Journal of American Studies of Turkey
35-36 (2012): 79-96

Re-reading World History through an "all-seeing eye": Cultural relativism in Gore Vidal's *Creation*

Vassilaki Papanicolaou

> *Well-born, well-connected, well-endowed and indisputably talented, Vidal has adopted a role at once humble and over-arching. On the one hand, the careful recorder of events, the re-inventor of history, the recorder on the other, the all-knowing, all-seeing eye — not unlike his hero Cyrus Spitama in this book who becomes the "Eye" of Darius the Great, King of Kings" (Bragg 842).*

Late in his life, Gore Vidal reiterated in his posthumous wish that readers should consider *Creation* as the "book-testament" of his literary legacy.[1] Oddly enough, the authorial right was not recognized as *erga omnes*. Indeed, except for some ephemeral reviews around the time of its publication in 1981 and rare essays,[2] *Creation* did not receive the critical attention it deserved. Most commentators seem to have followed a path similar to that of the novel's "Homeric" protagonist: they focused *stricto sensu* on Gore Vidal's constructions of *Creation* as "a sort of a crash course in comparative religion" (Parini 135). As a result they inadvertently *lost sight* of its literariness. Other critics sought easy interpretations like comparing *Creation* to a "sort of highbrow James A. Michener fact-crammed history lesson" (Michaud), or a "coach tour of the ancient world" (Ableman), reducing thus, in outrageous fashion, the literary scope of the panoramic novel. This study aims to *keep the eyes wide open*, meaning, literally, to

1 See Gore Vidal's interviews with Link and Stroumboulopoulos. It must be noted though that the author's favourite novel was *Myra Breckinridge* (1968), because, as he stated, "I could imagine someone else writing *Creation*, while it is not the case of *Myra Breckinridge*" (Louit 77). (All quotations from the French reviews and interviews were originally in French (Gore Vidal used to speak a little French), then translated into English by myself).

2 See Kiernan and Neilson.

consider *Creation* for its literary value and, figuratively, to provide a perspicacious analysis of what appears to be a fundamental key of its understanding: the bipolar motif of insight/blindness.[3] Cyrus Spitama's vision has indeed metaphorical connotations that have a lot to do with the author's hidden motivations behind his particular appraisal for the book.

For both purposes, a safe approach is needed that consists in returning to theoretical fundamentals. *Creation*, above all, was intended as a work of art. More "ideally," as Gore Vidal claims about his historical novels, it is one of these attempts "to restore History to Literature – the arts, not the science – where it belongs" (Missal 243). According to the Germanist H. J. Weigand, "a prerequisite for judging any book, any artistic performance, from a high critical vantage point, is an intimate knowledge of its frame of reference" (528). This is certainly true of *Creation* with its strong ties to classical cultures. This study will demonstrate that Gore Vidal applies faithfully Hermann Broch's vision of history as an experiment to unify the culture of the past with the present and future of American culture (33-41).

Creation is located at the crossing of two literary traditions, the most recent being a renewed American interest in Persian fiction which occurred a couple of decades prior to the writing of the book. One must first remember that the American use of Persia as a literary *topos* has a handful of remarkable examples between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. Margaret Horton Potter's *Istar of Babylon* (1902), a fantasy tale, portrays Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Persian Empire, and his son Cambyses II. The Greco-Persian Wars, not surprisingly, is also a main principal source of interest: William Stearns Davis' *A Victor of Salamis* (1907) deals with the legendary rivalry between Themistocles and Xerxes, and John Buchan's *The Lemnian* (1912) offers a reproduction of the mythic battle of Thermopylae (480 B.C.). Both works, though, exalt Greek heroism at the Persians' expense.

Literary texts with a Persian flavor regained popularity in the late 1950s, under the impulse of Lyon Sprague de Camp. His book *An Elephant for Aristotle* (1958) recounts a perilous Alexandrian mission led by a Thessalian commander (Leon of Atrax) and a Persian warrior, among

3 Blindness, in particular, has a multi-referential function. It makes easier Cyrus' assimilation to Homer, therefore giving an epic touch to *Creation*. Moreover, it is an obvious tribute, of a more autobiographic tone, to the author's grandfather, Senator Thomas Pryor Gore to whom the novel is dedicated (Altman 64-65).

other characters. More indicative of an increasing interest for Persia is his *Dragon of the Ishtar Gate* (1961). This novel depicts the life of Bessas of Zarispa, a soldier of the "Immortals" infantry, at the end of Xerxes' age. Persia's improving popular image encouraged the historian Andrew R. Burn to acknowledge, in 1962, that Persians are "one of the great imperial peoples of history who deserve more sympathetic treatment than, from our inevitably and rightly phil-Hellenic point of view, they have sometimes received" (64).

