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The Wedding Ceremony – Secularisation of the Christian Tradition

by

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The Wedding Ceremony – secularisation of the Christian Tradition.

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates and analyses the wedding ceremony in western society. The white wedding ceremony developed within Christian religious doctrine and although charged with certain symbolic meanings and traditions has not remained static but has evolved and changed to reflect contemporary lifestyles. The wedding ceremony has always been an indicator of ideals and aspirations at every social level and this work focuses on the sublime ceremonial as well as the evolving nature of marriage.

Couples historically married to cement dynasties and to ensure the passage of lands and wealth and their marriages were arranged but once couples could marry partners of their choice and love liaisons became normal then the ceremony provided an ideal opportunity for festive exhibition and theatrical excess. Wedding pageantry has readily adapted to encompass recent celebrity culture that has pervaded modern societies. Modern craving for instant acclaim has been promoted by profiteering industries and businesses dedicated to providing the dream wedding within any budget. This thesis argues that the nature of marriage has changed from a life-long heterosexual legal commitment to one person to a relationship that anticipates some degree of separateness and autonomy within a heterosexual or same sex association. The ceremony itself has evolved to accommodate changing ideals and expectations of first marriages and to provide opportunity for couples to remarry within the dictates of contemporary fashion. The wedding ceremony remains a significant and symbolic occasion because it has adapted and changed to accommodate contemporary tastes, styles, standards and edicts and because of this it will survive.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale for this research, introduction and significant questions

The rationale for this work came from questioning why British and North American practising or non-practising Christians still get married in the twenty-first century when there is no longer any particular social pressure to do so, and why does the wedding ceremony remain such a significant occasion. This study focuses on the wedding as a Christian western practice but the author acknowledges these practises are not universal; although a number of non-Christian communities have adopted the spectacle of the wedding associated with western Christian wedding ceremonies. Throughout the work the term Christian wedding is used to describe and discuss the ceremony practised within modern British and North American Christian communities although individuals might or might not be practising Christians and the ceremonies could be civil or religious. The main focus of the work is heterosexual marriage although same-sex civil partnership is discussed within the research.

The Biblical book of Malachi determines that marriage is a holy covenant made before God and this is upheld in the book of Matthew who determines when a man marries he leaves his parents and forms a new family with his wife. His edict upon marriage states, 'What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder (Matthew 19:4-6). This declares marriage a lifelong commitment that cannot be dissolved except by the death of a partner according to Christian beliefs.

Commenting on developments in attitudes to marriage and long-term family commitment during the late twentieth century, Lewis (2001) claims that 'Much of the commentary on family change has emphasised the part played by the pursuit of self-fulfilment and individual happiness over and above regard for marriage vows or any

other private commitments that might be made by cohabitants' (p.3). Lewis goes on to cite examples of couples living together maintaining aspects of singularity within their relationship. This image of two individuals cohabiting for so long as it suits the interests of both matches the 'pure relationship' classified by Giddens (1992). Giddens defines the 'pure relationship' as having nothing to do with sexual purity but is;

> 'a situation where a social relation is entered into for its own sake, for what can be derived by each person from a sustained association with another; and which is continues only in so far as it is thought by both parties to deliver enough satisfactions for each individual to stay within it' (p.58).

Each might have independence and each might take on dual responsibilities suggesting acceptance of dichotomy in a complicated mix of duality and individuality for as long as the relationship lasts. Both Lewis and Giddens recognise and acknowledge an element of individualism in the relationships of modern married couples. Couples can live together as an apparently conventional pair but within the relationship each has independent professional and leisure interests. Alternatively, Askham (1984) as recently as the late twentieth century discusses compromises brought about by marriage such as constraints of shared space or negotiating responsibilities (p.116). This suggests acceptance of duality within a relationship rather than individuality. The likelihood is that most modern marriages are a complicated mix of unity and self-interest depending on the personalities, experiences and needs and expectations of the people involved.

Women's autonomy and individuality was not recognised in the home or workplace and only began to become acknowledged during the late nineteenth and twentieth century's so women have been historically mostly financially dependent on

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men because men were regarded as the protectors and wage earners (Walter, 1998). As a consequence women have been subordinate at home and in the workplace and any female self-interest was likely to have been the search for an adequate provider. Walter (1998) acknowledges increasing contemporary recognition of individuality of women but she suggests that blatant inequality still exists between the sexes and that women's power is based more on potential than reality. She supports her claim specifying 30% of senior women managers have children compared to 75% of senior male managers with children (p.11) insinuating that men employed in senior positions leave most of the childcare to female partners. This implies that individuality within marriage depends on both partners having the financial means to maintain some independence. If one partner, traditionally the woman in a heterosexual relationship, is dependant on the other for financial support then individuality within the relationship will be compromised by need. Female biology can still prove disadvantageous for women wanting to combine a successful career with parenthood if periods of maternity leave interrupt career progression. Walter (1998) claims that a woman who has children loses, on average, over half the earnings she would have made in a lifetime if she had remained childless. Walter (1998) goes on to point out that despite women working more and living independent lives with more girls attending universities and leaving with good degrees, most professions are still dominated by men at the most senior levels. Despite this inequality, women typically dominate the preparation and planning of the wedding. Bridal magazines are directed primarily at prospective brides and there is rarely more than an article or a few pages focusing on bridegrooms, and even that is usually directed at the female reader.

As the average age at marriage is increasing; during 2007 men married at 36.4 years and women at 33.8 years, an increase of 2.5 years for both since 1997 (Great

Britain, 2009) modern men and women are likely to work prior to marriage. The bride's family traditionally paid for the wedding ceremony but modern couples with combined income are increasingly in the favourable position of being able to pay for their own wedding ceremony. The idea that the wedding is transition into maturity and adulthood no longer applies. Although the cost of recent weddings has escalated to an average cost of over £20,000 couples still want to splash out on their big day despite the current credit crisis (Wallop, 2008) so are prepared to wait and save.

Until recently, women traditionally gave up working after marriage so it was important for a woman to marry a husband who could support her and subsequent children. Popular romantic novels of the nineteenth and early twentieth century's offered a fairy-tale possibility for a working girl to find love and social mobility by 'marrying up' (Otnes and Pleck, 2003) while Giddens (1992) describes romantic novels as 'a literature of hope' (p.44) explaining that in romantic love stories the heroine often settled for a solid dependable husband who could keep her and the family in comfort although her dreams might be of an exciting dangerous adventurer. Otnes and Pleck (2003) claim that;

> …marketing and the media will constantly remind women (and to a lesser extent men) that their lives are incomplete unless they (a) experience romantic love, and (b) once having found it, reward themselves for doing so by consummating the accomplishment through the bestowel of a diamond engagement ring, a lavish wedding, and a honeymoon (p. 12). While this would not entirely support the dream of upward social progress it provides reassurance and reward.

Referring to research into the experiences of a group of mature American women during the 1980s Giddens (1992) explains; 'Marriage was to them the core experience

of a woman's life' (p.53) suggesting that they viewed marriage as an expectation and eventuality.

Her wedding day was likely to be the one occasion when a woman could be sure that she would be the focus of attention, the most noticeable person present, more important than her husband for the occasion. Certainly from the middle of the nineteenth century when male fashion favoured more severe clothing the bride was instantly recognisable as the woman dressed in distinguishable clothing, almost certainly white. Formulaic photographs of happy brides conspicuously dressed in white and couples surrounded by joyful families and friends have promoted and reinforced belief in the heterosexual wedding ceremony marriage among communities (Frosh, 2003). To opt out of the institution of marriage became a consciously controversial decision. Marriage presupposed a settled family, hopefully with children and automatic inclusion into community life whereas to remain single risked being judged as an eccentric outsider. Marriage has traditionally represented a married couple as duality becoming independent of their families. Marriage and the married state and the ceremony performing the act of marriage have traditionally profoundly affected individuals, families, communities and even nations since the joining of a couple links both them and their families and implicitly those around them. Western European Christian marriages were traditionally dynastic so that inherited titles, wealth and lands were kept within families and communities or supplementary gains were acquired through marriage (Ranger, no date). Marriage was primarily a business transaction between families so that any feelings of romantic love between the couple were rarely considered (Adler, 2002).

The concept of romantic love and romance evolved through the emergence of courtly love at the end of the twelfth century (Adler, 2002). Courtly love made the

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relationship with the idealised beloved into something mystical so that love becomes immortal and the object of love unattainable (Adler, 2002). Western Christian cultures male heirs had precedence over females so daughters were not in a position to inherit land and wealth, but their titles and family connections made them valuable assets in dynastic marriage markets. Upon marriage the bride moved out of her family home into the residence of her new husband or his family. Adler (2002) discusses the historical practice of women being passed at their wedding from the care of their fathers straight into the care of husbands. Giddens (1992) claims that in previous times 'all but a small proportion of women associated leaving home with getting married' (p.53) so brides have acceded to transition both of circumstance and location.

The beginning of the Industrial Revolution in Britain during the eighteenth century caused depletion of rural communities as people migrated into towns and cities in their search for work. This encouraged marriage on grounds of romantic love since couples were no longer contained within their familiar locality so choice of marriage partner could be personal rather than arranged. Giddens (1992) claims that 'Romantic love… drew upon ideals and incorporated elements of *amour passion,* while nevertheless becoming distinctive from both' (p.39). Otnes and Pleck (2003) summarise the emergence of romantic love as a reason for selecting a marriage partner saying;

> ' romantic love became the basis for selecting a marriage partner in Western Europe and in North America between the middle of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, because it seemed to fit with the emergence of individualism. It was at that time, then, that the ideal of perfect love became linked to romantic love, and romantic love became linked to marriage' (p.42).

Romantic love is an idealistic love that relies on sexual exclusiveness between both partners and on a belief that love is 'for ever' and a partner is the 'one and only' (Giddens 1992, p. 61). Romantic love is a result of attraction between couples whose relationship is derived from emotional involvement rather than from external social criteria and is likely to be co-dependent. This sort of marriage is organised around friendship or is used as a home base by both partners rather than marriage where the wife organised the home and looked after the male who worked within marital security and comfort (Giddens 1992).

Marriage and the wedding ceremony have become inexorably bound together but are not the same thing. Throughout this work differences are discussed and analysed. The sociologist Edward Westermarck (1936) described marriage as a social institution and defined it in terms of relationships being recognised by custom or law. He suggested that:

…the institution of marriage has most probably developed out of a primeval habit; that even in primitive times it was the habit for a man and a woman, or several women, to live together, to have sexual relations with each other, and to rear their offspring in common…This habit was sanctioned by custom, and afterwards by law, and was thus transformed into a social institution, (Westermarck, 1936, p.5).

Westermark's rationale for marriage does not discuss love within marriage and suggests that marriage as a legal bond between a man and woman would provide sex and procreation, care of children, division of tasks between housekeeper and provider and possibly mutual companionship. Westermark's (1936) work goes on to discuss 'free love' superseding marriage so that marriage would no longer bind and unite family life to the extent that family life would disintegrate and eventually cease. Relaxation in attitudes toward morality and chastity during the last decades of the

twentieth century resulted in couples being increasingly likely to enter marriage after a period of cohabitation and possibly after the birth of children. To a greater extent, modern weddings have become subsequent ceremonies following previous divorce of one or both partners. Modern attitudes towards the durability of marriage have altered so that where it was once considered a lifelong commitment it is now more likely to be temporary. Giddens (1992) discusses traditional inequalities between male and female sexuality where it was considered acceptable for men to engage in numerous sexual encounters before marriage this was not the case for women. Giddens (1992) claims that, 'For most men, romantic love stands in tension with the imperatives of seduction' (pp59 – 60). A woman was expected to remain 'virtuous', that is, she protected her virginity until marriage. Any infidelity on the part of a married woman was not tolerated while a husband's adultery would be frowned on but accepted (Gibson, 1994). It was not until the married women's property acts of 1870 and 1882 that women were allowed to retain goods and assets brought into the marriage or acquired during marriage and they were finally not considered property of their husband (Doepke and Tertilt, 2008).

Westermark's (1936) concerns about the durability of marriage have been partially reinforced as modern attitudes toward the permanence of marriage have altered. Where it was once considered a lifelong commitment, modern marriages are more likely to be temporary and divorce statistics increasingly appear to endorse some of Westermarck's concerns re-enforcing Giddens (1992) claims that modern relationships are more likely to be based on 'special relationship' rather than the singular 'special person' (p.62). The British Office for National Statistics registered the total number of marriages in 1934, two years prior to Westermarck's publication, as 342,307 while between 2004 and 2006 the number of marriages conducted in

England and Wales had reduced to 236,980. There were 123,562 divorces between 2004 and 2006 suggesting that the numbers of failing marriages is almost half (Great Britain, 2005). While marriage is no longer considered obligatory and numbers of weddings are in decline, it continues as a robust option although statistics do not identify first and subsequent weddings. The Christian Church did not acknowledge divorce and permission for dissolution of a marriage was only granted under exceptional circumstances. The common Christian marriage service states, 'Those who God has joined together let no man put asunder' (taken from Matthew 19: 4-6). Historical arranged marriages made no provision for separation of couples because too much money and property were tied up in the arrangements so the only escape from an unhappy liaison was the death of a partner.

The wedding ceremony is a rite of passage and an occasion to mark transition from one situation to another and as such it has historically been celebrated as special. Weddings conspicuously provide a visual banquet and ample writing and portrayals have described development of styles, fashions and customs. Available information specific to Christian British and North American wedding ceremonies is so considerable that inclusion of alternative documented cultural information other than the development of civil ceremonies within Christian communities would prove too unwieldy for the nature of this dissertation. Rituals and traditions associated with Christian and civil wedding ceremonies within Christian communities are described and discussed as common elements of ceremonies throughout the work.

Discussing the reason for growth of 'modern' traditions during the nineteenth century, Hobsbawn and Ranger (1983) state that generation of traditions for political or social reasons reflected the profound and rapid social transformations of the time. Changing social groups and environments necessitated new devices to ensure or

communicate social identity and cohesion (p.263). While the presentation of wedding style would indicate social or economic differences, the white wedding ceremony was available to all social classes. The wedding increasingly grew into an event where couples could choose who to invite to their celebration. They could dress up in unfamiliar but very special clothes with the only tacit rule being that no woman other than the bride should wear white. Dress codes became increasingly standardised with potential for individual interpretation so, like uniforms, they afford pageant.

Weddings have proved to be increasingly popular spectacles and sociologist Chrys Ingraham (1999) has identified more than 350 films with either 'bride' or wedding in the title produced after 1890 (pp177-183). A worldwide audience of more than 750 million people watched the wedding of Prince Charles to Lady Diana Spencer in 1981 (Malcolm, 1999). The occasion of a spectacular wedding, especially a wedding involving rich and famous stars or major British royals creates significant public interest encouraged by the media. Organising and supplying modern weddings has become big and lucrative business. The modern Western Christian ceremony has proved so visually successful that luminary weddings, television soap weddings and blockbuster film weddings (e.g. *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, 2002) are guaranteed substantial audience figures. A plethora of gossip magazines, the most familiar being *Hello* (first published 1988) and *O.K.* (first published 1993) were launched to provide gossip and photographs of celebrities to satisfy increasing public curiosity with regard to celebrity lifestyle. Wedding photographs of popular stars and celebrities made their ceremonies and style of wedding visually accessible to the public and as celebrity weddings became more lavish, so did the weddings of adoring fans. The celebrity style lavish wedding is increasing seen as a right for all in Western Christian societies, afforded by all but the poorest or those individuals who elect not to have a lavish

wedding. Illouz (1997) suggests that as consumption has become more democratised through increased salaries and access to finance, the luxurious wedding has become normal for middle and working classes (p.73). In an article for the *Daily Telegraph,* Wallop (2008) article claims that a modern British Christian wedding is now likely to cost in excess of £20,000. The suggestion is that visible spending is a successful way to communicate wealth and a wedding is an ideal occasion for excessive spending so establishing social prestige.

Paintings, photographs and sculptural works made by Christian and Jewish British, European and North American artists and photographers are used throughout this work to typify popular conventional interpretations of events or emotions relevant to the wedding ceremony. Certain works are examined and analysed in context of mood and social attitudes to include geographical location and social class. Images of the wedding effectively exemplify fashionable ideals and fantasies and illustrate the significance of symbolism in the wedding ceremony at a particular time and place. The illustrations are primarily of selected available images representing contemporary fashionable ideals of style, fashion or tenet along with private photographs or portraits illustrating adaptations and dilutions of current influential trends. The illustrations essentially represent archetypal contemporary interpretations of traditions and customs or wedding fashions or style aspirations. The visual representations of married couples rather than marrying couples illustrate characterisations of living together as a couple after the fuss and clamour of the wedding ceremony. Photographs and paintings are used throughout the work to convey messages by focusing on mood, ambience, place, location and time, behaviour and performance, accessories and accoutrements, fashion, style and taste.

Paintings or photographs of the wedding ceremony at whatever social level exemplify the financial outlay and time planning involved in organising the event. Otnes and Pleck (2003) claim that wedding photographs now serve to preserve the magic of the wedding day rather than indicating status and formality while Frosh (2003) claims that categorised image types act as templates for the creation of similar images that respond to public expectation. Strano (2006) suggests that 'photographic technology aids the process of ritualising memory by enabling formalized depictions of the past that perpetuate social groups and values' (p.34). Strano (2006) goes on to suggest that when seen as a performance the wedding ceremony reinforces social sanction. Wedding photographs do record the dream but this is often linked to status and exhibition. The wedding ceremony incorporates ritualised performances that include dressing up, declaration of vows, cutting a cake and while these activities are all open to some degree of individual interpretation, the actions heighten the perception of compliance. Photographs provide memorabilia of each couples personal show. Wedding photography also provides a lucrative source of income for photographers to the extent that feminist photographer Jo Spence said of the Hampstead weddings she photographed as a high street photographer, ' they were fabulous… I would do the expected lovey-dovey stuff and the standard groups that I'd watched other photographers doing outside registry offices' (Spence, 1988, pp 43 – 44). While her opinions on marriage were cynical she needed to earn a living and wedding photography provided her with money. ' For many women, their wedding day is one of life's most spectacular events, often staged in order for the woman to be dressed up, looked at and photographed. For photographers, wedding pictures are probably the most routine job, referred to as good money-spinners' (Spence 1988, p.28). Spence (1988) goes on to describe how the wedding couple wanted

'themselves to be as idealised as possible' (p.44). Although a confirmed feminist, Spence appreciated the fiscal and marketing values of wedding photography. Otnes and Pleck (2003) describe one groom's greatest hope that the wedding photographer 'would make his celebrity public as a shining exemplar of the perfect wedding' (p.105). Having superseded painting as a method of visually recording, photography remains the foundation of visual record; itself having become so ritualised that staged groups and posed photographs are accepted as natural, but video recordings increasingly support photography. Video is more informal and immediate and appeals to a younger, more urbane audience. The need to be seen as significant and fashionable has encouraged an increasing number of couples to publish personal wedding photographs and sections of wedding videos onto popular and accessible websites. Recent desire for recognition as celebrity has encouraged circulation of personal wedding images as public property in the style of popular stars. Despite growing incidences of this, examples of vernacularism have not been widely included in this work since the essential focus is on wedding idealism.

Customs and traditions associated with the Christian wedding have developed from ancient rituals (e.g. wedding rings) and superstitions (presence of bridesmaids) or have originated from more recent behaviour, beliefs and customs. When discussing the invention of modern traditions, Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983 pp.305 - 306) suggest that many practices and modes of behaviour were 'adaptations, specialisations or conquests of practices originally initiated by the higher social strata' and that many practices filtered socially downwards and while they were transformed, their historical origins remained. The assimilation of cultural practices developed among the mass public, such as styles within music and fashionable dress, became increasingly evident throughout the twentieth century. Greater egalitarianism allowed

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influences to percolate through all levels of society, moving up as well as down. The adoption and adaptation of customs and practises has been integral to the development of the formality, symbolism and ritual embodied within the Christian wedding ceremony so is selectively included in this work. New wedding customs develop to cater for evolving social situations and changes in family structures. One example of new custom described by Otnes and Pleck (2003) hails from Kansas City, USA and is directed at couples with children from previous relationships who want to celebrate their subsequent marriage. The bride and groom and the children of both are collectively presented with a special 'Family Medallion' at the wedding ceremony. The authors comment that Internet sales of the medallion are proving buoyant and popular among American families.

While the evolution of customs and conventions can be investigated and related to ceremonial modifications, changes in attitudes to marriage are more difficult to define. Community changes brought about by geographic and social migration, economic advancement and education opportunities are documented by Harvie et al (1970) in their descriptions of social change in England and Wales during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Industrial Revolution in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth century and two World Wars during the twentieth century contributed to modifications and alterations within traditional gender roles in home and workplace. Relating this to the married state, relaxation of laws pertaining to divorce during the twentieth century (Divorce Reform Act 1969) resulted in an escalation of divorce petitions. Statistical information communicating fluctuating numbers of marriages and their sustainability, ages of couples, employment, social status, ethnicity and location is collected by British government agencies so comparisons of figures over the last century are readily available. It seems that

modifications in lifestyle, wider employment opportunities and more catholic gender perceptions have all contributed to changes in beliefs regarding the position and importance of marriage and the wedding. Current comment and information about changes in social behaviour and lifestyles can be gleaned from newspapers and popular journals and is likely to reflect contemporary changes in belief and attitudes toward the wedding.

Changing attitudes toward the Christian wedding ceremony is demonstrated by its currently increasing importance as a vehicle for display of flamboyant wealth and for selling ever-greater ranges of specialised consumer goods such as cake-toppers, special 'hen' and 'stag' party fancy dress, bridal accessories and jewellery, decorations, cards and gifts. In ceremoniously uniting a couple in marriage, the wedding can also serve multifarious social functions by signifying the wealth and taste and style of the couple and their status within their community. In dynastic marriages a flamboyant ceremony publicly endorsed rank and estate and this has transmuted in recent years to imply social aspiration and consumerism. A lavish prominent wedding is no longer the prerogative of the ruling classes but is increasingly likely to reflect modern media idolisation of celebrity culture such as the 'celebrity style' wedding of television star Billie Piper in 2008. Billie Piper is a successful British actress probably best known for her female lead in the television series *Dr. Who*. The occasion of her second wedding in January 2008 caused a short-lived media furore among the popular tabloids. Front-page publicity of her forthcoming wedding followed by pages of photographs of the event were arguably out of proportion to her fame. Throughout this work, examples of modern consumer practice and reference to the effects of consumerism on the staging of the ceremony and expectations of the couple, particularly the bride are described and compared.

Modern admiration for and adoption of those celebrity style weddings that promote elaborate and ostentatious exhibitionism reflect contemporary attitudes toward luminary status. The opportunity to participate as a principal in a public display gained desirability during the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century. Otnes and Pleck (2003) claim that; 'Celebrity culture reaches down and affects virtually every wedding, even those where the bride does not explicitly buy a dress like Jennifer Aniston's or Catherine Zeta-Jones's' (p. 132). They go on to describe the wedding couple as stars of their own show, implying that the modern wedding ceremony is a lavish performance allowing couples their own celebrity occasion. Rojek (2001) argues that 'consumers do not simply nourish wants for the commodity; they routinely construct the façade of embodiment in order to be desired by the abstracted mass' (p. 187). Examples of this are the 'Elvis' or 'Kylie' or 'Madonna' style weddings where one or both of the couple dress up as named stars. Campbell (1998) further discusses how consumer 'wants' can be perceived as 'needs' because necessity and desires are relative and subjective and while certain 'needs' might not be vital to life, they are necessary for social status and prestige (p.240). The modern bride and groom want a complete celebrity wedding production to ensure they are the stars for the duration of their celebration, however bizarre their style and at whatever cost. Celebrity and consumerism are linked within the work with regard to the wedding ceremony in that celebrity style has become representative of lavish and flamboyant consumerist excess. Egalitarian presentation of signs and symbols of opulence and exhibitionism afford opportunity for vicarious celebrity status for the duration of the wedding. The wedding business has become an overwhelming phenomenon that takes over the wedding through exploiting fears of parsimony and

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lack of style as well as ensuring that wedding arrangements have become increasingly elaborate.

Modern facets of the Christian and civil wedding are described and analysed throughout the thesis relating profligate consumerism to modern desires and aspirations and reflecting the demise of spiritual and religious belief. The tradition of bridal white is traced from the white wedding of Queen Victoria. Victoria's wedding did not give birth to romantic consumer culture but the publicity associated with the royal wedding created awareness of patrician style and desire to imitate it.

The emphasis of this thesis is on the Christian form of wedding ceremony interpreted and adapted from Old and New Testament biblical writing within the framework of Christian heterosexual relationships. The thesis also investigates the demise of this form of wedding ceremony throughout the twentieth century and explores and analyses reasons for this through examination of varying and changing social attitudes toward the institution of marriage and changes of gender roles in marriage. A chapter is given over to examination and analysis of same-sex ceremonies but because these are considered 'civil ceremonies' rather than 'marriages' in the UK and those European countries and states of America where same sex relationships are recognised, such liaisons are not included within the descriptions of marriage or the wedding ceremony within this work unless specified. Descriptions and information relating to marriage and the wedding ceremony refers exclusively to heterosexual couples except where the work explicitly refers to same sex relationships. The work does not venture into religious wedding ceremonies outside Christianity, nor does it consider mixed religion weddings. Where references are made to civil ceremonies within the UK and North America discussion is limited to marriages of Christian couples outside Christian churches. The author

acknowledges that the Christian ceremony with its ancient and modern traditions and customs is not universal but this is the society inhabited by and therefore most familiar to the author so this work is concerned only with the wedding ceremonies of Christian couples.

 Research methodologies

The focus of this research primarily examines developments in the secularised contemporary western wedding ceremony from relatively small religious family or community celebrations in Victorian Britain to modern lavish and enormously expensive modern celebrations. Visualisations of the wedding ceremony have been described and images analysed using historical research and image analysis based on methodologies devised by art historian Winkelmann (1717-68) and expanded by Panofsky (1892-1968) to time, location and place within contemporary class systems and they applied the information with consideration of realism, idealism, customs, cultures and symbolic representations (Fernie, 1998). Images within this work are analysed with regard to what they represent and why and what is the significance of the individuals and articles and locations within the images at the time they were photographed or painted. Further images are included as visual examples to substantiate information and claims within the text, the images act as visual references. Examples of social analyses is provided by social historians Otnes and Pleck (2003) and visual analysis of modern images is provided by photographers and philosophers Frosh (2003) and Strano (2006). Reference to gender roles in society relating to marriage and the wedding ceremony focuses primarily on the duties, dreams and expectations of the bride at her wedding and within her subsequent marriage and the way that women's status has influenced the ceremony. Historical

and contemporary gender roles within marriage and the wedding ceremony are examined using social information provided by Giddens (1998) and Otnes and Pleck (2003) in context the bride's role in planning and participation at the ceremony and her subsequent role within marriage in terms of attitudes toward women in the home and workplace, changes within these and causes of change. The thesis concentrates almost exclusively on heterosexuality in marriage and weddings except Chapter 6 where research into same sex civil ceremonies is analysed and discussed.

Visual records of weddings for reasons of proof, posterity, memorial or tribute have become an increasingly important aspect of any ceremony. Art historian and philosopher Graham (1997) uses photography to illustrate how images can be variously interpreted even without complete provenance. All relevant sources of information (comparisons, locations, race, religion etc.) to place images in the context of time, location and class structures that produced them are used to analyse illustrations using Panofsky's (1955) and Graham's (1997) methodologies in conjunction with text. In analysing and discussing illustrations used in this work the principles of analysing them to discover contemporary attitudes toward class, gender, aspirations, marriage and the wedding ceremony.

Graham (1997) claims that images are always open to exegesis, 'But they [people] also suppose that great artists do not merely copy what they see, and expect them to offer a personal "interpretation". It is in this "interpretation" that many people think the art lies' (p.88). The artist, sculptor, weaver or photographer can direct perception to see what otherwise might be obscure, or not an immediately obvious representation. The photographer in particular can present a subject honestly and without manipulation yet in such a way to make it new and distinctive. Graham (1997), Frosh (2003) and Strano (2006) discuss the photographers role in interpreting

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the outcome of a photograph by looking at the subject from numerous angles, using different exposures and producing the final works on a variety of different papers. The photograph could be black and white in a world of colour. '…in looking at a black and white photograph, we are either *not* looking at a copy of whatever is represented, or that the very idea of a 'copy' is itself uncertain' (Graham, 1997, p.88). Frosh (2003) interprets… 'a selected category of "romantic" stock images and its relationship, broadly speaking, to cultural stereotypes' (p.27). The cultural significance of images can be interpreted by looking at images in terms of style, content and activity and rank of subject(s). Frosh (2003) goes on to suggest that formulaic photographs are popularly used to present approved predictable images. As well as practitioners constructing myth and fantasy around the bridal couple the couple themselves participate in a dream of glamour and largesse through embracing the unfamiliar as natural.

Historical information with regard to the heterosexual Christian wedding is discussed by Adler (2002), Baker (1997), Brooke (2004), Duby (1994) and Goody (1983) who all describe the evolvement and development of societies and communities within societies through time, and male and female roles within relationships and marriage in historical contexts. Harvie et al (1970) and Golby (1986) have been used to describe and discuss the conditions for working class employees during the late years of the industrial revolution and also the development and rise of engineers and entrepreneurs to middle class status. They also refer to living, working and employment conditions and gender roles within class systems.

Analysis of critical and social theory is provided by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995), Giddens (1992) and Walter (1998) contributing to comment on gender identity relevant to changing attitudes to the roles of women in the family,

employment and in societies. Within this work their theories have been applied to analyse the female role within marriage.

The wedding ceremony is heralded as a rite of passage, a visual and behavioural representation of beliefs and attitudes toward the ceremonial events and changing attitudes toward Christianity and religious practice. As religious practice diminished through the twentieth century and the ceremony increasingly provided occasion for a lavish party, the thesis questions beliefs and attitudes toward commitment within marriage and looks into the wedding being regarded as opportunity for performance and exhibitionism and commercial opportunism.

1.2 Introduction to each chapter

Chapter two examines how the conspicuous wedding dress has become representative of the modern wedding by examining how the modern wedding ceremony encompasses and replicates numerous traditions, customs and superstitious beliefs, and reasons why these remain desirable. The chapter examines how these have evolved and analyses how they relate to modern lifestyles and the modern ceremony.

The most recognisable modern manifestation of a wedding ceremony is the white wedding dress. This garment has contemporarily become one of the most important items of the ceremony being subject to acute concern by the prospective bride desirous to appear at her most attractive and modish and intense speculation by prospective guests and onlookers desirous to know how the bride will present herself for this special occasion.

The term 'white wedding' has become representative of a traditional wedding yet the special white dress is a relatively recent phenomenon. Wedding white is discussed within this work in relation to Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1983) definitions

of tradition, custom and 'invented tradition'. Because the white wedding transcends living memory it is commonly believed to derive from ancient custom, yet this is not the case. The custom of the white wedding can be likened to Hobsbawm's (1983) examples of popular public ceremonial surrounding nineteenth century monarchy in that it is a relatively newly instituted tradition when compared with ancient tradition. The white wedding dress was not an elitist object as any woman regardless of class could aspire to wearing a white wedding dress, and it focused attention on the bride. The white dress provided recognition of a bride and championed female visual superiority on her wedding day.

This chapter traces the emergence in popularity of white wedding dresses and it analyses the probable reasons for its adoption throughout Britain, North America and through most Christian countries and many European Jewish communities. The chapter further identifies superstitions and symbols exclusive to the wedding ceremony. Presentation and appearance at the wedding ceremony have mostly taken over from traditional religious functions so that the ceremony has become more secularised. The white wedding dress is symbolic of both traditional and modern values and ideologies and its conspicuous singularity ensures the bride is distinctive. White has endured as bridal preference but its allegorical representation of female virginity based on Christian symbolism is no longer widely acknowledged and its modern symbolic purpose is to distinguish the bride as the principle woman at the ceremony.

Chapter 3 examines the development and growth of celebrity culture through television, film, music and sport during the twentieth into the twenty-first centuries and goes on to analyse and discuss how aspects of celebrity behaviour and culture have infiltrated and influenced the modern wedding making the bride and groom

celebrities at their own ceremony. Selected celebrity and celebrity style weddings are described and discussed relating to modern wedding fashions. The chapter also examines the impact of celebrity inspired consumerism and merchandise on the wedding tracing changes in the ways the wedding ceremony is perceived and presented. The chapter draws on Campbell's (1997) theories of perceived need and want to determine how wants have been commercially identified and promoted as needs.

Evans and Hesmondhalgh (2005) claim that celebrity has become a powerful feature of modern culture, 'driving the media ideologically and economically' (p.2). By the late twentieth century a proliferation of magazines emerged to report primarily on the behaviour, tastes, dress and lifestyles of current celebrity figures. Luminaries and modern icons are now selected from areas of popular music, sport, acting and performance as well as more traditional areas of commerce, military and royalty. Rojek (2001) claims that ' mass-media representation is the key principle in the formation of celebrity culture' (p. 13). Evans and Hesmondhalgh (2005) further state that celebrities convey, 'directly or indirectly, particular social values, such as the meaning of work and achievement, and definitions of sexual and gendered identity' (p.2). A major attraction of celebrities is that they embody elements of fashionable collective desire and appeal. Ewen (1988) professes concern with objects being increasingly less concerned with rarity and quality and more concerned with aesthetic appeal, and this standard could easily correlate to the rise in popular celebrity where outward appearance and ostentatious lifestyle become the means to provoke favourable response.

