Joanna Kłos, "Entry on: Rome Survived Nero (A Post-American-Election Consolation) by Blue [Gregory Kerr] , Overly Sarcastic Productions , Red ", peer-reviewed by Elzbieta Olechowska and Susan Deacy. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/795. Entry version as of November 06, 2026.

Blue [Gregory Kerr] , Overly Sarcastic Productions , Red

Rome Survived Nero (A Post-American-Election Consolation)

Online (2016)

TAGS: Colosseum Emperor Julio-Claudian Dynasty Nero Roman Empire Roman History Rome





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

General information	
Title of the work	Rome Survived Nero (A Post-American-Election Consolation)
Country of the First Edition	Online
Country/countries of popularity	Worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2016
First Edition Details	Overly Sarcastic Productions, *Rome Survived Nero (A Post-American-Election Consolation).* November 9, 2016, 9 min 58 sec
Running time	9 min 58
Official Website	Overly Sarcastic Productions (accessed: June 18, 2019)
Available Onllne	*Rome Survived Nero (A Post-American-Election Consolation)* (accessed: June 18, 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

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Elzbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

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

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

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.

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

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

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Additional information

Summary

The video does not belong to any of the Overly Sarcastic Productions' series, although it is done in a similar way to those in the *Armchair Classics* and *Armchair History* cycles. The main difference is that there are almost no illustrations, and Blue's manner of speaking is way more serious than usually. This is due to the fact that the video was produced on November 9, 2016, to serve as "consolation" for all those disappointed with the result of presidential election by Donald Trump. Its main thesis is that while America "probably won't be quite the same [...], Rome survives Nero" – meaning that the country will endure no matter who the ruler is.

In order to explain it, the narrator alludes to the episode from Roman history when several emperors from the Julio-Claudian dynasty "were absolutely crazy" – Tiberius, Caligula and Nero. Blue says that the last one in 68 AD "actively planned the burning of Rome so that he could have a nice little spot in the middle of town to make a Golden House". Nevertheless, the whole empire did not disappear because of Nero's excesses – its history lasted 400 years more. We are told that Vespasian destroyed the Domus Aurea to build the Colosseum – so, sometime after the terrible fire, something exceptional was built: "a monument to this amazing culture in history".

This leads Blue to the following conclusions: that the US will also "survive", yet this requires people to be active in real political life, not only in social media; that the years after the election will be hard for democracy, but it will not disappear; and that love instead of hate is necessary in order to "persevere". What is more, problems such as sexism and racism will remain, no matter who will become president. The important thing then is to "build and stick with the community" of people facing the same issues.

Afterwards, Barack Obama's speech about the victory of Trump is cited; Blue encourages people to do "something nice for someone they've never met before" in order to feel better; and he invites them to see things in the long perspective – after a thousand years people will probably laugh at the nonsense of our times, just as we sometimes laugh thinking about Nero. He also remarks that: "This isn't the end, this is one step back in a long march forward through history". He also advises his viewers to do some pleasant things that can relax them. Producing art is a solution too – Blue points out that many

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood... The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

ancient Greek and Chinese philosophers were active in really hard times, when one war followed another; and that Dante's masterpieces are a result of the difficulties that he faced during his life. So, the narrator concludes, current tough events can as well become an inspiration to do something beautiful and creative.

Analysis

Even though impulsively prepared, the video is not very unconventional in its message – looking at ancient history as a source of comparisons and possible references to contemporary problems is one of the most common motifs in classical reception.

What is remarkable here, is that Blue's comparison does not serve to purely encourage or champion a totally critical view of the turn of events; it also invites to assume an active and creative attitude and to become a more aware citizen. If we take into consideration that many of Overly Sarcastic Productions' fans are young people who are not yet allowed to vote according to the U.S. law, we can view the video as a tool in formation of future citizens who do not limit their action to social media only.

However, the most striking aspect is that Blue does wonder whether Nero was in fact responsible for the fire of Rome. He wants to see in Donald Trump exactly the same kind of emperor, as Nero was in the eyes of his opponents. This is also a typical strategy for artists and politicians using examples from ancient times to support their view of the current state of things. At the same time, it is a very tricky strategy: as we can't be sure if Nero was mad or not, the whole rhetorical reasoning remains fragile.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts

Colosseum Emperor Julio-Claudian Dynasty Nero Roman Empire Roman History Rome

Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth

Health* Historical figures History Political changes Society Values

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Culture

Further Reading

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

Closs, Virginia Margaret, *While Rome Burned: Fire, Leadership, and Urban Disaster in the Roman Cultural Imagination*, University of Pennsylvania ScholarlyCommons, January 1, 2013, available at repository.upenn.edu (accessed: June 18, 2019).

Elsner, Jaś and Jamie Masters eds., *Reflections of Nero: Culture, History and Representation*, London: Duckworth, 1994.

Jones, Jonathan, "To understand Trump, we should look at the tyrants of ancient Rome", *The Guardian*, January 25, 2017, available at theguardian.com (accessed: June 19, 2019).

Jones, Peter, "The Nero is Donald Trump", *The Spectator*, May 27, 2017, available at spectator.co.uk (accessed: June 18, 2019).

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.