The pro-Persian momentum was sustained by Mary Renault's *The Persian Boy* (1972). Gore Vidal traveled to Iran during the writing of *Julian* (1964), but Renault's book was probably the turning point in his decision to write about Persia (Kaplan 644). In his essay "The Top Ten Best Sellers" (1973), the author observes that "The device of observing the conqueror entirely through the eyes of an Oriental is excellent and rather novel" (82).

However, the American tradition of Persian fictions is intertwined, to a certain extent, with an older one, of far greater influence in the conceptualization of *Creation*'s counter-historiographical dialectic -- "cultural relativism." This heuristic concept is, in fact, a synthetic term used to characterize the axiomatic approach on culture by the anthropologist Franz Boas (Gilkeson 7). It can be defined, briefly, according to Melville J. Herskovits, as "the theory that judgements are based on experience, and experience is interpreted by each individual in terms of his own enculturation" (61). Cultural relativism promotes a non-discriminating worldview that considers all ethnic groups as equally cultured. It was conceived as an all-out reaction against its exact opposite, ethnocentrism, whose "tendency [is] to view the world through one's own cultural filters" (Matsumoto 146).

The fathers of cultural relativism are none other than two historical Greek figures denigrated in *Creation*. One of them is Protagoras, accused, ironically, of moral baseness; his venal practice to request payment for teaching made him "the wealthiest sophist in the Greek world" (19). The pre-Socratic philosopher promulgated a form of cultural relativism as opposed to individualist subjectivism and tolerant, *vis-a-vis* the diverse beliefs incorporated in a particular cultural structure (Douglas and Wykovski 71). His formula ("man is the measure of all things") is quoted by Cyrus Spitama, who is symbolically the Sophist's cousin (9). The half-Abderitan

narrator, Cyrus, does not refute his kinsman's claim, but blames its deviant social manipulation. Not innocently, he misappropriates the Protagorean statement as a critical argument to stress the paradoxical cohabitation of agnosticism and atheism with superstitions and religious formalism in 5th-Century Athens (Maffre 117). This is a characteristic example of one aspect of cultural relativism known as politico-religious satire.

Another example is provided, a few pages later, by the other precursor of cultural relativism, Herodotus. The Greek historian is depicted as a controversial figure in *Creation*. His biased account of the "Persian Wars" at the Athenian Odeon forces Cyrus Spitama to act as a "counter historian" in order to provide historical *errata*. The official historical records regard Herodotus more positively as the proponent of both the Pindaric *nomos basileus* ("law is king over all,") and the right of *nomoi*'s self-determination by an ethnic group (Herodotus, *Histories* 3.37-38). Those facts find an indirect reference in one of Cyrus' incriminating observations: "there is a local law – what a place for laws! – which forbids not only the practice of astronomy but any sort of speculation as to the nature of the sky and the stars, the sun and the moon, creation" (15). The protagonist mocks the Athenians' lack of tolerance towards unholy activities. His Persian point of view is, in fact, shaped by ethnocentric tendencies, illustrating Herodotus' assertion that "every nation regards its customs as preferable to those of all others and shrinks in horror at alien practices that violate its own sensibilities, a universal shortsightedness" (Gruen 35). Besides an implicit Vidalian tribute to Herodotus' early contribution to cultural relativism, we observe one of the cultural messages arising from Cyrus' blindness: "Nothing is true except from a single point of view. From another point of view the same thing will appear quite different. Like the story of the blind man and the elephant" (194). It echoes Gore Vidal's endorsement of Alfred North Whitehead's principle that "the best way to understand a culture is to consider the things that it never says about itself" (Louit 79).[4] It gives

