Blue [Gregory Kerr] , Overly Sarcastic Productions , Red

Miscellaneous Myths (Series): Perseus

Online (2016)

TAGS: Acrisius / Akrisios Athena Danae Hera Hermes Hero(es) Medusa Perseus Polydectes Zeus





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Miscellaneous Myths (Series): Perseus
Country of the First Edition	Online
Country/countries of popularity	Worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2016
First Edition Details	Overly Sarcastic Productions, *Miscellaneous Myths: Perseus*, June 21, 2016, 4 min 7 sec.
Running time	4 min 7
Official Website	Overly Sarcastic Productions (accessed: June 18, 2019)
Available Onllne	*Miscellaneous Myths: Perseus* (accessed: June 19, 2019)
Genre	Animated films, Instructional and educational works, Internet videos, Short films
Target Audience	Young adults
Author of the Entry	Joanna Kłos, University of Warsaw, joanna.klos@al.uw.edu.pl
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Creators



Blue [Gregory Kerr]

Overly Sarcastic Productions is a YouTube channel created by two young people with nicknames Red and Blue.

Gregory Kerr, i.e. **Blue**, nicknamed for the colour of his eyes, as an undergraduate, he studied classics and philosophy; he is inspired by figures such as Caesar, who is his favourite dictator, and Thucydides, who as a writer was convinced that historical narrative should be enjoyable. Blue supports such an attitude and surprisingly, this makes him think that textbooks "are garbage" and "the worst way to convey information". This attitude made him dislike history at school – till the moment he started to attend the classes of prof. Loren J. Sammons II at Boston University and other lecturers in Classics; additionally, *Assassin's Creed* helped him enjoy historical narratives as well.

Bio prepared by Joanna Kłos, University of Warsaw, joanna.klos@al.uw.edu.pl



Overly Sarcastic Productions

Overly Sarcastic Productions (accessed: June 18, 2019) is a YouTube channel created by two young people with nicknames Red and Blue. They describe their activity as "summarizing classics and history" and "making the unfunny funny and the uninteresting interesting". Since 2012 they have created more than 180 animated educational videos, drawn in Japanese chibi art style; there are many series of the videos, such as, i.a., *Miscellaneous Myths*, *Trope Talk*, *Classics Summarized*, *Shakespeare Summarized* and *History Summarized*. They declare that Red is a huge fan of books and tropes, while Blue is more interested in history and philosophy. Although the effects of their joint work are definitely impressive, they can also differ on truly fundamental issues – e.g., when asked by one of the fans: "Greeks or Trojans?", Blue

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claimed to prefer Trojans, as "Hector is the only sympathetic character in the entire war", meanwhile Red expressed herself in favour of Greeks and their, as she called it, "bromance".

Sources:

Profile at TVTropes.org (accessed: June 18, 2019)

Overly Sarcastic Productions, *Q&A!*, YouTube.com, June 8, 2016 (accessed: June 18, 2019)

Overly Sarcastic Productions, *Q&A!! [100,000 SUBSCRIBERS SPECIAL]*, YouTube.com, June 21, 2017,

Twitter profile (accessed: June 18, 2019)

Prepared by Joanna Kłos, University of Warsaw, joanna.klos@al.uw.edu.pl



Red (Illustrator)

Overly Sarcastic Productions is a YouTube channel created by two young people with nicknames Red and Blue.

Red, whose nickname comes from the colour of her hair, is responsible for the illustrations. She claims that she has learned how to draw – or, more precisely, how to improve her own skills – from her mother who is an artist; meanwhile her father, who is a writer, inspired her to love books. She seems to be a truly interdisciplinary erudite, as apart from her interest in literature and artistic talents, at the university, she majored in math and computer science. Unlike Blue, she does not reveal her real name on the Internet.

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Source:

Jankowski, Lauren, *Interview: Red*, AsexualArtists.com, December 12, 2016 (accessed: June 18, 2019)

Prepared by Joanna Kłos, University of Warsaw, joanna.klos@al.uw.edu.pl

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Additional information

Summary

The series ***Miscellaneous Myths*** is devoted to various motifs, characters and tales from world mythologies. Red states at the beginning of the first video in the series, *Perseus*, that she decided to "focus primarily on Greek mythology, because it's one of the mythologies that's been more influential to popular culture in the past millennia or so".