Modern celebrities need publicity to ensure enduring prominence so excesses in behaviour and spending are ways they are able to effect public notice. Therefore,

the occasion of an opulent wedding is an ideal opportunity to maximise press promotion. Rojek (2001) claims 'It is easy to see why mainstream celebrities feed the everyday world with honorific standards of attraction that encourage people to emulate them, which helps to cement and unify society' (p.15). Fans and followers striving to emulate the style and behaviour of stars can view their wedding as an ideal occasion for fashionable immoderation and lavishness in the style of celebrity, even within personal cost constraints. Imitation of a particular star's wedding allows a fan to wholly equate with their idol in respect of adoration and status for the duration of their day. A couple or a bride may or may not identify completely with a particular celebrity, but reproducing a version of the celebrity's media acclaimed style imparts an impression of reflected stardom.

Otnes and Pleck (2003) examine in detail the allure of the fashionable lavish wedding and particularly the way it is marketed at the female consumer. The occasion of the wedding has become so paramount that considerations of ensuing married life can easily become secondary to the moment, anticipation of a successful and memorable day being foremost rather than an inception for potential changes in life style. Planning a celebrity inspired wedding incorporates escalating expenses and vast time commitment, elevating every bride to local prominence.

Throughout the twentieth century civil wedding ceremonies gained popularity and licenses were increasingly allocated to country houses, hotels, historic buildings and public houses. Couples could marry in the castles and homes of landed gentry if they chose and as desire for opulence, glamour and recognition within celebrity culture flourished and replaced religious dogma, couples could exercise their choice of where to marry and in what style. Being able to select any appropriate legal venue

encouraged romantic fancy, couples could live the life of the rich and famous and be stars of their own event for a day, they could visualise themselves as celebrities.

The business of wedding planning and organisation and businesses dedicated to wedding promotion are described and analysed in chapter 4. Anticipation of an expensive and spectacular celebrity-type wedding could arguably act as incentive to modern couples to marry in an age where co-habitation is an acceptable alternative to marriage. The early twenty-first century no longer demands that couples marry yet wedding business has grown into a vast speciality market catering for multifarious variations on the wedding theme. Commerce has influenced and affected modern wedding style stimulated by consumer demand for celebrity exhibition. The Christian wedding was traditionally a religious ceremony followed by a celebratory party but business aspects of wedding planning and diminishing church attendance and religious service participation have all but subsumed spiritual aspects of the civil wedding ceremony. Sociologist Colin Campbell (1987) explains consumerism linked with romance is based on the belief that goods and products purchased being considered out of the ordinary and special. Campbell attributes the connection of consumerism and romance to the powers of magazine and television advertising where potential customers are bombarded with images of desirable objects. He explains that the purpose behind the exotic, imaginative and idealized images portrayed in advertisements is to induce the consumer to buy the services or products featured (Campbell, 1997, pp.1-2).

Fashionable white weddings incorporating all the necessary decorations and adornments have become such big business that professional organisers and planners are regularly hired by couples to devise ever greater flights of fancy and imaginative design to ensure the event remains memorable, entertaining and competitive. An

article in The *Daily Mail* newspaper (2007) claims that competition among modern brides to make guests believe that their wedding was the best they had attended has increased spending on the average ceremony to £60 per minute. Businesses concurring to the desires and expectations of couples demanding increasing flamboyance and individuality have increased substantially in recent years. Expenditure has escalated to the extent that many couples elect to begin married life in considerable debt rather than deny themselves a fashionable wedding. By 2008 the cost of a modern British wedding had soared to more than £20,000 (Wallop, 2008). The article claims that, 'Too many couples spend a fortune trying to ape celebrities' and 'There's no doubt that big celebrity events inspire Britain's brides to think about creating unforgettable weddings where they can be the star for the day'. In 1925 sociologist and economist Thorstein Veblen wrote of excess consumption, ' The consumption of luxuries, in the true sense, is a consumption directed to the comfort of the consumer himself, and is, therefore, the mark of the master' (p.33). This suggests that goods or services associated with luxury or are special because of product or unusual occasion are also symbolic of status. While not referring directly to the wedding ceremony, Veblen (1925) goes on to state,'

> In the giving of costly entertainments other motives, of a more genial kind, are
> of course present. The custom of festive gatherings probably originated in
> motives of conviviality and religion: these motives are also present in the later
> development, but they do not continue to be the sole motives. The latter-day
> leisure class festivities and entertainments may continue in some slight degree
> to serve the religious need and in a higher degree the needs of recreation and
> conviviality, but they also serve an invidious purpose;…But the economic
> effect of these social amenities is not therefore lessened, either in the vicarious

consumption of goods or in the exhibition of difficult and costly achievements in etiquette (p.35).

In relation to the Christian wedding ceremony this adequately describes the dwindling influence of religion and the increasing power of conspicuous spending and exhibition in relation to perceived status. Discussion of consumption within this chapter will consider the discourses associated with need as satisfaction and want as in desire defined by Colin Campbell (1998). A big, showy wedding might be desirable for modern couples but it is not necessary. Campbell (1987) identified the powers of advertising as the means to make the consumer aware of goods and services but once consumers are aware of availability, advertising needs to promote consumption and persuade couples to realise desires at any cost. The visual allure of the modern exhibitionist wedding is discussed along with how the celebrity style ostentatious ceremony appears to influence notions of marriage. The chapter discusses and analyses what is expected within a modern fashionable wedding, what has developed from accessory to necessity, what promotes satisfaction and what is now needed to ensure a feel-good occasion. Development of the associated business that advertises and promotes the luxurious style of weddings described and discussed by Otnes and Pleck (2003) and Ingraham (1999) are referred to throughout the chapter. Boden (2003) claims that more and more new products will not provide satisfaction for the consumer chasing illusion and a proliferation of material goods does not provide gratification but on the other hand couples want to believe in the magic conjured up by a lavish and materialistic wedding (Otnes and Pleck, 2003). The chapter analyses gender perceptions of the wedding and marriage and how these have been developed and fostered by industries anxious to exploit whimsy and sell a

packaged product. It specifies a variety of modern wedding choices, from the formulaic and highly regulated and regimented to personal and individual styles.

Modern Christian couples would probably cite love as the greatest and most important reason for marriage yet such a life-changing act should rely on so enigmatic, indeterminate and irrational emotion defies rational belief.

Chapter Five researches the influences and effects of love providing historical and contemporary visual and recorded examples of love describing how love is currently and previously had been portrayed, expressed and depicted. The chapter is concerned primarily with heterosexual love and relationships since acknowledgement of homosexual love and relationships will be discussed in a following chapter.

Couples need not marry to provide a public declaration of their love yet many eventually marry and most marriages are public and personal declarations of love liaison. Love was seldom considered in historical dynastic marriages arrange for purposes of property and inheritance, yet the practise persisted and the marriages endured. Love is intrinsically difficult to explain or resolve; visual and inscribed examples or interpretations attempt to portray the diversity and complexity of this fragile and volatile emotional condition through numerous definitions, and these are liable to change through time, place, class and contemporary vagary. The power and effects of love have always been recognised but because of it's transitory and changing state it has been simultaneously exalted and derided, idolised and distrusted. Variants and variations of love and its vicissitudes suggested by social scientists Beck and Beck-Gernshiem (1995) are included throughout the chapter and the work of sociologist Giddens (1992) is used to examine love, sex and emotional equalities in modern relationships while writing by Illouz (1997) and by Ingraham (1999) are further used to discuss and describe modern romantic weddings.

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The chapter gives examples of historical female subordination within Christian marriage using examples provided by Seidel (1997) and Gibson (1994) with further discussion regarding inequality between the sexes provided by Walter (1998) and Lewis (2001). The chapter compares and discusses various definitions of love and provides visual and written examples and expressions of love and it investigates representations of love as reasons for marriage.

The breakdown of love and marriages resulting in divorce escalated during the twentieth century, especially after the Divorce Reform Act (1969) that allowed 'irretrievable breakdown of marriage' as grounds for divorce after a three-year separation, later reduced to one year by the 1984 'Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act' (Great Britain, 2008). Twenty-first century Christian Church doctrine recognises the legality of divorce but the Roman Catholic Church still refuses to marry couples where one or both partners have a living ex-spouse while Church of England priests are allowed to marry divorcees at their own discretion (Robinson, 2006). Analysis of what makes a modern romantic wedding along with the place of love in marriage and representations of love appropriate to wedding symbolism supports the relevance of a chapter dedicated to love within this work.

Chapter Six follows recent formal recognition of civil partnership between both ordinary and celebrity same sex couples comparing analogous ceremonies and relationships. Examples of Civil Partnerships are described and discussed. The work traces and examines the evolution of same sex relationships through Christian tenet incorporated in British law using information gathered primarily from homosexual information websites and British government statistical information. Further information regarding the history of homosexuality in Christian communities has been gathered from the writings of Auchmuty (2004), Baird and Rosenbaum (1997),

Boswell (1981) and Eskridge (1996) while further discussion about developments in same sex civil partnership ceremonies have relied on descriptions by Wilkinson and Kitzinger (2004 and 2005) and various websites. Examples of celebrity civil partnership ceremonies are discussed and described along with some discussion on changing tolerances toward same sex relationships in contemporary societies.

Throughout Christian history same-sex relationships were a religious anathema and were so profoundly unlawful that homosexual males were severely punished should their sexual preferences be discovered. It was only in 1861 that the death sentence for homosexual acts between males was abolished although by 1897 an English edition of Havelock Ellis and John Addington's *Sexual Inversion* (anon 1, 2006) proclaimed homosexuality an inborn and unchangeable condition rather than a disease or a criminal state.

Government statistics inform that marriages in England and Wales fell by 13.2% between 2004 and 2006 (Great Britain, 2009). Many modern couples choose to cohabit and bring up children together without marriage yet marriage is still considered a consummate commitment. Many cohabiting couples elect to seal their relationship through eventual marriage since cohabitation does not provide any legal protection to either party in the event of death of one partner or dissolution of the relationship. No matter how long couples might have cohabited any property division is based purely on financial contributions without any consideration for disposing of assets on a fairness basis. This has proved problematic in recent years for same sex couples who can legally live together but not legally marry so even long standing relationships are not recognised within the law (Great Britain, 2005).

As recently as 1967 century same sex relationships between adult males were decriminalised although conspicuous same sex liaisons remained socially

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inadmissible. Legislation in 1996 recognised same sex partnerships in pension

schemes and in 1997 legislation recognised same sex partnerships for immigration.

Homosexuality was no longer illegal but centuries of religious intolerance was

ingrained in communities and societies so the concept of legalising same sex

relationships celebrated by a ceremony akin to a wedding was a radical change in

Western Christian attitudes towards homosexuality and marriage.

   Civil same sex ceremonies of commitment were legislated in December 2005

in England following the precedent of Holland in 2001, Belgium in 2003, Canada in

2004 and Spain in 2005 (Bishop Buckley 2, 2006). British ceremonies provided the

same legal and civil equalities to same sex couples as marriage does for heterosexuals

but civil partnerships cannot be celebrated within a Christian church and, in Britain,

are not called 'marriages'. The actual civil ceremony is akin to a heterosexual civil

ceremony without any religious content or influence and provided this is performed in

the presence of a legal registrar then it accommodates all the fiscal and social benefits

of marriage.

   The commercial opportunities proffered by this new, alternative customer saw

businesses appearing almost overnight clamouring to cater for a potentially highly

lucrative specialist consumer market. A number of high profile celebrities publicly

celebrated civil partnership ceremonies setting style standards in a period of

ostentatious show so myriad business opportunities for commodities targeted toward

'pink' weddings opened up.

   Civil ceremonies between same sex couples are based on heterosexual civil

ceremonies and current wedding fashion dictates extravagance and flamboyance so

provides a wide variety of business opportunities. While presentations of wedding

ceremonies follows conventions, sanctified same sex partnerships are recent

phenomena and indicate the greatest changes in Christian and social attitudes toward

the institution of marriage.   Statistics relating to longevity and failure of same sex

civil partnerships have not yet had time to trace reliable regular patterns. After

considerable media attention to legal ceremonies of a number of long-term same sex

celebrity partnerships, interest appears to have recently waned, or less celebrity civil

ceremonies between gay couples are making headlines. Divorce statistics with regard

to same-sex partnerships have yet to be collated but it is likely that the legal

separation of prominent celebrity same sex couples will provoke as much media

attention in future as that of high profile heterosexual couples such as The Prince and

Princess of Wales and McCartney – Mills McCartney.

Chapter 2

THE CONSPICUOUS WEDDING DRESS

2.1 A Historical background to the tradition of the white wedding dress

The day of a woman's wedding is probably the most memorable and important of her life. She is the conspicuous figure on the occasion of her wedding. It is a ceremony available to every age and kind of society. Such was the historical importance attributed to the occasion that visual evidence of ancient Roman wedding ceremonies survives along with numerous later paintings of Christian weddings. For the traditional heterosexual Christian couple, a huge difference in their lifestyle and status will take place. A new wife has customarily given up her family name and adopted the family name of her new husband. The status of the bride and groom change from two singles to one couple as they become joined through law. Couples find themselves legally contracted to support one another, historically for the rest of their lives until death separates them although in more recent years separation is more likely to be through divorce. From single state to marriage has historically been accepted as a significant change in social position for both bride and groom so the wedding ceremony incorporated particular rituals and conventions developed to signify and celebrate the momentousness of the occasion.

Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) suggest that repetition of certain customs performed in special situations leads to their acceptance as 'traditions'. They explain the differences between customs and traditions as 'traditions' being invariant practices while 'customs' can undergo some limited degree of change. 'It is the contrast between constant change and innovation of the modern world [custom] and the attempt to structure at least some parts of social life within it as unchanging and invariant [tradition]' (p.2). The formal Christian wedding ceremony includes a

number of formalisations and rituals linked to the past that have become established through repetition and continuation to eventually be accepted as 'wedding traditions'. Examples of this are the exchanging of wedding rings or the attendance of bridesmaids. There is no certain date regarding the use of marriage rings in Christian ceremonies but Bloch (1980) describes the custom of using marriage rings at Jewish weddings began in approximately the seventh century when it was used to signify the groom's declaration of betrothal. 'The ring was placed on the index finger of the bride's right hand, where it has prominent visibility' (p.31). Christian ceremonies were not formalised until the thirteenth century (Gratsch, 1985) but the custom of the bride wearing a wedding ring was adopted and recorded in contemporary paintings and art works although choice of the ring-wearing finger has alternated between right and left hand and the ring has at times been worn on the thumb. The modern custom of the bride and groom exchanging rings became established in the 1900s but did not become popular practice until the early 1940s (Ranger, no date).

Attendance of bridesmaids at the wedding ceremony is based on ancient custom. Legend (Alchin, 2008) claims that early Roman bridesmaids protected the bride from kidnappers or thieves as she travelled to the home of her groom while alternative legend proposes she would be accompanied by up to ten bridesmaids to protect her from evil spirits. Regardless of their role, the presence of bridesmaids accompanying the bride is apparently ancient custom. There is no ancient or modern legal requirement for either wedding rings or the attendance of bridesmaids but these symbols of the wedding have endured and remain popular. Further examples of customs and conventions acquiring symbolic significance is the ritual cutting of the wedding cake or guests throwing confetti over the newly married couple. Probably the most significant 'modern tradition' associated with the Christian wedding is the

bride's white wedding dress, a colour symbolic in Christian cultures of purity and of a boundary between two circumstances as well as of surrender and submission (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1966). The popular adoption of wedding white proclaimed a bride's virginity on her wedding day as well as symbolically suggesting her transition between youth and adulthood or innocence and experience. White is also the colour of 'passage' as used in rites of passage where changes take place such as initiation rites (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1966). White is a relatively modern wedding choice popularised after Queen Victoria elected to wear white for her wedding in 1840. The Queen's choice reflected her own Christian values and those of the era she lived in as her preference 'valued the ideal of female sexual purity and associated this trait with the colour white' (Otnes and Pleck, 2003, p.31). Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) claim that 'Sometimes new traditions could be readily grafted on old ones' (p.6), suggesting desire for ceremonial traditions, new, old or adapted from old to provide and establish conformity and unity and to accord formality to significant occasions. Until late in the twentieth century, a bride would customarily only wear white for a first wedding because of associations with virginity and purity. Even if a subsequent ceremony was after widowhood rather than divorce, stigmatised in Christian church doctrine, rules of wedding etiquette required that the bride should not wear white even if she wanted a 'traditional' wedding outfit. There was no law denying a bride her choice of white for a second or third wedding but such conduct would be unconventional and nonconformist. Otnes and Pleck (2003) suggest that wearing white for a subsequent wedding was not common accepted practice until the 1990s;

'Even the most conservative etiquette advisors …have caught up with the times, lifting the embargo on what these ceremonies are allowed to include. In the past, the list of forbidden elements in repeat weddings was quite long:… no white dress – especially not a long white one with a train. By the 1990s, the only restriction...was that the encore bride should not wear a veil' (p.252).

This implies that wedding white had become so established as standard that brides coveted the opportunity for distinguishing white to the extent that wearing bridal white for a subsequent wedding had become accepted practise through power of demand. The white wedding dress had become so familiar that wedding white was accepted as representative of a bride rather than indication of the bride's virginity.

2.2 The prestige and vagaries of the fashionable wedding dress

The woman at any Christian wedding dressed in white is immediately recognisable as the bride since modern custom dictates that no other female present should wear white. White wedding clothing has become a synecdoche of the wedding. Brides have always taken pleasure in agonising what to wear for their wedding with most modern brides opting for a mixture of lavish fashion and personal whimsy in a white or near white dress or outfit. The white wedding dress has become the embodiment of the wedding but wedding clothing has always been special. Brooke (1989) and Seidel (1993) proclaim the importance and value of cloth as a trade commodity back in medieval Britain and Europe. Cloth and clothing has historically been a way of outwardly proclaiming opulence and status and the occasion of a wedding offered greater opportunity for affluent individuals and families to proclaim their standing in society (Harvey, 1995). Traditional family law notably amplified encouragement of subordination of a wife's interest to that of her

husband (Scott, 2000) so her wedding day provided a unique opportunity for a woman's status to surpass that of her new spouse for the duration of the day.

While the Christian religious wedding service is written to a specific formula, social behaviour at a wedding loosely follows certain familiar conventions with opportunity for the principal couple to introduce some individuality within the ensuing celebrations. Wearing exclusive clothing or dictating the tenor of their reception at a formal wedding accords a degree of distinctiveness and personalises the occasion for every couple. For their wedding in 1999, popular celebrities Victoria Adams and David Beckham requested that guests dress only in black or white so they could colour coordinate their wedding reception (*Hello*, 1999). They both wore white for their private ceremony then changed into matching purple outfits where they could be distinctive and prominent at their ensuing party (*Hello*, 1999).

An original and exclusive wedding dress identifies the bride and makes her special and unique among the crowd, conspicuous above all others. Otnes and Pleck (2003) describe the wedding gown as 'the object brides mention most often as possessing sacred qualities' and go on to suggest that veils, wedding rings and photographs are regarded in the same manner (p. 82). The wedding veil is handed down from pagan Roman times when a bride and her female attendants would wear similar clothing and be veiled to disguise the bride from evil spirits on her wedding day. Wedding veils were certainly worn at ancient Jewish weddings as described in Genesis, 'And she took her veil and covered herself ' (Genesis 24;65) describing Rebecca veiling herself before her wedding. The practice of wearing a wedding veil has historically waxed and waned in Christian Europe until it was revived during the nineteenth century when it became associated with modesty and virtue. Fine, hand crafted lace is highly labour intensive and the manufacture of individual pieces based on traditional

regional designs is a slow laborious process occupying hours of intensive work by skilled weavers. Wearing an exclusive, exorbitantly expensive wedding veil served as a way of ostentatiously exhibiting a bride's family wealth as well as symbolically proclaiming her morality.

The fashion for wedding veils has continued into the twenty-first century. While the wedding veil is no longer particularly significant for the modern Christian bride who is more likely to regard a veil as an accessory rather than a symbolic object, many modern brides still opt for a wedding veil.

2.3 The white wedding dress

Aristocratic and highborn brides could historically aspire to the most valuable and expensive gold or silver cloth available (Herald, 1981) but it was Queen Victoria who established the fashion for the white wedding dress in Britain and subsequently among Christian nations and communities within the British Empire. She wore a white dress for her wedding in February 1840 and instituted a fashion that has endured into the twenty-first century. Queen Victoria's reign spanned over sixty years by which time the white wedding dress had become assimilated into wedding tradition. The Queen's choice of wedding dress style was simple and understated for a royal at that time. The daughter of Victoria's uncle and heir to King George IV, Princess Charlotte, had married less than two years before Victoria's ascendance wearing a silver gown, more usual for a member of British royalty but Victoria had good reason to dissociate herself from her Georgian predecessors. According to her comprehensive and detailed diaries (Woodham-Smith, 1972) she wanted to emphasise her pedigree, youth and wholesomeness as a new monarch intent on detaching herself from her disparate forebears. George IV and his brothers were libertines and debtors

and the new Queen needed to present a new perception of royalty to her subjects if

public esteem of royalty was to revive. The Queen and her ministers were aware of

the delicate balance between appropriate exhibition for a member of royalty and

sensitive circumspection in the use of public funds. As part of the royal marketing

scheme Victoria opted for a regal but unostentatious wedding ceremony.

Hayter, Sir George, 1840, *The Wedding Of Queen Victoria.* The Royal
Collection. Windsor. Permission of Her Majesty The Queen.

The painting of the royal wedding (illustrated) by Sir George Hayter portrays

the young queen wearing a fairly simple and uncluttered wedding dress made from

heavy satin with a deep flounce of Honiton lace round the neckline. The Honiton lace

industry, based in Devon, was floundering because the complicated and highly labour

intensive hand-made lace was hugely expensive at a time when imported lace from Brussels was considerably less costly. The Queen's choice of a British product was an enlightened patriotic gesture. The Queen declined to wear formal state garments appropriate to her status for her wedding, in part because she declared her wedding day an intimate occasion and also because the British government considered her husband socially inferior so they refused to allow him to hold any authoritative or powerful office. For her wedding day Victoria desired that her role as a bride supersede her role as Queen (Woodham-Smith, 1972). Victoria's choice of wedding gown was made in the knowledge of customs and symbolism associated with the wedding and with Christian symbolism, she was a practising Christian worshipper so would appreciate the significance of wearing a white gown. Her choice signified a new and fresh beginning and also disassociated her from the flamboyance of her forefathers.

Although this wedding was relatively plain and understated when compared to previous royal style, the Queen did wear diamond earrings and a diamond necklace and Prince Albert's wedding gift to her of a sapphire and diamond brooch. This combination of simplicity and opulence was assured to satisfy the court as well as the public. Twelve bridesmaids all selected for outstanding beauty attended the royal bride. They were dressed in gowns similar to that of the bride and all carried bouquets of white roses. The Queen elected to be married in the middle of the day so that she and her bridesmaids could be clearly seen by her subjects. The whole entourage was an effective example of positive image presentation. By providing a spectacular pageant to the crowds lining the streets, the Queen presented an image of an attentive and accessible monarch.

2.4 Background to Victoria's choice of a white wedding dress.

The beginning of the nineteenth century saw Britain going through a period of economic growth. France and much of mainland Europe had been ravaged by the Napoleonic war, Britain was victorious and powerful, her colonies were trading successfully and raw materials were being cheaply imported. The defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815 had left Britain the leading country in Europe. The growth of factories, mills and coalmines along with associated ports and railways resulted in migration from rural to urban industrial life. Harvie et al, (1970) document 'the complex and deep-seated changes in British society that resulted from the process known as 'industrialisation' (p.11). They explain that physically industrialisation made it possible to travel distances inexpensively and it allowed some social migration through the British class system but it also produced widespread misery through economic exploitation of the workers (p.11). Golby (1986) evidencing social migration uses an article by Samuel Smiles (1859) that claims 'The instances of men in this country who, by dint of persevering application and energy, have raised themselves from the humblest ranks of industry to eminent positions of usefulness and influence in society…' (p. 110). Golby (1986) goes on to example the rise of the late Joseph Brotherton who rose from lowly factory boy to Member of Parliament for Salford. Despite such seeming opportunities the new labouring population was accommodated in appalling slum conditions in the cheap and shoddy houses built near to their workplaces. The labouring poor generally earned paltry wages while living in appalling squalor and working long hours in harsh and dangerous conditions while the owners of the mills, mines and factories could afford to build extravagant family homes in the countryside. Author Charles Dickens (1812 – 70) centred much of his writing on social injustices and his descriptions of the hardships and privations

suffered by labouring classes in his novel *Hard Times* (1854) formed an indictment of the forces shaping Victorian society. The factory owners of Dickens' novel concern themselves only with profit without any consideration of the human needs of the workforce. Those people who remained working on the land found that their common rights were taken from them resulting in rich landowners owning more of the land while smallholders were reduced to the state of landless labourers (Thompson, 1970). Discussing more subtle effects of industrialisation, Harvie et al (1970) claim that;

> ' Contemporary thinkers maintained that it promoted a commercial spirit which damaged the quality of personal and social relationships, encouraged a competitive self-interest, depreciated the life of the feelings and the values of the art, and seriously disturbed the balance between man and the world of nature' (pp. 11 – 12).

As the mill owners, factory owners and mine owners became wealthier, they coveted and affected the style and manners of the upper classes while tradesmen and shopkeepers could also prosper and aspire to recognition of elevated status. Opportunities for travel were widely available to almost everyone and while industrialisation made many previously unattainable commodities more widely accessible and affordable through mass production, it posed a serious threat to the continuance of many traditional hand-made crafts and craftsmen. Britain was growing more prosperous and it was the middle classes who benefited while workers existed in overcrowded unsanitary conditions.

Queen Victoria's father was the fourth son of King George III and younger brother of the Prince Regent who ascended the throne as King George IV. Victoria's father had no ambitions for the throne since his oldest brother would accede and his daughter Princess Charlotte would in turn succeed her father. Princess Charlotte

married in 1816 but after only eighteen months of marriage she died in childbirth leaving the accession in question. George IV was acrimoniously separated from his wife so was unlikely to produce further heirs and although all his younger brothers rushed to marry and produce legal heirs it was the fourth brother, the Duke of Kent who fathered Victoria, the only living legitimate child. Neither the Georgian royal family nor parliament could have anticipated Victoria's accession to the British throne.

The Regency and reign of George IV could be summed up as a reign of wantonness, debauchery and decadence concerning the king and his brothers. All were debtors and lived expensive and excessive lifestyles in contrast to most of their subjects. Victoria and her husband presented a more moderate lifestyle, privileged compared to the British middle and working classes but unostentatious in comparison to her Georgian uncles. Her regular church attendance testified to her Christian observance and respect for religious teachings and was a clear antithesis to previous royal intemperance. The Georgian kings and princes had disparaged the institution of marriage, treating it as a necessity for the legitimate continuation of heirs, and as a means of harbouring wealth, lands and estates while taking lovers and paramours, fathering illegitimate offspring and spending and borrowing to excess and without care. Their philandering exploits and unorthodox sexual behaviour resulted in antagonism among their subjects. King George IV was head of the Church of England yet his lascivious sexual behaviour and that of his brothers abandoned Christian teachings regarding morality affording no principled leadership to the populace. Although there was public hostility to Victoria when she came to the throne (Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983 p. 121) Victoria's impressive presentation as Queen and Empress as well as a practicing Christian and homely and caring wife and mother

conformed to society's expectations in her female duties while she carried out her role as monarch.

By the beginning of Victoria's reign Britain was in the process of unparalleled industrial development resulting in growing material prosperity. The success of the British navy had ensured riches beyond belief through foreign trade via her colonies. Britain's power and wealth extended throughout the world, the country had entered a new era. Queen Victoria's reign became a successful period for development in industry and innovation and an ordered era for middle and upper class family life. Despite this, Victoria deliberately decided on a restrained wedding ceremony as a precursor to the relatively simple and homely family life of the royal family. Her ensuing family lifestyle was one of wealthy simplicity, committed to kin and family values while the development of formal etiquette and lavish state ceremony provided grandeur and significance.

2.5 The continuance of wedding white

As a young woman, Queen Victoria cherished her secure marriage and her family life and encouraged her portrayal as a wife and mother as well as a monarch. Her successful and obviously happy marriage was reassuring for her subjects, a display of security and assurance within the institution. Her monarchy occurred during an era of unprecedented invention, engineering and development in Britain. The invention of photography made the Queen and her family visible and recognisable to her subjects. Construction of the railways made transportation of merchandise and passengers from one part of the country to another safe, fast and cheap. Materials could be transported from the ports to town and city centre mills and factories and the workforce could be brought in from the countryside. The newly rich

mill and factory and mine owners could afford to build themselves grand town and country houses and travel through Europe in the style of the landed classes. This new rich had disposable income and were prepared to pay for the recognised appurtenances of the upper classes in an attempt to buy status and recognition and creature comforts (Thompson, 1970).

The Queen and her husband produced a large family who were perceived by her subjects as close when compared to previous royal families. They spent leisure time together at their holiday residence, Osborne House on the Isle of Wight. The Queen's marriage was arranged and was dynastic but was also a fortunate love match so she valued the unity of her family and the support of her husband. The idea of a solid, steadfast couple surrounded by a close family emerged as characteristic of the royal family and influenced the ideal romantic marriage.

Matthew (2000) discusses the domestic ideal of the royal marriage as an ideology that appealed to the middle classes. Golby (1986) quotes census material from an 1851 report that claims ' The middle classes have augmented rather than diminished that devotional sentiment and strictness of attention to religious services by which, for several centuries, they have so eminently been distinguished' (p.40). In *Beeton's Book of Household Management* (1859 – 61) emphasis is placed solidly on female domesticity. About the role and duties of the mistress of the house Mrs. Beeton wrote ' …there are none which take a higher rank, in our estimation, than such as enter into a knowledge of household duties…' (Golby 1986, p. 190). Matthew (2000) suggests that the successful tradesman who may have started life working above the shop with his wife's support in building the business, could move to a house away from his workplace where he could support his wife and family so acquiring greater social standing. The home became a refuge for the middle class

tradesman where he could escape from the competitive business world. Within the home were delineated male and female spaces, men commandeered smoking and billiard rooms while women appropriated drawing rooms. Fashion in dress began to emphasise the sobriety and functionality of the men's business clothing while their wives and daughters dressed in increasingly impractical garments. Tight lacing, crinolines and bustles all emphasised the decorative but impractical perception of female place. Middle class women were pivotal in dealing with social interface and coordination of domestic tasks while maintaining appearances of appropriately privileged lifestyle. In writer Anthony Trollope's novel *The Warden* (1885) the women's characters were portrayed as strong and as influential as the men except their authority remained primarily in the domestic sphere while the men were exerted their power within the Church and in business. Women were often in a heterogeneous situation acting as a major business support in business maintaining or enhancing the family's social position while taking an apparently subordinate role. Matthew (2000) states, ' Although the advice literature often exhorted middle class women not to imitate the leisured lifestyle of the "fine lady", conceptions of the woman's sphere were in some respects modelled on the roles of wives and daughters in the landed upper classes' (p.169). The upper class lifestyle was an aspiration for many middle class women and men who longed to affect the manners, behaviour and fashions of the patriciate. The bourgeois and pedestrian royal lifestyle presented an achievable role model for ambitious nouveau-riche families.

After the early death in 1861 of Albert, her husband, Queen Victoria became a recluse who avoided public duties wherever possible and spent the rest of her life in deep mourning. Even at the marriage in 1863 of her eldest son and heir, Edward, the Queen wore funereal black. Despite her withdrawal from society and duty, Matthew

(2000) claims that no other British monarch 'gave her name more readily to her epoch than Victoria' (p.124). During the nineteenth century Britain's dominance as a world power was presided over by a monarch who had reigned for over sixty years. Hobsbawn and Ranger (1983) explain that as the monarch withdrew from active politics the real power of the monarchy waned so the way opened for it to become the centre of grand ceremonial (p120 – 121). Power was exchanged for popularity so 'Victoria's longevity, probity, sense of duty and unrivalled position as matriarch of Europe and mother-figure of Empire came to outweigh, and then eclipse, the earlier hostile attitude towards her (p121). The authors go on to claim that at her death she was described as most excellent of sovereigns who bequeathed a name to be eternally revered. Many of the ceremonial conventions developed and performed during the later years of her reign such as parading of troops and the use of special ceremonial horse-drawn carriages, became so well established that they became enduring. Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983 p.106)) suggest a number of aspects of ritual, performance and context linked to British royal ceremonial. These include;

- the personal character and standing of the monarch;

- the nature of the economic and social structure of the country;

- the extent and attitudes of the media, it's interest in and descriptions of royal events;

- the prevailing state of technology and fashion, dressing for purpose suggesting mystery or magic;

- the organisation and pomp attributed to ceremonial events, organisation of display;

- the physical arena or backdrop for an event, fitness for pageantry;

- opportunity for business, commercial remuneration by suppliers of artefacts and trinkets.

Blair – Leighton. Edmund, 1853 – 1922, *Signing the Register,* (undated), City of Bristol Art Gallery.

Many customs originated and perpetuated throughout Victoria's long reign had become regarded as traditions by the end of it and among these was the special lavish white wedding dress. The Victorian bride was ideally presented as a beautiful, romantic and fashionable figure as in Blair – Leighton's painting. The bridegroom stands discreetly behind her as she signs the register of her marriage. This painting depicts an ideology, a soft focus vision of a romanticised Victorian bride.

