

ФИЛОЛОГИЯЛЫҚ ҒЫЛЫМДАР / ФИЛОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ НАУКИ /
PHILOLOGICAL SCIENCES

DOI 10.54596/2958-0048-2023-3-139-143

UDK 347.1

IRSTI 17.82.82

H.P. LOVECRAFT'S UNIQUE STYLE: CATALYST FOR THE RISE
OF LOVECRAFTIAN INTERNET FOLKLORE

Denisenko A.¹, Starkova A.V.^{2*}, Vassilyeva O.M.²

¹*English Fellow, English language Programs at Georgetown University,
Washington, USA*

²*M. Kozybayev North Kazakhstan University, Petropavlovsk, Republic of Kazakhstan*

**E-mail: Elvenbride@inbox.ru*

Abstract

This article delves into the enduring influence of H.P. Lovecraft on internet folklore, specifically focusing on his distinctive writing style and narrative techniques. By analyzing examples from Lovecraft's seminal works, such as "At the Mountains of Madness" and "The Call of Cthulhu," we illustrate how Lovecraft's ability to evoke cosmic horror and existential dread has served as a catalyst for the emergence of Lovecraftian internet folklore. This study sheds light on how Lovecraft's legacy continues to shape and thrive in the dynamic digital landscape of internet folklore.

Keywords: Lovecraftian Horrors, Internet Folklore, trends, digital world, individual style.

Г. ЛАВКРАФТТЫҢ ЕРЕКШЕ СТИЛІ: ЛОВЕКРАФТ ИНТЕРНЕТ
ФОЛКЛОРЫНЫҢ ДАМУЫНЫҢ КАТАЛИСТІ

Денисенко А.¹, Старкова А.В.^{2*}, Васильева О.М.²

¹*English Fellow, Джорджтаун университетінің ағылшын тілі бағдарламасы,
Вашингтон, АҚШ*

²*М. Қозыбаев атындағы Солтүстік Қазақстан университеті,
Петропавл, Қазақстан Республикасы*

**E-mail: Elvenbride@inbox.ru*

Аңдатпа

Бұл мақала автордың ерекше жазу стилі мен әңгімелеу техникасына назар аудара отырып, Г. Лавкрафттың интернет фольклорындағы тұрақты әсерін зерттейді. Г. Лавкрафттың «Жындылық жоталары» және «Ктулху шақыруы» сияқты орталық шығармаларынан мысалдарды талдай отырып, мақала автордың ғарыштық қорқыныш пен экзистенциалды қорқынышты жеткізе білу қабілетін ашады. Бұл аспектілер Лавкрафтиандық интернет фольклорының пайда болуына катализатор ретінде қызмет етеді. Зерттеу Г. Лавкрафт мұрасының Интернет фольклорының динамикалық цифрлық ландшафтында қалай қалыптасып, гүлденуін жалғастыратынына жарық түсіреді.

Түйін сөздер: Лавкрафтиандық қорқыныш, интернет фольклоры, трендтер, цифрлық әлем, жеке стиль.

УНИКАЛЬНЫЙ СТИЛЬ Г. ЛАВКРАФТА: КАТАЛИЗАТОР РАЗВИТИЯ
ЛАВКРАФТСКОГО ИНТЕРНЕТ-ФОЛЬКЛОРАДенисенко А.¹, Старкова А.В.^{2*}, Васильева О.М.²¹*English Fellow, English language Programs при Джорджаунском университете,
Вашингтон, США*^{2*}*Северо-Казахстанский университет им. М. Козыбаева,
Петропавловск, Республика Казахстан***E-mail: Elvenbride@inbox.ru*

Аннотация

Данная статья посвящена непреходящему влиянию Г. Лавкрафта в интернет-фольклоре и уделяет особое внимание характерному стилю письма и технике повествования автора. Анализируя примеры из центральных произведений Г. Лавкрафта, таких как «Хребты безумия» и «Зов Ктулху», в статье раскрывается способность автора передавать космический ужас и экзистенциальный страх. Данные аспекты служат катализатором появления лавкрафтовского интернет-фольклора. Исследование проливает свет на то, как наследие Г. Лавкрафта продолжает формироваться и процветать в динамичном цифровом ландшафте интернет-фольклора.

Ключевые слова: лавкрафтовские ужасы, интернет-фольклор, тенденции, цифровой мир, индивидуальный стиль.

Introduction. H.P. Lovecraft's enduring influence on internet folklore can be attributed, in large part, to his distinctive writing style and narrative techniques. His individualistic approach to cosmic horror and storytelling has served as a catalyst for the rising popularity of Lovecraftian horrors in the digital age. As the internet facilitates the rapid exchange of ideas and the creation of new myths, Lovecraft's legacy remains a source of inspiration for countless creators and continues to shape the way we perceive and engage with horror in the modern world. This topic is highly relevant as it highlights the intersection of classic literature, digital culture, and the evolution of storytelling in the internet era. It sheds light on how a literary figure from the early XXth century continues to impact contemporary online creative communities. The novelty of this article lies in its focus on the specific influence of Lovecraft's writing manner within the context of internet folklore. While there is existing literature on Lovecraft's influence on horror fiction, this article narrows its scope to examine how these influences have translated into internet-based storytelling, fan communities, and the creation of new myths. It offers a fresh perspective on Lovecraft's legacy and its ongoing relevance in the digital age. Thus, the aim of the article is to analyze the distinct elements of H.P. Lovecraft's literary technique and storytelling style that have made them enduring and influential in the realm of internet folklore.