4 According to Alfred North Whitehead specialist Michel Weber, it is a simplified paraphrase of the philosopher's theory. The full sentence is: "When you are criticising the philosophy of an epoch, do not chiefly direct your attention to those intellectual positions which its exponents feel it necessary explicitly to defend. There will be some fundamental assumptions which adherents of all the variant systems within the epoch unconsciously presuppose. Such assumptions appear so obvious that people do not know what they are assuming because no other way of putting things has ever occurred to them. With these assumptions a certain limited number of types of philosophic systems are possible, and this group of systems constitutes the philosophy of the epoch" (Qtd. in Gore Vidal, *United States. Essays 1952–1992*: 334.)

also a clue about what Peter Conrad theorizes as the author's inherent perpetual duplicity:

> Although the array of Gore Vidal's personae is bemusing, they tend to come in pairs: the American and the Roman, the historian and the formalist, the candidate for political office and the propagandist for bisexuality. Even his name bifurcates — Gore is the caption attached to him by populist America (he inherits it from his maternal grandfather, the Oklahoma senator Thomas Pryor Gore)" (347).

The Vidalian creation of a revisionist historian, promotes through a Cyclopean rebuilding of the fifth century B.C., a binocular vision of history whose aim is to reintegrate, through art, the "other half" of history.

Exploring Cyrus' character reveals further ties to the history of cultural relativism. The anthropological concept gained prominence in seventeenth and eighteenth century European literature under the leadership of the French Enlightenment. One of the most famous examples of French cultural relativism is Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes* (1721). This epistolary novel of Persian theme is a major inspirational source for *Creation*; it consists of a lengthy fictitious correspondence between Usbek and Rica, two Persian noblemen of Isfahan, who undertake a long journey in 1711 through Europe and to Paris. Usbek bears striking similarities to Cyrus Spitama; his overflowing curiosity about exoticism and his viewpoint as a foreign traveler take the form of philosophical reports on local cultural habits and manners, as well as the religious customs of the Parisians. Rica is more in the same vein as Cyrus' amanuensis, the Laughing Philosopher Democritus: more discreet, more pragmatic in his vision, and not much interested in politics. Their narratives are illustrated by techniques designed to emphasize the *Lettres Persanes*' master principle: irony. This is also evident in *Creation*,[5] in which Cyrus Spitama's vision enables him to detect the slightest moral deficiencies as if he were God. Hitherto critical commentaries on the novel seem to have failed to observe

5 For more discussion of the links between *Creation* and the *Lettres Persanes*, see Murray 595.

that the half-Persian, half-Greek *aoidos*[6] re-enacts the mythical blindness of his nephew, Democritus. According to Aulus Gellius' *Nocta Atticae*, the atomist philosopher deliberately blinded himself in order to gain better spiritual insight (10.17). In *Creation*, this extrasensory perception is incredibly efficient to underline ethical relativism, while being a pretext for the politico-religious satire. It is linked to the fact that Gore Vidal is no subscriber of the doctrine of the "art for art's sake" (Zanganeh), but prefers to be regarded as "a cultured Roman patrician and composer of exquisite satires" (Saylor).

The demystification of American imperialism is one of the recurring forms of satire in *Creation*. Periclean Athens, Achemenidian Persia, and even Ajatashatru's Indian kingdom, suggest disturbing analogies with the United States of the twentieth century. Just like the Americans, the Greeks' self-interest manifests itself as a refusal to consider "Athens" as no more than a "tiny part of this curious Asiatic appendix and far-west called Europe, which happens to be also the last part of the Ancient World to be civilized" (Louit 80). The imperialist Persians of Darius' age strengthen their hegemony by abusing their financial power and imposing their cultural model on other civilizations. The Indians of Magadha absorb other kingdoms of the Indo-Gangetic Plain and begin to dream of a universal monarchy.

This form of satire is contrasted with the systematic debunking of established religions. Cyrus first witnesses the killing of Zoroaster that confers on him, *ipso facto*, a status of pseudo-sanctity, as well as rendering him open to political exploitation. However his gift of political clear-sightedness eventually helps him to give up his embarrassing religious position, and to ensure a symbolic promotion to the function of "King's Eye." Gore Vidal has no truck with this kind of religion; he believes that it is both futile and barbaric (Holleran 42), a means of asserting one's domination over others. His critical stance refers to Montaigne's cultural relativistic statement that "there is nothing […] that is barbarous or savage, unless men call that barbarism which is not common to them" ("Of Cannibals" 152).

