

From Tradition to Hashtag: The Transformation of Ritual Practices in Instagram Culture

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Abstract

Within digital media environments, traditional rituals are increasingly rearticulated through visual platforms, reshaping their meanings and modes of participation. This study analyzes the representation and transformation of H?d?rellez, a spring ceremony strongly embedded in cultural history, on Instagram. This research utilizes visual culture theory and Postmodernism to frame Instagram as a postmodern ritual place where embodied, collective actions are transformed into visual and performative representations. The research employs qualitative content analysis of user-generated posts disseminated during the H?d?rellez period, concentrating on hashtags, visual components, captions, and user engagement patterns. A particular focus is placed on the existence and evolution of traditional symbols—such as wish-making ceremonies, rose trees, and fire-jumping practices—within digitally generated visuals. The examination examines the aestheticization, individualization, and recontextualization of these aspects within a framework of visibility and self-presentation. Research indicates that Instagram enhances the sharing and visibility of ritual practices, while concurrently transforming H?d?rellez from a collectively performed cultural heritage into an individualized and visually mediated spectacle. During this process, the significance of rituals increasingly corresponds with aesthetic value and symbolic representation, mirroring wider trends of commodification and identity formation in digital culture. This study emphasizes the relationship among ritual, visibility, and digital mediation, contributing to current discussions in visual culture, digital anthropology, and media studies about the evolution of tradition in modern networked society.

Keywords: Digital Rituals; H?d?rellez; Instagram; Postmodern Space; Visual Culture