The spread of new wealth had made commodities such as thread and cotton cloth readily available and generally affordable. Sociologist Colin Campbell (1987) notes that the idea of romantic love was a major reason for the consumer revolution that was a catalyst for the Industrial Revolution. This consequence of need, want and

acquisition of coveted resources stimulates need for more, so as awareness of the fashion and prestige of wedding white became more widespread, desire for popular white became inclusive and percolated all levels of society.

2.6 The ascendance of the bride dressed in symbolic white

Harvie, Martin and Scharf (1970) and Matthew (2000) describe the hardships of nineteenth century workers as being employed in dangerous mines, mills and factories or as workers on the land. Labouring class women frequently worked alongside men doing the same or similar jobs but their wages were considerably lower. Before the invention of the sewing machine many needlewomen, commonly referred to as 'sloppers,' were reduced to prostitution to boost their wages. The money they were paid for hand sewing in such uncertain employment frequently did not cover basic living expenses (Golby, 1986). While working class women struggled to earn a living wage there was a society of middle class women who did not need to work, their husbands or families were able to keep them in comfort without need for employment. These women grew up dedicated to aesthetic pleasures and entertainments. An enigma of the time was a powerful ruling queen and the prohibition of entrepreneurial endeavours of most wealthy middle class women. Middle class girls were taught the trappings of acceptable society behaviour along with skills such as music, painting, embroidery and a grasp of European languages but access to universities or serious professions was the exclusive prerogative of men. While employed working classes could be proactive in trying to change their lives for the better, many middle class girls and women remained at home dealing with domestic tasks within the relative isolation of their own family units. Walter (1998) expresses the concerns suffragette Christabel Pankhurst (1880 – 1958) who claimed

that the women's suffrage movement was over-dependent on working class women and middle class women needed to join and support them. Working women during the Victorian era campaigned for equality in their working lives and the Women's Co-operative Guild (1884) was set up to influence government policy in areas such as maternity benefit and childcare (Walter, 1998). The identified middle class female role was often one of subordinate support for a husband and family. The Women's Institute (1898) published a dictionary of employments available to women especially to inform middle class, particularly single, women of opportunities open to them such as clerks, and shop assistants, while others agitated for entry into the professions. General female employments listed include doctor, nurse, accountant, fashion designer, ballet dancer, paper bag maker, charwoman and barmaid. Despite all this encouragement women were not welcomed into the worlds of commerce by businessmen who preferred to maintain their male preserves.

Fashionable clothing provided an interest and an outlet for women who could display their awareness of current styles and their ability to afford such self indulgence and frivolity. Robbins (2000) claims 'If the field of fashion had remained the field of real garments, clothes would have been worn until they were worn out' (p.82). Voguish dress made an important statement among those striving for social recognition and acceptance. Heavy fabrics and tight bodices looked modishly stylish but the impracticality of highly fashionable dress indicated a leisurely lifestyle since tight corsets made it difficult to bend or often to breathe comfortably and heavy fabrics over layers of heavy petticoats made any prolonged physical exertion tiring. Silhouettes demanded contortion of the female body and it was not until the invention of the crinoline cage during the 1860s that physical repressions caused by weight of undergarments was relieved. Men's dress became more severe; the dark colours

representative of a downgrading in the pleasures of dress while women became more frivolous in their dress style (Harvey, 1995). The downgrading of men's interest in style along with the enhanced importance of female dress style reflected gender attitudes at home and in the work place. Walter (1998) differentiates male and female occupations by explaining the male role as one in a clear workplace outside the domestic sphere. Male employment was traditionally for life leading to linear working patterns with expectation of promotions. Women's traditional commitment to domestic life very often makes employed work cyclical, moving in and out of work with time devoted to a domestic role so that re-entry to work was often at the same level or a lower one (p.225). Bourgeois male authority and dominion was enhanced through maintenance of a wife and family within the home. Prevailing middle class ideology marginalized women's paid employment and women's wages were considerably less that their male counterparts so working class women aspired to being full-time housewives imitating middle class values (Matthew, 2000). Most middle class women could claim authority and status only within their domestic environment so it is hardly surprising that a woman would grasp the opportunity to attract attention and be the dominant figure on the occasion of her wedding. Anything she owned passed to the keeping of her new husband, it was customary for her to relinquish her family name and assume the family name of her husband and the wedding ceremony demanded she 'obey' her husband. It was not until the late twentieth century that practises encouraged women to use the term Ms rather than Miss or Mrs to erase reference to marital status and to have the word 'obey' removed from the liturgies of many Christian faiths (Otnes and Pleck, 2003).

The romantic Hayllar painting (illustrated) depicts a young bride being greeted immediately after her wedding ceremony. She is obviously the principal subject of

the painting; her bridegroom stands behind her holding her bouquet, eclipsed by his bride and playing a secondary role. The Victorian and post Victorian Christian bride in her white wedding dress was able to conspicuously stand out above everyone present, including her groom who would thereafter assume his role as head of the household. The white wedding dress allowed transgression of class and rank and distinguished the bride from the throng.

Hayllar, Jessica, 1890, *Fresh from the Altar* (detail). Private Collection.

The education act of 1870 advocated education for all, including the working classes and including girls. They set up school boards elected by ratepayers in each district and women were allowed to vote for these and be candidates. The married women's property acts of 1870 and 1882 'allowed married women to retain and acquire assets independently of husband and for the first time eradicated the notion that a wife was the property of her husband' (Hanna, J. no date).

Stylishly dressed non-patrician bride and groom c.1900
Courtesy Dr. & Mrs. W.G.Salt

Women could develop a presence other than that of subordinate wife or female dependent within influential bourgeois society. Access to education and the right to some financial independence allowed women and girls to begin to infiltrate male dominated institutions and occupations. Working opportunities allowed women to marry at a later age or not at all although girls usually anticipated marriage at some point in their lives. The photograph of the bride and groom c. 1900 gives little indication of their class. Examination of details indicates that they are not especially wealthy since the brides dress is not ostentatious and finely embroidered and the groom's coat does not fit well but neither are they obviously poor since the clothes are fashionable and stylish and the groom wears good shoes.

Malevich, Kasimir, 1907, *The Wedding,* Museum Ludwig, Cologne. A Russian artist influenced by his early rural life and an admirer of simple peasant lifestyles, Malevich's depiction portrays a bride escorted by a group of undistinguishable men. Any one could be the groom. Only the bride is individual and conspicuous and powerful as the only female among the group.

Whilst marriage was still an expectation among women, their increased earning power made it less of a financial necessity. A few notable women did pursue careers. Florence Nightingale (1820 – 1910) was the daughter of a wealthy middle class family. In charge of a group of nurses sent out to the Crimea during the War, she set about revolutionising military nursing. On her return to Britain she established nursing as a respectable profession for women. She sympathised with women's suffrage but she argued that there were many greater injustices under which women laboured than the lack of the vote (Golby, 1986).

After the First World War (1914 – 18), the serious dearth of men meant that many women were condemned to a single life so the occasion of a wedding was a

particularly joyous occurrence and one to be publicly vaunted by brides. Strict moral

codes of the times did not tolerate illegitimacy so many women could expect to work

throughout their lives without either a husband or children. Marriage itself became

status state. Class was no barrier to the white wedding dress and brides could wear

whatever dress they chose or could afford.

Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon marries the
Duke of York in 1923. He later became
King George VI

Stoke wedding c. 1925. Dress in
similar style to Lady Elizabeth's.
Courtesy Dr. & Mrs. W.G. Salt

Cloth rationing during the Second World War, 1939 – 45 resulted in a

shortage of luxury fabrics so a lavish white wedding dress was out of reach for most

brides and remained so for the decade following wartime austerity. Those brides able

to acquire and afford a white dress were envied and admired. Privation did not affect

the fashion for wedding white since post-war fashion saw demand as strong as ever.

2.7 The endurance of wedding white and the invention of tradition

During the late 1960s and early 1970s the ready availability of female dominated birth control caused the image of the flawless virgin bride to become almost obsolete in British and Christian societies. Male sexual proclivity outside of marriage had always been acknowledged but female sexual activity prior to marriage had not been previously tolerated. Marriage had historically usually been rapidly followed by the birth of children but suddenly propagation could be reliably timed to the convenience of the parents rather than being controlled by the dictates of nature. Couples could delay marriage until after a period of cohabitation so the enduring preference for a white wedding had little to do with innocence and chastity at this time and probably more to do with demand and desire to fulfil a fanciful dream with opportunity for attention and exhibition. Employment in Britain was plentiful so people had money to spend on extra luxuries. A proliferation of young working class music and acting stars emerged to become the new celebrities. Their immoderate behaviour and extravagant lifestyles set a precedent for their increasingly affluent young fans. Admiration and yearning for celebrity and fame was growing, so the congenial image of the modest, innocent and virtuous bride gave way to desire for grandeur and an extravagant white wedding. Customary white had become so fixed within wedding tradition as the bridal colour of preference that a white wedding became the expected ideal. Delay of a formal traditional ceremonial during the second half of the twentieth century resulted in much traditional white wedding symbolism to be forgotten or ignored. Some customs were perpetuated but without much understanding or empathy yet the increasingly ostentatious white event flourished. Instead of the allegories of virtue and celibacy, white came to represent the bride; the wedding day; the bridal dress so the white wedding became

synonymous with show and ostentation, wealth, fashionable style and exhibitionism. Historic meanings associated with colour and objects were no longer widely recognisable or appreciated.

Popular perception of the wedding as an event as well as a ceremony probably came about after the privations of World War II, 1939 – 1945. Luxurious cloth was almost unobtainable and food was rationed so that inessentials were virtually unavailable in the open marketplace. Most wartime brides had neither the means nor the connections to procure a white wedding dress so most opted for whatever smart clothing was available or those not yet discharged from the armed forces could marry in their military uniforms. The aftermath of war left Britain devastated, roads and buildings were ruined, areas of cities completely destroyed and cloth and food rationing ensured a basic diet and drab appearance. Most weddings were frugal through necessity with scarce evidence of lavish embellishments.

The young Princess Elizabeth must have inspired hope and admiration and provoked some envy to a nation still suffering from the privations of war when she wore a spectacular and lavish white wedding dress and veil for her wedding in 1947. The royal wedding was intended to appear visually wonderful and emotionally heartening for a nation deprived of any sign of decoration and visual extravaganza. Although British society had, by then, developed a passion for American films and their affiliated fashions the royal family were still upheld as icons of British wedding style in their designer haute couture. Media attention focused on the white dress designed by couturier Norman Hartnell, the fine lace veil, the magnificent diamond tiara, the flowers, the music, the whole extravaganza. The royal wedding set a post war celebrity style event that was recreated by a plethora of contemporary and

subsequent brides. Cloth was rationed so by necessity contemporary women's

fashions featured a narrow and economical silhouette.

Wedding of Princess Elizabeth to Prince Philip
1947. Official royal photographer, Cecil Beaton

The royal wedding dress was billowing, the skirt was generous with a huge

ostentatious train and exquisite embroidered detail using thousands of seed

pearls (associated with purity and virginity in Christian tradition) a relief from

plain unadorned utility post war clothing focused only on necessity. The style

of the royal dress was beyond the means of couples free to marry at the end of

the war when men and women returned from conflict but the message

conveyed by the royal wedding style was of hope and a better future. Princess

Elizabeth and her young husband allowed the popular press and newsreel

producers into their wedding making their ceremony easily accessible to the

public. A succession of royal brides married in white continuing and

perpetuating tradition at patrician level. Fashion companies who compete to

be the first to merchandise a replica copied every subsequent major royal

wedding dress in an assortment of fabric types, quickly mass-produced to

contend with anticipated public demand. Modern society attempts to proclaim

a diminishing of social division yet any royal wedding evokes massive media

interest.

Princess Margaret's wedding dress 1962
Photograph; Photographer Cecil Beaton

Throughout the second half of the twentieth century the royal family

dominated as arbiters of wedding style, their modishness slavishly copied. Every

major royal bride during the twentieth century wore a voguish white wedding dress

and veil. The royal wedding dresses were magnificent in their lavishness and

fashionable stylishness. Princess Margaret, sister to Queen Elizabeth made a

reputation for herself during the 1950s as a stylish single young woman and this was reflected in the fashionable silhouette of her white wedding dress and veil.

Princess Anne's wedding Nov 14th 1973
Accompanied by her father, the Duke of
Edinburgh. Photograph; Daily Mirror.

When the Queen's only daughter, Princess Anne married in 1973 the princess and the royal family agreed the whole event being televised, including the couple making their wedding vows. The viewing audience was bound to be vast and wedding dress manufacturers eagerly anticipated the event so the dress could be copied for the mass market. The princess had selected a designer from the manufacturing house of Susan Small to design her gown rather than use the established couturier to the royal family, Norman Hartnell. According to an article by Liz Smith for *The Daily Mirror* (1973) the subtle stitching details of Princess Anne's dress made it particularly difficult for the mass-market manufacturers to copy.

A proliferation of attractive stars has provided celebrity alternatives to royalty through the twentieth into the twenty-first century and they have frequently proved more glamorous than the royals. Rojek (2001) claims 'the growth of celebrity culture is closely bound up with the aestheticization of everyday life (p.102) and goes on to explain the aestheticization of everyday life as, 'the process by which perception and judgement regarding beauty and desire become generalised…'(p.102).

Wedding of Charles, Prince of Wales
To Lady Diana Spencer, July 1981

The generalising of beauty or general admiration is brought about by popular prevailing recognition and appreciation of an acknowledged stereotype. Increasingly the public began to increasingly look for style leaders among more visible and accessible icons such as film and music stars rather than royals.

A notable exception was lady Diana Spencer who married Prince Charles in 1981. She epitomised the innocent, virginal young bride on her wedding day but went on to become a celebrity of iconic status through her verve and stylishness. Her style

of wedding dress evoked the fairy tale myth of the beautiful lady marrying her handsome prince. Diana's wedding style heralded a fashion for grand and spectacular romantic weddings that has continued into the twenty-first century. The wedding of Prince Charles to Lady Diana Spencer precipitated a general fashion for lavish spectacular weddings. Their wedding occurred at a time of financial growth in Britain so people could afford to emulate the ostentation and grandiose wedding style of the royal couple.

Fans can more easily identify with media stars since most do not come from privileged backgrounds. Successful celebrities from any walk of life who regularly appear in film, television, music or sports are followed, emulated and copied by their admirers; dress styles are imitated, duplicated and compared and criticised. Their influence is potentially enormous because of their success, fame, achievement, availability and physical allure and media hype. More and more popular celebrities have used the occasion of their wedding as a means of self-promotion as well as to endorse a variety of products for economic gain. They have recognised and appreciated the commercial value of the modern marriage business and have exploited their fame for profit and career advancement. The wedding is a visual event stimulating the interest of strangers and invited guests alike. Television 'soap' weddings are used to amplify viewing figures even though the television audience knows the wedding is not real life but merely a colourful spectacle.

The modern fashionable British wedding involves huge potential costs for all levels of society and equivalent returns for those involved in wedding promotion business. An article in *The Telegraph* (Wallop 2008) suggests that the cost of a wedding has climbed to above £20,000. As celebrities increasingly competed for attention with excessive spending on their weddings, ordinary couples rewarded

themselves with extra luxuries, or suffered possibly appearing parsimonious if they did not provide guests with luxurious surroundings and an expensive spread. Ordinary couples appeared to be persuaded by anecdote or popular media to expend vast amounts of money for their fashionable and contemporary dream wedding ceremony event.

A newly married couple enjoy their status as celebrities of the moment at their wedding. Photograph; Leicestershire Wedding planner, Autumn/Winter 2004

A number of aspects and attitudes from the nineteenth century endured into twentieth and twenty-first century weddings such as the established conventional dress styles and etiquette expected of the groom, attendants and guests. Customs and traditions were selectively appropriated and adapted to conform to modern interpretations of symbolism and ritual. For example, the traditional decorated wedding cake contained a variety of dried fruits representative of fertility. Many modern caterers produce an equally decorative but much lighter chocolate or sandwich cake preferable to fashionable modern tastes. The symbolism of the ingredients is no longer generally regarded but the tradition of the wedding cake remains.

Wedding photographers and the presence of television at weddings of public figures and the video recordings of less grandiose ceremonies have increasingly made weddings more publicly visual subsequently making weddings more akin to theatrical performances that elevate principal characters to temporary stardom. The bride and groom and guests equate to a cast dressed in unfamiliar clothing and surrounded by visual decorations of flowers and speciality decorations. The affordability of photography meant that most couples could record the most important and probably the most expensive days of their lives. Photographs provide evidence of the dream of luxury and celebrity status. Whatever their background, their wedding photographs portray couples upholding current conventions, customs and traditions while endeavouring to emulate the style and spectacle directed by patrician classes or popular celebrities.

Contemporary artists and designers have increasingly used images of the wedding dress to reflect aspects of modern life or to represent contemporary issues. British artist Susie MacMurray exhibited her *Mixture of Frailties* wedding dress made from household rubber gloves in December 2004 – January 2005. The wedding dress is a beautiful garment made from material that is both fashionably recyclable and also representative of a woman's traditional role within the home. The work is described by Fiona Venables (2004), curator of the Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery as, 'a work referencing both a young girl's dream of a white wedding and the mundane reality of household chores…there is an analogy of the internal made external [the gloves are turned inside out] of vulnerability and excess'. The artist, Susie MacMurray claims that her interest is inspired by folk tales ' and the visceral nature of fairy-tales which so often function as cautionary tales' (MacMurray, 2004).   The dress is a beautiful garment designed to provoke the sort of admiration directed

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towards the white wedding dress but the concept behind this design is about the

mundane reality of everyday life behind the glamour and MacMurray's intention is to

portray the beautiful wedding dress as a trap. In the words of the artist, 'be careful

what you wish for' (MacMurray, 2004)

MacMurray, Susie, 2004 – 05, *A Mixture of Frailties*.
Photograph courtesy artist; Susie MacMurray

Chocolatier Rococco commissioned designer Ian Stuart to design a wedding

dress made entirely from white chocolate for the 'Chocolate Week' exhibition in

October 2008 as a piece of ostentatious consumerism and as a humorous

interpretation of the special ceremonial wedding dress. The outfit appeared frivolous

but the marketing message was very serious about the uniqueness and exclusivity of

this particular chocolate brand and it's worthiness at such a special occasion.

Chocolate is generally advertised as a sweet, aromatic and sensual product and this

wedding dress was a testament to the versatility, luxury and desirability of high

quality white hand-made chocolate. It was also a testament to the exclusivity of the

occasion, suggesting the luxury and exclusivity of the chocolate at such a momentous

occasion. The garment was never a serious fashion statement but it successfully

exploited the advertising power of a glamorous and immediately recognisable modern

bridal image and it accentuated the desirability of exclusivity.

Stuart, Ian, 2008, White chocolate wedding dress
design for chocolatier Rococco

Rococco used a mixture of cheeky modernity and romantic tradition directed at

women in their product promotion

Although royalty still retains its unique place, the symbols of wealth and

opulence popularised by modern celebrities of television, film, music and sport have

made the wedding increasingly egalitarian. The twenty-first century wedding allows couples to aspire to their fantasy 'celebrity style' wedding.

> 'Luxury and distinctiveness have been democratised and personalised as celebrity culture permeates more of the choices and styles for many features of the wedding and the reception. Champagne and fresh flowers, once found only at the fanciest of weddings, are now standard for people from humble backgrounds and limited parental incomes' (Otnes and Pleck, 2003, p.132)

The luxurious white wedding was once only available to royalty and landed classes and the very wealthy. By the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries the event become desirous to couples from all walks of life, and within the financial reach of almost everyone.

Chapter 3

THE CELEBRITY WEDDING

3.1 Defining Celebrity

Sociologist Chris Rojek (2001) claims that 'The emergence of celebrity as a public preoccupation is the result of three major interrelated historical processes. First, the democratisation of society; second, the decline in organised religion; third, the commodification of everyday life' (p. 13). Rojek goes on to suggest that modern day celebrities have come to fill the void left by erosion of belief in popular belief 'in the divine right of kings, and the death of God' (p.13). In previous centuries, fame or notoriety was gained through success primarily in the areas of military achievement, writing, politics, science and artistic merits while royalty have been accorded celebrity through auspicious birth without need for accomplishment. Christianity elevated many devotees and zealots to greater status because of their public display of belief and preparedness for martyrdom. Real and mythical figures (such as Robin Hood and Joan of Arc) have been accorded celebrity status through repetition and embellishment of their stories. This chapter will examine changing definitions and growth of celebrity and will discuss recent obsession with celebrity and how this has influenced modern wedding style in Christian Britain and North America.

During the twentieth century, the influences of the American film industry along with popular music business, television and sport added entertainment cultures of presentation and conversation to the established celebrity cults. Chat show hosts were bestowed celebrity status for conducting entertaining interviews with acclaimed celebrities. The nature of celebrity has partially changed character with time, no longer is celebrity status bestowed exclusively on the greatly talented and worthy, modern celebrity can be accorded for being extensively recognised and preferably

popular. Fashion models, television actors and personalities are awarded celebrity status for success. Rojek (2001) claims that 'mass-media representation is the key principle in the formation of celebrity culture' (p.13). Journalists, feature writers and publicists working within the popular press, television and the movie industries speak of the 'star quality', 'presence' and 'charisma' of popular modern celebrities while academic writing, especially from cultural and media studies focuses on celebrity as 'the product of a number of cultural and economic processes' (Turner 2004 p.4). This suggests that agents and business managers of the famous are usually handsomely rewarded for helping to construct an advantageous public image of a star ensuring favourable media attention. More accessible idols generate greater desire for additional stars and luminaries therefore contributing to the construction and acceleration of a celebrity industry. From the 1960s there was an abundance of people claiming some degree of celebrity and numerous businesses and agencies established to promote and sell celebrity. It was even possible for the agents of pop stars to become celebrities through association, the Beatles were household names through their musical talent but Brian Epstein became almost as well known as their manager and publicist. Turner (2004) discusses 'the commodification of the individual celebrity through promotion, publicity and advertising: the implication of celebrities in the processes employed by the media in their treatment of prominent individuals' (p. 4). This suggests 'star quality' does not depend entirely on individual charisma but the media does not want celebrities to be ordinary, they are expected to have some sort of special qualities. If stars do not naturally emanate special qualities then publicists and agents can readily invent them. Media attention and expectation of ready accessibility usually denies a star's privacy but the benefits are publicity, fame, public acclaim and associated wealth.

Rojek (2001 p.p. 17 – 18) suggests that celebrity status can be divided into 'ascribed', 'achieved' and 'attributed' celebrity. The former, 'ascribed celebrity' concerns lineage and individuals are born into their status. 'Achieved' celebrity derives 'from the perceived accomplishments of the individual in open competition' (p.17) and includes talented musicians or sports personalities while 'attributed celebrity' is someone awarded celebrity status by nature of fashionable social penchant. Examples of the latter are previously unknown individuals who are .awarded celebrity status through appearing in reality television programmes such as Channel Four's *Big Brother*. Previously unfamiliar individuals are confined in a house together and every aspect of their behaviour is filmed to satisfy an element of voyeurism in public taste. Rojek(2001) goes on to claim that the spread of 'attributed' celebrity recognition derives from the expansion of mass-media who promote sensationalism in response to the mundanity of everyday life.

From the middle of the twentieth century into the beginning of the twenty-first, it was possible to become famous through association with the famous so that partners and companions of the truly famous could benefit simply by being seen in the company of someone famous. Celebrity status could be reflected on to another person through association with a major celebrity. Jacqueline Kennedy was the very famous first lady of America during the office of her husband, President John F. Kennedy. Jacqueline was revered throughout America for her elegant and stylish appearance and deportment but it was her husband who was the major figurehead. Jacqueline was intelligent, beautiful and urbane, the ideal wife who supported and assisted her husband, and along with him became regarded as celebrity royalty. For all her personal charm and accomplishments it is unlikely she would have achieved the same degree of social success through her own accomplishments, she was famous and

became a celebrity through association although she adroitly and intelligently manipulated connections to successfully effect and elevate her personal status. A later example of a personality who became famous and achieved celebrity status through association is the actress Elizabeth Hurley. In 1994 she accompanied Hugh Grant, her film star partner to the premier of *Four Weddings and a Funeral.* He might have been one of the stars in the film but Elizabeth was the star of the evening in a close-fitting and revealing designer dress held together at the side seams with safety pins. Photographs of the pair appeared in most popular newspapers and suddenly the glamorous companion and aspiring actress was launched into the world of tabloid stardom. They made an attractive couple and whilst he was the successful star, she effectively ensured continued attention through regular appearances at media-covered events and press interviews. Liz Hurley has succeeded in becoming famous through affiliation, she is a major celebrity because of her attractive physical appearance and her awareness and appreciation of celebrity cult; her ability to anticipate and cater to public voyeurism by ensuring that she is photographed at appropriate events, and her readiness to divulge information to the press. She has subsequently become acknowledged as a businesswoman and actress but has never appeared as the principal star in any major production. Unlike Jacqueline Kennedy whose famous partner thrust her, albeit willingly, into the media spotlight, Liz Hurley actively sought fame and media attention and she cleverly manipulated media attention on her relationship to further her professional identity. In both cases liaison with a celebrity resulted in welcome public attention and reflected fame and fortune within a culture increasingly fascinated with image.

The recent rise in celebrity culture in Western societies certainly connects to a rise in money economy and the modern situation of disposable income through an

increasing public desire for television and film personalities and stars who become well paid role models for those followers wishing to emulate their successful style. Disposable income is available to a wider range of society than ever before and is generally achievable to almost anyone in full-time employment. It is no longer the providence of those born into wealth. Salaries and payment for work are characteristically above subsistence level for most. Sociologist Colin Campbell (1998) claims that economic accumulation has encouraged consumers to desire new products and to routinely replace commodities before articles are worn out or damaged simply because newer or more advanced models make older ones obsolete or merely less attractive or covetable. The concentrations of population situated in urban and industrial locations have encouraged acquisition of possessions and goods generating competition among individuals and within communities. Financial success has resulted in consumers buying a proliferation of non-essential products designed to enhance lifestyle rather than support it (Campbell, 1998). Product loyalty toward extraneous commodities is generally short-lived and the cult of modern celebrity reflects this in that the popularity of a celebrity is generally brief, few enjoy prolonged acclaim. The consumer may be persuaded to covet a commodity, including a celebrity as a commodity, but the abstract nature of desire means that consumers will not be satisfied when their desire is met, they will always want new. Celebrity worship often begins as recognition by fans of a wholeness and glamour that is missing from their own lives. Rojek (2001) describes celebrity status as one wherein reward culture differentiates individuals from one another through financial status or social distinction. Turner (2004) cites representation in the media along with publicity and developments within cultural identity as the primary reasons for celebrity treated as commodity, alleging that these processes amount to a celebrity

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industry. This business is concerned with promoting a culture of celebrity, elevating individuals through staged and contrived events and situations appealing to extravagant newspaper, television and magazine promotion rather than by achievement or greatness. The celebrity industry exists for profit regarding celebrity as a commodity to be intensively publicised and traded then jettisoned when popularity wanes. Gossip magazines such as *Hello , OK, Chat* along with numerous others divulge personal information about stars with or without their compliance and can influence public opinions through revelation and the tone of the publicity.

The rise in fame and prominence of film, music and sporting stars represented a shift in contemporary celebrity idols during the latter half of the twentieth century. With the popularity of tabloid newspapers and television, those people who regularly featured in the media and therefore were instantly recognised, became accepted and accorded celebrity status along with major film stars and society personalities. The definition of celebrity modified and metamorphosed to encompass a broader category of the population. Discussing definitions of celebrity, Turner (2004) contrasts beliefs that celebrity is 'a natural, immanent quality with its phoniness and constructedness' (p6). He suggests that while some individuals achieve success through 'star quality' success for others has come about through luck and media publicity.

3.2 Vagaries of celebrity

As people earned more and therefore had more disposable income, they craved access into the lives of those in the media spotlight whose lifestyle reflected fashionable modern aspirations. Popular mass circulation magazines such as *O.K.*, *Hello* and *Chat* along with an increasing plethora of others, concentrated on reporting on the material benefits of fame, the living standards, the intimate and professional

relationships, the associations and liaisons, glamour, health, happiness, miseries, in fact anything that would temporarily appease public curiosity yet continue to titillate. A lavish and glamorous society or celebrity wedding would always assure sales since readers are fascinated by the extravagance of household names. Pursuit of celebrity status became legitimate and prevailing among those ambitious for personal prestige. The financial and approbative rewards to acknowledged celebrities were potentially enormous through payment for appearances, interviews and product endorsement. Publicity enhances the image of celebrities by affording them particular significance and by creating appropriate personality images for those stars that could be targeted toward particular sections of society. The social qualities portrayed by individuals through enactment of a devised distinctiveness could be identified with, yearned for or admired by followers and devotees. The negative side for those bestowed with the fame and fortune is that the public also enjoy the spectacle of the unaware or fallen celebrity. Photographs of stars looking less than glamorous provide roguish entertainment of readers. Cashmore (2006) suggests that the public would rather read about everyday events in the lives of celebrities than read about fantastic events in the lives of ordinary people.

Surviving scandal often depends on media reaction to an alleged indiscretion. Cashmore (2006) claims that 'today we credit a celebrity with inadvertent ingenuity for becoming involved in a moral indiscretion that manages to outrage and delight in such proportions that it creates rather than destroys their careers' (p.143). Survival usually depends on how any alleged indiscretion is portrayed in the popular press as few celebrities dare to provoke the media. When Boyzone band member Stephen Gately finally admitted his homosexuality the press that had formerly hounded him reacted sensitively to the friendly and gentle star (McLean, 2006).

Through the use of photographs and video and news media, stars and celebrities could use their status to champion a diversity of goods and companies and be paid handsomely for their services. The demand for stars exceeded provision and so popular television and media figures found themselves required to attend public functions allied to services providing promotion and publicity. Newsreaders, reporters and soap-stars acquired celebrity status along with minor actors through familiarity. Chris Rojek (2001) explains that celebrity power depends on immediate public recognition and he goes on to say that although celebrities might complain about the continual attention paid to them, the recognition is vital to them. He claims ' Instant public acclaim is part of the appeal of being a celebrity. Along with the wealth and the flexible lifestyle, it is one of the reasons why achieved celebrity is sought after with such deliberate and often frenzied ardour' (p.77).

Television programming and the target markets of mass circulation newspapers and magazines ensure that the opportunities for advertisement and product and self- promotion are colossal. Fashionable figures become public property to be viewed and discussed on a regular basis. The public pick over the private and public lives of their favourite celebrities in exhaustive detail while being able to both admire and criticise these role models with impunity. Every garment, every gesture and mannerism, every quote and every companion is scrutinised and admired or censured. Cashmore (2006) cites physical perfection as having become a compulsion in the quest for celebrity stardom, he claims that anything other than perfection, 'translates into an intolerance of anything less than faultless' (p. 99). The modern celebrity is built on admiration, devotion, loyalty and emulation but the antonyms of jealousy, resentment, covetousness and lack of good will exist to criticise and demolish those at the pinnacle of common popularity. Only a few survive to outwit

their critics and overcome the destructive time factor to become lifelong celebrities. Club performer, singer and film star Frank Sinatra had both genuine talent and charisma to overcome detrimental reports about his affiliations with the Mafia and mob connections. Such accusations could have destroyed his career but although his work and personal acclaim suffered vicissitudes, his career survived and he retained massive popularity throughout his life.

Such is the importance of visual image to stars, music industry celebrities such as Kylie Minogue and Madonna have habitually changed both their physical appearance and their style to gratify their restless fans and maintain their loyalty as well as to acquire new fans by appealing to an expanded commonality. In particular, Madonna has set out to reinvent her public image at regular intervals assuming roles as diverse as vamp and maid whilst Kylie has transposed her girlish innocence into a more alluring and beguiling persona. Such is her celebrity power she has resurrected and revived her career with enormous success after retiring from public appearances due to devastating and highly publicised ill health. Her health issues became public property describing her debilitating illness and her fortitude and bravery in overcoming a life threatening condition and the incapacitating and toxic cure of a woman whose physical appearance is so essential to her livelihood. She and her publicity agents nurtured her career ensuring she remained in the public eye. Her recovery enabled her to re-enter the music and performing arenas in the fashionably flamboyant and excessive style of a modern pop diva.

The nature of celebrity prohibits privacy and allows the masses voyeurism into all aspects of celebrity life including a fanciful and unrealistic lifestyle of new- found wealth and public adulation. The actor or music star represents composite facades; there is a projected role born from their profession and a real life role as perceived by

fans. The professional image commands adulation while the real-life image fosters a belief in the possibility of access. It allows and encourages the mundane to aspire to fame and recognition, to realise fantasies through the lives of others. It adds spice and interest to the humdrum existence of many who regularly see television characters in their homes, or see photographs or read about their lives in magazines and newspapers so they can associate with and identify with these personalities, either the reality or the fictional image.

