Joanna Kłos, "Entry on: Armchair Classics (Series): The Epic of Gilgamesh / Hecuba / Ajax by Blue [Gregory Kerr] , Overly Sarcastic Productions , Red ", peer-reviewed by Elżbieta Olechowska and Susan Deacy. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/793. Entry version as of November 07, 2026.

Blue [Gregory Kerr] , Overly Sarcastic Productions , Red

Armchair Classics (Series): The Epic of Gilgamesh / Hecuba / Ajax

Online (2015)

TAGS: Epic Gilgamesh Immortality Mesopotamia Mesopotamian Deities





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

General information	
Title of the work	Armchair Classics (Series): The Epic of Gilgamesh / Hecuba / Ajax
Country of the First Edition	Online
Country/countries of popularity	Worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2015
First Edition Details	Overly Sarcastic Productions, *Armchair Classics: The Epic of Gilgamesh*. August 17, 2015, 2 min 42 sec. Overly Sarcastic Productions, *Armchair Classics: Hecuba*. October 11, 2015, 3 min 14 sec. Overly Sarcastic Productions, *Armchair Classics: Ajax*. October 11, 2015, 2 min 43 sec.
Running time	2 min 42 / 3 min 14 / 2 min 43
Official Website	Overly Sarcastic Productions (accessed: June 18, 2019)
Available Onllne	*Armchair Classics: The Epic of Gilgamesh* (accessed: June 18, 2019); *Armchair Classics: Hecuba* (accessed: June 18, 2019); *Armchair Classics: Ajax* (accessed: June 18, 2019).
Genre	Animated films, Instructional and educational works, Internet videos, Short films
Target Audience	Young adults

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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)

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Additional information

Summary

Armchair Classics is the shortest series made by Overly Sarcastic Productions – apart from the first episode, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, which will be described here as an example of the series' style and characteristics, there are only two other episodes: about *Ajax* and *Hecuba*. The series is also slightly different from the others (except *Armchair History*): the only drawn character is the one of the boy (Blue, we can guess), who sits in an armchair and narrates the whole story. The other illustrations are memes and photos that represent – of course, not in a direct way – sequences of the very fast-paced narration. Thus, each video is designed in a humorous manner – this makes Blue warn in the description of the first of them that we should "take it with a grain of salt and enjoy the jokes".

The Epic of Gilgamesh

Blue presents the most important episodes of the ancient Mesopotamian poem. It starts with the praise of the city of Uruk, its history and its walls. The main hero, the semi-divine Gilgamesh, appears to Blue as "a bit of a meanie" – he exploits his workers and ravishes women. In order to tame him, the gods decide to send another hero, Enkidu, to the city. Enkidu wants to defeat Gilgamesh in – as Blue puts it – "a 1v1 irl". Gilgamesh wins the fight, yet afterwards both heroes become friends and take up the quest of killing Humbaba, the monster from Cedar Forest. After such a victory Gilgamesh catches the amorous attention of the goddess Ishtar but he rejects her. Enraged, she sends a bull to kill the hero; Gilgamesh and Enkidu slay the monster. Next, the gods make Enkidu fatally ill. After discussing and appraising the value of his friendship with Gilgamesh, he dies.

Gilgamesh decides to take another quest – he wants to search for the secret of immortality. This results in a meeting with the goddess Saduri, who advises Gilgamesh to "stop freaking whining about death and enjoy the pleasures". Next, the hero talks to Utnapishtim, who became immortal after surviving the great flood. Yet Gilgamesh is unable to become immortal, because he fails in two trials: staying awake for a week and finding a magical plant. Finally, as Blue tells us in the end of the video, "Gilgamesh returns to Uruk empty-handed but with his mortality reconciled".

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The memes and photos used in the video make it witty, yet they are definitely loosely connected to the original plot, e.g., the discontent of the people of Uruk is illustrated by the photograph of Severus Snape from the *Harry Potter* film series, who says: "This displeases me", the rejection of Ishtar by Gilgamesh – with a shot from an animated film about Batman, where he says to Catwoman: "Not interested", and the Bull of Heaven – by the logo of Red Bull drinks.

Analysis

The series' connection to previous instances of classical reception is not direct. Blue does not allude to any examples of the poem's rewritings or adaptations from different periods. In place of that, the story is associated with popular culture and Internet culture – thus, in consequence, it is presented as "digestible" and potentially intriguing for young people – with the application of images that they encounter everyday while watching movies, using online resources or scrolling their newsfeeds in social media. This can result in convincing the video's target group that the ancient culture is a resource of still live and relevant themes.

As the video is very concise, it does not leave room for original comments about the interpretation of the plot. Instead, we are given numerous colloquial and catchy phrases. This is probably what made Blue comment after some time – as we can read in the video's description – that it "no longer meets his standards of quality for historical research and presentation". Also some of the viewers' comments are critical: "Okay you need to stop putting so many memes with text written on them, that just serves as a distraction"' [Salman Arshad]; "I thought we were missing parts of the story because not all the tablets were recovered?" [gilat granit]; "this video was a bit sloppy" [Atty Jkb]. On the other hand, one might say that a joke does not need to be explicit – the most important thing is to grasp its point.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts

Epic Gilgamesh Immortality Mesopotamia Mesopotamian Deities

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Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Character traits Heroism Journeys Knowledge Pop culture references

Further Reading

Barlow, Rich, "Debunking Misconceptions about Other Cultures, on YouTube", BU Today, July 31, 2017 (accessed: June 18, 2019).

Dimock, Wai Chee, "Recycling the Epic: "Gilgamesh" on Three Continents", in Brenda Deen Schildgen, Ralph Hexter eds., *Across Space and Time. Receptions and World Literature*, Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2016, 39–58.

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Pryke, Louise M., *Gilgamesh. Gods and Heroes of the Ancient World*, Susan Deacy, ed., Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2019.

Ziolkowski, Theodore, *Gilgamesh Among Us: Modern Encounters with the Ancient Epic*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011.

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