Research methods. We use such methods as continuous sampling method, cognitive analyses and hermeneutic method. Continuous sampling method is used to identify the most popular and enduring examples of Lovecraftian myths and stories in internet folklore. It includes specific characters, creatures, settings, and themes that have gained traction online. With the help of cognitive analysis, we explore how Lovecraft's distinctive writing style, themes of cosmic horror, and narrative techniques impact readers and creators on the internet. Additionally, this method helps us to uncover why Lovecraft's style is appreciated. We use the hermeneutic approach to unveil the profound and symbolic meanings embedded within Lovecraft's narratives and why these meanings continue to captivate online communities.

Research results. Internet folklore, often referred to as "cyberlore" [1, p. 552] or "digital folklore," [2] is a dynamic and evolving form of folklore that has emerged in the digital age. It

encompasses a wide range of narratives, stories, legends, memes, and cultural practices that are circulated and shared through online platforms, social media, email, forums, and other digital channels [3]. In other words, Internet folklore is a reflection of contemporary culture and serves as a means for individuals and communities to express themselves, share experiences, and engage with the online world.

T.J. Blank offers insights into the nature of internet folklore. Internet folklore, as described by T.J. Blank and other scholars in the field (such as O. Voichici, X. Foulidi, E.C Papakitsos, etc.), refers to the body of traditional and contemporary expressive culture that is created, transmitted, and transformed within online communities and digital spaces. It encompasses narratives, rituals, jokes, urban legends, and other forms of cultural expression that evolve and circulate in the digital realm. Internet folklore is important because it captures the collective creativity and identity of online communities. It provides insights into how people adapt traditional folklore to the digital environment and create new cultural forms. It serves as a medium for the expression of social commentary, humor, and shared experiences in the digital age. Internet folklore is highly popular due to the accessibility and interconnectedness of the online world. It spreads rapidly through social media, forums, and other digital platforms, reaching a global audience. Its popularity also lies in its ability to adapt quickly to current events and trends, making it a relevant and engaging form of contemporary folklore [4]. Generally speaking, internet folklore represents the dynamic cultural expressions that emerge from online communities. It plays a significant role in reflecting and shaping the digital culture of the modern age, making it an important and highly popular aspect of contemporary folklore studies.

One of the most prominent sources of internet folklore is the literary legacy of H.P. Lovecraft. Examining the popularity dynamics of the keyword “Lovecraftian horrors” reveals a notable upward trend.

On March 17-29, 2019, Google Trends recorded 87 queries for this keyword, using a scale where 0 represents the minimum number of queries, and 100 represents the highest possible. Subsequently, from June 9-22, 2022, there were 97 queries, demonstrating a steady increase. The interest reached its zenith, registering a perfect score of 100, during the period of April 2-8, 2023.

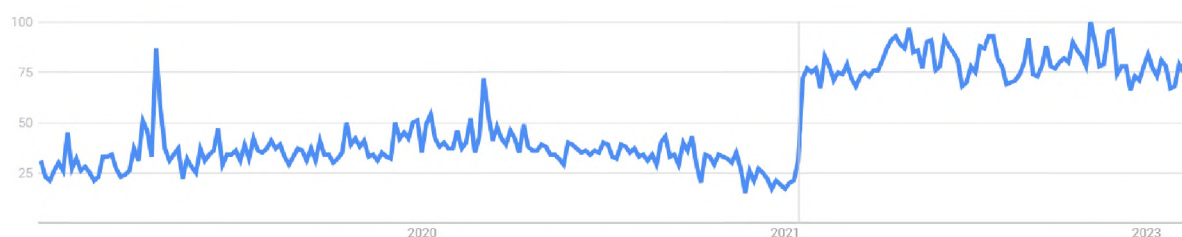


Figure 1. The popularity dynamics of the keyword “Lovecraftian horrors” from 2019 to 2023.

This data prompts an intriguing question: What is driving the surge in popularity of Lovecraft’s works, and has the author’s creations truly achieved a prominent status within internet folklore? To answer these questions, we must delve into the enduring appeal and cultural impact of Lovecraft’s literary universe within the digital age. To do so we to analyze several examples which can serve as arguments to maintain our point of view.