6 In Ancient Greece, the word *aoidos* referred to an oral epic poet. Cyrus Spitama can be seen as a Homeric *aoidos* who narrates a Persian *Odyssey*.

Gore Vidal is particularly hard on Judaism. Cyrus and Xerxes dress themselves up as Babylonian gods in an anachronistic caricature of the Judeo-Christianity's fancy dress as Zoroastrianism.[7] This moment alludes to an earlier example of French cultural relativism, Voltaire's *Zadig ou la Destinée* (1747), in which the eponymous hero, a Babylonian philosopher, strictly observes Zoroaster's tenets and takes pot-shots at Christian zealotry and intolerance. *Creation* similarly hints at a cloaked satire against Christian universalism, the antithesis of cultural relativism. Cyrus' comparative exercise of the religions can be interpreted as a defensive reflex against those nations which challenge its religious primacy. Such narcissistic attitudes give rise to a paradox that provides another explanation for Cyrus' blindness: the "Persian" Homer committed the mistake "of looking in a mirror and not from a window" (Louit 80). According to Robert F. Kiernan:

> Cyrus fails to recognize the creeping impiety that leads him to question Zoroaster's borrowings from older religions and begins to see the resemblance between Indian Vedas and sacred Persian stories. Cyrus' old-age blindness is an effective symbol of his refusal to face this radical dividedness in his point of view, for the blindness comes over him one day while he is looking in a mirror (63).

Similarly to Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-85), the reducing of Cyrus' field of vision finds an analogy in the parodic reduction of Zoroastrianism to strict Manichaeism.

Cyrus' weakness is evident in the abortive attempt, as preacher of Zoroaster's faith, to indoctrinate Indians, and his struggling to justify the existence of evil to other religious dignitaries. Shortly after Cyrus' argument with Ananda, Prince Jeta declares: "We can't conceive a god who takes an immortal soul, allows it to be born once again, plays a game with it, then passes a judgment on it and condemns it to pain or pleasure forever" (519).

7 Vidal observed on one occasion: "I mean the idea of one God and so on is just a crazed notion that perhaps starts with Zoroaster, perhaps with the Jews, nobody knows quite where. It was thought that a great deal of Judaism might well have come from Zoroaster" (Ward and Johnston 67).

In his insertion into his great-uncle's narrative, Democritus comes to the conclusion that

> Certainly any deity that had created life in order to torture it must be, by definition, entirely evil. Put another way, the Wise Lord did not create Ahriman. The Wise Lord *is* Ahriman, if one is to follow through the end the logic – if that's the word! – of Zoroaster's message (553).

In other words, "Christianity" is compared to "the devil (since) there is probably no good Lord" (Zanganeh). *Creation* appears thus to be an early introduction of Gore Vidal's future "sky-god religions" theory, exposed in "Monotheism and Its Discontents" (1992). In this misotheistic pamphlet, the author argues that

> The great unmentionable evil at the center of our culture is monotheism. From a barbaric Bronze Age text known as the Old Testament, three anti-human religions have evolved: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. They are, literally, patriarchal; God is the Omnipotent Father, hence the loathing of women for 2000 years (1049).

However, the failure of monotheism must be extended to all religions, if we take into account that it finds its uttermost resonance in Cyrus Spitama's illusory spiritual odyssey. The *homo viator* goes to the other side of the world to collect a wide range of answers in the hope of elucidating the reasons for creation. Yet, at the end of his journey, he finds no valid solution; instead, he eventually becomes lost in metaphysical theories. As Alan Hollinghurst explains, "In Vidal's [book] a parodic spiral of initiation takes place in which increase in knowledge and experience brings obfuscation and blindness rather than enlightenment" (14). Cyrus ends up by admitting: "There is no way […] to answer that question" (552). This outcome, however, was announced from the beginning of his investigations by Anaxagoras: "Impossible questions require impossible answers" (18). This shows symbolically that the cosmogonic quest, whose alpha and omega is incarnated by Cyrus and Democritus, represents a no-go area similar to squaring the circle (Parini 135). The reasons evoked by

Gore Vidal for this aporetic conclusion are neither dualistic nor atomic, but anatomic:

> There are only so many things you can do because we have two lobes to our brains. If we had three lobes – a trinary brain – we would see things very differently from people with two lobes. This is why we think that everything must begin and then it must end: because we are balanced. We're always trying to do things in two's. Creation may not have to have anything to do at all with two's. So we're sort of little twosomes down here with our own little, funny view of the world in a creation that does not resemble us at all. Hence the desire for anthropomorphic deities. Hence, as Montaigne so wisely said, "Man, who cannot even create a worm, never ceases to create gods" (Ward and Johnston 67).

