

Conceptual and Language Representations in American Gobblewonker Monster as Loch-Ness Monster Mythology in Hirsch's Animated Series Gravity Falls

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Abstract. The research thesis discusses the Gobblewonker monster character in fictional America of animated series *Gravity Falls* as the representation of real-life Loch Ness monster mythology. The Gobblewonker is a lake monster shown in the animated series as mysterious beast surrounding Lake Gravity Falls in Oregon, United States that resembles real-life Loch Ness monster mythology. The purpose of this study is to analyze the conceptual map and language representations based on Hall's representation theory on *Gravity Falls*' Gobblewonker that refers to real-life Loch Ness. The writer uses cultural approach paired with representation theory from Stuart Hall as a main analysis model. The results of the research show two main findings; conceptual maps and language representations of the Gobblewonker that refer to Loch Ness monster mythology. The conceptual map representation covers the monster and mythology concepts of Gobblewonker that refer to Loch Ness conceptual map aspects in real-life. The language representation covers the iconic sign and indexical sign of Gobblewonker that refer to Loch Ness language signs in real-life.

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1 Introduction

The fiction is a product of author's creative ideas or external inspirations. The era of massive information has broadened the source of inspirations, resulting in reshape of ideas into new existences; one of which is what Stuart Hall defined as representation. American TV series Gravity Falls is example of cultural representation in modern literature. Alex Hirsch infuses cultural inspirations from real mythology creatures, including Gobblewonker, an American monster in Gravity Falls that reflects similarities to Loch Ness myth from Scottish lore. The writer finds the interest to understand how fiction is impacted by real-life inspirations through the means of representation and how it reflects the reality through the scope of fiction.

The research problems of this research are focusing on two points; what are the conceptual representations and language representations of Gobblewonker monster as Loch Ness mythology in Alex Hirsch's Gravity Falls, as the purpose of research is to analyse the two points of representations to examine the correlation between the fictional representer and its real-life represented.

2 Theory and method

2.1 Intrinsic theories

Gobblewonker is a mysterious lake monster appears in *Gravity Falls*. the monster, despite being a particular mindless beast, contains the aspect of character and characterization. Hence in elaborating the framework of its character, Bergstrand's definition of character and Abrams' definitions of showing and telling characterization are used [1-3]. In addition, the character of Gobblewonker takes the establishment of settings for it to be able to exist in the story, hence Smith's definition of place, time and social settings are taken into accounts.

2.2 Extrinsic theories

Hall's representation theory becomes the main framework to analyze the correlations between Gobblewonker to its real-life counterparts; that is a Loch-Ness monster, through its conceptual and language representational aspects. Hall's definition of representation is where the meaning is produced, conveyed and exchanged using languages to depict things through portrayal [9]. The theory consists of two systems; conceptual map

representation and language representation, with each sub-systems; concept and meanings, and iconic sign and indexical sign contained respectively. The representation theory can be viewed through three distinctive approaches; reflective, intentional, and constructionist. American Gobblewonker as a representation of Loch-Ness monster is falling into the category of cultural reflection in which fiction is dependent on its source of inspiration from real cultural object (in this case, European mythological creature), therefore the reflective approach fits into the problems this research presents.

Additionally, the Gobblewonker being a mythological monster also requires the complementary theories for conceptual representations to work; the monster theory and the mythology theory. Sauchelli's definition of monster refers to abnormal and threatening beings with two proposed types of monsters; supernatural monster and moral monster [14]. In relation to this research, Gobblewonker is classified as supernatural monster that possesses abnormality and threatening behaviours towards *Gravity Falls* characters. The mythology theory refers to Douglas's definition; an illusion, a legendary tales, or a representation of fictional truth taken by common beliefs to illustrate figure/story [5]. These key characteristics are placed to elaborate what the mythological monster is in relation to Gobblewonker, complementing the conceptual representation analysis to reflect the meanings and.

2.3 Research methods

Cultural approach is chosen as the most fitting to complement representation theory with. Woods stated that cultural approach aims to understand social phenomenon that emphasize on the existence of norms and meanings in unconsciously structured behaviour in society. [16] One of the fields of cultural approaches is myth criticism. Myth criticism is a concentration of study that myths, as cultural products, are distinguished and proposed as a structural part and unconscious aspect of the object which acknowledges and retells the myths to reveal its form and composition by analysing the pattern structure given by the myth itself. [11]

For the source materials analysis, the library research as method of data collection is also added. The library research is defined as research inquiry that is structured in investigation from the start to finish with technique, rule, and tool specified by user. [6] The data is then divided by two sources: primary source and secondary source.

3 Discussion

3.1 Intrinsic elements

Before looking at the representation analysis, the understanding of the research object must be taken into consideration. Gobblewonker is an American monster character created by Alex Hirsch that is featured as main antagonist in the Episode 2: Tales of the Gobblewonker in the first season of the show. [12] It is depicted as a mysterious water monster which has long neck and a wrinkly skin that inhabits the Lake Gravity Falls and a legend that haunts the lake inhabitants as mythical monster renowned in Oregon, United States.

Through showing and telling characterization, the writer has found the key concepts that secures Gobblewonker as a distinct character. Showing characterization analysis shows the Gobblewonker as a creature that possesses giant stature towering high among the trees, the amphibious species able to live both aquatic and terrestrial area, and a dangerous beast capable of hurting and threatening the lives of characters. Telling characterization analysis on other hand shows one particular trait of Gobblewonker as mysterious creature that lives its life as a rumour surrounding Lake Gravity Falls.