H.P. Lovecraft’s distinctive writing style, characterized by archaic language, cosmic horror themes, and narrative techniques, has served as a catalyst for the emergence of Lovecraftian internet folklore. H.P. Lovecraft’s archaic language and intricate descriptions tend to create a sense of antiquity and cosmic dread. In “The Call of Cthulhu,” he describes the

sunken city of R'lyeh as "*a nightmare corpse-city of vast angles and stone blocks*" [5, p. 45] evoking a sense of ancient, otherworldly horror. The archaic language and vivid descriptions in this story help set the tone of cosmic insignificance and terror.

The next example is a rich one of his distinctive writing style and his skill in conveying cosmic horror: "*I could not help feeling that they were evil things – mountains of madness whose farther slopes looked out over some accursed ultimate abyss. That seething, half-luminous cloud background held ineffable suggestions of a vague, ethereal beyondness far more than terrestrially spatial, and gave appalling reminders of the utter remoteness, separateness, desolation, and aeon-long death of this untrodden and unfathomed austral world.*" [6, p. 21]. This quote encapsulates the profound sense of dread and insignificance that pervades the story as the characters encounter the ancient, alien beings and the terrifying mysteries of the Antarctic landscape. H.P. Lovecraft's ability to evoke fear and cosmic awe through his prose is a hallmark of his distinctive writing style and has contributed to the enduring popularity of H.P. Lovecraftian internet folklore through such aspects as:

- Evocative imagery: H.P. Lovecraft's writing is characterized by its vivid and evocative imagery. In this passage, he describes the mountains as "evil things" and suggests that their slopes lead to an "accursed ultimate abyss." This choice of words creates a sense of foreboding and dread, immediately immersing the reader in an atmosphere of horror.

- Cosmic horror themes: the mention of an "ethereal beyondness" and the "utter remoteness" of the austral world evoke the idea that humanity is confronted with something beyond its comprehension and control. The reference to an "aeon-long death" emphasizes the vastness and age of the unknown forces at play.

- Ineffability and suggestion: H.P. Lovecraft often relies on the ineffable and the power of suggestion to induce fear. The passage mentions "ineffable suggestions of a vague, ethereal beyondness," highlighting the idea that some horrors are beyond human description and understanding. It's not about what is seen but what is hinted at and left to the imagination that terrifies the reader.

- Isolation and desolation: H.P. Lovecraft frequently portrays a sense of isolation and desolation in his works. Here, the "utter remoteness" and "unfathomed austral world" emphasize the characters' isolation in an unfamiliar and hostile environment, heightening their vulnerability and the reader's unease.

- Terrestrial vs. cosmic: the "half-luminous cloud background" suggests an otherworldly and alien landscape, one that is far removed from the familiar and reassuring aspects of Earth.

In sum, this passage showcases H.P. Lovecraft's talent for creating an eerie and unsettling atmosphere through his use of vivid imagery, cosmic horror themes, suggestion, and a profound sense of isolation and desolation. It exemplifies why H.P. Lovecraft's writing style has had such a lasting impact on the horror genre and has contributed to the emergence of Lovecraftian internet folklore.

Discussions. Let us delve deeper into the factors that contribute to the popularity of Lovecraftian Internet folklore:

- Resonance with online communities: Lovecraftian internet folklore has gained substantial popularity because it resonates with online communities. H.P. Lovecraft's themes of cosmic insignificance and fear of the unknown tap into deep-seated existential anxieties that are prevalent in the digital age. In the digital era, where individuals often grapple with the vastness and mysteries of the internet, H.P. Lovecraft's themes provide a lens through which people can explore and make sense of their digital experiences. The sense of insignificance and

the fear of the unknown are emotions that many online users can relate to in an age of information overload and digital anonymity.

– Alignment with existential anxieties: H.P. Lovecraft's themes align closely with contemporary existential anxieties. The digital culture, with its constant connectivity, can often create a sense of detachment from the tangible world and raise questions about the nature of reality and existence. Lovecraftian narratives offer a framework for exploring these existential dilemmas. They provide a means to confront the uncertainty and chaos that can be associated with the digital realm, allowing individuals to grapple with their fears and uncertainties in a fictional context.

– Adaptability to contemporary trends and events: Lovecraftian internet folklore is adaptable and responsive to contemporary trends and events. H.P. Lovecraft's themes are timeless and can be applied to a wide range of situations and cultural phenomena. Internet folklore is often shared, remixed, and modified to reflect current events and trends. Lovecraftian content can be easily integrated into online discussions, memes, and creative works, allowing it to remain relevant and resonate with a diverse online audience. The internet's interconnectedness and rapid information sharing make it possible for Lovecraftian content to spread quickly and reach a global audience. It can evolve to incorporate references to current events, pop culture, or internet memes, making it accessible and engaging for a wide range of online users.

Conclusion. In summary, the popularity of Lovecraftian internet folklore can be attributed to its ability to tap into the existential anxieties of the digital age, its adaptability to contemporary trends, and the internet's capacity for widespread information sharing. H.P. Lovecraft's themes provide a framework for exploring the mysteries and uncertainties of the digital realm, making Lovecraftian narratives a natural fit for the online culture.

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