Image is all-important and modern celebrities are attentively groomed by their publicity agents to ensure that their behaviour and appearance reflects their carefully devised and manipulated public profile. Any indiscretion or betrayal displaying fallibility or vulnerability guarantees rapt attention. The 1995 television interview by Martin Bashir of the late Diana, Princess of Wales, for the *Panorama* programme discussed her bulimia, her failed royal marriage and her admitted marital indiscretions. Prior to the showing of the programme information regarding the very sensitive nature of it's content was leaked to the press therefore stimulating anticipation, expectation and huge publicity. Viewing figures for this programme involving a popular member of the reclusive Royal Family were unprecedented, estimated at 15 million (BBC, 2009). Diana was beautiful and photogenic and she presented herself as an enigmatic mixture of strong and vulnerable personality. She was characterised as ordinary and approachable, yet she was also regal. Her calamitous marriage resembled a television soap fiction story being acted out in full view of the media and popular press. Diana was a major celebrity so the nation hung on her every word and her candid descriptions of her troubled personal life proved enthralling viewing. Diana was a celebrity whose fallibility added to her charisma

through her presentation as subjugated by her husband and his domineering and repressive family but bravely and stoically overcoming her frailty and suffering.

The famous can direct social behaviour since fans will copy their activities, style and tastes. Where they lead others will follow so they may be viewed as commercially manipulative and exploitative as well as socially effective, persuasive and significant. Any celebrity behaviour is compelling but a celebrity wedding promises excessive supplementary public and media attention for the idol and guests, and through association, for the corporations and merchandise promoted by that celebrity. Boden (2003) claims that 'Media coverage of celebrity and unusual weddings plays a key role in developing a popular wedding consumer culture, in part through identifying and celebrating the crucial elements of the successful wedding' (p.54). Boden (2003) goes on to comment on the increasing enthusiasm of the popular media for celebrity weddings and more unusual and excessive wedding preferences of members of the public. Coverage of celebrity weddings has established criteria for successful wedding ceremonies as fans can copy dress styles, types of venue and lavish spending. Media emphasis on the visually impressive and sumptuous event sets a standard for the everyday consumer.

Every aspect of a modern luminary's life is potentially public property so the clothes they wear, the cars they drive, the location of their home, the places they visit; everything about them will be avidly followed by their followers and aficionado's. Their taste and style will be mimicked to the extent that any product or commodity endorsed by the popular celebrity brings them further riches. Not everyone is overwhelmed by the saturation of celebrity coverage but flicking through journalistic magazine prose can prove insidious (Evans and Hesmondhalgh, 2005). It is therefore understandable that, in a period where celebrity and stardom forms the zenith of a rite

of passage, the bride and groom expect instant recognition and admiration. The

modern couple are likely to have paid handsomely for their wedding and since the

wedding ceremony is very often the only opportunity for public admiration and

indulgence for the ordinary couple it provides a lifetime opportunity to appear

famous.

Turner (2004) identifies a variety of levels of celebrity admirers. Among these

are fans who model fantasy and identification with media figures as well as those who

do not use celebrities as models or fantasies but as opportunities for their own cultural

activities. Fantasy weddings are fashionable so couples can secure a successful

romantic experience through indulging their own ambitions or modelling their event

on the style of their acclaimed celebrities. Ingraham (1999) summarises the effective

influence of the lavish celebrity wedding stating ' Celebrity spectacles become the

vehicles through which the masses not only imagine the possibility of wealth and

fame but seek to emulate it as well, thereby legitimating the accumulation practices of

the rich and famous' (p.108).

3.3 The wedding celebrities

Most brides comply with some degree of formality and opt for a white dress

that immediately proclaims status. It has always been the prerogative of the marrying

couple to have their day of deity, to be the principals at such a life-changing occasion

but modern convention has elevated their status to one of celebrity for that one day.

Whilst not above law, social protocol becomes more relaxed and excess is tolerated

and even encouraged. Major stars and celebrities succeed in redefining the

boundaries of extravagance, they demonstrate their wealth through their spending

ability and fanciful representation. Acknowledging the customary lavishness of a

contemporary wedding, the marriage of a luminary could be expected to be grander and more spectacular than that of someone ordinary, especially when managed as a publicity vehicle. They set the standards of immoderate contemporary extravagance and often fund this by agreeing publication of their photographs in gossip magazines at substantial financial remuneration.

Media furore promotes major celebrity wedding celebrations as every detail is published and examined. Publication of information well before the event guarantees elevated sales of the magazines and newspapers fortunate or aggressive enough to uncover the sort of detail that will satisfy public curiosity. Television networks will vie for images of the event. Increasingly celebrity nuptials are linked to business who will use the occasion to promote commodities. Followers will imitate details of a famous wedding and this can prove very lucrative for anyone involved in supply, design, planning or publicity. Given the frequent brevity of celebrity acclaim, the lucrative possibilities of lavish wedding costs covered through product and designer endorsement coupled with guaranteed positive media coverage make the exhibition wedding a tempting proposition for those famous enough to warrant the attention.

Boden (2003) suggests that the traditional space, time and opinion reserved for royal weddings is now allocated to weddings of celebrities and increasingly, unusual and outlandish weddings of the public (p. 54). The occasion of a wedding can cynically elevate an aspiring star desirous of celebrity status to media attention through appropriate disclosure of engaging information. In December 2001, Lothian racing driver, Dario Franchetti, announced his intention to wed a minor film star, Ashley Judd. Their selected venue was Skibo Castle, made famous after the music star Madonna had previously chosen to marry there. While both Mr. Franchetti and Ms. Judd were reasonably successful within their chosen careers, neither could be

considered major stars so the estimated cost of £1.3 million for the event was newsworthy (lovetripper, no date). Publicity concerning their nuptials certainly projected them temporarily into the limelight. Couples are at liberty to marry at whatever licensed premises they choose and pay whatever they want to for their nuptials, only when they court media interest by informing the press of wedding details and estimated costs of the event does it signify an attempt to attract attention and represent themselves as celebrities.

Temptation to fulfil the expectations of the press and public has proved hard to resist for many celebrities, the lure of massive amounts of publicity for all and huge financial reward for those who select this option have become difficult to renounce. Stars are public property and their manufactured public image makes them fictional; the constructed public persona serves to represent their personality and their appearance. Whilst most fans never meet with celebrities, they know them intimately through mass-media publications (Turner 2004), or at least they choose to believe they do through information publicity agents care to broadcast. A few celebrities at the very pinnacle of their success can afford to disregard publicity and opt for a private marriage ceremony attended only by selection of chosen friends and family. Music star Madonna was one of these stars; she planned a very private wedding to her second husband Guy Ritchie and went to enormous and very expensive lengths to keep all uninvited intruders away from the venue. The press and media were left with the prospect of only being able to describe her security measures and attempts made to breach them, no other details were made available to them. A contrary example to this was the marriage of the American movie star, Michael Douglas to British star Catherine Zeta Jones. Their wedding was a magnificently exploitative affair with huge press speculation. Details of the intended ceremony were leaked to the press

stimulating public interest although the actual ceremony was intended to be private and rites of publication were sold exclusively to *O.K.* magazine. The recent prolificacy and popularity of gossip magazines, which stir up public interest in the activities of those in the media spotlight, has very successfully highlighted the celebrity-wedding event.

3.4 Real royal weddings

Rojek (2001) and Turner (2004) agree that celebrity status for those born royal is pre-determined by birth. Rojek makes the point that people 'may add or subtract from their ascribed status by virtue of their voluntary actions, but the foundation of their ascribed celebrity is predetermined' (p.17).

Whilst the concept of hereditary elitism runs against modern egalitarianism, a curious public avidly consume every detail of the lives of The Royal Family even though they generally lack the talent or physical glamour and blatant preoccupation with consumerism attributed to celebrities. Their exclusivity ensures their celebrity so interest in the royal family had historically been reverential. Cashmore (2006) describes royal onlookers watching as subjects rather than as participants. The wedding of Princess Elizabeth to Philip in 1947 was the first royal wedding to be televised and caused debate between the Royal Family and the BBC since the British Royals were public figures with private lives and such a degree of intrusion was likely to set a precedent. The weddings of Elizabeth's sister, Princess Margaret in 1962 and of her daughter, Princess Ann in 1973 were televised to increasing viewing audiences. Some media access was approved although in both cases cameras kept a distance as the couples made their marriage vows to one another. It was the 1981 wedding of Queen Elizabeth's son Prince Charles to Lady Diana Spencer that ignited public

imagination. Exhaustive media coverage prior to the wedding ensured huge television audiences estimated globally at 750 million (BBC, 2009) for the event that became regarded as the magical fairy-tale wedding of the era. Diana was a young and glamorous bride whose style of wedding, ' reinvigorated the Cinderella fantasy, providing permission for celebrities and commoners alike to emulate royalty' (Otnes and Pleck 2003 p.50).

Marriage of Charles, Prince of Wales to Lady Diana
Spencer, July 29 1981, The fairy-tale coach, *Hello*
magazine, July 31, 2001

Princess Diana's huge lavish white wedding dress initiated a fashion for ornate 'fairy-tale' wedding dresses. The frills and flounces and vast quantities of material reflected the relative wealth and consumerism of the era. Britain was doing well in financial markets, employment was high and the term 'disposable income' was used to describe spending on unnecessary but desirable objects and gadgets for the home, car or office, flamboyance was the style of the day. This royal wedding probably established the fashion for the lavish and ostentatious ceremonies adopted by celebrities.

Princess Diana's sumptuous white wedding
danrecs. Photograph *Hello* magazine 31 July 2001

The death of Princess Diana in 1997 robbed the world of an iconic celebrity

and the wrath of the British people turned on the royal family who had seemingly

ignored her unhappiness and vulnerability within her loveless marriage. The royal

family had never been so unpopular in living memory so further royal marriages were

likely to be more moderate events.

On 19th June 1999, the last of the Queen's children, Prince Edward, married

Sophie Rhys-Jones in St. Georges Chapel in Windsor. This would be the last royal

wedding of the millennium and was probably the most understated of the twentieth

century royal weddings. Sophie Rhys-Jones was a commoner, the daughter of a

representative for a car-tyre manufacturer and a secretary, her background was

comfortable but undistinguished in any way. She had no royal connections and had

met the prince through his theatrical interests. The couple lived together prior to their

wedding announcement so she was not a new or unfamiliar face within royal circles.

Marriage of Prince Edward and Sophie
Rhys-Jones, June 19 1999

The prince, as fourth child and third son of the Queen, was unlikely to inherit

the throne since the heir already had two sons. As the youngest and last child,

Edward was the least interesting royal. This royal wedding was planned to be unlike

the weddings of the prince's older siblings. The couple had requested a simple,

family wedding with no pageantry and minimal pomp. By the standards of royal

weddings, the ceremony was low-key, with no military or ceremonial state

involvement. The guest list consisted only of family and friends with no politicians,

not even the Prime Minister, in attendance, and no foreign royal dignitaries other than

invited friends. A further break with recent royal custom was the lack of media

presence; the occasion was not televised. The couple actively avoided any obvious

celebrity style trappings.

Since the eldest three children of the Queen had all divorced, public

confidence in the success of royal marriages was jaded and interest in the occasions

had waned. Neither prince Edward nor his fiancée were especially charismatic or

colourful so the celebration of their nuptials was unlikely to incite much public interest. The occasion was eclipsed to some extent by the forthcoming marriage of football hero David Beckham and former *Spice Girl* singer Victoria Adams. Their hugely publicised wedding arrangements incited enormous press attention, eclipsing the less glamorous and less image obsessed royals. Whilst press and public interest in the royal wedding was limited, the occasion still merited publication of over 100 pages of information and report in *Hello* magazine. The magazine coverage included photographs of a century of royal bride's along with information about the working lifestyles of the couple, the diversity of their family backgrounds and photographs of the wedding venue and a number of the guests. Any available information and gossip about the couple was made news.

   On the wedding day the streets of Windsor were reportedly lined with 20,000 well-wishers who had waited patiently for a glimpse of the royal bride and groom in their horse-drawn open carriage. Apart from minor breaks in recent family convention, the couple planned a very traditional wedding. The bride was dressed in a white dress and her jewellery consisted of diamonds and pearls. She carried a bouquet of flowers symbolic of a bride, white lilies and orange blossom.

   Although this marriage was between a fourth royal descendant and a commoner, public interest in the event was still very considerable and *Hello* publicised every available detail about the occasion. The wedding was not a ceremonial affair and had been underplayed by the couple yet because their wedding involved a member of the royal family the occasion could elevate this otherwise uninteresting couple to exalted status. The couple wished to elude the attentions of the press without making this a project in itself, but the clamour for wedding details

proves that even an uninspiring royal can generate attention and be accorded celebrity. Every royal wedding is noteworthy, and merits special significance.

3.5 The subtle celebrity event, Madonna marries

During the 1990s, pop idol Madonna proved a hugely successful and enduring singing star. Madonna had a chameleon ability to adapt and change her appearance and recording style to retain the attention and the following of her fans and to win more devotees and admirers. An epitome of contemporary style, Madonna could transform herself through use of studio sound techniques and creative video filming into whatever personality she wished to portray. She was a star who encapsulated the contemporary popular icon. She depicted effigies of fantasy and fashion, the virgin; the predator, the modern grasping material woman; the accessible available girl; she could appear fragile and vulnerable or hard, tough and brittle. Madonna effectively portrayed a range of popular female images. Her music was inevitably accompanied by sophisticated and expertly produced video material, crafted to enhance her musical message and her physical assets.

One popular 1990s image of female persona was of the assertive ambitious woman aggressively determined to fight to realise her aspirations (a popular slogan among young women was *girlpower*). Madonna embodied all of these qualities and presented herself as a composed, poised and independent woman, fierce, capable, and materialistic and at the same time, feminine and physically beautiful. Madonna successfully flirted with the press and television media; she portrayed variations of the currently desirable female, playing to both male and female fantasy. She became one of the most admired icons of pop culture during the last decade of the twentieth century.

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Madonna was a star who recognised the power of the media to make or break a career. Madonna's alter image provided the media with controversial and shocking video and lyric material pushing limits of acceptable taste. Cashmore (2006) claims that… 'she epitomized and helped usher in an age in which the epithets "shocking," "disgusting," or "filthy" didn't presage the end of a career' (p.49). She built her career by disclosing more of herself than possibly any other pop idol so the occasion of her wedding was anticipated as a media feast.

This wedding was not Madonna's first. Her numerous previous amours and her former brief marriage were well publicised and documented. The doyen of 1990s style already had two children, one from an earlier liaison, both born out of wedlock, both representative of the more lenient attitude to parenthood and marriage that developed during the last quarter of the twentieth century.

As soon as her intention to marry was announced, preparations were made to keep the occasion strictly private and distant from the press and public. It was an occasion when this celebrity wished to appear as herself and she ensured that only an invited few were there to witness the occasion. The woman behind the public face wanted the veridical persona to take precedence without intrusion and without any need to act out a part. As soon as her wedding was rumoured, the press besieged her and her entourage. Madonna had no desire to make money through material endorsement from her wedding, nor did she invite or allow the gossip magazines, or anyone else she had not selected, any access to the ceremony. This celebrity was both rich enough and famous enough to ignore the press and her followers and to disregard an opportunity for publicity and extra financial gain.

The ceremony was due to be held in December 2000 in Scotland, at Skibo Castle in Dornoch, a remote and inaccessible cul-de-sac that could be effectively

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policed to ensure detection of extraneous interlopers. Security for the event was planned with military precision. Heat seeking equipment was rigged up to provide warning of unwelcome intruders and as an extra security measure to ensure absolute privacy. The couple kept secret everything from the time of the ceremony to the guest list. It was rumoured that even invited guests were not privileged with the actual time of the ceremony until after they arrived at the venue. The style of the wedding dress was also a closely kept secret; this was a huge disappointment to a fashion industry that eagerly anticipated copying the design, and for the gossip magazines that relied on photographs of the exclusive design to promote sales. The bride was known for her raunchy, risqué dress style so the wedding dress provoked enormous interest. The occasion was lavish; the anticipated cost was estimated at £1.5 million. The press waited in the cold Scottish winter for any crumb of information but nothing came forth. They left with no information at all; the couple had not even made any announcements after their marriage to inform the waiting press that the ceremony was over. Madonna had proved true to her intentions and had made sure her wedding was a truly private affair, witnessed only by close friends and immediate family. Only someone of her popularity would have the confidence to hazard offending supporters and propagandists and demand complete privacy for this special event. So effective were the security measures that no photographs or any other visual information has seeped out and every other detail about this wedding could only be guessed at. Madonna's private marriage robbed her fans of a spectacle yet such was this celebrities power that little complaint and criticism were made, she claimed a right of privacy for what is traditionally a most public event. This was not a cynical promotional event but something highly personal. Every couple has the right to select those guests they wish to witness their right of passage but no one other than someone

with great power could prohibit bystanders. A major celebrity is able to exercise

complete control under certain circumstances. The marriage act in itself was enough

to warrant an enormous degree of curiosity and publicity yet such was the importance

of her wedding to this major celebrity that she was determined to forgo the undoubted

positive publicity that publication of photographs would have brought. She had

remained under media scrutiny for a number of years and while she did not attempt to

explain her desire for privacy, it could be assumed that she had learned to distrust the

integrity and candour of the popular press. Madonna and husband, film director Guy

Ritchie, succeeded in reminding a public who were used to television, film, gossip

magazine and popular tabloid images of establishment and celebrity weddings that

this was a private celebration only needful of selected witnesses for legality. The

exigency exerted by the press for information was totally disregarded by the bride and

groom who apparently wanted to appear as themselves for their marriage ceremony.

Subsequent to the wedding, no photographs were ever published.   This hugely

popular self-made celebrity had succeeded in demanding privacy, a privilege no

longer available to a member of the royal family.

3.5.1 The very public celebrity wedding, 'Posh' and 'Becks' wed

During the mid 1990s Britain went through a period of economic success. A

change in government promised positive change and the popular mood was confident,

employment was buoyant and people had expendable income that they were eager to

lavish on luxuries. Entrepreneurs from the entertainment industry were eager to

promote and groom idols for public patronage. Aggressive publicity elevated a

number of the new entertainment stars to hasty prominence. Popularity and success

were copiously rewarded. The new sports and popular music celebrities revelled in

their newfound acclaim and wealth to the delight of the popular media who reported

any misdemeanours or excesses. Such was public interest in celebrity lifestyle, more gossip magazines were launched in competition with *O.K.* and *Hello* attempting to disclose more intimate detail and exclusive information about the behaviour of their subjects to retain the attention of the ever- eager yet often fickle, fans. The sales of gossip magazines rely on photographic information regarding the behaviour or physical condition of celebrities so they will pry and intrude into the lives and lifestyles of their subjects for new or unpublished information or gossip. Whilst these magazines may be invited to attend at places or events where they dutifully portray celebrities in beautiful homes or with their partners and families, they are unscrupulous in their rivalry to boost sales so will publish unflattering or compromising photographs or prattle destined to blemish carefully constructed reputations.

The plethora of publicity information around new celebrities further arouses the curiosity of the public to know more; they demand detailed information regarding the tastes, lifestyle and behaviour of these stars, excessive behaviour makes thrilling news. The possibility of marriage between two major celebrities in 1999 whipped up media frenzy among the news and gossip magazines. Product and advertising agencies could gleefully anticipate sales of any product associated with either or both celebrities. The publicity generated from such a high profile event would promote all the usual appurtenants identified with the wedding business and it would positively promote incidentals, the stylists and hairstyles; the venue; the make of vehicle transporting the couple and numerous other ancillaries. There was, and is, potential for a huge amount of money to be made by an enormous number of people as a result of such an event. When music star Victoria Adams (stage title 'Posh') and football ace David Beckham announced their intention to marry on July 4, the news invoked

massive publicity and attention. Both were young, attractive and very much representative of their generation and of society at this time.

Both of these are instantly recognised stars known to invite publicity at every opportunity and both are extremely image conscious. Each had made their name before they met but as a couple they outrageously courted the media, ensuring a huge following whenever and wherever they publicly appeared. Burchill (2001) describes the couple as 'a pair of beautiful social barometers' and lauds their self-made fortunes and celebrity status while also writing about the envy and anger aimed at this famous self-made couple by newspapers.

The couple's combined style was displayed excess in the form of exorbitant shopping sprees for designer clothing accessories and jewellery, spending vast amounts of money on gifts for one another or clothing for their baby, often dressing identically for public appearances thus making sure that they would be noticed and photographed. Their combined passion for designer labelled clothing and possessions was well documented, Gucci suits, Rolex wristwatches and status cars such as Ferrari, Porsche and Jaguar were all part of their purchasing style. Their presence at a public event guaranteed crowds of onlookers and considerable media coverage. At their engagement they conspicuously sported identical diamond rings and willingly allowed publication of photographs. Continuously in the public eye, they recapitulated a popular fashionable image of the stylish and current couple. Those who followed and aspired to their dress style and behaviour would emulate their élan.

Much criticised among some of the press (Burchill 2001) for their flamboyance and ostentation rather than for good taste, their wedding promised exhibitionism in the extreme, and so the event proved. Their wedding was used as an unashamed promotional event to maintain their undisputed reputation for display. It

also reflected both their combined taste and the exuberant mood of their preferred social echelon. Their wedding provided a field day for the popular press and the gossip magazines. The wedding costs were astronomical and while there were only a small number of guests invited to the actual ceremony, immediate family members and close friends, the ensuing party was for somewhere between 300 and 500 (depending on which publication is to be believed). The final cost of this wedding has never been disclosed but the cost of the reception alone is estimated to have exceeded £500,000. The magazine *Hello* reputedly paid the couple £1million for exclusive publication rights to photographs of the event.

The couple did not disappoint their following; their wedding was glamorous and theatrical. Everything was carefully colour co-ordinated, bride, groom and baby wore themed outfits planned to work together. Guests were specifically requested to wear only black or white. The bride and groom sat on specially designed golden thrones placed on a podium raised above their guests and the bride wore a diamond crown valued in the region of £10,000. The wedding reflected a popular interpretation and expectation of this rite for the wealthy and socially aspirational. The couple made no concessions to any current perception of good taste; they went their own way with extravagant gusto, planning exactly what they wanted in their own style. They determined to have exactly what they wanted for their wedding and to enjoy the day. Their celebration confirmed their dual reputation as style leaders of immoderate, exuberant modish presentation.

David and Victoria Beckham sit together on chairs styled as thrones
And placed on a raised podium for their wedding reception in 1999.
They were the principal couple and the major celebrities. The bride
and groom changed into outfits of matching purple for the party after
their ceremony, typical of their penchant for matching designer
clothing. They ensured they were the recognisable stars at their
ceremony by insisting that guests wore only monochrome outfits.
Their wedding table is typically lavish and indulgent and is carefully
designed to colour coordinate with their clothing.   Their backdrop was
dark so that lighting highlighted them as the principals at the event.
The event was a visual representation of the public image the couple
wanted to portray yet it was also an obviously happy occasion for both
if their willing smiles are genuine.
Photograph *Hello* magazine 1999.

David and Victoria Beckham in the white wedding outfits they wore for their ceremony on July 4 1999. Her 'fairy-tale' dress and gem -encrusted tiara resembled a modern interpretation of Princess Diana's royal ensemble.
Photograph *Hello* magazine July 1999

David and Victoria Beckham wore coordinated purple wedding outfits for their reception after changing out of the matching white outfits they wore for their ceremony.
Photograph; *Hello* magazine July 1999

Whilst their attitude to money and publicity appears cynical, their marriage ceremony was serious and was witnessed by a selected few. The couple appeared sublimely happy in their photographs and no pre-nuptial agreement appeared to have been made dividing assets in case of failure of the marriage. Like Madonna, the Beckhams appeared to believe that their relationship would last, at least no contingency plan was pre-arranged in case of breakdown. They are an ultra-modern young couple apparently thoroughly enjoying their celebrity status and the assets this brings them, yet both still acknowledge old-fashioned family values of children and home life within the recognised union of marriage. David and Victoria Beckham are an exemplar couple whose actions and behaviour will influence their fans and followers. Their marriage will champion and endorse matrimony among a generation who have grown up with divorce and live-in partnerships.

3.5.2 The Hollywood style celebrity wedding, Michael Douglas and Catherine Zeta Jones are married

In November 2000 Hollywood actor Michael Douglas and Welsh actress Catherine Zeta Jones were wed amid a huge blaze of publicity. An American, Michael Douglas 55, was an internationally recognised veteran of Hollywood and film. His wife had started her career in British television where she had been well received, before moving to Hollywood in search of further success, fame and fortune. The couple met at a party in 1998 and had been together as a couple since 1999. Their wedding was originally planned for September 2000 but was postponed so that the actress could 'regain her shape' after the birth of their child. This marriage was planned to be a huge media event and she realised that her appearance would be inspected and appraised by the popular press in America and Europe. The venue for the wedding was the Plaza Hotel in New York and details of the magnificence and

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excessive costs of the event were freely given to the press in advance. Publicity surrounding the celebration ensured that huge crowds and banks of photographers were present as famous guests arrived in limousines and waved to the masses before entering the venue. The cost of flowers for the ceremony was estimated at £300,000 while catering and further decorations cost an estimated £250,000. The 250 invited guests were offered a seven -course meal accompanied by unlimited quantities of champagne. The twelve tier wedding cake cost £12,000. Among those staying in the £500 per night rooms were 30 members of the bride's family who had been flown from Wales in the grooms private jet. The exclusive photographic rights to the wedding had been sold to the gossip magazine, *O.K.* so it was anticipated that most of the costs incurred would be recouped through magazine sales.

This couple anticipated advancement financially and through publicity from the event of their wedding. This was acceptable and expected behaviour within their circle. Tabloid press were denied all access to the wedding despite vast publicity so there was speculation among them regarding the mercantilism of an already incredibly wealthy couple. They had been offered £2 million by *Hello* for exclusive rights to their nuptials but they had already accepted a £1.2 million offer by *O.K.* magazine with the proviso that they would retain the right to select photographs intended for publication. Both relied on their physical attributes as well as their acting ability for maintenance of fragile and carefully nurtured reputations so they claimed the right to select and, if necessary, enhance photographs prior to publication. The wedding went well and was a great media success but before the couple had selected the photographs for publication in *O.K.* their rival, *Hello* succeeded in publishing some unauthorised and very amateurish images.

The couple deemed these illicit photographs less than flattering and embarked on a lawsuit against the magazine. The celebrity myth is built on public perception and anything that would damage the illusion could be devastating to an acting career. Catherine is a glamorous star recognised for her physical attributes so the couple apparently considered the uncomplimentary published photographs potentially damaging to her reputation.

The age difference between the two stars certainly contributed to gossip and speculation about their wedding photographs. He is glamorous but ageing in a profession where a youthful appearance is paramount; she is beautiful but struggles to remain slim in a weight obsessed society. The publicity agents of both partners intensively promoted this wedding event since both rely on extensive and regular advertising for continued success in their precarious profession.

Illicit and unauthorised images taken at the wedding of Catherine Zeta Jones and Michael Douglas in November 2000. Photograph *Hello* magazine.

Illicit and unauthorised photograph of Catherine
Zeta Jones at her marriage to Michael Douglas,
November 2000. Photograph *Hello* magazine

Illicit and unauthorised photograph of Catherine
Zeta Jones at her marriage to Michael Douglas in
November 2000. Photograph *Hello* magazine

The popular press reported the ensuing court case with malicious glee, therefore ensuring vast negative publicity for a couple they presented as avaricious and brash. The couple were made to look vain and self-important. They allegedly described the wedding ceremony of David and Victoria Beckham as vulgar, implying that their nuptials were genteel and tasteful. The tabloids were jubilant, they had been denied all access to photographs without payment by this enormously wealthy couple, and they revenged themselves by disparaging and lambasting them. Whatever their reasons for attempting to control access and publication of their wedding photographs, the resulting court case was a world-wide media event and certainly damaged the reputations of both, albeit temporarily.

It is probable that the extreme excess of their wedding exceeded the limits of public acquiescence with exhibition of wealth and the press were eager to provoke resentment. The couple publicly criticised David and Victoria Beckham for outrageously flaunting their wealth yet they did the same thing. David and Victoria Beckham candidly benefited from their wedding but after negotiating their price they confidently relinquished all control of photographs for publication. Michael and Catherine Douglas peremptorily requested control over images to be published consequently exposing their apprehensions regarding their individual and combined self-image. Celebrities depend on a convincing self-assured façade to maintain fan loyalty, any sign of vulnerability causes insecurity among those fans confident only with the approval of others. Antagonising the popular press after the press had acquiesced with the Douglas publicists resulted in a temporary break down in good will between them but it is rare for the press to retreat for any length of time. The celebrity publicity business needs the press but the paparazzi need A-list celebrity gossip to survive.

3.5.3 The celebrity wedding that never was and the shortest celebrity marriages.

On Monday 5 January 2004 the press headlines reported that 22 years old music star, Britney Spears, was desperately trying to have her marriage to 23 years old school-friend Jason Alexander annulled, after just two days. The couple had wed in a Las Vegas wedding chapel at 5.30am on Saturday 3 January, reportedly just for fun, to do something wild, just for the anarchic hell of it. Press speculation was that the pair had been drinking heavily and marriage seemed like a good idea at the time. The marriage was annulled after 55 hours, the grounds cited and accepted were that the couple did not properly know each others likes, dislikes, tastes or desires and, upon learning of these, they proved so incompatible as to make the marriage unworkable. (CNN, 2004). There was apparently no planning for this wedding or considerations as to the consequences of the act. Britney Spears had achieved music stardom in her teenage years and although her public and private behaviour had been extensively reported, there were no previous reports of any romantic liaisons between the two. The adverse pressures of fame on the star were given as reasons for her increasingly eccentric and outlandish behaviour and were widely publicised, and fans were made aware of rumours of exhaustion and sporadic breakdowns. In this case, marriage appeared to be simply another adventure to be regretted later (BBC, 2004).

In an era of celebrity excesses, little was made of this wedding debacle other than minor comment on the misappropriation of sacred marriage vows. Britney is only one in a line of celebrities whose marriages have been short-lived in the extreme. In 1982, actress Zsa Zsa Gabor celebrated her eighth wedding ceremony when she married Mexican lawyer, Felipe de Alba, in a ceremony performed by a ship's captain, at sea. The marriage lasted only 24 hours and since Ms. Gabor had not, at the time, divorced her previous husband, the annulment may well have been redundant.

Actress Elizabeth Taylor has been married eight times although two of her marriages were to the same husband, Richard Burton. The couple divorced in 1974 then married again in 1976. Actor Dennis Hopper and Michelle Phillipe of *Mama's and Papa's* music fame married in 1970 for only eight weeks. In 1994, female actor Drew Barrymore married bar owner Jeremy Thomas for a total of six weeks while heavyweight boxer Mike Tyson's ex wife, Robin Givens ended her 1997 marriage to Yugoslav tennis star, Svetozar Marinkovic after one day. The groom allegedly claimed that the marriage was over after a total of seven hours (Callaway, 2009). Actors Renee Zellweger and Kenny Chesney met in January 2005 and married in September 2005 before Renee filed for divorce after 128 days of marriage while actor Eddie Murphy and Tracey Edmonds declared their marriage over after two weeks in January 2008 (Callaway, 2009). The transience of these marriages must question why they ever occurred in an age where cohabitation is perfectly acceptable. These celebrity weddings are models that fans increasingly opt to follow, the style of the event progressively appears to triumph over belief in its significance and consequences.

3.6 The making of modern celebrity

A mixture of admiration, physical and sexual attraction, and the need to venerate those popularised by others captivate most of those people attracted to celebrities. Celebrities set the scene for others in their behaviour and the way they live in that they set fashion trends; their obsessions, wants and demands will be copied and customized, in this way they epitomise particular social types and act as role models. The modern celebrity is put above ordinary mortals and will be revered, the

luxurious lifestyle and enviable possessions symbolise their success and exemplify the dreams and desires of admirers.

Turner (2004) describes a recent phenomenon of 'accidental' celebrities whose stardom explodes into media attention with a huge furore and disappears into obscurity within a short time span. Short-term celebrities can impact on modern style since they represent some aspects of the communities and cultures they inhabit. The late Jade Goody (d.2009) became a celebrity after her appearances on television's reality *Big Brother* programme. Goody had no particular skills or talent but her conduct and outspokenness reflected a section of current society so she was elevated to celebrity status. Turner (2004) discusses theories for individuals electing to participate in these reality shows that suggest desire for personal validation through being included in some major cultural form such as television or film, links to desire to be free of class placement. French sociologist, anthropologist and philosopher Pierre Bourdieu (1998) acknowledges celebrity achieved through reality television as a means of providing an immediate route to acquiring lifestyle recognition and of becoming free from insignificance. Bourdieu (1998) discusses contemporary television programmes as trying to reach the largest possible viewing numbers by any means, ' television is intent on exploiting and pandering to these same tastes' (p.48) by using the chat show format to offer viewers those particular experiences that appear as exhibitions of the sort of excessive behaviour aimed at voyeurism and exhibitionism. Bourdieu (1998) cites TV chat shows where people are desperate to participate, even as members of the studio audience in their quest to be noticed (p.48).

The role of celebrity has become a 'location for the interrogation and elaboration of cultural identity' (Turner 2004, p. 24). Celebrity is increasing identified and supported by the mass media applying criterion and selections

reflecting current social values. Modern celebrities are those who reflect current popular and fashionable character and physical traits. Desire and pursuit of physical beauty has accorded many fashionable 'supermodels' with celebrity acclaim because of how they look. While it could be argued that the privations of dieting to fashionable size zero, or the rigours of undergoing extensive cosmetic surgery to effect or maintain transient physical perfection constitutes dedication, it is a reflection of modern values when fame and celebrity can be awarded for beauty rather than achievement.