From the authorial point of view, those ideologies that claim to have the key to anthropo-theological understanding, could only demonstrate great inability or unwillingness to answer fundamental questions of the human existence: monotheism proposes infantile myths; oriental philosophies show signs of intellectual fatigue (Baker and Gibson 59). It can be assumed therefore that Gore Vidal's interest in religion remains essentially ideological, since, as he sardonically declares at one point: "I found no creator of the cosmos, except myself being the little creator of the book" (Louit 80). Irony redefines the contours of *Creation* as an antithetical novel, adding even more evidence of a hidden agenda against religion.

Satire also serves another central interest of cultural relativism: education. Vidal states that his fondness for Confucius comes from the fact that Confucius is the "founder not of a religion but of an ethical and educational system" (Missal 245) that could introduce undereducated American readers to world history (Vidal, "True Gore.") Gore Vidal, whose need to write historical novels finds its essence in his fondness for autodidacticism, believes that this is his fundamental duty as a novelist to engage literature in an overhaul of the American culture:

> What little the average thoughtful American – that is, the 5 percent of the country who read books – what little they know about American history, I taught them. I never intended to do this. I certainly wasn't trained to do it – I was self-taught. Rather an awesome responsibility. Fortunately, someone else will come along in another generation or sooner and take my place. I was happy to have made a contribution (Ruas 87).

The author feels obliged to address the deficiencies in the American educational system. His critique of the venal sophism in *Creation* denounces the teaching's drift toward its anti-vocational tendency to become nowadays a mere lucrative job:

> In recent years traditional methods of education have been abandoned […] by a new class of men who call themselves sophists. In theory, a sophist is supposed to be skilled in one or another of the arts. In practice, many local sophists have no single subject or competence. They are simply sly with words and it is hard to determine what, specifically, they mean to teach, since they question all things, except money. They see to it that they are well paid by the young men of the town (10).

Meanwhile, *Creation* challenges the sterility of esoteric languages and unreadable glossaries that uselessly compromise the educative process of knowledge acquisition. Unlike Confucius who "spoke quite simply," says Cyrus, "so many of the Greeks who make simple matters difficult with syntax and then, triumphantly, clarify what they have managed to obscure with even more syntax" (460). As an alternative to the current complex educational system, Gore Vidal, in an interview with Gerard Clarke (1974), proposes his own methodology of teaching:

> I would teach world civilization – East and West – from the beginning to the present. This would occupy the college years-would be the

> spine to my educational system. Then literature, economics, art, science, philosophy, religion would be dealt with naturally, sequentially, as they occurred. After four years, the student would have at least a glimmering of what our race is all about (24).

Creation can be seen as an exploratory experiment in the Vidalian vision of an accelerated multidisciplinary education, engaging readers in a massive learning project in which didacticism plays an active role. In this regard, the educative aspect of the book is consistent with Gore Vidal's consideration of the Ancient philosophers as "pedagogues" (Louit 79), hence the intertextual inclusion of literal translations of the masters' parables and sayings. *Creation* owes also a debt to an educational novel: the *Voyage du jeune Anacharsis en Grèce* (1788) of Jean-Jacques Barthélémy, whose hero makes a comparable Grand Tour of the sources of the Enlightenment in fourth-century Greece (Murray 595). *Creation* follows Horatian canons, *docere* ("to instruct") and *placere* ("to entertain") to hold the reader's attention, while offering thousands of "juicy" elements of the World history scattered throughout the narrative.