The aforementioned video about Perseus can serve as a perfect example of the style and characteristics of the series. In the beginning Red, who is the narrator, underlines that the myth is present in the popular culture – e.g., in *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* by Rick Riordan.

The first image of Perseus that we see in the video is a photo of his famous statue with Medusa's head by Benvenuto Cellini. Next, Red presents the timeline of the hero's history without hesitation using very colloquial language. We see the following points: "King is a dick – Danae has a rough day – Destiny objects to being thwarted – Zeus takes matters into his own hands".

We learn about the prophecy regarding Perseus: king Acrisius was told that his grandson would be his doom. He reacted by imprisoning his daughter Danae. Yet, Zeus – whom Red characterizes as a god that "never met a mortal woman he didn't want to make sweet sweet Eros to" – intervened by impregnating Danae. Acrisius, threatened by the birth of Perseus, threw him and Danae into the ocean. They reached the island of Seriphos and started to live there with a certain fisherman and his wife. Later, the island's king Polydectes fell in love with Danae and wanted to marry her. Perseus stood in his way, so the king decided to get rid of the boy by sending him to kill Medusa.

The monster, we are told, was cursed with snake hair and "hideous" appearance – at this point Red comments that "modern interpretations usually make her superhot anyway, but hey, whatever". Next she informs us that the gods have decided to support Perseus – he got a sword from Hermes and a mirror shield from Athena (surprisingly, the name "Aegis" does not appear). Perseus finds the Graeae sisters, "takes their eyeball hostage" and forces them to reveal Medusa's abode. Next he gets a sack and a magic helmet in the Garden of Hera, and after finding Medusa he cuts off her head. On his way home he

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rescues Andromeda from the sea monster by killing it during a spectacular clash. He comes back, petrifies Polydectes with Medusa's head, marries Andromeda, and the fisherman becomes the island's king. At the end of the myth the prophecy is fulfilled – Perseus kills Acrisius by accident during the Olympics.

The video finishes with an important and original interpretative comment – that Danae in the story "does not get enough credit. She survived more sh*t than Rasputin AND she gave birth on her own. That alone should have gotten her a medal".

Almost the whole narration is illustrated by comic images, where the characters speak using modern and colloquial language – e.g., Polydectes seeing Danae asks her: "Hey there hot stuff – ever met a king before?". Yet the most funny part of the video seems to be the incident with the magic helmet, where a scene from *Bugs Bunny* cartoon, also about a magic helmet, is unexpectedly inserted.

Analysis

The series should be considered interesting by all those interested in classical reception, as its starting point is the presence of myth in popular culture. Although not many examples of such presence are pointed out, they are remarkable – the allusion to Percy Jackson's adventure indicates that the series' target are people who are or were at least somehow interested in reading as teenagers.

Meanwhile, the comment on Medusa's beautiful image in modern culture proves that Overly Sarcastic Productions team is familiar with the feminist and "commercial" reinterpretation of the myth. The last comment on Danae is also definitely grounded in feminist critique, as it alludes to the concept of reclaiming female perspective in the classical stories. The character of Danae, mostly silent in the ancient narratives that survived to our times, thanks to young American students, finally gains the attention that is due to her.

The vigorous dialogues that Red and Blue put into the character's mouths, whether one finds them witty or not, do not oversimplify the story. What is more, they undoubtedly are effectively introducing young people to classical topics. Till June 17, 2019, the video had been viewed more than 2 mln times and gained 2449 (sic!) comments on YouTube, most of them positive.

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Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Acrisius / Akrisios Athena Danae Hera Hermes Hero(es) Medusa Perseus Polydectes Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Heroism Knowledge Learning Pop culture references
Further Reading	Barlow, Rich, "Debunking Misconceptions about Other Cultures, on YouTube", BU Today, July 31, 2017 (accessed: June 18, 2019). Latham, Andrew S., "Comic Books vs. Greek Mythology", Scholar Works of at UT Tyler, English Department Theses, 2012 (accessed: June 18, 2019). Paul, Joanna, "The Half-Blood Hero. Percy Jackson and Myth-Making in the Twenty-First Century", in Vanda Zajko, Helena Hoyle, eds., *A Handbook to the Reception of Classical Mythology,* Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017, 229–242. Zajko, Vanda, ed., *Laughing with Medusa. Classical Myth and Feminist Thought*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

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