While celebrity status is likely to be highly beneficial to finance, occupation and ego, it does deprive 'real' celebrities of privacy and demands unrestricted access to their lives. Respect for them operates on a superficial level. Frequently they cease to be regarded as people and become regarded as part of the commercial process. The late Princess of Wales complained bitterly to the press for their disregard for her privacy, every aspect of her life became public property and although she had initially encouraged this, when she did want to exercise control over material published about her she found she was unable to. The press and media, in turn, retaliated to her allegations by accusing her of courting and manipulating their reportage selectively and to her advantage. It seems that once a personality has been accorded celebrity status then the price they are expected to pay for acceptance of fame and fortune is commodification. Prince William was born into his position yet such is the press and public interest in his life that the royal family were obliged to arrange a fragile agreement with the media who acquiesced to his request for privacy while he attended university. Since completing his studies he has been subjected to an increasing degree of harassment and hounding although his private life has been protected and relatively uneventful. Persistent speculation concerning future marriage has proved futile so far

but Prince William will be well aware that the media will meticulously investigate any liaison, no matter how casual. The younger royals represent the acme of celebrity so their status is fixed whether they welcome media attention or not.

The way in which appointed celebrities are presented in the media is fundamental to their continued status. Celebrity publicity is generally considered to be beneficial to all parties, those in the limelight are rewarded with the attention they crave and are financially rewarded by the hoards of devoted fans hungry for all news about their idols. Even bad publicity elevates them to the forefront of public notice. Stars need to project glamour and a glamorous lifestyle to which their fans aspire whilst appearing more physically attractive or appealing, and richer than ordinary people, but occasionally their vulnerability can humanise them and fans can empathise with their susceptibility. Their lifestyle is the fabric of dreams for most fans, to be allied, admired and envied and imitated wherever possible at some level.

It is not always possible to exactly define celebrity or to ascertain who makes the grade to celebrity status. During the first three quarters of the twentieth century, Hollywood determined celebrity via a mixture of talent, glamour and positive publicity, there also appeared to be a degree of luck and fate intertwined with these virtues. The latter part of the twentieth century and the early twenty-first saw the rise of the manufactured star, the star selected by means of interview and groomed to desirable and acceptable performance. Talent can be limited and is not a major priority provided the individual displays a positive work ethic and is willing to be manipulated to fit a desired personality and physical image. An affective agent along with ambition, hard work and luck can bring celebrity status for the determined individual. Pre-fabricated groups of music performers have been banded together at least since the 1960s when 'The Monkees' were auditioned separately then assembled

to form an American challenge to the plethora of popular young British music bands pervading North America. The hugely successful all-girl group, 'The Spice Girls' were formed in 1995 after being auditioned among thousands of hopeful young singers desperate for stardom. They were all attractive and ambitious and their individually constructed stage personas were carefully targeted at the newly identified and lucrative pre-pubescent and early pubescent female audience. Their earnings were vast and media interest in their lives, both public and private, was frenzied. Manufactured celebrity is being thrust at an increasingly younger and prodigal fan-base. Television talent shows offered aspiring stars the opportunities of fame and success but 'exploited the possibilities offered by a generation which considered fame its only deliverance,' (Cashmore 2006, p. 199). Fading stars and minor celebrities attempt to rejuvenate or boost careers through television talent shows such as 'I'm a Celebrity; Get Me Out of Here' and ' Strictly Come Dancing. All those hopeful stars are prepared to endure humiliation and insult at the hands of celebrity judges and the viewing public in their desire for fame and acclaim, and the associated financial benefits.   A fickle and inconstant public anticipates a stream of new and established celebrities to entertain them, and to retain their status celebrities need to maintain media and public attention through talent, publicity or preferably, both. Stars need constant attention; they need to be photographed attending fashionable events or in fitting locations and the media needs to provide visual information to guarantee sales.

Just as the photographer can be friend or foe to the celebrity, wedding photographs have become an art form in visually defining audience or guest perception of the mood and importance of the occasion. The bride and groom emulate the status of the stars for their wedding day and it is the skill of the photographer that elucidates the bride's dreams and concepts of glamour. No longer does the wedding

photographer turn up at the ceremony to snap away at the bride and groom and invited guests in locale. Modern photographic techniques have evolved to manipulate lighting, composition and quality of printing paper to produce flattering images akin to celebrity publicity pictures. Modern photography can subjectively enhance a client through artistry and craftsmanship exactly as skilled portrait painters had done in the past.

3.7 Recording the event, wedding photographs and visual celebrification

Wedding photography has developed particular styles and techniques to record the most important ceremonial event in a lifetime while affirming the bride and groom's ideas about their social standing. Strano (2006) suggests that wedding photography functions as a means of ritualised communication where social norms are maintained and contested while Lewis (1997) describes it as more than a series of joyous images, but also as 'a complex interconnection of manifest and latent meanings' (p. 167). This suggests that wedding photographs are recognisable as such and obvious to anyone while the 'latent' meanings would indicate wealth, social status, possibly age of the couple and whether the wedding is a first or subsequent ceremony.

It is apparent that wedding photographs are more than a mere record of events and that the photographs represent aspects of current culture and social expression. Strano (2006) comments that while a couple might feel their wedding album is individual and very personal, albums are generally very similar between couples.

Stoke-on-Trent c.1900, A family formally posed and dressed in their wedding best. Their extravagant garments reflect contemporary style but the background terraces suggest such smart formality would be exceptional . Courtesy Dr. & Mrs W.G.Salt.

Wedding photography has developed certain conventions acknowledged by photographers and customers, signing the register, the couple, the family group. Wedding rules of conduct are featured through, among other things, 'family relationships, friendship, and public display of wealth, much of the ritual centers around the display of gender norms dictating how men and women should act, especially regarding their (hetero)sexuality' (Strano, 2006, p. 38). This explains how wedding photographs are able to capture ritualised moments in time centred round certain individuals and their family, community and peer groups. Because wedding photographs are posed and manipulated they are really negotiated interpretations of the reality of participation in conventional practice.

Formally posed family wedding group photograph, Northumberland 1920.
The corrugated iron building behind the group is likely to be the reception
venue. Private collection.

The emerging same-sex marriage market appears to embrace many structured
and standard wedding conventions including orthodox style of wedding photography
while their visual records indicate an altered social memory of accepted rituals. The
wedding photographs are usually ordinary and routine images of the happy couple, the
couple with friends and family, except the couples are same gender.

Wedding photography is one part of the huge and highly profitable wedding
business. It is commercially beneficial for the wedding industry to perpetuate those
values, ritual practices and traditions and convictions based on anticipated consumer
wants and needs. Photographs provide idealistic images of events revolving around
class and position within the world the couple inhabit but they also document
aspirations and social ambitions. Sontag (1977) claims 'The picture may distort; but
there is always a presumption that something exists, or did exist, which is like what's
in the picture', (p.5), suggesting that photographs provide incontrovertible proof of an
event but the images might be highly selective and only indicative of constructed
reality. She goes on to suggest that photographs can capture reality rather than just

interpreting it but photographs are 'as much an interpretation of the world as paintings and drawings are' (p.7). The two photographs of wedding groups (Stoke and Northumberland) represent both record and aspiration. Both feature a wedding couple and guests dressed in their formal best. In context of time and locations, their finery is relatively classless in that the groups are not patrician but could be either middle or working class. In both instances, it is the location that indicates family background but the photographs are evidence of ecumenical fashion and provide evidence of an aspirating community stylishly and resolutely rising to such a ceremony. The occasion of a wedding allows transgression of expected class behaviour and style where all classes can indulge in luxury clothing and food and drinks in opulent if unfamiliar surroundings.

In discussing the norms associated with wedding photographs Strano (2006) states that in the traditional heterosexual bridal portrait, the two most highlighted features of the bride's appearance are her white dress and veil, historically symbolic of her virginity. The romantic myth blurs reality so that a bride can be whatever she wants as far as her wedding audience is concerned. She can pursue any delusion, including that of innocent purity and her photographs corroborate her dream. Much of the symbolic, ceremonial and traditional performances of the wedding are ritualised conventions that the couple will willingly embrace. Photographic records of the wedding day fall into this category as most couples comply with traditionally ceremonial gendered roles. Strano (2006) claims that wedding photographs evidence brides and grooms engaging in negotiated performances that display 'normative behaviour to public and private audiences' (p.44). The couple conform to the gendered conventions of wedding performance such as the bride being 'given away' by a male relative or wedding speeches conventionally made only by the bride's

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father and the groom along with his best man. Photographs authenticate this while subtly indicating their ideas of their class, and place in their community and their social aspirations and ambitions. Wedding photographs conventionally capture the romantic idealism of the event and provide affirmation of the couple's social situation on the occasion of their wedding day.

The professional wedding photographer must work quickly and efficiently to ensure that the groups behave as instructed so the outcomes will look technically proficient and idealistically conformist. The job has gone beyond the capabilities of the talented amateur as modern weddings are too expensive to leave visual memories and records to chance. Wedding photographs are staged to catch a particular moment in time where everyone is dressed in their finest clothes looking their best. These images become permanently available so they can be reviewed and admired at any time and couples can preserve themselves at their most confident and glamorous. They function as stimulants to memorise the day and will function as memorials of the occasion. Lewis (1997) suggests that this ideal look should reflect the visually stereotypical signs of wealth as portrayed by celebrities featured in mass media news, advertising and film. Such signs are the material objects associated with the rich such as impractical, expensive, once-worn clothes, costly flower and table arrangements and extravagant catering. Many modern couples are so proud of their glamorous and ostentatious event that they post fragments of video footage on popular internet web-sites so they can be accessed by any member of the general public. Part of the whole modern wedding experience is the elitism of the bride and groom, the need to feel special, significant, important and famous. Once all the brouhaha is over, the photographs provide incontrovertible evidence of the day.

Throughout the twentieth century, wedding photographs usually recorded the groom and best man arriving at the wedding venue, the bride's arrival, the couple and their witnesses signing of official registers then the couple leaving as newly-weds. Afterwards there would be a number of photographs of the couple, separately or together with various friends and family and usually a few group photographs with the session culminating with a group photograph of all guests and attendees. The photographer would then attend the reception venue to capture some less formal images, but ensuring flowers and table decorations were included, and for a staged 'cutting of the cake'. The resultant album would show a series of appropriately happy, smiling images, the bride looking demure and virginal but standing out from the crowd in her white dress with the groom acting as proud accessory.

Visual records of the wedding ceremony have always evidenced conspicuous consumption. In 2005, celebrity magazine *OK!* reportedly paid £1.75m in payment for publishing rights of wedding pictures of 'glamour' model Jordan and her pop star fiancée Peter Andre. The couple both appeared on a reality television production where their public romance blossomed and they gained mutual popular acclaim. Jordan, aka Katie Price came to prominence posing as a topless model while Andre was a declining pop star but both were glamorous and had captured public attention and approval. She had allowed tabloid and gossip press publication of details of her breast enlargement that immediately brought her public recognition. She then published her autobiography documenting a previous relationship resulting in the birth of a child with serious health problems. This helped to focus media perception of her as a fashionably archetypal gorgeous and glamorous caring and responsible parent. Her willingness to disclose graphic personal information about her past to a prying public along with her disreputable career and physical attributes and tabloid

availability contributed to her overnight celebrity status. Neither could claim fame outside Britain but the wedding of Katie Price, nicknamed 'Queen of Chavs', by the tabloid press, promised maximum visual excess and outrageous exhibitionism with little acknowledgement of taste so magazine sales were guaranteed (Leppard, 2005). The wedding perfectly reflected contemporary ideals of extreme conspicuous consumption. The wedding photographs maintain a perception of a capricious grand lifestyle enjoyed by very few but warranted by the couple, at least for their wedding day. The subsequent break-down of their marriage has been further used by both, but Katie in particular, as further opportunity for attention and self-publicity (*Daily Mail*, 2007).

There is some degree of competition between couples regarding their wedding arrangements and Lewis (1997) suggests that modern couples compared their nuptials through evidence of the photographs. The album provides testimony of the day. The opportunity to act the part of fictional wealthy and glamorous nobility at the centre of deference and opulence has become central to the successful modern wedding image along with being seen by others as desirable, beautiful and enviable. Lewis (1997) states;

> In today's mass society, notions of success, fulfilment, consumption and image are closely connected within "consumer ideology". The "star-for-a-day" fantasy is especially powerful in the wedding album because it is composed of photographs, those two dimensional representations that are a seemingly "natural" form of communication (pp. 173-174).

During the late twentieth century and into the twenty-first wedding conventional photography has been supplemented by digital photography and video adding further visual documentation and memory. Digital photography adds greater

selection of photographs by allowing the photographer to select or delete images without the trouble of time consuming chemical development. Results can be seen almost immediately. Digital photography can be more easily computer manipulated to ensure flattering images or to portray more favourable light and weather conditions. This can produce successful results in the hands of a talented amateur photographer although the experienced professional is more likely to arrange groups quickly and efficiently and compose the photograph to produce a successful layout. Video is more immediate than still photographs in that while people can be posed and manipulated for both, photographs capture a single moment in time while video indiscriminately displays the whole performance. Internet web-site publication of wedding video images is usually of selected snippets used to display the exhibitionism, ostentation and glamour of the event by couples determined to promote their celebrity potential. Inclusion of music and sound in wedding videos adds a further dimension to records and ambience but even when carefully edited, video images are often too rudimentary and lack the subtlety and discrimination of photographs.

Most couples want their photographs to look natural, yet also provide flattering and memorable records to be displayed for the benefit of others or kept as visible evidence of the glamour and success of the day. Lewis (1998) reveals that supposedly spontaneous emotional moments make popular photographs although the professional photographer carefully orchestrates the actions and poses. Wedding photography is formulaic in grouping and layout and follows certain conventions in the types of images produced since most wedding albums bear a remarkable similarity yet they are an incontrovertible part of the wedding ritual and the wedding industry. They provide testimony to the lavishness and extravagance of the occasion and present the couple looking their best with family and invited guests deferring to them.

People recognise the similarity of poses and location images among wedding photographs but this is accepted as part of the convention and couples see their own wedding images as exclusive and individual. A wedding video might be viewed by the couple and shown to friends and family but it is the wedding photographs that are proudly displayed and reflect a couples dreams, aspirations style-awareness and self-esteem. The wedding photographs provide evidence of stylishness, glamour, competitiveness and celebrity. Photographs furnish concrete evidence of the lavish success of the day and of the conspicuous celebrity status of the bride and groom.

Fashionable wedding of the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries have reflected the exhibitionism and excesses perpetrated by wealthy star celebrities. Wedding style has changed from a private ceremony attended by family and friends into a celebration publicised in newspapers and on websites. Records need to reflect the opulence of the day and success appears to be increasingly measured in materialistic outlay. Couples expect celebrification on their wedding day and as costs escalate to £ 60 for every minute of the day (*Daily Mail*, 2007), couples might feel they have paid for their celebrity status.

Chapter 4

THE WEDDING BUSINESS

4.1 The wedding business opportunity

Weddings have traditionally been expensive, lavish ceremonies at all levels and families and couples have extended themselves to provide the best they can afford. A wedding day has historically been recognised as a very special day to be celebrated as a life-changing event, and such an important occasion has traditionally been commemorated by festivity. As well as being a rite of passage and acknowledgement of adulthood, the occasion provides numerous business opportunities and because of the press coverage and the huge popularity of modern celebrity weddings, the wedding industry has expanded and thrived. This chapter will discuss the growth of the wedding business and it's influence in promoting the modern consumer driven style of wedding. Bridal dress shops can be found in every town and city regardless of size and population. Large hotels and exhibition centres rely on packing in crowds by staging wedding events wherein wedding consultants and photographers and all those involved in producing and selling equipment, venues, supplies and all manner of materials associated with marriage and the wedding can congregate together and ply their wares to an enthusiastic public. Fashionable weddings have developed an element of competitive excess, especially in recent years where obvious superfluous spending has become an expectation.

The wedding business concentrates primarily on the bride and her female entourage while the groom is relatively peripheral in the marketing context. In her very special white dress and surrounded by her bridesmaids and attendants she provides the glamour and the focal point of the event. It is usual for the bride to decide the style of the wedding and her influence extends to the wedding and party

venues where flowers, confetti, table dressings and all manner of decorative accessories colours and styles harmonise in accordance with fashionable taste.

Magazines and journals dedicated to wedding promotion abound and are avidly read by prospective brides for advice on style and product information. Highly commercialised consumerism informs and advises the criteria for a successful wedding providing commodity information and enlightenment. Fashions in wedding presentation and etiquette change but commercial pressure to make the day special and different are encouraged by stealthy manipulation from an industry primed to promote fantasised ideal within a range of costs. Celebrity weddings have promoted the idea of a lavish ceremony and they set fashionable style. The wedding business is designed to foster hedonism and exhort maximum profit from illusion. Modern society both fosters and abets fantasy and delusion in regard to the wedding day image and marriage overall. Fantasy is described by Otnes and Pleck (2003) who claim that ' Hedonistic pleasure has become embedded in lavish theme parties…such pleasure is inevitably tied to the assumption that one can assume star status by acquiring and enjoying the right goods…' (p.270). Otnes and Pleck (2003) go on to discuss delusion when couples whose 'Cinderella fantasies of happily ever after…lead to disappointment and ultimately to divorce' (p.274). Weddings have become spectacular visual occasions and guests anticipate an ocular feast as well as an edible one. Anticipation and excitement are verbs best used to describe the build up to a wedding, especially if a public figure is involved so that the press can inflame interest and expectation. Television soaps enhance viewing figures with the promotion of a televised wedding with the event guaranteed to draw a maximum audience. Contemporary gossip magazines almost inevitably contain myriad photographs of at least one celebrity wedding, a ploy guaranteed to boost sales figures.

Wedding photographs invariably feature a smiling couple dressed in unfamiliar clothes situated in a fanciful and sumptuous location completely unlike and unrelated to their natural home environment, yet delighting in their situation. Commercialism has so effectively persuaded the modern bride and groom to comply with current convention in the organisation of their wedding day that whilst they might individualise minutiae, recognised practice and protocol are rigidly adhered to. Fashions in weddings are set and changed by celebrities and film stars and occasionally, major royals. Dress designers are made famous through reflected status of their celebrity clientele as well as their design talent. A moderately successful designer or company can be elevated through their profession if their skills are recognised and endorsed by a major star. Although Stella McCartney was already well known in the fashion design world, rumours that she had been asked to design the wedding dress Madonna wore for her marriage to Guy Ritchie greatly enhanced Ms. McCartney's professional reputation. Before the future Duchess of York, Sarah Ferguson, asked her for a wedding dress design, Linda Ciernac was virtually unknown. She was propelled to fame through association with her royal client. Newspaper advertisements proclaim the advantages of numerous venues in which to celebrate both the wedding or the ensuing reception or both. The etiquette involved in the organisation and presentation of the ceremony involve a blend of traditionalism, romanticism, fantasy and pragmatism as facets of wedding consumerism. The proliferation of bridal magazines offers general advice and practical information on every aspect of wedding planning. Up to date 'de rigueur' council is included, advising on current fashion and dress codes; catering and menu management; flowers, bouquets and floral arrangements; presentation techniques; music guidance; lighting; details of service; transport; venue recommendations and innumerable advertisements

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for anything even remotely connected to marriage and the wedding. Every small detail is included, even down to the shape, construction and colour coding of confetti.

The cost of a wedding has increased throughout the twenty-first century. An article published by insurers *Weddingplan* (Jill Phillip, 2002) put the cost of a basic wedding at £12,000 but rising while the *confetti* wedding website put the cost at nearer £14,000. A similar article researched for *The Guardian* (2004) put the average cost of a U.K. wedding at £15,764 Sandra Haurant, 2004). The most expensive parts of the occasion are the honeymoon, costing an average of £2,828, and catering costs at £2,447. By 2008 a *Telegraph* article (Wallop, 2008) discovered that the cost of a wedding had soared to more than £20,000. A suggested budget reads as;

Item	Av. Cost
The service	£520
Insurance	£110
Reception (food, venue, drinks)	£4,000
Evening reception	£1,700
Entertainment	£ 850
Flowers	£685
Balloons & Decorations	£460
Bride's outfit	£1,590
Hair and Beauty	£170
Groom's outfit	£200
Attendants outfits	£575
Photography	£905
Videography	£905
Transport	£480

Stationery	£465
Wedding cake	£370
Wedding rings	£630
Gifts	£205
Stag & Hen nights	£280
Honeymoon & first night hotel	£3,400
Total	£18,500

(Weddingsday, 2009)

The cost of a wedding in London goes considerably beyond the national average through higher venue, catering and transport hire costs. The cost of an average wedding appears to exceed half the sum of the average national salary (Wallop, 2008). Because of the costs involved it has become usual for couples to take out insurance in case of disaster but this does not cover the non-appearance of either partner (Which, 2009). A huge service industry devoted to wedding planning and organisation has been built up to assist with etiquette and tradition and to advise on honeymoon locations, recommend fashion choices and guide on wedding trends. Experts in wedding organisation have set up 'wedding planner' businesses to help support those intending to marry. These experts build up information data and contact lists to save the couple the stress and time it takes to ensure that every detail has been attended to, but such a service is expensive, typically costing 15% of the wedding budget (Weddingguide, 2009; b). Planning experts recommend that couples begin planning their wedding 18 months prior to the event; if a particularly popular venue for the reception is planned then the time-scale may need to be extended.

The wedding industry has arguably enhanced perceptions of the wedding as a spectacle since it encourages the realisation of the wedding fantasy and suggests that

such fanciful notion is within grasp. First weddings in America, according to Boden (2003) are usually big traditional white weddings but those planning a second or third marriage have different ideals and want a different sort of wedding. The first wedding is fashionably a 'fairy-tale' occasion promoting the bride to status of 'princess' (p.52). Subsequent weddings may still merit display but these are often more personal to the couple in that they are less concerned with prescribed convention. Along with traditional paraphernalia the industry has invented modern sacred artefacts that add both pomp and atmosphere to the wedding as well as expense, the most obvious example being the white wedding dress and bridal bouquet.

Boden (2003) refers to research regarding the gender imbalance in structuring wedding preparations, both enthusiasm and participation. She suggests that the trappings relating to the wedding ceremony did not appear to hold special significance for the groom who was more involved in the social assembly and in the photographs. His concern was with the fraternization and camaraderie of the reception and in attending to the provision and enjoyment of guests so involving himself in a group celebration. Since the groom is usually dressed in a suit similar or even identical to that of many male attendants, his identity is secondary and is usually totally eclipsed by his bride. Formal male wedding attire has changed very little since the early twentieth century and many grooms prefer to hire their worn once outfit rather than buying it. Comparisons between groom's outfits from the 1938 and the 2007/08 advertisements demonstrate that formal male clothing has changed very little other than the modern less formal collar and tie and the modern groom would not carry gloves. The bride concentrates on the occasion itself ensuring that every detail is considered in a ceremony where she is the major attraction.

Bridegroom attire   Bridegroom attire 2007/8
The Bride's Book, 1938   *the Wedding directory*,
Ed; Dorothy Stote   *Nov 2007 – Jan 2008*

Bridegrooms appear prepared to accept their subordinate position and are generally

willing to accede to the bride's daydreams. So focused have modern brides become

on planning a successful wedding day that a modern condition of 'Post Nuptial

Depression' (BBC Radio 4, 2004) has recently been diagnosed. The hiatus left after

the excitement and bustle of the wedding day leaves the modern bride with a period of

empty time and the realisation that the wedding is over and marriage has begun.

Recognition by the medical profession gives credence to a malady created through

contemporary self-induced stress. Journalist Amelia Hill quoted Phillip Hodson,

fellow of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy in The *Guardian*

as early as 2003 suggesting that at least 10% of new spouses suffer a post-wedding

depression which, if left untreated, can lead to despair and even separation. He goes

on to suggest that post-wedding depression stems from the belief that marriage will

elevate the couple in some way, to a higher and happier state of existence. The

emotional and physical effort invested in wedding organisation can take up to two years and can cost more than £40,000. Possibly more significant than cost are the hopes and fantasies invested in the wedding. Hill (2003) quotes Linda Sinclair, clinical psychologist at Bath University describing the effect of Post Nuptial Depression as,' The syndrome can sound insignificant but, if it's not dealt with, it can slip into real depression and last indefinitely'. The modern wedding has often become the extravagant climax of many months of planning rather than as the beginning. Wigmore (2008) writing for *The Mail* newspaper cites articles by American Psychologist Dr. Michelle Gannon claiming that 10 % of modern couples (brides in particular) suffer from Post Nuptial depression because of unrealistic expectations of married life after wedding euphoria.

4.2 The ideal venue

The traditional venue for a Christian wedding until the middle of the twentieth century was the church. Churches incorporate both gravitas and impressiveness to the religious and legal ceremony and the atmosphere within a church conveys the significance of the ceremony. Churches are traditionally relatively large and high ceilinged, dimly lit, silent and overwhelming, the very buildings command respect. The alternative to marriage in a church was marriage in a licensed civil building. Civil marriages conducted for non-Christians or non-believers or for divorcees were perfectly legal but civil venues were inevitably institutional, unadorned and unattractive. They existed to legalise a contract rather than celebrate a ceremonial occasion so were austere and functional. By the late twentieth century when a greater number of marriages were conducted outside The Church these venues were finally dressed up to present a more desirable environment in which to celebrated such a

momentous occasion. Once alternative venues were finally allowed to conduct marriages competition acted as the incentive for embellishment to the detriment of the church service. The church service became less exclusive with the inclusion of a diversity of venues offering variety and choice.

During the Middle- Ages the Christian Church rationalised its own laws and governmental structure. A systemised doctrine was developed wherein a rigid set of customs was attributed to the celebration of marriage. The Church determined to control marriage services ostensibly to ensure proper and legal practise but also to direct and regulate. Whilst lack of religious ceremony did not prohibit marriage, and marriages outside a Christian church were legal, such ceremonies were spurned as socially inferior. The church was at the hub of every town and village and it was expected that all local marriages would take place there (Seidel, 1993). The church gave a reverent, holy atmosphere to a public ceremony amid dignified and esteemed surroundings.

Ecclesiastic law demanded that marriages in a church could take place only during the morning hours between 8am and midday, regardless of the size of parish and even during favoured months when greater numbers wished to marry. As a sacrament, marriage had to take place after an overnight fast and noon was sanctioned the latest hour to maintain abstinence (hence the term 'wedding breakfast' for the subsequent feast). Within the walls of the church, a couple pledged their vows to one another in the presence of witnesses in the place of their God. The sanctity of marriage was assured in the eyes of the Church through the pledges delivered in the presence of a priest, a servant of God, and the service stipulated that a union blessed by God could not be later reversed by man (Council of Trent 1545 – 1563).

The Divorce Reform Act 1969 allowed mutual breakdown as condition for divorce and this relaxation resulted in escalating numbers of marriages ending in divorce. Despite this the ideologies of the Church could not recognise, much less authorise dissolution of marriage. Remarriage of a divorcee could not be sanctioned within a church building if the previous spouse was still alive so a wedding in church was denied to many. Those divorcees wishing to remarry or anyone marrying a divorcee were forced to look elsewhere to contract their wedding ceremony.

Custom still demands that couples marrying in an Anglican Church call banns for three consecutive Sundays immediately prior to the wedding. If one partner lives outside the parish then banns must be read out in both parishes. Should a couple choose to marry in a church outside of the area then they must either be on the electoral role of that church or else they must pay for a Special Licence. A Common Licence suffices where couples take up temporary residence in an area. Roman Catholic ceremonies demand that a couple produce certification of baptism and confirmation. The Church of England table of parochial fees (1 January 2009) stipulate that basic statutory fees for a wedding are:

Publication of banns	£22.00
Certificate of banns (if required)	£12.00
Marriage service	£254.00
Marriage certificate at registration	£3.50

Floral decoration of the church, heating, organists and choir fees are all extra.

A priest will provide permission for a Catholic to marry another Christian or he may apply to his bishop for dispensation to marry someone who is not baptised. The Catholic Church usually requests that couples attend a number of meetings with their priest in preparation for their wedding. The most liberal of the British Christian

Churches is the Church of Scotland. Provided the minister agrees, a Church of

Scotland wedding can be conducted anywhere with a fixed address, so a vehicle

would have to be permanently parked or a boat moored. Whilst banns are not

required, a minimum of fifteen days notice must be given to a register office in the

district of the wedding rather than in the districts of residence (Wedding & Home,

April/May 2003). Such authoritarian rules were perfectly acceptable when couples

were likely to be part of a community but by the mid twentieth century, individuals

were commonly migrating to distant towns, cities and countries in search of

employment opportunity. Where both members of the couple lived outside their

respective parishes and were not regular churchgoers, the need for some alternative

arrangements became obvious.

Wedding chapels have proved a popular American alternative to the pomp and

expense of the traditional white wedding conducted in church, and importantly, these

venues sanction re-marriages. Wedding chapels remain open for twenty-four hours

offering easily accessed cheap and speedy weddings therefore appealing to

spontaneous wedding decisions. Their popularity has resulted in a proliferation of

chapels competing with each other for custom by blatantly advertising their existence

to passing traffic through lurid neon advertising hoardings and conspicuous websites.

There is nothing religious about such premises but they offer a variety of financial

packages for a popular service at an affordable cost with greater immediacy. As well

as a simple service, many wedding chapels offer bridal packages from small and

uncomplicated to a full-blown fantasy wedding for those with no financial constraints.

While Britain has not commercialised the wedding venue so aggressively, the

relaxation of laws licensing acceptable venues has meant that church weddings have

declined in number while alternative venues have become increasingly popular.

American wedding chapels are externally brash and garish but provide an instant formulaic service with individual touches at a guaranteed pre-agreed price. Couples can have a non-religious civil service of their choosing in the themed lavish interiors. Photographs, *Wedding Annual* 2003

Church attendances diminished during the late twentieth century (Office for National Statistics, UK, 2009) resulting in many young couples choosing to pledge themselves in civil marriage without religious content or significance. The Christian Church in England and Wales has recognised the legality of civil marriage ceremonies since the system of registration was introduced in 1836 but has surreptitiously scorned their significance. They were considered a poor and, at one time, barely respectable alternative to a formal church wedding for Christian couples. The civil marriage meets legal requirements so that the bond between spouses will provide a basis for exchange of property and will provide financial arrangements and protect children. A Christian marriage is a religious marriage and is considered by the Catholic Church as a permanent covenant and sacrament performed in the presence of God. The Church of England does not recognise the sacramental nature of marriage but still

acknowledges the covenant made in the presence of God. Civil weddings provide the practical means for a legal marriage without the accompanying pomp and ritual and very often, without such public scrutiny. The registrar licensed to conduct civil marriages requests that couples provide evidence of name, age, marital status and nationality. The couple have to be resident in England or Wales seven days before visiting the register office and weddings can be booked no less than seventeen days and no more than twelve months in advance. A civil marriage demands the presence of at least two witnesses for a brief ceremony lasting up to thirty minutes. The minimum fee for a civil wedding costs appreciably less than a church and comprises:

Notice of wedding	£60.00 (£30 each)
Register Office ceremony	£40.00
Religious ceremony in building other than Church of England or in Wales	£47.00 registrars fee+ any fees to church trustees of building and fees to person who performs ceremony
Marriage certificate	£3.50
Total cost;	£103.50 (General Register Office (visitbritain.com 16.6.2009 England and Wales).

A civil wedding is available to anyone unless there is a legal reason for prohibition of marriage so Christians debarred from a religious ceremony have had no other legally recognised options. The reluctance of the Church of England to sanction marriages between divorcees within church premises and the outright refusal of the Catholic Church to recognise such marriages has resulted in couples searching for alternative venues when a civil registry office appears too austere and impersonal. In recognition of this, many U.K. public houses, hotels and private country houses have obtained the necessary licences to legally perform non-religious marriage ceremonies on their premises. They offer themselves as attractive venues able to provide an

aesthetic ideal for photographs and videos so the whole celebration can be conducted within a single venue with accommodation and catering included. They also offer a welcome addition to the popular Saturday wedding. Unlike civil registry offices, private licensed locations allow time for the service so the occasion is not likely to be hastened along before the next wedding party arrives. The extension of wedding licences to pubs and public halls has allowed couples to marry in familiar and comfortable circumstances at relatively minimal expense although weddings may not take place out of doors or in private homes. Unlike America, British venues advertise through wedding exhibitions and events and through magazines, newspapers and websites with no neon present so the occasion and locale are more decorous.

Skibo castle, Scotland, venue for Madonna's wedding suggests
heritage and noble lineage but is available for prestigious weddings
American chapels provide a lavish interior but a gaudy, showy exterior

designed to attract the attention of passers by. As well as traditional and conventional white weddings, marriage chapels offer themed weddings where the couple can indulge any whim and fantasy and fulfil any reasonable fanciful desire whilst being married. Such themes could include exhibitionist display, fancy dress, celebrity clone witnesses, and performance of dance, sport such as skydiving or parachuting or location visits. Helicopter weddings flying over the Grand Canyon are advertised on

a number of websites along with the famous Elvis themes. Elvis weddings can have 'Elvis' officiating at their wedding ceremony in a choice of Elvis film sets such as *Jail House Rock* or *Blue Hawaii*. Famous celebrity look-alikes such as Michael Jackson or Madonna are available to attend or officiate a ceremony depending on whim and preference. Whilst these weddings confirm and legalise a binding contract, they also provide instant gratification so that the opportunity for self-indulgence and thrill complement the more serious and meaningful aspects of the event.