However, the novel's main attractiveness lies foremost in its metaphysical subject. The existential question of creation is diachronic; it touches everyone's sensibility since the beginning of the human civilization, regardless of our personal faith. As explained by Anthony Burgess, the theme of creation is therefore a good marketing product:

> If we're looking for "relevance" in Vidal's latest novel, we shall find it in a question as pertinent to our own age as to the fifth century before Christ, the setting of *Creation*. Who made the world, asked Dr. Faustus. What is the world made out of? We are all Fausts these days. We may have sold our souls, but we're still vitally interested in the nature of the merchandise. Herein the relevance of *Creation* (18).

To give a context to the creation and to promote Edward B. Tylor's vision of culture as a universal fact, Gore Vidal selects a founding moment in the world history of religions, included in the "Axial Age," according

to Jasperian terminology.[8] Gore Vidal observes: "The fifth century is the greatest century in human thought […] one man, had he lived to be 75 could have met Zoroaster and Buddha, Socrates and Confucius, not to mention Pythagoras [...] and many others" (Ward and Johnston 66). *Creation* aims to transcend cultural boundaries in order to reach the broadest readership. This historical novel of ecumenical dimension is innovative since, as Gore Vidal proudly asserts, it is a *hapax legomenon* in the history of world literature (Pivot). But the story of *Creation* does not end with this statement.

During his six-year odyssey to encompass a world vision of history, the author is touched by the same ironic fate as his protagonist. Indeed, he makes striking discoveries: the simultaneous birth of many religious and philosophies in the fifth century B.C., the invasion of the Aryans, the fact that the rise and fall of political systems are universally regulated by entropic-negentropic law (Bensoussan 217). Those combined coincidences force him to replace his initial cosmogonic quest by a chilling eschatological vision:

> "A startling and unpleasant sense came to me on my serendipitous journey: that the human race is programmed. Just like the DNA codes." Across the cultures, oblivious of each other, the same new developments were taking place. "So you think of the human race as a baby. It waddles, walks, talks, grows, procreates, withers away and dies. Now this is pure B. F. Skinner science. It's rather horrifying that I would ever come to this Calvinist conclusion" (Hamilton 342).

Zoroaster's verses on the end of the world look like a perfect translation of this apocalyptic discovery: "when all men will become of one voice and give praise with a loud voice to the Wise Lord and at this time he will have brought his creation to its consummation, and there will be no further work he need do" (27). Creation was born out of chaos, but will be reabsorbed into chaos. This cyclical perspective authorizes a shift of meaning which revives the interest of the novel: if mankind cannot

8 See Karl Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History*. Trans. Michael Bullock. 1949. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1953. 1-21. Print.

avoid extinction, then literature will follow the same inexorable path. For Gore Vidal, though, the termination of literature is already in process; the history of the book is coming to an end:

> The century that began with a golden age in all the arts (or at least the golden twilight of one) is ending not so much without art as without the idea of art, while the written culture that was the core of every educational system since the fifth century B.C. is now being replaced by sounds and images electronically transmitted (Vidal *Armageddon?* (206)

Creation, which was initially intended to be the writer's last novel (Moritz 426), adopts a skeptical stance towards the cultural transition from literature to mass-medias, since it challenges traditional definitions of the novel: "These days, novelists became journalists and henceforth we label 'novel' the majority of works of journalistic type" (Muratori 52). This misunderstanding manifests itself in two textual forms. It is first underlined, narratively, by a symbolic analogy: the progressive obsolescence of the oral system that gives rise to scriptures (Baker and Gibson 64). But it is also imitated, structurally, by the novel's self-adaptation to the cultural mutations: *Creation* criticizes modernization by freeing itself of the normative shackles of the historical novel to evolve into a type of televisual-journalistic paraliterature, conceived as the only appealing and readable format for a televisually-obsessed generation.

For this purpose, Gore Vidal borrows from Fredrick Forsyth's *The Odessa File* (1972), which has the hero moving "from one person to the next person, asking questions" (Vidal "Top Ten," 87), but not necessarily coming up with any answers. Thus an interpretation of *Creation*, as suggested by its subject, "has neither a beginning nor an end" (574); the book itself is made to be read and re-read. *Creation* eventually offers a new definition of cultural relativism, literally as a conscious way to put things into perspective, meaning both a refusal and acceptance of the inevitable cultural degeneration. World History serves as the eyewitness of Gore Vidal's *tour-de-force* to unite, in a single novel, the visions of the past, present, and future of culture; a means of achieving a universal all-seeingness.