3.2 Conceptual representations

Conceptual representations of Gobblewonker as Loch-Ness base the key points on two types of conceptual maps; monster conceptual maps and mythology conceptual maps. Monster conceptual map that refers to Loch-Ness monster covers the abnormal figure and dangerous creature. Gobblewonker's abnormal figure comes from its depiction as a giant monster resembling giant water creature with four flippers, glowing eyes, sharp giant teeth, and long neck. Therefore, an abnormal figure; uncanny look and unnatural size as uncommon species compared to other animals in Gravity Falls. This correlates to real-life Loch Ness mythology through Cray report in 1959, stating it to have 50-feet long size, four flippers, humpy back and long neck creature; a set of uncommon appearances of what is deemed to be extinct species of plesiosaurs. [4] Gobblewonker is also depicted as dangerous monster that is threatening to Gravity Fall's characters; shown with sharp giant teeth, aggression tendency, and strong body that could destroy trees, give arise to concept of dangerous beast from Gobblewonker that bares universal characteristic of what is deemed as dangerous. This dangerous creature correlates to Loch Ness myth based on old scripture of St. Columba's biographer that he encountered the burial ceremony of an alleged victim of 'lake monster' that has been bitten to death whilst arriving at Loch bank. [7]






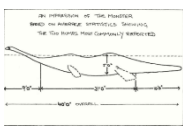


As for Gobblewonker's mythology conceptual maps that refers to Loch-Ness monster, it covers the key points as mysterious figure, local tale and legend, false truth. Gobblewonker's mysterious figure comes from the main investigation for main characters due to its mysterious whereabouts and skepticism of its existence, hence the investigation is conducted by protagonist to uncover the truth. This prompts the universal concept of a mysterious figure in Gobblewonker that correlates to real-life Loch Ness lore from reports of a monster inhabiting Loch Ness date back to ancient times. Notably, local stone carvings by Pict depict a mysterious beast with flippers. [16] Gobblewonker's local tale and legend comes from its whereabouts that is spread by Old Man McGucket to local people including his son in which whom react in skepticism, indicating that Gobblewonker is nothing, but a tale or legend spread by McGucket. The Gobblewonker's rumor and local skepticism produce the meaning that connect Gobblewonker and concept of local legend inside Gravity Falls' towns people's minds. Then we have Gobblewonker as false truth, in which it has finally been revealed to be a robot designed by Old Man McGucket himself to get him the attentions. This occasion makes Gobblewonker possess universal characteristic as the concept of fake, hoax, and false creature. This correlates to real-life Loch Ness myth based on several scientific tests in the past which disproved the Loch Ness existence. These includes the experiment on sonar wave scanning that is proven to be unsuccessful in revealing Loch Ness existence. [7]

3.3 Language representations

The language representations of Gobblewonker as Loch-Ness refer to the signs that carries the meanings between the representing and the represented, essentially build the bridge of representation. In Hall's theory, Gobblewonker's language representation is divided into two signs; iconic signs referring to its visual depictions referring to Loch-Ness, and indexical signs referring to its indirect signs that conveys the meanings of the object.

Iconic signs of the Gobblewonker are taken directly from source material's depiction, in this case, the frames of the episode, that correlates to its real-life counterparts in Loch-Ness. The findings are Gobblewonker's long neck that refers to Loch-Ness long neck photograph (the surgeon photograph), four flippers that refers to Loch-Ness flippers statue in Dores, gigantic size that refers to Loch-Ness size consensus as sketched by Gowler, and amphibious species that refers to Loch-Ness terrestrial sketch made by Grant. [7,8] The iconic sign findings are presented into the following table:

Table 1. Gobblewonker iconic signs referring to Loch-Ness.

Iconic signs	Gobblewonker	Loch-Ness
Long neck		
Four flippers		
Gigantic size		
Amphibian		

Then we come to the last language category; the indexical signs. This sign is the appearing indirect signs of Gobblewonker that convey its meaning without direct depictions / visualizations and refer to Loch-Ness monster with similar correlating signs. In this case, it takes form in textual reports and environmental signature such as footsteps / water ripples. In relation to Gobblewonker, the indexical signs are divided into dialogues and non-dialogues. The dialogues highlight the lake dwellers report, especially McGucket, about the whereabouts of Gobblewonker monster without directly depicting its visualization on the frame. This refers to the similar reports reported in newspaper regarding the local news of Loch-Ness whereabouts / sighting. [4] The non-dialogues also indirectly refer to Gobblewonker through indirect visualization such as the destroyed boat, in which despite not directly depicting Gobblewonker, it refers the meaning that Gobblewonker exists and caused it. This destroyed boat refers to Loch-Ness similar indexical sign in which takes form in a footprint taken by Marmaduke Whitherell for allegedly belongs to monster.

4 Conclusion

Conceptual map representation discussion covers the Gobblewonker's monster and mythology conceptual map elements that refer to real-life Loch Ness monster mythology as work of representation. The monster

conceptual representation discusses the Gobblewonker as an abnormal and dangerous creature based on monster definition that refers to Loch Ness monster lore as work of representation. The mythology conceptual map representation discusses the Gobblewonker as mysterious figure, local tale and legend of Gravity Falls, and false truth based on mythology definition that refer to Loch Ness mythology as work of representation. The language representation discussion covers the Gobblewonker's iconic sign and indexical sign elements that refer to real-life Loch Ness monster mythology as work of representation. The iconic sign representation discusses the Gobblewonker 's visual sign that shows long neck, four flippers, gigantic size and amphibian signs which qualified as iconic signs that refer to Loch Ness monster mythology visual depictions in real-life as work of representation. The indexical sign representation discusses the Gobblewonker's indirect reference of its existence which covers the dialogue and non-dialogue aspects that exist in Gravity Falls as indexical signs that refer to real-life Loch Ness' indirect references as work of representation.

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