The magnitude of the marital pledge as a lifelong commitment can easily be overlooked amid the glamour and exhilaration of the whole performance. Personalisation of the ceremony so that it becomes relevant solely to the couple rather than families, friends and society in general, reflects a hedonistic modern attitude of self-fulfilment being paramount. Mercantile promotion of the desirability for a novel, imaginative wedding day evinces the showmanship quality of many weddings. The exhibitionism of the event takes precedence over the poignancy. Young brides, or those marrying for the first time, still usually opt for a traditional wedding complete with white gown. The lure of the fairy-tale bridal image and the gratification of celebrity recognition for the duration of the day, as well as common expectation, amalgamate to persuade the couple to conform and to behave according to current trend. Themed weddings appear a popular choice for couples who have already experienced previous extravagant white wedding idealism so they treat any subsequent wedding as special to them rather than an occasion for family, friends and close colleagues (Boden 2003).

Wedding chapels offer convenient modern weddings and offer alternatives to the clandestine wedding in that both conventional and unconventional liaisons are

legally legitimised Many American wedding chapels began as small community churches during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries.

The Elvis wedding experience, 'Elvis' walks a bride through the 'Tunnel of Love' at the Little White Chapel, Photograph, *Las Vegas News Bureau* (no date).

As communities grew and diversified the need for available establishments where anyone could marry provided there was no legal reason not to was recognised within locales. Within Las Vegas a number of establishments competed to provide dream weddings at various established costs and the Wedding Chapel was created. Las Vegas wedding chapels have become famous through aggressive marketing of their preparedness to cater to dreams and fantasies and their popularity with celebrity clientele. As early as 1942 actor Mickey Rooney and actress Ava Gardner married in

a Las Vegas wedding chapel followed in 1943 by actress Betty Grable who married

bandleader Harry James. Since then numerous celebrity couples have chosen Las

Vegas weddings such as;

 composer Burt Bacharach and actor Angie Dickenson (1966),

actor Michael Caine and model Shakira Baksh (1973),

rock star Bob Geldorf and television presenter Paula Yates (1986),

actor Richard Gere and model Cindy Crawford (1991),

television presenter Chris Evans and actor Billie Piper (2001)

singer Britney Spears and Jason Allen Alexander (2004)

(Las Vegas ReviewJournal, 2009)

These names represent only a sample of the major celebrities who have elected to

marry in wedding chapels.

   Wedding organisers are on hand if needed to help organise every detail including

procurement of necessary licenses, purchase or hire of clothing and provision of

witnesses if required. Competition among wedding chapels is intense so attention to

detail and value for money are primary considerations and the chapels are open all

day and night so clients can marry at any time. Such personal attention is available

only to advise on organisation and to provide commodities, guidance on matters of

style and taste are generally left to the customer. Wedding chapels provide a variety

of levels of service at an agreed cost to assist wedding consumers in their choices.

The options offered are dependant on price and preference rather than sentiment; their

involvement in the business of weddings has more to do with economics than

idealism. The two Viva Las Vegas wedding chapels can accommodate one hundred

people and provide a condensed fairy-tale environment including vaulted ceilings,

stained glass windows and bell towers along with fountains, gazebos and silk trees

and flowers and twinkling fairy lights. (Viva Las Vegas Weddings, 2009) The

interiors can be transformed like a stage show to accommodate any themed fantasy

including 'mansion wedding', that promises 'Hollywood glamour in the heart of Las

Vegas' (Viva Las Vegas Weddings, 2009), 'Pink Caddy wedding' where the bride can

ride down the aisle in a pink Cadillac car or a 'desert wedding' where the interior is

transformed to a spectacular desert sunset. The advertising material describes various

available packages within a range of prices and these stipulate exactly what is

provided, even recommending who to tip and how much. Packages include

everything necessary for a marriage, including obtaining licenses and providing

accommodation so these weddings are available to anyone who can legally marry and

has the necessary identification, including overseas visitors. For instance the

'Mansion wedding' includes;

- Minister's services

- Wedding Coordinator

- Music (recorded or grand piano)

- Unity candle lighting during the ceremony

- Floral package that includes; bride's bouquet, 4 attendants bouquets, 7
  boutonnieres, 2 corsages.

- Photo package; includes photographer's services through wedding and
  beginning of reception for toasts and first dance, 72 different poses, 72
  photo proofs, bride and groom's photo album of prints including four
  8x10s, ten 5x7s, sixteen 4x6s,.

- Souvenir certificate holder.

- DJ and dance floor.

The reception includes;

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- Fruit and vegetable display

- Buffet meal with 2 entrees, 3 vegetables, tossed green salad, roll and butter.

- Open bar with cocktails, beer and wine.

- Traditional 3-tier wedding cake.

- Souvenir cake cutting set and champagne flutes.

- DJ and dance floor.

The wedding and Reception for up to fifty guests for four hours costs $9,500 and for up to one hundred guests for four hours the cost is $12,500 (Viva Las Vegas Weddings 2009).

The spiritual aspect of the wedding as a rite of passage and the depth of commitment traditionally identified with marriage are not the primary concerns of wedding chapels. They exist to provide a variety of levels of service within a range of costs and to cater to demand. The services offered by wedding chapel are cost calculated into a variety of ceremonies designed to meet the demands and dreams of clients. The ceremonies are formulaic although details can be customised to satisfy customer's individual requests. The immediacy and easy availability of a venue pandering to almost every conceptual ideal condensed into an accessible setting is the invention of a type of society in a particular place desiring a recognisable product. An extensive and ever expanding range of proffered wedding packages are readily available and aggressively advertised. Wedding chapels promote the concept of romance but their existence is based on economics, they exist as businesses both to provide for spontaneous whims and decisions and to indulge personal gratification with regard to choice of wedding style. They are there to provide a ceremony only, a means to marriage, and do not offer any social ministration or advice on the

consequences of the act of marriage unlike a church minister who would normally explain the gravitas of marriage and the responsibilities involved (Viva Las Vegas Weddings, 2009).

British civil venues provide for a completely different cultural expectation usually catering for a less glitzy clientele. While they offer an alternative to a religious ceremony they are completely different, almost an antithesis to American 'love chapels'. Services are not immediately available to anyone desirous of marriage, they are not open over a twenty-four hour period and their philosophy is not purely fiscal. They offer a multi-cultural civic ceremonial venue in an urbane, austere locality, usually a town hall. The legality of weddings conducted in such venues is recognised by the government but the services are usually brief and unglamorous, they acknowledge law and provide opportunities for marriage to many who are unable to marry within the rules of their religion or family preference. They simply perform and record legal marriages, without additional frills.

Hotels and country houses provide the lavish location and ambience of a bygone lifestyle that many wedding parties might have seen on television period drama and could aspire to. The understated grand wealth and elegance manifested in a style associated with the land-owning classes furthers a daydream of marriage providing an elegant idealised lifestyle. Author Jane Austen encapsulated middle class aspirations to living in grand style in a country estate in her novel *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). The heroine's ambitious mother desperately desires that her daughters should 'marry well', a euphemism for marrying into more socially elite society through ensnaring a wealthy gentleman from the landed classes. The daughters themselves all harbour aspirations of marrying above their class to a wealthy husband. Although already in love, first sight of her suitor's vast country

estate expels any doubts Austen's heroine may have harboured and convinces her to marry him. For those born without historic wealth, the opportunity to preside over a personalised celebration in a lavish location under perfect conditions, although only for one day, satisfies a fantasy. To some extent, the British country house venue can be compared to the American wedding chapel in that both offer a dream location although the British example is more one of aspiration whilst the American venue is likely to be fantasy. Modern music icon Madonna nostalgically emulated the perceived style of gentile British aristocracy at her wedding to film director Guy Ritchie when she married in a Scottish castle. The wedding event was a highly publicised affair that set a style for extreme excess whilst ostensibly emulating discretion and restraint. Both venue and ceremony endeavoured to evoke traditional links of wealth and upper class lineage.

With the emphasis on subtle but elegant and stylish display, the country house venue is more discreet than wedding chapel exuberant exhibitionism yet some degree of ostentation is a major component of the modern event. Splendid gardens, family portraits and grand rooms all signify social elevation, albeit only for the duration of the wedding celebration since the provenance is borrowed. Release from the restraints of the Church and the religious ceremony along with the growing adoration of celebrity culture and more general disposable income has resulted in greater flamboyance and exhibitionism in modern wedding presentation. The wedding venue was traditionally selected for convenience and availability and for compatibility with the size of the wedding party. Couples traditionally celebrated their wedding in an appropriate local venue, a village hall or church hall suitably decorated for the occasion.

Advertisement examples of dream wedding venues. Both internally and externally, these properties are typically hired for effect since they cannot fail to impress. Photograph; *the Wedding directory,* November 2007 – January 2008

The modern couple concern themselves with future reference as well as the present so that representation of the location on photographic and video records is an important part of the memorable day. A smart setting is now one of the criteria for a successful wedding. Since photography was developed, its use as a record of the wedding day has grown to the extent that a record of the event has become a customary requirement. Wedding photographs had to be scheduled into the ceremony and a particular etiquette quickly grew with regard to inclusion in photographs. Those wedding guests not involved in photographs anticipate diversion during the time of the photographs in the form of beautiful grounds to roam or exploration of historic surroundings, or at the very least an area providing refreshments. The wedding location provides the required standard of setting for the principal couple to behave as stars with their attendants in support and guests as peripheral extras who provide an attentive and appreciative audience.

4.3 Recording the event

Visual and written records of the lavish white wedding event during the twentieth century demonstrate increasing adoption of the 'traditional' white wedding dress throughout British, North American and many European Christian cultures and many of those countries converted to Christianity through the British Empire. The pervading fashion for the white wedding dress was all embracing and demonstrated the influence of popular style and presentation.

The perfect contemporary wedding image of a fashionable bride and groom surrounded by happy guests *the Wedding directory*, November 2007 – January 2008

Prior to the advent of photography, those with the means to commission paintings of their wedding day were able to idealistically record their ceremony. Paintings did not necessarily represent a realistic portrait, more often a flattering interpretation authentic enough to humour and indulge the patron. Wedding paintings represented the preferred public face of the commissioners so the event could be portrayed as a grand event or as an intimate occasion, depending on the status,

preference or circumstances of the patron. A regent might desire a portrait in grand surroundings reflecting wealth and importance whilst a lover might choose a more sensitive representation. Portraits and paintings generally effectively demonstrate contemporary wedding fashions and the intricate and complex social arrangements and values of time and place. Demeanour, clothing and location of the subject or subjects of wedding portraiture immediately suggest their status within their community. Wedding paintings were expensive so only available to those who could afford the expense of an artist and the time to sit for him. Presentation is an enormously important aspect of the wedding event and visual record both documents and evidences the occasion, as well as demonstrating the worthiness of the couple and their perception of romantic conformity.

Photography is a relatively recent invention that did not come into being until the 1830s when technology found a way to capture images of subjects on light sensitive paper and produce them as photographs. Photographs were available almost immediately (when compared to paintings) and were more generally affordable. Photography soon eclipsed paintings as fashionable representation and the advancement of artisan skills resulted in many images being awarded the status of paintings. Chris Rojek (2001) describes photography as a new opportunity for staging celebrity by enabling the viewer to capture the habits, lifestyle, ideas and character of the subject. Rojek (2001) goes on to cite photographs of distinguished subjects such as: Corot, Monet, Millet, Daumier and Baudelaire as establishing the nineteenth century template of displaying cultural celebrities to the public. Mass produced photographs of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert with their children helped to establish them as family orientated monarchs sharing the same domestic values as their subjects. These images served to present the Queen as a noble, sound and stable

monarch who cared for her family, her subjects and her country. Photographs of Queen Victoria made her appear accessible to all classes because she could be instantly recognised. The royal court was very well aware of the importance of favourable publicity and she successfully manipulated a positive public perception of the monarchy through publication of photographs.

The nineteenth and early twentieth century wealthy middle classes confirmed their hierarchical place in society by commissioning photographic records of themselves in their place of work or of their family in the home, thus displaying their new authority and wealth. Photographs acted to record a subject and like paintings they could be used to indicate status by means of location or dress. The difference was that photographs were generally affordable and were used to indicate status within a social environment that might not be natural to the subject. Photographs could record a subject in a venue of choice constructing an illusion that encouraged perception of the subject as belonging there. Photography records what is within range of the camera lens but the gifted photographer can artfully use effective lighting techniques and clever positioning to maximise some inherent aspect of the subject. A painter is able to use artistic license and personal interpretation to enhance the subject of a painting while the photographer uses shadows and scale, location and background to complement his subject. The photograph can augment a particular facet to promote an image or it can present an alternative representation. Rojek (2001) describes the photographs of Oscar Wilde taken by Napoleon Sarony in New York as examples of how staged appearance photographically recorded can influence the viewer's perception of a subject. American audiences may have been more impressed with the tour publicity photographs portraying Wilde as an exotic young dandy rather than the content and quality of his lectures on the new Aesthetic Movement. Rojek goes on to

claim that images increase the conspicuousness of celebrity culture by making celebrities more accessible to the public. Modern celebrities continue to ensure that their photographic images enhance their trope to endear them to their fans.

Contemporary culture now relies so much on photographs and immediate visual images (this could be video stills) for news or information that under certain circumstances the combination of image and environment promotes the subjects to celebrity status. Photographic records of celebrations of rites in a predicted location engender visions of celebrity images encouraging marrying couples to believe in their promotion to celebrity status through fashionably manipulated photographs of their wedding day. By copying aspects of a celebrity appearance and demeanour and details of their ceremony, couples can assume an aura of reflected stardom. Modern gossip magazines uphold fashionable protagonists as arbiters of popular style and provide comprehensive and penetrating access to their lives through photographs. Every aspect of their lifestyle is displayed for readers' scrutiny, including intrusive access to the celebrity's home to satisfy curiosity about their taste and preferences. The illusion of reader control is enhanced by intimate images but the photographs are inevitably carefully orchestrated and selected to comply with popular impression. The celebrity stipulates what can be pictured and the manner of presentation. A lavish room setting containing rare and valuable artefacts implies style and taste synonymous with refinement and sophistication born from good breeding. A couple pictured smiling warmly and fondly touching one another signify a successful romantic liaison. The desire to be seen to be loved, admired and adored is a need that is often as important to a fashionable celebrity as actual ardour and affection. Paul Frosh (2003, pp 117-121) analyses photographic representations of romantic couples. He interprets the cultural significance of romantic photographs by isolating and

defining the major components that include settings and placements within an image and elements of very particular focus and colour. His definitions are not exclusive to romantic photography but they demonstrate the recognition and elevation in status of romantic photography. A misty soft focus image in muted pastel shades is evocative of mysticism and romance.

The Romantic Dream
the Wedding directory,
November 2007-January 2008

Romance is a valuable asset in advertising when product sales are directed toward a particular element in society by appealing to emotions through projection by reliable and recognisable procedures. The fun element of romance relies on activities such as mutual play, laughter, doing things together, mutuality as recreation. There is obvious interaction and some degree of role- playing within socially structured light-hearted interaction. The more serious portrayal of romance is meditative and intense, signified by lovers gazing into each others eyes or out to the distance, or else with firmly closed eyes. Their expression is both self-absorbed, mutually immersed and daydreaming, without fun or humour since romance is deeply felt and potentially

painful. This romance is self-reflective and extremely intense. The images are pure

and authentic visualisations of a couple being totally captivated and fixated with one

another (Frosh, 2003). When discussing the use of romance in advertising Illouz

(1997) reflects:

> The power of advertising lies not in regimenting consciousness but rather in
>
> articulating meanings that bind consumers' desire to market forces. Romance
>
> was one of the most powerful "channels of love" used by advertisers to make
>
> their imagery at once lifelike and dreamlike (p.82).

Romantic photographs are distinguishable in that they portray couples

engaged in romantic behaviour. Frosh (2003) defines romantic behaviour as looking

or gazing at one another or gazing together into the distance or else kissing with eyes

closed. Altogether, his definitions suggest soft and gentle eye contact either mutually

or by one directed towards the other. The couple are absorbed with one another to the

exclusion of all others including the camera and the space they inhabit is generally

exclusive to them. Other people are either entirely absent or are incidental

background figures. Wedding photographs portray a romantic experience and a

momentous event yet the couple involved are both absorbed with one another while

sensitive to the presence of others. Romantic photographs are posed to deliberately

ignore the presence of the camera yet wedding photographs feature the couple,

surrounded by friends and family, smiling out to the photographer. The romance is

intimate but the celebration is very public and encompassing. The celebration is a

culmination of the romance and a public declaration of happiness. Wedding

photographs proclaim a shared intimacy confident in its supremacy. They record the

union of two individuals into a communal relationship where families become

secondary to the chosen partner. They also profess the status of the couple within

society, either by what is contained within them or by the style and quality of the

photographs or the reputation of the photographer. Photographs are as susceptible to

the subjectivity and technical and aesthetic skills and sensitivities of the photographer

as paintings are to the artist. Once the wedding day is over and married life settles

into a pattern, photographs provide memories of the dreams and fantasies and convey

the glamour and measure of the event.

The necessary accoutrements of a modern wedding offer greater and increasingly
varied choices. A plethora of journals exist to advertise style and services available
and progressively more necessary and obligatory. Photographs *Cosmopolitan Bride,*
February/March 2008

   The methods used by advertisers to promote wedding products utilize accepted

romantic imagery by appealing to the desire for idealism. Bridal magazines and

websites abound to advertise merchandise manufactured to appeal to the modern bride

using images based on formality and tradition and current desirability. With all eyes

focused on her for the duration of her wedding, the fashion- conscious bride will

ensure that every possible product is explored to make sure that no detail is

overlooked and any new artefact is included. Advertising photographs are inevitably

of beautiful couples in ideal settings smilingly endorsing a product. Brides are earnestly determined to be convinced that once dressed in their white dress, they will acquire the physical identity of a fashion model and appear beautiful to everyone. Wedding dresses are promoted as mystical fancy-dress garments empowered with magical capability of transforming plain young women into a gorgeous princesses. The female entourage nurture and exacerbate this myth as a matter of custom.

Advertisers promote an attitude of deserving whatever is available so that the bride owes any extravagances to herself and those present. This attitude is self-justified by the perception that this rite only occurs once, even when statistics disprove this, so that couples will self-righteously assume substantial debt to have the quality of wedding they desire or they believe reflects their social position. By ensuring that every modish whim and fancy is catered for, the bride is assured she can experience her utopian day in a glow of admiration. Sales techniques change according to fashionable desire but the fundamental knowledge of their principality by the bride and groom ensures their expectation of recognition and attention. The marketing of wedding commodities preys upon their acquiescence to custom and tradition and the desire of couples for recognition and modernity. The uniqueness of the ceremony ensures that much merchandise is exclusive to the ceremony (table decorations, paper napkins) and the engineered etiquette guarantees that niceties will be fastidiously observed. Celebrities have set standards for the successful modern wedding and manufacturers exhibit their selected style and product endorsement as the accepted benchmark. Photographs of Victoria and David Beckham dressed in designer wedding clothes enjoying an extravagant, sumptuous feast in exclusive surroundings encouraged a trend both in type of weddings and in style of presentation. The couple appeared relaxed and comfortable and photographs of them were of a

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beautiful and famous couple perfectly at ease and natural in their surroundings. Their photographs served both to record their wedding and as publicity photographs to augment their huge celebrity status and confirm them as modern trendsetters. Frosch (2003) suggests that the 'systematic imitation of successful photographs creates image types that function as visual correlates to general categories…'. He goes on to explain that '…the process of imitation is also generative, since each image type also acts as a template for the creation of similar images' (p.60). Imitation does not apply only to already existing imagery; it also generates and orders the production of new images, each one slightly different to the original. Frosch (2003) then equates the results with the concept of 'formatting', a process that responds to demand for predictable results. The results can still be original but any deviance from familiar and recognizable imagery is strategic and calculated.

Photographs of a wedding serve a number of corresponding purposes from recording the event for future posterity to signifying the aspirations of the couple and their families. A wedding day is unlike any other and what makes it so special is the opulent extravagance and self indulgence. Photographs do not record the minutiae such as the outrageously expensive personalised confetti or table place cards and such frivolous details rely on the observational powers and scrutiny of guests to be appreciated. Significant details are included in photographs to ensure that the distinctive cars or mode of transport is chronicled, clothing is documented from every possible angle, and the interior of the venue that has been specially decorated for the occasion will be recorded for posterity. The only individuality is likely to be in the recording of detail and the couple involved, the style of the photography is formatted to conform to popular trends and expectations. Wedding photographs are posed and staged to favour the couple and every aspect of their day. A talented photographer

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can contrive the most advantageous angles and viewpoints to enhance the occasion and his popularity would depend on how complementary his images proved to be. Modern brides have to book popular professional photographers several months in advance of the wedding to ensure their services on the day. The photographer helps and advises regarding type of photographs, black and white, colour or sepia prints, shiny or matt, size and number of photographs as well as locations and etiquette. Many modern couples emulate the style and dress of idolized celebrities and expect the wedding photographer to produce images demonstrating their similarity to reproductions of their favoured icons. The photographer is there to record and event and to nurture a dream and as such, his services are an expensive component of the wedding business.

The wedding video recording proves more intrusive and less selective. The professional video recorder needs to engineer sound, lighting and perspective to benefit the situation and location and will edit his final product to fulfil the expectations of the customer. Guests rarely demonstrate such expertise and celebrities Catherine Zeta Jones and Michael Douglas expressly prohibited video cameras among their guests ostensibly because the photographic rights had been exclusively sold but probably also to avoid unflattering amateur images appearing in the popular press. Video recordings are generally additional to photographs but because they are less selective and are personal to the bride and groom, they are rarely used as an alternative.

Fashions in wedding photography have moved on since mid-twentieth century photographs of couples in wartime uniforms standing at the door of the church or civil building. The widely smiling couple stood surrounded by bridesmaids and best man

who frequently doubled as witnesses. Prior to that, the format of the photographs was identical and only the clothing and hairstyles of the couple indicated the era.

Formally posed couple in the church door 1967. Photograph courtesy Dr. and Mrs. W.G.Salt. The pose and photographic style have not noticeably changed since the beginning of the century.

Everyone wanted a photographic record of their special day and wedding photography became a lucrative occupation. Since then, wedding photography has emulated fashion photography and the subjects expect end results to depict them in the fashion of their time. Photographs quintessentially imbue atmosphere and character to the occasion. Numerous websites exist to advise on choice of photographer and cost of wedding photography that appear to start at around £500 and can cost several thousand pounds depending on numbers of photographs; type, colour

or black and white, size and quality of photographs; variety of locations and number of hours.

Bridal magazines now determine fashions in all aspects of the wedding day, including the style of photography. Boden (2003) summarizes the importance of the photographers' role when she records an interview of a bride and groom equating their wedding to a theatrical production and remarking that their photographer had likened the wedding to a film set. They saw themselves as the stars of the show and the photographer was able to provide material evidence of their dream.

4.4 Catering consumerism

Hieronymous Bosch (1450-1516),*Marriage Feast at Cana*, undated, Boymans-van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam

Food has been used as a means of celebrating a wedding ceremony since ancient times. The word 'bride' originates from an old English name for 'cook'. (WeddingGuide.uk.2004). The New Testament story of the Wedding at Cana (St. John, 19) describes a post- nuptial feast during the time of Christ and Roman wedding celebrations included food and feasting.

Stanhope, Alexander Forbes, 1889, *Health of the Bride*, Tate Britain

Food and feasting and celebratory drinking have always been an integral part of the post-nuptial festivities. The act of eating together and sharing food and drink after a marriage ceremony pre-dates Christianity and is prevalent among a number of religions. An ample supply of food was an indication of wealth when families relied on the land to provide for them. The Stanhope (1889) painting typically represents welcome of the bride and groom into each other's family group.

The two families have an opportunity to meet and familiarise themselves with one another in a neutral location. A communal meal signified an ancient message of acceptance, comradeship and bonding when prior disputes would be set aside and families and communities united, at least for the duration of the celebration. The British tradition of calling the meal taken together after the ceremony a 'wedding breakfast' was because the sacrament of marriage had to be received after an overnight fast. Marriages were traditionally only conducted in the morning between 8am and noon so invitation to guests to break their fast was wholly appropriate. By

1885 the demand for weekend weddings caused the hours to be extended to 3pm. Times were further extended in 1934 to 6pm when the feast began to be renamed a 'reception' since the traditional term 'wedding breakfast' was no longer entirely appropriate.

A 1930s advertisement for quality canned food provided
by the informed and sophisticated young hostess.
(*The Bride's Book*, ed; Dorothy Stote, 1938).

The wedding feast is an integral part of the wedding ceremony traditionally observed by society at every level even during times of austerity and want. During the Second World War (1939-45) the British government issued limited coupons to individuals and families to purchase food and small luxuries. Families and communities hoarded and pooled precious coupons to provide a feast for wedding

guests. After the gravity and solemnity of the service, the newly married couple along with families and guests enjoy light-hearted celebrations beginning with eating and drinking.

Until the end of the eighteenth century anyone acquainted with the bride and groom who lived within travelling distance could attend a wedding ceremony, but after this time weddings became more selective. Pieter Bruegel's painting of the peasant wedding feast circa 1525 depicts an ebullient occasion. This was a happy, joyous, sociable working community wedding. The guests sit informally in a simple dwelling chatting over a table already laden with food while yet more wine or ale is being poured into jugs and extra dishes containing food are delivered carried on a door. The overall portrayal is of a happy semi-drunken crowd thoroughly enjoying a gathering and making the most of the food and drink supplied. The religious symbolism contained within the work is represented by the sheaves of corn displayed on the walls symbolising fertility, plenty and prosperity. As they are tied together they symbolise the merging of many into the one to demonstrate unity and social concord. The dog, portrayed hiding under the table, is symbolic of fidelity within marriage (Cooper, 1998). The banner over the bride suggests victory and conquest. The day is hers and she is the principal figure. Her clasped hands signify union, mystic marriage and allegiance. The painting represents inclusion and participation of people at every level and it shows the wedding as a special joyous occasion. This is a community at the bottom end of the social scale, labourers and peasants, yet the wedding ceremony is as important and meaningful to them as to the patrician classes and is celebrated in the same way but at a different level.

At every level of society throughout history, food and grain were an important symbolic element of the marriage ceremony. Corn and rice, later to be replaced by

paper confetti, were frequently thrown over a newly married couple to figuratively

ensure their fertility.

Bruegel, Pieter , *Peasant Wedding Feast*. 1566/7 Kunsthistorisches
Museum, Vienna.

The wedding cake is ancient custom symbolic of abundance and prosperity as

well as fertility. The wedding cake pre-dates Christianity although it has been

adopted by Christian societies. Ancient Greeks threw wafer thin cakes at the newly

married couple while Romans and Egyptians crumbled grain cakes over the head of

the bride. Guests hoping to receive some of the symbolic blessing would scramble to

share remaining cake. Only children born to a marriage sanctified in this manner

qualified for high sacred office in Roman life so the symbolic breaking of the cake

was a highly significant gesture determining a potentially propitious lifestyle. Early

Anglo-Saxons provided biscuits at a wedding to be shared by guests, and the

remainder to be distributed among the poor. The custom developed so that guests

provided small cakes that were piled together into a mound so that by the Middle-

Ages the wedding cake consisted of a high tower of smaller cakes piled precariously

on top of each other. During the reign of king Charles II (1630-85), a French pastry

chef discovered a method of binding the huge mound together using a mixture of

sugar and water so that the cake could be ceremoniously decorated and cut

(WeddingGuide, 2004). This began to resemble a modern wedding cake with the use

of marzipan and white icing as decoration.

'Traditionally' shaped modern tiered
wedding cake

Like most appurtenances associated with wedding ceremonies, the bigger and

more extravagant the cake became, the greater the veneration and admiration directed

at it. Wedding cakes became huge, built as decorative iced palaces complete with

figures. In an article describing wedding customs, historian Arden Ranger (2002)

describes cakes of this period being decorated with figures to represent the new 'Lord

and Lady of the Manor complete with gardens and horses'. Cakes subsequently

became less grandiose and ostentatious although they were still lavish. The decorated

cake dominated the decorative wedding table and whilst most couples celebrate with a

single cake, Queen Elizabeth II received 12 official cakes to celebrate her wedding in 1947 as bakeries vied for the honour of producing her wedding cake (Ranger, 2002).

The association of fertility, good fortune and abundance with the wedding cake resulted in numerous customs and traditions being constructed around it. Unmarried Victorian women would pass a piece of cake through the wedding ring and place it under their pillow in the hope of dreaming of a future husband. Such belief was recognised as romantic fantasy yet the power of superstition fashioned prevailing custom. The custom of baking silver charms into the cake was to bring good fortune to those who found them. It was customary to contrive the discovery of the charms by young, unmarried females, usually the bridesmaids who would rummage among pieces of cake to discover them. The wedding cake is the centrepiece of the formal reception, heavy with pagan and Christian symbolism although much of this is lost to the modern couple. The abundance of fruit and nuts in the cake was both an acknowledgement of symbolic fertility and richness and abundance, in more modern times a means of preservation ensuring freshness during the lengthy and complicated period of decoration. Otnes and Pleck (2003) explain that modern cakes are designed to impress guests rather than as symbolic objects. Contemporary cakes reflect modern issues and traditionally heavy fruit- cakes have frequently been superseded by more fashionable healthy options. The wedding cake and cutting the cake remains an established tradition and while the cake itself has become increasingly important as a decorative item, the associated symbolism has almost disappeared.

Sharing has traditionally been an important gesture at a wedding so the cake was distributed among guests to share the happiness of the occasion and pieces of cake would be saved and sent to those unable to attend the ceremony (Plannersguide, 2002). Cutting the cake was originally the sole responsibility of the bride and was

representative of loss of virginity but contemporary custom demands that the groom should join her in this task and the performance be photographed. Many customs served no purpose other than to promote goodwill at the celebration and to enhance the symbolic nature of many wedding practices but the cake itself, in whatever form, is an ancient, highly allegorical tradition.

Examples of lavishly decorated modern wedding cakes, Photographs,
Leicestershire Wedding Planner, Autumn/Winter ed., 2004

  Customs, traditions and superstitions associated with wedding cakes and post conjugal feasting have developed and progressed historically metamorphosing through social and religious change. Illouz (1997) explains how eating and drinking have always been regarded as intimate social activities indicative of fraternization. Families eat and drink together and meal times are traditionally times when families and communities congregate. Lovers meet and confirm attraction over food while business is settled and validated over a meal. At a rite of passage, the provision of food satisfies more than basic hunger it is symbolic of partnership and social bonds marked by sharing food.

Modern wedding catering can incur astronomical costs and whilst those involved recognise the inflated price structures, they still willingly pay for their special service and provision. Costs for supplying food and service at a hotel venue currently start at about £25 per head excluding drink and VAT tax and any service charges. This cost provides a basic service but will certainly climb once drinks at arrival, table wine and wine for the toasts are added. A more usual cost of over £50 per person is supplemented by another £1,500 (approximate) for drinks at an average event (Weddingguide, 2009, a). These total costs add up to £6,500 and do not include table decorations or guest favours or the cost of an elaborate cake. Provision of wedding reception venues is a business in itself. Competition between venues is fierce and standards of presentation are high. While menus are usually uninspired, the appearance of the venue must be exquisite since it will be recorded in myriad collections of photographs and videos. The grander and more sumptuous a room appears, the more likelihood of constant lucrative booking opportunities. People want to celebrate in a beautiful and luxurious location.

The desire for ever more memorable unusual and exotic locations include possibilities such as the walkways over Tower Bridge, London, at a cost of £1,850 plus Vat tax for hire charges only that does not include cost of the registrar nor any catering (Tower Bridge, 2009). A less expensive option is the Bridge-masters dining room costing £460. The banqueting hall and great kitchen at Brighton Pavilion are available at a cost of £2,400 while Hever Castle in Kent, childhood home of Queen Anne Boleyn, is available at a cost from £195 per person. (weddingvenue, 2009). Catering, linen, entertainment, staffing, licenses, decorations and insurances are all extras. For a magnificently extravagant venue, an Orient Express train is available for hire at a cost of £30,000 for the train or £5,000 for a day hire of a carriage. This

would accommodate 20 people at a cost of £280 per person including food and drink. More usual hotel venues vary according to size of room, menu, and numbers of guests, type of entertainment required and popularity of desired date. Couples can elect to marry in airports, abbeys and priories, film studios and railway stations should they wish to (weddingvenue, 2009). A palatial venue adds to the sense of ceremony and makes the occasion extra special, fostering a contemporary desire for recognition and adulation.