Works Cited

Ableman, Paul. "Back to the cradle." Rev. of *Creation* by Gore Vidal. *Spectator* 2 May 1981: 26-27. Print.

Altman, Dennis. *Gore Vidal's America*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2005. Print.

Aulus Gellius. *Noctes Atticae*. Trans. Heinrich Albert Lion. Charleston: Nabu Press, 2011. Print.

Baker, Susan, and Curtis S. Gibson. "*Creation* (1981)." *Gore Vidal: a critical companion*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1997. 53-64. Print.

Barthélémy, Jean-Jacques. *Travels of Anacharsis The Younger*. 1788. London: Green, 1817. Print.

Bensoussan, Nicole. *Gore Vidal l'iconoclaste*. Nanterre: University Paris X-Publidix, 1997. Print.

Bragg, Melvyn. "In the Beginning." Rev. of *Creation*, by Gore Vidal. *Punch* 280 (1981): 842. Print.

Braudeau, Michel. "*Création* par Gore Vidal." *L'Express*, 1983: 93. Print.

Broch, Hermann. "The Heritage of Myth in Literature." *Chimera* 4.3 (1946): 33-41. Print.

Buchan, John. "The Lemnian." *The Moon Endureth*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1912. 66-223. Print.

Burgess, Anthony. "The devils return." Rev. of *Creation*, by Gore Vidal. *Inquiry Magazine* 15-29 Jun. 1981: 17-19. Print.

Burn, Andrew Robert. *Persia and Greeks: The Defense of the West, 546-478 B.C.* 1962. California: Stanford UP, 1984. Print.

Clarke, Gerald. "Interview with Gore Vidal: *The Art of Fiction*." *Paris Review* 59 (1974): 1-36. Print.

Conrad, Peter. "Re-inventing America." Rev. of *1876*, by Gore Vidal. *Times Literary Supplement* 26 Mar. 1976: 347-48. Print.

Davis, William Stearns. *A Victor of Salamis*. London: Macmillan & Co., 1907. Print.

Douglas, Neil, and Terry Wykowski. *From Belief to Knowledge: Achieving and Sustaining an Adaptive Culture in Organizations*. Florida: CRC Press, 2010. Print.

Forsyth, Frederick. *The Odessa File*. 1972. London: Arrow, 2011. Print.

Gilkeson, John S. *Anthropologists and the Rediscovery of America, 1886-1965*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2010. Print.

Gruen, Erich S. *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity*. Princeton and London: Princeton UP, 2012. Print.

Guizot, François Pierre Guillaume. 1864. *Meditations on the Essence of Christianity, and on the Religious Questions on the Day*. London: John Murray, 1864. Print.

Hamilton, Alex. "Historical Faction: Gore Vidal and Norman Mailer." *Writing Talk: Conversations with Top Writers on the Last Fifty Years*. Leicester: Troubador Publishing, 2012. 339-343. Print.

Herodotus. *The Histories*. Trans. Robin Waterfield. New York: Oxford UP, 1998. Print.

Herskovits, Melville J. *Man and His Works*. 1948. New York: Knopf, 1960. Print.

Holleran, Andrew. "*Creation* by Gore Vidal." *New York Magazine* 30 Mar. 1981: 42. Print.

Hollinghurst, Alan. "Imperial Dope." Rev. of *Creation*, by Gore Vidal. *London Review of Books* 3.10 (1981): 13-14. Print.

Jaspers, Karl. *The Origin and Goal of History*. Trans. Michael Bullock. 1949. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1953. Print.

Jennings, Gary. *Aztec*. New York: Atheneum, 1980. Print.

Kaplan, Fred. *Gore Vidal: a Biography*. 1999. New York: Bloomsbury, 2000. Print.

Kiernan, Robert F. "The Ancient World: *Julian, Creation*." *Gore Vidal*. 45-66. New York: Frederick Ungar Pub. Co., 1982. Print.

Link, Matthew. "Gore Vidal's on America's Lost Culture." *The Daily Beast*. Web. 19 Apr. 2007.

Louit, Robert. "La Création Selon Gore Vidal." *Le Magazine Littéraire* 195 (1983): 76-80. Print.

Maffre, Jean-Jacques. *Le siècle de Périclès*. Paris: P.U.F., 1990. Print.

Matsumoto, David Ricky. *Culture and Psychology*. Pacific Grove: Brooks/ Cole Pub. Co., 1996. Print.

Michaud, Charles. "*Creation*." *Library Journal* 106.6 (1981): 683. Print.

Missal, Samuel. "Deconstructive satire in the novels of Gore Vidal." Diss. U. of Pondicherry, 2010. Print.

Montaigne, Michel Eyquem de. "Of Cannibals." 1588. Trans. Donald Murdoch Frame. *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*. Stanford and London: Stanford UP, 1958. 150-159. Print.

Montesquieu [Charles-Louis de Secondat]. *Persian Letters*. 1721. Trans. Margaret Mauldon. Ed. Andrew Kahn, New York: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.

Moritz, Charles. "Gore Vidal." *Current Biography Yearbook*. 424-7. New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1983. Print.

Muratori, Jean-Claude. "Quatre questions à Gore Vidal." *Le Figaro Magazine*, 21 Jun. 1983: 52. Print.

Murray, Oswyn. "Whoring after strange gods." Rev. of *Creation*, by Gore Vidal. *Times Literary Supplement* 29 May 1981: 595. Print.

Neilson, Heather. "In Epic Times: Gore Vidal's *Creation* Reconsidered." *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 23.1 (2004): 21-33. Print.

Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book For Everyone and Nobody*. 1883-85. Trans. Graham Parkes. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005. Print.

Parini, Jay. *Gore Vidal*. New York: Columbia UP, 1992. Print.

Pivot, Bernard. "Interview with Gore Vidal: Des Romans dans l'Histoire." *Apostrophes. L'Institut National de l'Audiovisuel*. 4 Mar. 1983. Television.

Potter, Margaret Horton. *Istar of Babylon: A Phantasy*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1902. Print.

Renault, Mary. *The Persian Boy*. 1972. New York: Vintage Books, 1988. Print.

Ruas, Charles. "Interview with Gore Vidal." *Conversations with Gore Vidal*. Eds. Richard Peabody and Lucinda Ebersole. 85-99. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2005. Print.

Saylor, Steven. "Classical Gore." Rev. of *Creation*, by Gore Vidal. *Alternate* 3.19 (1981): 74. Print.

Sprague de Camp, Lyon. *An Elephant for Aristotle*. 1958. London: Dennis Dobson, 1966. Print.

---. *The Dragon of the Ishtar Gate*. New York: Doubleday. 1961. Print.

Stroumboulopoulos, George. "Gore Vidal Interview." *The Hour*. *CBC* 6 Jun. 2007. Television.

Vidal, Gore. *Armageddon? Essays 1983-1987*. London: Andre Deutsch, 1987. Print.

---. *Creation*. 1981. New York: Vintage Books, 2002. Print.

---. *Julian*. London: Heinemann, 1964. Print.

---. "Monotheism and Its Discontents." 1992. *United States: Essays: 1952-1992*. 1048-56. New York: Random House, 1993. Print.

---. *Myra Breckinridge*. New York: Little, Brown, 1968. Print.

---. "The Top Ten Best Sellers According to the Sunday *New York Times* as of January 7, 1973." *United States: Essays 1952-1992*. 67-88. New York: Random House, 1993. Print.

---. "True Gore." *Salon* 10 May 1999. Web. 8 Jun 2008.

---. *United States: Essays 1952-1992*. New York: Random House, 1993. Print.

Voltaire [François-Marie Arouet]. *Zadig; or, the book of fate. An oriental history*. 1747. Trans. Francis Ashmore. London: Harrison and Co., 1780. Print.

Ward, Margaret, and Carl Johnston. "Interview with Gore Vidal." *Sequoia* 23 Feb. 1982: 65-68. Print.

Weigand, Hermann J. "Broch's *Death of Vergil*: Program Notes." *PMLA* 62.2 (1947): 525-554. Print.

Zanganeh, Lila Azam. "Gore Vidal: 'Je crois à l'Utilité des Livres, Figurez-vous'." *Le Monde* 31 Aug. 2005. Print.