4.5 Planning and organising a contemporary wedding

Planning a modern wedding has become an expensive and time-consuming operation with so many obstacles and complications that planning is akin to a military exercise. A modern phenomenon is an industry of 'Wedding Planners' that has flourished in order to take care of the particulars and stresses of arranging a modern wedding so that the operation proceeds smoothly and according to plan. The wedding planner is a professional who has taken over the role of the medieval wedding organiser who was usually a family member from both families who would negotiate and arrange the whole event. The medieval wedding organiser would liaise between the two families to ensure financial matters, including wedding gifts, property and land matters were discussed and agreed before organising the ceremony and arranging any following party (Seidal, 1993). A whole wedding planner career path has developed and flourished based on the uncertainties and insecurities of the modern affianced couple as well as those in such exacting professions that free time is never available. The wedding planner not only has experience and business contacts to coherently progress planning a wedding but also is also well versed in required etiquette at varying levels. An efficient professional can ably arrange the whole event

so that once boundaries have been discussed and established the couple need only to appear on the day. The planner will discuss budgets and establish wants and ideals in minute detail before recommending budgetary possibilities and constraints. The planner negotiates services and costs on behalf of the couple and is usually in a position to transact discounts on a variety of appropriate goods and services. The planner co-ordinates the planning so that arrangements progress in a methodical order ensuring that nothing important is overlooked. Whilst an efficient wedding planner can relieve a couple of the stresses and strains in arranging their wedding day, the planner is still reliant on the couple for necessary information so an enormous degree of reliance and trust rests with a wedding planner. The wedding planner is able to provide samples of goods available within the agreed budget, even suggesting and recommending retail outlets for essentials such as the wedding dress or suit hire, stationery, flowers or confetti. The wedding planner takes over time- consuming discovery and detection duties, especially when a couple want something unusual such as an unconventional cake or out of the ordinary rings or stationery or out of season flowers or catering wares. Deliveries and consignments can be directed to the planner who can orchestrate and sequence each phase and is also in a position to scrutinise and control budgets and re-negotiate particular costs. Menus and drinks are recommended by a planner who will also book venues, time-manage all the necessary tasks and co-ordinate gift lists. The planner initially assumes a highly intrusive position but once requirements and budgets have been negotiated and decided and roles organised, the planner assumes complete responsibility for arrangement of either part of or the whole wedding package. The position necessitates complete accountability for the success of the most important day in the lives of the couple that must place complete trust in the professional abilities of the planner (Weddingguide,

2004). Once the decision to marry has been made, the planning and organisation of the event begins and even couples opting for a simple ceremony must begin the planning processes months ahead of the event. Wedding publications suggest timescales beginning eighteen months prior to the wedding day. Booking an especially popular or improbable venue for the ceremony and reception might necessitate an even longer planning period. A typical plan is as follows;

12 – 18 months before;

Decide on budget

Decide on type of wedding

Choose location of ceremony

Choose attendants

Plan memorabilia scrapbook

Select attendants dresses

Compile invitation list

Select reception venue

Select dress, head dress & accessories

Select toastmaster

Select photographer

Select caterer

Select videographer

Plan details of reception

Select gift registry

Select music for ceremony

Order wedding cars

6 – 12 months before;

Make honeymoon trip reservations

Order invitations, personal stationery, order of service

Select venue decorator

Order wedding cake- supplier

Select mens' clothing

Select fireworks company

Shop for trousseau

Shop for home furnishings

Select florist

Take out contingency wedding insurance

Select musicians/DJ for reception

Plan honeymoon

2 – 4 months to go;

Send out wedding invitations & gift list, organise calligrapher

Check up on local newspaper announcement details deadlines

Select attendants' gifts

Buy wedding rings, order engraving

Select date to get marriage licence

Consult beautician

Consult hairdresser

Arrange preservation of bridal flowers

Consult with mothers regarding their outfits

Order bridal favours

Select dress cleaning company

Finalise honeymoon plans

1 month to go;	**2 weeks to go;**
Final dress fittings	Final clothing fittings
Arrange accommodation for guests	Pack for honeymoon
Arrange stag/hen parties	Record wedding gifts &
Consultations with hairdressers/beauticians	write 'thank you' letters
Confirmation & finalisation of prior plans	Confirm rehearsals
Buy each other's gifts	Complete trousseau

Chase up unanswered invitations   shopping

                                                   Arrange for name change

1 week to go;

Final consultations with suppliers

Final guest count to venue or caterer

Hen party – venue

Stag party – venue

(East Midlands Weddings, 2008)

The typical lists suggested do not account for any individual requirements and represent an ordinary and fairly basic modern wedding experience by most couples. Special table decorations or glasses and linen, favours, gifts for table guests, ice sculptures, special floral arrangements and any theme wedding requirements are likely to require more organisation and incur greater costs.

Modern wedding etiquette has become more complicated because divorce, remarriage and co-habitation affect names and status of the couple and their immediate family members. Invitations are the first contact guests have and these are traditionally strictly formal so any reply must be addressed to the wedding host. The wedding planner should have the knowledge and experience to advise on all matters of etiquette. The wording of an invitation suggests the relationship and status of the hosts (customarily the bride's parents) and the stage of the wedding to which guests are invited. For example, if the bride's parents are hosts, the invitation is sent on their behalf. If the bride's parents are divorced but are jointly hosting the wedding then invitations are sent in the names they separately use. If step- parents are hosts or a parent and re-married or co-habiting partner, then their separate names are used on the

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invitation. Guests may be invited to the ceremony and reception or just the reception or just an evening event.   Photographs can be complicated when families have extended through divorce and re-marriage. An acrimonious divorce may have resulted in ex-partners and subsequent spouses not feeling well disposed toward one another so arrangements for photographs can be fraught and strained. Wedding formality demands precise etiquette and whilst families usually acknowledge that such a monumental day for the couple should focus primarily on their happiness, modern circumstances add stresses and complications to smooth arrangements making the services of a professional organiser increasingly desirable. Traditionally, the period for photographs immediately after the ceremony was fairly uneventful and dull for guests so the photographer had to be organised and resolute in his use of photographic settings. The protocol of who appears alongside whom and in what order has always been complicated and individual but extended families have added further intricacy and entanglement. The seating order at a wedding can also prove difficult since those guests situated at distance from the bridal table are apparently less important than those nearer. Room planning becomes of paramount importance so that table arrangements ensure that guests do not feel marginalized and neglected. Many modern families comprise current partners and children from the liaison, children from previous relationships of one or both current partners and ex-partners and a current spouse and their children. Planning must be carefully and sensitively orchestrated so that all guests are made to feel equal while some are diplomatically kept separate from others (weddingguide, 2009 a). This all adds to the angst that the wedding business can effectively exploit. Weddings have always been important to the principal couple and immediate families but modern weddings have recently become momentous to everyone involved in organisation.

Families and guests may attend as supporters and spectators but they have some part to play in the success of they day. If family members or guests decline to take part in photographs because of dispute or one table of guests is very obviously incompatible, then sensibilities are offended and the ambience of the day can be irrevocably marred. Ancient families frequently arranged marriages between offspring to strengthen dynasties so that whilst there may have been enmities between families, the liaison brought the warring families closer together to unite wealth and assure social status. Modern couples choose their partners themselves yet the harmony and affinity between families and friends may be as difficult and distant as it has ever been.

Guests have always brought gifts to a wedding, at one time these supplied the basics for setting up home but since many modern couples have either lived away from the family home as singles or the couple have co-habited, the status of gifts has changed. Gifts were traditionally selected according to the taste and generosity of the guest. During the twentieth century when many couples had either individually or together accrued enough household basics to furnish a home, wedding lists became accepted. These suggested preferred gifts; usually at a wide range of cost to suit any budget or else monetary sums could be paid to a supplier so that couples could select their own choice of gifts. The wedding list is practical yet such a concept does not always sit easily with the spirit of free giving in Britain although Otnes and Pleck (2003) suggest that American couples are relaxed about producing preferred gift lists or suggesting that guests contribute toward honeymoon expenses.

Modern male 'stag' and female 'hen' parties prior to the wedding provide an opportunity for unmarried friends and colleagues to conspicuously contrast the apparent liberty, flexibility and licence within the single state against the impending

responsibilities and obligations of marriage. Myriad merchandise has been devised to accessorise the obligatory modern celebration and a huge business has developed organising and providing for these separate parties. This final indulgent spree with unmarried friends now frequently requires overseas or distant travel and hotel accommodation where the presumptive bride and groom are elevated to an exaggerated grandiose state, frequently in fancy dress emphasising their soon-to-be-married status. The parties emphasise the progression and transfer from unattached and available to coupled and spoken-for, and the associated industry encourages increasingly lavish and expensive celebrations. Modern custom demands the function gathers together a group of friends for a celebratory party, usually held in advance of the wedding to allow the parties to recover in good time for the marriage. The modern occasion is one of amusement and entertainment in advance of the serious ceremonial to come.

The profit potential for manufacturers associated with the wedding business is dependent how much couples are prepared to pay for their ceremony and the powers of persuasive advertising to convince every couple of the exigency of products and services. Not only will publicity proclaim the benefits and advantages of socially desirable yet very often practically unnecessary commodities, subtle advertisements suggest that non-compliance indicates lack of awareness and social ignorance, lack of fashion and style or lack of financial resource. Non- conformity can be manipulated so that rather than been seen as attempting individuality, couples can be portrayed as unfashionable or parsimonious. The power of mass advertising is extremely potent; couples are bombarded with merchandise information from the first moment they make wedding enquiries. Ingraham (1999) points out that ' The social relations at stake- love, community, commitment and family- become alienated from the

production of the wedding spectacle...'. He goes on to claim that the division of labour is heteromorphous with the bride accepting the role of domestic planner, 'showpiece of the groom's potential wealth and producer of future workers, while the groom represents final decision maker – patriarchal authority – and passive recipient of the bride's service…The system also sets up the bride as primary consumer, and the marriage promise as integral to the accumulation of private property' (Ingraham 1999, p. 74). Throughout each stratum of society the temptation to arrange and participate in a ceremony more opulent than that of compeers is an alluring enticement made more attractive and possible by sharply focused business dedicated to the wedding event. A *Daily Mail* (2007) article claims, ' "Competitive Wedding Syndrome" pushes up cost of average bash to £60 per minute'. This suggests that couples are placed under so much pressure to celebrate a lavish wedding that the cost has risen to amounts above the average British salary.

4.6 Brouhaha building

Even in childhood, marriage and a grand wedding are promoted and encouraged as the normal and desirable female aspiration so young girls are indoctrinated with wedding imagery. Giddens (1992) suggests that 'the majority of women continue to identify entering the outside world with forming attachments' (p.53) and while the twenty first century woman is more likely to cohabit either as an alternative to marriage or before marriage, the image of a bride in a white wedding dress is presented as a feminine ideal from childhood. Many popular fairy-tales end with a splendid wedding between prince and princess (*Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella*) and children's books have traditionally portrayed the white wedding as the ultimate success story. The twentieth century animator and filmmaker Walt Disney created

some of the most lasting wedding imagery, to the extent his characters and concepts came to define wedding fantasy. Disney animations portraying weddings were the embodiment of romantic fantasy (Bailey 1982).

Bridal dolls exist from Victorian times but were intended only for display but a big boom in bridal dolls came about during the 1950s (Otnes & Pleck, 2003). Bridal dolls were introduced by a number of different companies but all these dolls had immature bodies with young adult facial features. The dolls were dressed in typically fashionable bridal outfits with some of the dolls having a variety of dresses to choose from.   These 1950s dolls brought affordable bridal fantasy to children but these dolls were like dressed up children. One of the most famous and enduring dressed dolls is the Mattel manufactured universally popular 'Barbie' introduced in 1959 (Otnes & Pleck, 2003). Barbie was a fashion conscious sexy young adult. There are one hundred and twenty versions of Barbie who owns at least thirty different bridal dresses, with a new one released each year (data 1996, Ingraham 1999). Barbie is available in numerous hues to reflect her multi-cultural popularity and her image is likened to an attractive, fashionable, composed and self-possessed young woman, reflecting the hopes and desires of her young fans. Otnes and Pleck (2003) describe a 'my size bride' Barbie, a three feet high doll dressed in a wedding dress made to fit young girls so that from a very early age they are able to dress up and see themselves as brides. Dresses are carefully manufactured so that they fit a range of sizes ensuring that most girls can wear a Barbie wedding gown and the fantasy image is nurtured and progressed from childhood into adulthood.

Barbie dolls have become such a contemporary institution that 'Barbie' has become a recognised descriptive term in modern culture to the extent that 'Barbie' pink is a universally recognised colour shade. Barbie's signature colour might be

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pink but her selection of wedding dresses are in traditional white. So iconic is the Barbie brand that young girls growing into adulthood are influenced by her modish designer style and Fairy-tale wedding dresses so are encouraged to nurture the 'beautiful bride' dream she exemplifies.

Wedding merchandise targeted toward immature young girls is directed toward the glamorous aspects of the occasion where it is likely to stimulate dreams of glamour and celebrity recognition. Criteria for the success of a modern wedding continuously evolve so while wedding ceremonies are essentially the same, personal interpretation allows for differences in detail. Every detail is open to scrutiny, from initial impressions of the venue, the appearance of the bride and her entourage through to the quality of food and entertainments. By supplying unnecessary but covetable commodities, businesses providing wedding merchandise intensify and perpetuate the need for new and more august commodities.

Couples and their families are assailed with a barrage of mandatory modern essentials such as table gifts of individual flowers, chocolates and colour-coordinated confectionary for guests; individualised confetti, the letters spelling out the names of the couple or scented dried flower petals to substitute for paper confetti.

Barbie's early wedding dresses 1959 and 1963. Courtesy Mattel Toys

Twenty-first century Barbie has become designer conscious.   Barbie wears (left) a Monique Lhuillier (2004) design and (right) a Vera Wang design (2009). Courtesy Mattel Toys

Other modern options range from souvenir table-place cards to individually designed and produced coasters and place settings or napkin rings. Wedding invitations alone incur expensive printing costs because of quality card and coloured inks and along with individually printed order of service, the expenditure careers along. First time brides and grooms optimistically anticipate they will only do this once (most people do not anticipate divorce when they marry despite statistical evidence of increasing marital failure) and since neither has first hand previous experience of wedding organisation, it is relatively simple for businesses to encourage and benefit from apprehension and insecurity among couples. Fear of parsimony and lack of style makes many couples extend their budget beyond comfort and through a combination of expectation and peer pressure, expedient suppliers have successfully benefited by producing merchandise exclusively designed for the marriage market and promoted goods as essentials. A wedding has, in many instances and certainly within the advertising world, become a valuable and lucrative commodity that can be deployed to sell commodities, dreams and fantasies.

Throughout the 1990s the lavish wedding shifted from a testament to the bride's purity, virginity and fertility to a celebration of luxury, romance and magic for both first and repeat weddings (Otnes & Pleck, 2003, p.251). This meant that previously married couples could create a lavish wedding comparable to first wedding celebrations if they chose. Divorced couples had typically married relatively quietly with a small gathering of guests (Otnes & Pleck, 2003). Because of the reportage associated with weddings the success of the day is likely to be judged by guests and onlookers by the allure of the brides dress, the decoration of the cake and the opulence of the venue. Very often, the more overwhelming the expensive and excessive apparel, surroundings and accoutrements, the more enjoyable the event is deemed to

be for guests and participants. The allure of the fashionable lavish wedding transcends previous custom so that divorced couples could indulge the sort of ceremony previously only expected of first time weddings.

4.7 The cost of being a wedding guest

As the cost of staging a modern wedding escalates for the families paying for the event, so the cost of participating in a wedding as part of the audience has similarly increased.

Henri De Toulouse-Lautrec, 1894, *Confetti.*
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

A *Daily Telegraph* article by Frances Booth (2005) claims that the cost of attending a wedding is £300 on average for each guest and the accumulated costs to a typical 100 guests is £30,000, a sum greater than the cost of the wedding. These costs are arrived at by assuming that guests spend roughly £90 on travel and

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accommodation, upwards of £30 each on alcohol (exclusive venues are expensive) and £50 plus on a wedding gift. Along with all this are the costs of new clothing where the average spend is £80.70 with £9.20 on the cost of a hat, garments rarely worn other than for ceremonial occasions. Participation in stag or hen night revelry costs an average extra of £170. Additional costs such as cards, wrapping papers, parking and other extra expenses added up to £17.45. For popular guests or members from large or extended families, the peak wedding season can prove very expensive indeed.

An article in the *Daily Mail* (2008) suggests that businesslike modern brides should consider contracting bridesmaids not to put on weight, become pregnant or change their hairstyle prior to the wedding. The report claims that one in five brides would be prepared to ask bridesmaids to sign a written contract agreeing to conditions before enlistment. Of the 1000 women surveyed, almost half (48%) said they would sack a bridesmaid who did not abide by the contract. It seems that the cost of providing dresses, shoes and accessories is such that any transgression by potential bridesmaids has serious financial impact.

4.8 The 'McDonaldization' and 'Disneyization' of marriage packages

4.8.1 The 'McWedding' formula

The term 'McDonaldization' was termed by George Ritzer (1993) as a social comment to describe the degree of standardization entering society through the McDonalds fast-food restaurant chain example. This term could be effectively applied to standardized modern wedding package based on Ritzer's analysis. McDonald's effectively provides a model for fast- food delivery and franchise by exactly reproducing a food product so that its taste, size, methods of cooking,

presentation and portion size are identical in every franchise in every part of the world. Uniformed staff are precisely trained and regimented so that they are able to perform their work with robot-like precision. All employees follow strict rules regarding make-up, hair length and jewellery and personal appearance so they correspond with the company's corporate image. McDonalds followed the successful Disney formula in ensuring that employees' behaviour and demeanour follows a strictly defined code of conduct. Staff members are schooled in customer communication to ensure a clean, courteous and friendly mien. They are paid at the basic minimum wage and are rewarded with incentives for conformity and undergo disincentives for unwelcome individuality. Employees are invisible as personalities and function most successfully as friendly, personable clones. The company began in America but successfully marketed its product throughout the world so that a McDonald's exists in almost every city and certainly every city catering for tourists. Here the food is recognisable and the cost is internationally inexpensive. Wherever a customer is, anywhere in the world, McDonalds serve identical food with minimal concessions to local cuisine (gastric and religious prohibitions are respected). All McDonalds' restaurants are decorated with the same basic décor, toilets are kept clean and staff members are trained to be efficient and friendly. Ritzer (1993) describes McDonalds' appeal through the public perception of spic and span restaurants, fresh food, young and eager employees, apparently concerned and caring managers and a fun-filled dining experience. Other factors are; the product (in this case food) is inexpensive and substantial, standards are internationally reliable and the environment fits a particular facet of contemporary social climate. McDonalds fast-food is respectable as it transcends all social barriers whist remaining cheap and readily available. The near-identical, antiseptic interiors of the restaurants and the perfectly

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honed charm and friendliness of staff ensure that the restaurants are welcoming and non-threatening for everyone, from families with small children to lone diners. The McDonalds customer expects standardisation, they know exactly what to expect and exactly how much the food will cost with no hidden extras. They are concerned with recognisable security, the safety of the known article and of it's acknowledged public acceptance. Nothing is likely to go wrong within this environment. McDonaldization is a term that describes the phenomenon of cloning and standardisation extending beyond food and the restaurant situation and into other areas of lifestyle; the formularisation has certainly been infiltrated into the wedding business.

This section examines the wedding business in the light of two approaches to understanding modern organisations and consumer matters. Weddings are increasingly being presented as organised packages, in the style of package holidays where, once the customer has made certain decisions, the organisation of the event is taken over by a third party and the style of the package is offered according to a prescribed formula. For many couples, pressures of busy work schedules or skittishness relating to potential escalation of costs or organisational insecurities or all of these can contribute to their decision to employ an outside agency to arrange their nuptials. While fashion dictates stylish individuality, reality is frequently based on a more formulaic approach with singularity demonstrated through sundry and miscellaneous details. Packages specialise in replicating lavish celebrity or society weddings adjusted to budgetary restraints. A format that supplies a precisely stipulated package was discussed by Frosh (2003) in relation to wedding photography but this theory could be applied equally to many weddings arrangements. Frosh (2003) acknowledged each wedding as individual to those involved but described wedding photography style as generally formulaic. Wedding photographers usually

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offer specific numbers of photographs within their costs that will include individuals, small groups, large groups and the bride and groom occupied in certain tasks and duties and in certain locations. Wedding photographers will usually show couples a representative album of photographs and the style of these is unlikely to vary to any great extent.

Wedding chapels reproduce the McDonalds experience as far as the business of marriage is concerned since these venues can offer an exactly standardised ceremony that will perfectly meet all the customers' specifications and expectations within the limitations of a package that can be added to with individual details. The wedding is presented as a product and is illustrated in precise description and photographs so that the venue can be clearly viewed with choices of decoration and flowers to offer some distinctiveness, much like a menu card. The whole event is precisely and carefully staged managed by friendly and highly trained staff so that timings and presentation exactly fit a pre-planned formula. Whilst the range of product (types of wedding ceremony) is likely to be fairly limited, sales employees are trained to guide the customer through a menu of packages allowing them to add preferred details to a basic choice, much like the adding of proffered relishes to mass-produced food. The impression of individuality and variation in choice is suggested, but the range is strictly controlled and formulated. Every aspect of the wedding event can be arranged, even down to the hiring of dresses and the buying of rings, at a pre-arranged price within the specifications of the couple. Each standard wedding is virtually identical and the hire-dress wardrobe can fulfil any brides Barbie dream, or any other fantasy image she might harbour. Once again, the customers know exactly what they have ordered, they will immediately be familiar with the format of the event and they can be confident that there will be no surprise extra costs. They have

viewed the photographs and the video and are familiar with the music so know there is no risk involved. There are numerous comparisons between the prescribed McDonalds fast-food experience and the pre-packaged wedding event, the most obvious is the element of control and guaranteed format. Wedding chapel ceremonies provide ideal examples of formulaic weddings where the ceremony is exactly timed, costs are calculated exactly and while couples can choose from a 'menu' of wedding types, the ceremonies are organised to run to a perfected formula. Couples can choose details such as clothing and music but these are still organised by the wedding organisers so control is only partly with the participating couple (Viva Las Vegas Weddings, 2009).

Caribbean weddings and beach weddings, once considered exotic, unconventional and progressive, have adopted tested formulas so that couples flying to their recherché locations know in advance the exact format of their wedding day. Like many wedding chapel packages, they are formulated with McDonald-like rigour. The whole package is planned and discussed in detail prior to the event so there are no shocks and the wedding proceeds with conveyer- belt smooth precision. Formula weddings frequently run to such precise timing that popular times at popular venues see subsequent brides and grooms queuing for the next wedding. Unlike traditional community weddings, these weddings are efficient, predictable, controlled and assured. These are pre-eminent considerations to couples that have invested substantial sums of money to ensure the day is enjoyable, memorable and modishly successful.

A fashionable modern beach wedding is an exotic
and luxurious alternative to a church wedding.
Photograph courtesy Dr. & Mrs. W.G.Salt

Caribbean and exotic beach wedding packages including flights to the selected venue, transfers from airport to hotel, hotel bookings for the bride and groom and guests and organisation of a religious or civil ceremony and reception following the ceremony are all organised by professional wedding planners provided by package companies (First Choice Holidays, 2009). Exotic weddings are invariably expensive but they guarantee fine weather and once budgets and style of ceremony are agreed the organisation can be left to a planning professional. Because of the high cost of beach weddings they are not affordable by everyone but for those couples wanting a different sort of ceremony or those couples who would be expected to provide for a huge number of family and friends, beach weddings can provide a status linked alternative or can be a way of ensuring a lavish but selective ceremony.

The trend for formulaic weddings is a modern one and it appears to act as antithesis to the hugely individualised celebrity style wedding. The formula wedding, with every aspect strictly controlled and perfectly planned is guaranteed to generally please everyone and offend no one. It can be tailored to a specific budget to look fashionably stylish whilst adhering to accepted conventions. The formula wedding

reflects a particular aspect of current society, that is, the need to conform whilst also appearing individual and different.

Individual modern weddings have become increasingly expensive to organise and the expectations of principals, family and guests have all added to the worries and stresses of the couple or the family members coordinating and financing the event. Couples, especially brides, anticipate their wedding day with excitement and elated enthusiasm, yet fear of committing social or fashion gaffe can cause immense stress so the recognisable package provides an easy alternative.

Ritzer (2000) quotes the director of nutrition for the American School Food Service Association who said in 1998 that young people today have been brought up in a fast-food climate so to persuade many of them to eat, they must be provided with familiar items of food. The same theory could be applied to weddings since the cost of a modern stylish wedding has escalated out of the budgetary and organisational capacities of many couples. At one end of the market the individually tailored potentially prohibitively expensive personalised option is available alongside an easily achievable pre-designed package that alleviates organisational complications and is available at minimal cost, with myriad choices in between. Mass marketed catering products are promoted as providing uniformly consistent quality provided in clean, comfortable and uniform surroundings, modern-day necessary requirements. Pre-designed wedding packages are designed to be instantly available and universally recognisable, exactly like fast food. Local customs such as wearing of garlands or local drinks and exotic cocktails provide the garnishes. The couple know that their wedding will be contemporary and socially acceptable and everyone can be adequately catered for within a precise pre-arranged cost that will include gratuities. Like fast food, value-for-money, attractive presentation and the security of familiarity

with anticipated outcomes are paramount considerations. Proliferations of websites offering package weddings indicate package weddings are increasingly popular among the British. Packages are promoted as a convenient respectable alternative to the personally organised wedding for the busy professional bride and groom wanting to keep control of their budget.

American society has willingly embraced the offer of the pre-arranged, stereotyped package, and since so many American social customs are increasingly being adopted by Westernised cultures, predominantly Asian and European, then it is likely that package weddings, already easily available, will become increasingly globally popular to certain echelons of society, like McDonalds food and restaurants. The prefix 'Mc' has been so successfully marketed by the McDonalds chain that it has been humorously adopted to describe other business ventures. Ritzer (2000, p.10) cites McDoctors and McDentists as examples of business initiatives offering immediate fast service. As yet, McDonalds has not promoted or encouraged the use of its restaurants as venues for wedding receptions but the possibility of the McWedding being tendered as an alternative themed wedding choice must be considered a future possibility.

4.8.2 The Disneyized and Disneyfied formula wedding packages

The terms Disneyization and Disneyfication are described and discussed by Alan Bryman (2004) in relation to the way that societies have adopted and embraced of the idealistic niceties of the Disney Theme Park. Bryman (2004) goes on to reflect on the ways that these unrealistic environments have pervaded many spheres of modern life. Bryman (2004) distinguishes the terms 'Disneyization' from 'Disneyfication' by claiming,

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Disneyization is meant to be distinguished from Disneyfication, which has

come to be seen as a distinctive approach to literature and history that entails a

crude simplification that also cleanses the object being Disneyfied of

unpleasantness. While 'Disneyization suffers from the fact that it has also

been used by some writers, and being a somewhat awkward term, it is

encumbered with less baggage, hence my preference for it over

Disneyfication…

(Bryman, 2004, pp. 12 - 13)

Bryman (2004) describes his use of the term 'Disneyization' as a title that 'becomes a

lens through which the nature of modern society can be viewed, as well as a way of

thinking about issues to do with consumption and globalization' (p. vii). Bryman

(2004) discusses ways in which aspects of Disneyization can be broadly divided into

dimensions of; theming, hybrid consumption, merchandising and performance labour,

and how the theory of Disneyization can be discerned beyond theme parks into wider

modern societies. Bryman suggests that control and surveillance are crucial to the

success of Disneyization.

Bryman (2004) describes 'Disneyfication' as generally describing the cultural

products of the Disney Company. Bryman (2004) asserts that writers and researchers

of Disneyfication have described Disneyfication as a process of rendering material

being worked on (historical event, fairy-tale, fictional story) into an instantly

recognisable standardised format so that material is trivialised and sanitised.

The tightly controlled themed wedding chapel wedding where everything is

meticulously timed and organised and nothing is left to chance reflects both the

control and standardisation of Disneyization and the sanitisation suggested by

Disneyfication. Precise prior planning ensures that all aspects of the ceremony have

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been discussed and arranged so that flowers, music, transport, rings, timing, registrar, witnesses and attendants are all exactly where they should be and briefed where appropriate. There will be minor variations on any selected theme, for instance the brides dress or the dresses of attendants but these are minor details in the standard theme. A variety of idealised themed ceremonies are offered often within a selection of real or fictitious characters or locations such as the Elvis wedding; Camelot wedding; Rock n Roll wedding; Rock Horror wedding amid numerous others (Viva Las Vegas Weddings, 2009). Couples are offered an individual wedding but, like McDonald's food, the wedding is a standardised theme with couples selecting details such as lighting and music. For instance, the 'Elvis Blue Hawaii wedding package' offered by the Viva Las Vegas Wedding Chapel has Elvis performing the ceremony and singing his hit songs. Hula girls dance to Elvis singing the Hawaiian wedding song in a lush, tropical setting amid theatrical fog and lighting effects. The Chapel website suggests that guests might want to sport their best luau-wear (Hawaiian party wear). Chapels encourage couples to choose their preferred theme within a structured format. The ceremony is an idealised theme conducted under strict controls, 'Elvis' is always pleasant and on form and it never rains (unless the couple want it to) Nothing is left to chance while at the same time the event is a product of fantasy and illusion. In reality it is highly unlikely that selected stars would ever attend these weddings and the perfect staged locations are usually derived from Disney animations.

Examples of Disneyfied wedding are the sentimentalised locations such as perfect icing sugar type castles that never show signs of squalor or hardship. Disneyfication makes objects and locations (and even characters) pretty, they might be scary but are never sordid. Wedding locations can be Disneyfied when they are presented as illusionary interpretations of perfection. The Blue Hawaii wedding is a

Disneyfied event with its changeable lighting to emulate any time of the day or evening and its constant ambient temperature allowing no brisk winds, sunburn or dark clouds. It is not based on a real place, the location is all illusionary and is a microcosm of an illusionary and perfect miniature Hawaii. Other examples are fake Bavarian castles and cave interiors representing a fictitious sublimity universally recognised as a utopian environment because they are safe and wholesome, what better place to hold a dream wedding. The Disney Company interpreted European fairy-tales into sanitised animated films providing romanticised settings and happy endings.

In analysing and discussing Disney influences, Bryman (2004) suggests that geography, history and social organization provide the wealth of archive and available accounts of events that can be developed into a theme. His suggested theme influences of *Time,* with special emphasis on nostalgia, *The Natural World,* with the emphasis on spectacular vistas and flora and fauna and *Buildings and Architecture*, with emphasis on the pictorial, grand and unusual relate most closely to the wedding.

The style of wedding clothing and etiquette is usually based more on nostalgia and fantasy reflecting the past than current high street fashion. Brides frequently adopt the visual persona of legendary princess or a beautiful and heroic female historical figure fictionalised through time and interpretation. The Disney princess makes the idealised bridal figure since she is inevitably virtuous and without guile.

The idealised and illusionary Disney castle venue is easily identified within wedding chapel interiors. While obviously not a real site, the fairy-tale interpretation represents a dream that is bound up in belief that the wonderful location will act as a precursor to the marriage itself. The Disney Company has invaded and influenced many aspects of leisure and it has impacted on interpretation of the wedding by

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adoption of sanitised fictional imagery and its provision of pleasure and insouciance

through easily interpreted illusion of perfection.

Disney Inspirational Sketch of a young heroine. Date unknown, Her frothy billowing dress and delicate femininity personify the bridal ideal. Photograph courtesy Prof. Paul Wells

Advertisement for a dream wedding dress in the style of the Disney heroine. *the Wedding directory* Nov 2007 – Jan 2008

Presentation of the wedding ceremony based on Disney animations showing

idealised 'happy ever after' weddings of fictional young and beautiful adults taken

from folklore and fairy-tales has encouraged the popularity of strictly controlled and

contrived wedding ceremonies reflecting 'Disneyfied' images of unreal perfection.

The Disneyfied wedding suggests a flawless and sublime ideal.

4.9 Summarizing wedding business relating to the business of weddings

The philosophy of modern day society toward the wedding has changed. It

has generally become less of a pious religious ceremony and more of a party. Even

the fundamental traditional values of the wedding have shifted, for instance, there is

less importance on the significance of the exchange of rings than of their aesthetic

value, and more interest in the performance of the exchanges. The pledge was once considered such a binding promise that if a promise of marriage was broken, the injured party could claim legal compensation for a damaged reputation. The value of the pledge has depreciated to the extent that it is barely recognised and the very term in this context is almost obsolete. Proliferation of smart and unusual venues means that the location of many weddings has moved away from the local church to a status venue that looks wonderful in photographs and will be admired by guests. The wedding business has effectively highlighted the differences between marriage, the act and the institution, and the wedding ceremony where opportunities for fiscal profits are boundless. The whole wedding occasion has traditionally consisted of a variety of components evolved and merged through customs that unite to constitute the wedding event. Businesses have identified a variety of successful elements and applied these to assemble a collection of popular and lucrative wedding formulas.

The style of weddings changes according to the economics of a society, the degree of wealth and status within each stratum; the political situation affecting a country or environment; the subjects of affection in society and the degree of social affectation in society. Fashion and caprice affect the presentation of the wedding ceremony through myriad potential business opportunities although the forms of presentation continuously evolve to cater for contemporary demands. Same sex civil partnership ceremonies were made legal in England and Wales in December 2005 recognising 'gay marriage' for the first time in history (Stonewall, 2006). While members of the Christian Church were divided in their opinions, same sex couples celebrated the fact that they could at last solemnize their relationships allowing them the same rights as heterosexual couples (Casciani, 2005). Same sex couples celebrated their ceremonies in fashionable style with couples like Manhattan socialite

and author Andrew Solomon and journalist John Habich hosting a ceremony for 300 guests in the grounds of Althorp, childhood home of the late Princess of Wales. The celebrations lasted three days with guests that included both families along with a number of heads of media and film stars. Horse drawn carriages driven by liveried coachmen conveyed guests around the venue. The ceremony was presided over by Christian and Jewish ministers and at the end of the party the couple drove off in a pink painted army tank (Flynn, 2007). Wedding businesses immediately recognised the financial potential of same sex ceremonies and catered to style and taste exactly like celebrity heterosexual weddings. The British Government Office of National Statistics (December 2006) estimates that by the year 2010 there will be between 11,000 and 22,000 civil partnerships. Reportage of the civil partnership of Solomon and Habich in *The Times* article claims, 'where there are gay men, there is, inevitably opulence' (Flynn, 2007).

The wedding business has apparently continuously re-invented the constitution of the wedding celebration to stimulate then satisfy popular public demand. The modern couple want the wedding ceremony to be more than a portal to marriage, it is expected to be a singularly memorable event. The sumptuous exhibitionism currently promoted and publicised by wedding businesses has made the lavish event fashionable and therefore desirable. Should public taste diversify or change then the adaptability of manufacturers will still provide ideal merchandise fitting for the occasion, in whatever forms that should take. Business provides whatever the customer desires such as the ornaments and trinkets superfluous to needs but designed to tempt impulsive fanciful purchase bought because of a wish to conform to an image of generous provider. Many of the articles available are aesthetically alluring and appealing and because most modern westernised societies have a generous amount of

surplus cash available, industries have exploited the consumers desire to spend. The wedding business exists to nurture a dream by anticipating and inciting hopes and desires and by providing whatever the customer wants, in any situation and at whatever cost. Wedding packages can be organised by a wide variety of companies providing organisational expertise so nothing can go wrong on such an important day. The MacDonaldised strictly organised and cost controlled wedding set in a Disneyized illusionary perfect location provides a lavish alternative to the potentially exorbitantly expensive celebrity style occasion. Wedding websites market themselves as information givers and guides in the maze of traditions, customs and social niceties whilst their fiscal success flourishes through persuasion in an ever- expanding market. The wedding business has embraced the escalation of subsequent marriages and alternative and same sex couples to ensure its own expansion and continuing success. The variety of necessary cards and gifts has expanded to include bridesmaids and ushers and virtually anyone involved, however remotely, with the occasion.

The wedding business continues its successful expansion, confident that whatever the economic climate, no expense will be spared in the celebrations. Efficient manipulative marketing has propagated businesses produced, nurtured and succoured through the desire for attestation of mutual love through a showy wedding.

Chapter 5

ROMANTIC LOVE AND A HAPPY MARRIAGE

5.1 Romantic Love and Marriage

Love is considered a necessary requirement for a happy marriage by modern

Western Christian societies, yet the worth of love prior to commitment to a

relationship has never been measured nor evaluated. Modern Christian societies

advocate love as the paramount specification for entering into marriage but love has a

multitude of interpretations, based mainly on emotional sensations.

Brancusi, Constantin, *The Kiss.* 1907. Stone. Muzuel de
Arta, Craiova

Brancusi's stone sculpture *The Kiss* (illustrated) uses a traditionally cold

material to portray a touchingly warm emotion. The shapes are only vaguely human,

they are obviously representative and the work is clearly about depth of emotion, an

intimate depiction of fondness and tenderness. The sculpted images are the same

height and while the right figure appears slightly thicker-set the sexuality of the

figures is ambiguous, interpretation is left to the viewer. The message is

uncomplicated, clear, direct, straightforward and timeless. Love is a curious

phenomenon; it is an emotion that has become a necessary part of a serious

relationship or a marriage, yet in societies where families arrange marriages it is

viewed as an inessential luxury. Love is frequently proven to be temporary, it is often

given as a major reason for marriage but it offers no guarantee of endurance or

survival of the relationship. Love is difficult to define; one person may describe love

in terms of emotions and strong feelings whilst another may describe it as biological

attraction, or as caring and concern. It can also encompass friendship and

companionship, affection, approval. It is all of these and more. Love can be

individually interpreted to express personal feeling but because no two people will

respond in the same way, such subjective definition can lead to misunderstanding and

conflict. Love can mean a great number of things and even to the individual; love as a

concept can be endowed with a number of meanings. Love can be described and

explained in various ways; romantic, erotic, dependent, caring, altruistic indicate

some familiar definitions. Explained and described as a variety of sensations and

sentiments existing within certain circumstances, love is often so powerful it becomes

almost tangible. Love can govern energy and appetite and it can control sense and

reason, it can flourish and grow within marriage or wilt and die.   Beck and Beck-

Gernsheim (1995, p.168) state; 'Nobody should be rash enough to claim they know

all about love'. The nature of the emotion will usually change with time since love

goes through a number of phases during its course, from immediate excitement to a

more sedate (and probably more enduring) familiarity and companionship. Giddens

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(1992) discusses love in relation to gender interpretations of romance and passion. He claims that romantic love is essentially feminised love where idealised romantic fantasy provides escapism from real life. Modern romantic novels usually portray the heroine as feisty and spirited who dissolves the indifference of the male and wins his devotion. Giddens (1992) describes this as creating a mutual narrative biography where the taming and softening of the man by the woman makes it possible for mutual affection to drive their lives. The idea prevailed that true love would last for ever so the realities of love into marriage where the couple had to live together often caused unhappiness when romantic love was succeeded by the actualities of domestic chores and motherhood for women and paid work for men.

Great acts of valour and heinous crimes have come about as the result of love, great works of art have been executed in the name of love, and sonnets and poems written. Love lends itself generously to written and visual interpretation and translations of love can be individual or collective and can demonstrate numerous facets of the state. Some of the most enduring films and musical pieces have based themselves on the theme of love, choice of possible examples are multitudinous so selections typify presentations in the genre and materials of their time representing contemporary attitudes. An example of film portrayal of a particular aspect of love evocative of the special circumstances a period in time is David Lean's 1945 film, *Brief Encounter*. The film is a classic moralistic story of sexual frisson and controlled desire between two people married to other partners. The story was of a war time encounter by two people who regularly travelled home by trains leaving from the same station. Both were comfortably married to others but through meeting as part of their regular routine both became sexually attracted to one another. Mid-twentieth century Britain would not entertain portrayal of an adulterous affair and the message

contained within the film was of control and morality but by the end of the century more lenient attitudes to extra-marital sex made the film's moral message look quaint and rather outmoded.

Love has traditionally featured in works of art and has frequently inspired art works. Visual presentations of love are innumerable and their attraction is their attempts to portray the manifold aspects of love either within socially acceptable boundaries or shockingly extraneous to established conventions. Paintings represent contemporary conventions of love although painters have frequently attempted to offend accepted propriety by advancing the boundaries of what is socially acceptable.

Chagall, Marc, 1929, *The Lovers,*
Tel Aviv Museum collection

Painted representations of love and lovers have mainly given way to more modern media of film and photographs but the subject matter has remained ever universal. Marc Chagall's *The Lovers*, painted in 1929 is a visual representation of

innocent romance. The painting portrays to young lovers romantically embracing in an outside space.   He cherishes and protects her while looking out of and beyond the canvas while she passively surrenders to his hold. The illustrated picture is not claimed as a portrait but it bears a striking resemblance to Chagall and his wife. Chagall was born in poverty in Russia and after moving to Paris he married his French wife in 1915 and lived in sublime happiness in Paris until the beginning of World War II when the couple emigrated to America.

The work by artist Jeff Koons (1991) is deliberately meant to provocative and to challenge tastes and sensibilities of the early 1990s. The photograph of Koons and his companion is posed and directed by the artist although a professional photographer has taken the photograph. This particular example of sexually suggestive portraiture would have shocked earlier generations and it clearly demonstrates how public acceptance of visual definitions of love have become more liberal throughout the twentieth century. The Chagall work is representative of a romantically loving couple while the Koons work is suggestive of sexual familiarity.

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Koons, Jeff, 1991, *Jeff and Illiona*, Photograph; Peter Schinzler

Love is exalted and lamented in song, both ancient and modern and various facets of love have been advanced through song lyrics. Love songs generally represent the idea of romantic love in their particular era as well as being indicative of more complex economic and social issues. The Beatles anthem *All you need is Love* summed up the idealism of the late 1960s. This was an era where youth culture prevailed and the band, consisting of four working class youths from Liverpool, epitomised taste in music, dress and behaviour. For the first time in living memory, middle and working class youth had considerable earning power and were free to adopt a lifestyle independent of their parents. The newly introduced contraceptive pill proved a uniquely successful method of birth control and this had a revolutionary effect on conventional morals. It allowed controlled fertility so women could elect to indulge sexual freedom without fear and anxiety of unwanted pregnancy. A 'soft drug' culture of marijuana became fashionable to induce feelings of camaraderie, warmth and closeness that in turn, helped to liberate sexual inhibitions. Love songs have customarily exalted the joys of reciprocal love and have bewailed the disappointments and sadness of unrequited or lost love but to Jane Birkin and Serge Gainsbourg in their 1969 song *Je T'aime,* love translated as sex. This song openly acknowledged and proclaimed mutual heterosexual pleasure, a reflection of increasingly liberal attitudes to female sexuality.

The way in which the word 'love' is used in song generally reflects myriad contemporary social interpretations of love and emotions but 'love and marriage' is a recurring combination. This is an outmoded concept since love no longer inevitably leads to a state of marriage yet still this idealistic dream prevails. Contemporary lyrics could read 'love and cohabitation'. In the context of love songs, 'Love' is fancifully portrayed as a starry-eyed condition promising happiness and absolute

devotion. The momentousness and value of love in society has resulted in the state of love being an expectation whereby those adults who have not experienced romantic love are in danger of being outside the norm. Love is either a mutual emotional state or it emanates from one person who emotionally desires attachment to another even if the attachment is not reciprocated. The emotion involves two (or more) people even if one of those is completely unaware of the emotional feeling or does not welcome it. Giddens (1992) suggests that most communities would accept that passionate love is not an ideal basis for a relationship but most couples are searching for romantic liaisons. The workload demands of contemporary professional men and women and increasing numbers of divorcees frequently made it difficult for them to meet prospective partners socially. Growing numbers of dating agencies contrived liaisons between couples using data provided by individuals regarding likes and dislikes and requirements of a partner. As technology developed individuals could search out like-minded and desirable escorts through dating websites where they could confidently appraise prospective partners without introduction by a third party and without having to identify any personal details except to a desirable contact.

The celebration of heterosexual coupling in western heterosexual societies has meant that singles are frequently marginalized. Individuals attempting to book apparently inexpensive package holidays usually find that advertised prices are available only to couples or multiples and that singles pay an extra premium. Restaurants usually place singles in less desirable areas of the restaurant, prime window locations are usually reserved for multiples. Sociologist Chrys Ingraham (1999) underlined and critiqued the appeal of beauty and fashion regarding the 'white wedding' ceremony claiming that many of the traditions in wedding ceremonies are manifestations of heterosexual, patriarchal and racially biased ideologies. Lesbian

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studies scholar Ramona Faith Oswald (2000) adds to Ingraham's critique claiming that wedding etiquette marginalizes and ostracises lesbian and gay wedding guests. She describes her experience as a bridesmaid being obliged to accompany a male usher for the day despite her lesbian partner being among the guests (pp. 117 – 119).

The Great War of 1914 – 1918 in Europe eradicated almost a complete generation of young males so the prospect of marriage for many women would remain a distant dream or an accepted unlikelihood. Women had to accept the possibility of a single state and whilst most would have been conditioned to expect marriage, at least they had reasonable employment opportunities and could therefore support themselves. Women became an accepted workforce trained as skilled workers in employment previously exclusively male. The subsequent financial independence offered women the opportunity to enter into marriage through choice rather than acquiescence. Single independent individuals lived socially parallel lives to married couples and women were able to pursue career and education opportunities with a degree of social endorsement, either through choice or necessity. Those women brought up to view marriage as a romantic ideal were left to consider a life of work without the support of a husband and the comfort of children. Children born outside of marriage carried social stigma and women who had illegitimate children were condemned as immoral. Giddens (1992) highlights the actions allowed under the Mental Deficiency Act passed in 1913 when unmarried girls who became pregnant could be detained indefinitely in reformatories and mental hospitals. Abortion was illegal and while it was possible for women to seek illegal abortions if they could afford to, they did so at considerable risk to life. Otherwise they were treated as pariahs. Women in the workforce were not treated as equals and it was not until the Equal Pay Act of 1970 and the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 that the

principle of equal pay for work of equal value was established. Women had a long tradition of campaigning for equality at work from the Sisterhood of Leicester Women Wool-Spinners protesting in 1780 about the use of child labour. Walter (1998) claims that the intellectual and political force of feminism is the movement that brought contraception and abortion rights, among other benefits, to modern women. Walter further claims that women's efforts to gain equality, through two centuries of feminist argument, finally brought about advances including property ownership, education and control of personal fertility. Giddens (1992) acknowledges that a change in official opinion to contraception after World War I released women from ' a chronic round of pregnancy and childbirth' (p.26). Effective contraception allowed couples, and women in particular, to control fertility so that family and family size became a matter of choice. The introduction of the contraceptive pill allowed women sexual autonomy. During the early 1970s philosopher Simone De Beauvoir was able to 'identify strategies for women's liberation during based on the kind of economic transformations which help women to affirm productive capacities' (Humm, 1992, p. 44). Beauvoir claimed that being female is not the same thing as being a woman so that women's escape from objectification will bring about an end to patriarchy.

As women were increasingly able to plan conception so could plan careers and families, their status and opportunities in the labour market were still inferior to those of male colleagues. Research by Frankle Kirschner (ed. Huber 1973) acknowledges that while roles within British and American homes appeared to be changing, gender stereotypes in pictures of women immersed in domesticity while men pursued careers appeared to be upheld (pp 289 – 290). No evidence of enquiry into pay differential between the sexes emerged from the research and Kirschner implies the subject was

not a serious consideration within his sources. Jo Freeman (ed. Huber, 1975) describes the emergence of a women's organisation lead by author and women's rights pioneer Betty Friedan who in 1966 set up a group 'to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, assuming all the privileges and responsibilities thereof in true equal partnership with men' (p.37).

Women were not equal in employment, their wages (for equal work) were likely to be lower and promotion prospects less. After the First World war (1914 – 1918) 'a "marriage bar" was imposed on women pursuing many professional and manual careers' (Humm, p. 38 – 39). A pioneer of women's liberation groups such as

Modern girls can be independent and as assertive as males yet the appeal of a romantic wedding is as great as ever, but young women are not so enamoured with the idea of becoming wives claims Boden (2003). The lures of a liberated and independent lifestyle complete with the attraction of marriage. Otnes and Pleck (2003) claim that historically love had little to do with marriage and that it was the associations of romantic love with individualism that caused romantic love to become the basis for selection of a marriage partner. It was at that time that the ideal of perfect love became linked to romantic love and romantic love became linked to marriage. Otnes and Pleck (2003) go on to suggest that mass media advertising encouraged those retail stores ensconced in both the culture and the marketplace, to capitalise on the public's belief in the ideal of romantic perfection by representing the wedding as the ideal of perfect love. They suggest that 'perfect' linked to 'romantic' provided the right to spend to the extreme by applying the adjective 'perfect' to most products and elements of the lavish modern wedding. Illouz (1997) claims it was at this time the new media industry shamelessly promoted and exalted the romantic ideal (p.46). Mid -twentieth century women's magazines (*Woman, Woman's Own,*

People's Friend) contained recipes, beauty tips and wrote short romances complete

with happy endings. Popular twentieth century women's authors like Catherine

Cookson wrote about feisty working-class girls successfully overcoming adversity yet

these novels are 'more or less fairy-tales, in which wish-fulfilment follows hard on the

heels of unimaginable disasters' (Walter 1998, p.207). For many women, the

romantic myth is a variation on the Cinderella fairy-tale where the special qualities of

the underdog are finally recognised and she is rewarded by marrying her prince and

living happily ever after.

5.2 Romantic love and ideology

Romantic love is a strong emotion that relies on intense feelings. It can arouse

such strong feelings that those experiencing romantic love can experience physical

changes such as quickening pulse and breathlessness while loss of love or rejected

love can cause loss of appetite and sleeplessness (Rice, 1998).

Romantic love is likely to coexist alongside idealisation of a subject where

certain aspects of their personality or appearance are seen as embodying perfection. It

can create a sense of devotion and stimulate a willingness to sacrifice and serve.

Romantic love enhances confidence so that the recipients feel attractive and

accomplished but romantic love is idealistic and does not acknowledge reality.

Publishers acknowledge demand for romantic fantasy by producing titles

targeted toward female readers prepared looking for escape into romantic idealism.

Such romances usually contain the 'happy ever after' ending present in childhood

fairy-tales where all upsets and trauma's are finally resolved and the heroine usually

marries the hero. Ingaham (1999) discusses the role of film and television using the

fairy-tale formula of 'happy ever after' perpetrated by the romance novel in

presenting tales intelligible to the viewing audience. 'The comprehensibility they produce is a product of dominant ideologies about marriage combined with utopian notions of love and community, a dash of male resistance, and a hint of alternatives, circulating in the culture at large as well as in the guise of entertainment and escape' (p.127). Fictional romance panders to desire for protection, care and nurture while recognising female individuality while also conceding to some degree of eroticism. Emphasis is on romance rather than sex although there will inevitably be sexual frisson controlled by the narrative heroine. Radway (1987) discusses female fantasy as desirous of reciprocation, a wish for the same sort of care and attention that women are expected to lavish on men. While acknowledging the idealism of romantic love, Giddens (1992) claims that romantic love can also project a course of future development and suggests that romance provides alternative ways of thinking about their situation for the deprived so that from the nineteenth century they participated in a reworking of the conditions of personal life. Giddens (1992) goes on to describe the heroines of modern romantic novels as independent and spirited yet able to capture the heart of a man through focusing so much love on him.

Discussion and comparison of gender concepts and attitudes to romance and consumption of romance, combined with social and biological influences, produced advances in feminism including popularisation of the 'Girlpower' brand of feminism that evolved during the 1990s. Walter (1998) quotes British girl band the *Spice Girls* as claiming ' Girl power is…when you reply to wolf whistles by shouting " Get your arse out"' (p.118). They could present themselves as a collective group or as individuals with separate lives. These girls were famous and influential modern celebrities, confident, assertive and liberated and choosing to engage in relationships at will and have children with or without the financial or emotional support of

partners. Giddens (1992) discusses the association of romantic love with marriage and motherhood claiming that when marriage was an almost insoluble lifelong commitment it might have resulted in years of unhappiness and that marriages based on love were unlikely to remain happy. The appeal of a romantic wedding is as great as ever, but modern young women are not so enamoured with the idea of becoming wives (Boden 2003). It appears that young women like the prospect of a wedding rather than the concept of marriage. The lures of a liberated and independent lifestyle compete with the attraction of traditional wedlock. The eclectic mixture of instant celebrity and being the most important individual at the event as well as the thrill and excitement of extravagance and intemperance seem to combine to eclipse the significance of the ceremony. Modern young women are usually able to earn enough to support a single lifestyle, they are free to participate in sexual activity without fear of conception and fashionable behaviour encourages female assertion. Young women experience unprecedented freedom. Modern independent women could demand equality in relationships. Giddens (1992) analyses modern female gender equality in terms of a 'pure relationship' that is, a relationship 'of sexual and emotional equality, which is explosive in its connotations for pre-existing forms of gender power'. He goes on to claim that;

> 'ideals of romantic love have long affected the aspirations of women more that those of men…. On the one hand it has helped to put women "in their place" - the home. On the other hand, however, romantic love can be seen as an active, and radical, engagement with the "maleness" of modern society'.

Giddens explains the emergence of 'decentred sexuality, freed from the needs of reproduction' as 'crucial to the emancipation implicit in the pure relationship, as well as claims to women's sexual pleasure'. He goes on to explain that this began

'somewhere in the late eighteenth century' and was a means of limiting family size but developed later as a result of more available modern contraception (Giddens 1992 p.2). Walters (1998) suggests that while contraception helped women to become more independent, it was the education of women that provided 'a necessary precondition to women taking the decision to limit their families' (p.50). She goes on to state that had women not 'opened their minds to the possibility of female independence and self-worth, the contraceptive pill alone would have had much less affect on women's lives (p.50). Giddens (1992) claims that a division of labour between husband and wife where the wife worked in the home and the husband sought salaried employment was a solution to sustaining marriages.

Participation in Christian religious wedding ceremonies declined during the second half of the twentieth century so that by 2007 civil ceremonies represented two thirds (67%) of all ceremonies (Office for National Statistics UK, 2009, a). Since 1991 the number of religious marriages has halved. The decline in weddings during the second half of the twentieth century resulted in the lowest number of weddings celebrated in England and Wales during 2007 since records began in 1862 (Office for National Statistics UK, no.30, 2009). As heterosexual couples increasingly cohabit and have children together there is less reason to celebrate a formal ceremony and, according to Wallop (2008) writing for *The Telegraph*, 'There is mounting evidence that the cost of wedding is deterring many couples from tying the knot. Otnes and Pleck (2003) trace the lavish wedding back to Queen Victoria. The Victorian lavish wedding was a formal ceremony. Two World Wars during the twentieth century might have made weddings less obviously opulent as people struggled to acquire luxurious goods but the spirit of many fashionable weddings celebrated as much luxury as was available. After World War II, middle class weddings aimed for

comfortable but modest family respectability (Otnes and Pleck 2003). Royal

weddings and those of major film stars influenced the style of wedding dress and

some aspects of the post ceremony reception but most family wedding receptions

were held in local village halls or other such humble venues. Gradually self-imposed

barriers to a showy ceremony began to lift and as rationing ceased and desire for

luxury flourished, a lavish wedding increasingly began to be viewed as a right by

middle class and working class brides. The relaxation in attitudes to female sexuality

outside marriage and increasing cohabitation was reflected in the decline in weddings

through the 1970s until the wedding of Lady Diana Spencer to the Prince of Wales in

1981 changed wedding style. Their wedding portrayed the embodiment of the

romantic ideal.

The couple married in July 1981when he was thirty-two years old and his

bride was twenty, an age difference of almost thirteen years. He was a highly eligible

bachelor, son of a queen and heir to the British throne while she was a modern girl of

noble birth who worked as a kindergarden teacher. Crowds of 600,000 filled the

streets of London 600,000 with an estimated global television audience of 750 million

viewers (BBC, 1981.) Every aspect of the ceremony was filmed and photographed

and images of the event appeared throughout the world in magazines and newspapers.

It was the first wedding of a major royal since the wedding of Charles sister, Princess

Anne, in 1973 and public interest in the new princess was insatiable. Lady Diana was

young, pretty, shy and extremely photogenic and to a culture pre-occupied with

elevating personalities in the public eye to celebrity status, her unchaperoned

accessibility and her ready compliance to be photographed by the popular press was a

windfall. Her indulgence of press attention was interpreted as carte-blanche for

following and photographing her at every available opportunity, much to the increasing delight of the public.

The popular press had hailed prince Charles as the most eligible bachelor in Europe and he had been speculatively liked to numerous heiresses, models and actresses by the tabloid press. Charles was under intense pressure to marry from the press, the government and public and, as he later admitted, from his immediate family. Not only was he the heir to the British throne and therefore expected to produce heirs of his own, but the relatively recent royal scandal of the prince's uncle, Edward VIII who had left marriage until relatively late and then had abdicated his throne in 1936 in order to marry a woman he loved, a divorcee, was still in the memories of many subjects and needed to be exorcised. Only a few years later in 1955, Margaret, the Queen's sister, became romantically linked to a divorcee and had to choose between abandoning her royal status or giving up her lover. Such behaviour caused further ignominy for the royal family so an appropriate partner for the heir was of paramount importance. The number of eligible women available for marriage to the prince was decreasing as they married other husbands so there was some fear that the pool of suitable partners would dry up before the indecisive prince selected his spouse. Much deliberation as to the credentials of the prospective wife of the prince had been voiced in the press so his eventual selection of a well-bred and beautiful young English woman was enormously popular. The wedding venue, London's St. Paul's cathedral, was both magnificent and ancient and it provided a commanding backdrop for the ceremony. The popular press portrayed the couple as the perfect example of a romantic couple, the *Sun* newspaper described them as 'The Very Picture of Fairy-Tale Sweethearts'. (Ingraham 1999, p.36) The couple were

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young, well-born, wealthy and attractive and photographs of them exhibited their glamour and romantic attraction and fondness for one another.

This wedding represented a real life romantic fairy-tale where a working girl meets and captures the heart of her prince. Diana's life changed from that of an advantaged girl in a routine and unglamorous job to a real-life princess through marriage, she epitomized an image of female romantic ideology. Her life story emulated the fairy-tale *Cinderella* whose fears and worries would all disappear and she would live happily thereafter with her prince.

Fairy-tale wedding of the Prince of Wales to Lady
Diana Spencer 29 July 1981 was viewed worldwide
and set modern wedding fashion and standards.

Children's fairy tales inevitably end with a wedding to a wealthy handsome prince while romantic fiction stories, both old and modern, usually also end with a wedding. In these cases, the wedding itself is the pinnacle of achievement and the aftermath is of no consideration or consequence. In the case of the prince, he was

seen to have done his duty by marrying his beautiful princess who, in turn, blessed him with heirs. A romantic fairy- story or a modern romantic novel would end at this point. Romantic love need not always lead to marriage nor does marriage need romantic love but the two have been inextricably linked and represent the heterosexual acme.

Portrait photographs and paintings are staged to capture romantic love at its most perfect. They portray ideal love and satisfy a human need for flawlessness and sublimity.

The newly married Prince and Princess of Wales
kiss in public on the balcony of Buckingham Palace

Romanticism does play some part in the attraction between two people and their decision to marry in that it encourages and promotes a perception of faultless perfection, but by it's nature, romantic love cannot endure since it does not allow for reality and practicality.

The ideology of romantic love between ideal heterosexual couples is represented by depictions of weddings in popular culture. It is the idea and illusion of happiness and love that is central to the selling of media weddings (Ingraham, 1999).

The Charles and Diana wedding began a fashion for expensive exhibition weddings

seeming ordinary. Ingraham (1999) claims the justification for expense 'become

normalised through invocation of the "special" romance that requires such class

trappings (p.p.135 – 136). Twentieth century capitalism recognised and developed

the commercial possibilities related to romantic love and contrived to turn the concept

of love into business opportunities. Commodities were designed to appeal to

romantic lovers as commerce suggested and promoted the altruistic aspects of love.

Boden (2003) describes the manipulation and indoctrination of the public by agencies

involved in advertising merchandise designed to create' false needs' during those

times of consumer affluence.

5.3 Love and consumerism

Capitalism encompasses all social groups in that all can aspire to a better

lifestyle through successful economic progression. Media promotion of the benefits

of financial ascendancy has resulted in the cult of celebrity that, in turn, has promoted

greater consumption at all social levels. Otnes and Pleck (2003) claim that romance,

along with envy, anxiety, snobbishness, traditionalism and family values, has been

used as a means of selling products since early in the twentieth century. Beauty

products claiming to improve appearance appealed to female consumers. Advertisers

used representations of beautiful brides, symbolically representative of purity, joy and

happiness, as symbols of luxury (Otnes and Pleck, 2003). Television advertisements

and photographic images of products can be made more appealing through presenting

products with empowerment to benefit lifestyle. Products are portrayed on screen as

having special ambience. Selective studio lighting, appropriate music and frequently

endorsement by popular celebrities makes them appealing and identifiable with style

and taste. This visual picture of desirable product conveyed an increasing

proliferation of goods associated with romantic love, or images of romantic love were

used to sell selected goods. Television or journal endorsement of a product by a

celebrity confirms general acceptability of the product and provided glamour.

Couture clothing is beyond the pocket of most working women but the opportunity to

buy into the image of luxury and glamour of couture is available through expensive

but affordable perfumes and cosmetics.

As a rite of passage the wedding provides a sense of transformation.

Historically individuals move from single to married and from dependency to

adulthood but for the modern couple obsessed with the production of fashionable

exhibition presentation is all-important. It is usually the bride who strives for

perfection on her wedding day, in the production and outcome of the day and with

regard to her appearance. She will be the focus of attention and she will feel obliged

to ensure she achieves and maintains a fashionable dress size and that her complexion

and make-up, hair, nails and teeth are perfect. Romantic symbols will be evident

throughout the day, flowers, tables strewn with rose petals or 'honesty' petals,

almonds, usually in the form of sugared almond confectionary and almond cake icing

representing virginity. The consumer is buying into a marketing interpretation of

romance represented by a desirable product. Sociologist Campbell (1998) discusses

how consumers can persuade themselves that purchase of an unnecessary item is

justified and that the item is, in fact both potentially useful and necessary. He

explains that a consumer might both want an article and possess the means to buy it

but a customer must also be able to convince himself or herself that such a purchase is

right. Campbell discusses consumers 'needs' as a necessity and essentially a

replacement while 'want' is brought about by pleasure and desire is the motivation

that causes want. As far as consumerism related to love and subsequently to the modern lavish wedding ceremony is concerned the wedding is represented by the gratification of 'want'. There are certain associated 'needs' such as need for clothing, travel to and from a legal venue and a need to feed guest and while the couple do not 'need' wedding rings there is a need born out of tradition, but as people become increasingly affluent those objects previously considered luxuries become regarded as necessities. One of the contrasts between traditional and modern consumption is that modern consumers expect to indulge their desires while satisfying their needs (Campbell 1998, p.239). Discussing the lavish modern wedding, an article in the *Telegraph* newspaper claims that 'Inflation has helped push up the price of food and drink, exacerbated by more and more couples insisting on hosting a full sit-down meal, rather than a sandwich and a glass of champagne, which used to be the norm a generation ago' (Wallop, 2008). Otnes and Pleck (2003) describe wedding dress shops as pandering to customers need for ritualistic pampering. Charsley (1992) describes how wedding cakes at the beginning of the 1980s were usually three tiers high with the four-tier cake being the ultimate. By the end of the 1980s a manufacturer could charge £500 for a five-tier cake when a typical three-tier cake could be bought for £100. Those couples wanting to impress could order cakes with seven or eight tiers.

Expensive gestures and goods increasingly represented love as people found they could buy pleasures and consumption and romantic love were both about fantasies and making dreams come true (Campbell 1998). By the early 1980s many men and women were earning salaries surplus to their basic needs so they came to accept the idea of wanting and needing more goods, then more expensive and lavish goods, and they could afford to buy them. Things no longer became worn out before

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they were replaced. Instead, they went out of style or were subsumed by a superior product with more or more complicated functions. Wedding consumerism was apparent in the size and style of the event. In 2008 football star Wayne Rooney married his girlfriend Coleen McLoughlin in Portofino, Italy. The bride reportedly spent more than £100,000 on her wedding dress (Khan, 2008). Describing a big, showy wedding where the groom's ambition was to have his photographs publicly displayed as an exemplar of wedding perfection, Otnes and Pleck (2003) reflect,' Surely the contemporary wedding is an exercise in narcissism, with the circle of pleasure and self-admiration spreading from the bride outward to include the groom, the mothers of the bride and groom, and sometimes the guests' (p.p.105 – 106). It seems that romance can be attributed to the wedding event and it is increasingly exhibitionism that provides the excitement and memories for some couples, and in the case of celebrity fans such as those of Rooney and McLoughlin, it is the degree of exhibitionism that makes the occasion memorable and different.

5.4 Love, marriage and irregular marriage

Most marriages in pre-modern Christian Europe were arranged on economic grounds where mutual sexual attraction was not grounds for marriage. Giddens (1992) suggests that demonstrative affection among serf classes was rare among married couples whose liaison was often brought about through labour compatibility. Opportunities for men to engage in extramarital liaisons were numerous but sexual licence was only openly permitted for aristocratic 'respectable' women and this freedom was almost never connected with marriage (p.p. 38 – 39). The sexuality of marriage was a moral sexuality while passion occurred outside marriage, for men.

'Respectable' working class and middle class women were not permitted sexual contact outside marriage.

The Christian Church treated the marriage vows as sacrosanct and allowed no indulgence or leniency. Early Christian writings had struggled with the concept of coitus and it was not until the thirteenth century intellectual theologian, scholar and Dominican monk, Thomas Aquinas (1225 –1274), defined, developed, explained and systemized Catholic theology in his *Summa Theologiae* to determine the place of physicality within marriage (Gratsch, 1985). His organisation and standardisation of religious order and associated common law gave the Church authoritative control over marriage and the formalities of the ritual. He likened the union of man and wife to that of Christ and The Church where the coupling made them one (Ashley 1995). Early Christianity appointed saints and revered martyrs of either gender but later attitudes became progressively patriarchal. The downfall of Adam and Eve described in the Book of Genesis was considered solely the fault of the woman by the Christian Church. On one hand women were presumed inferior to men yet they were obviously necessary for childbearing. British custom advocated that the eldest son of landed gentry could inherit family lands and fortunes so that wealth was not diluted through sharing. Subsequent sons were left to either find wealthy wives from less prestigious families desiring higher status or else to find their own ways of making a living. One respectable role for these generally educated unmarried men was to enter the Church, where they built their own hierarchal rankings and social orders (Alchin, no date). The biblical writings of St. Paul supported celibacy as an ideal (Corinthians 7: 32 – 38) and sex was acknowledged only for procreation, not for pleasure. The male-dominated Christian church tolerated heterosexual sex for procreation and controlled marriage by demanding that a representative of the Church conduct marriages.

Because the traditional arranged dynastic marriage was made to ally families and to ensure land and wealth remained within families it made no allowance for love between the prospective bride and groom or their love for anyone else outside the bond. Emotional bonds were not requisite to a favourable contract and attraction between a couple would have been incidental.

The clarification and recoding of marriage rites by Aquinas acknowledged the legality and validity of marriages conducted outside the auspices of the Christian Church but common expectation was that a member of the clergy blessed respectable marriages. People acknowledged religious ritual in establishing conjugal unions and parish registers to record marriages were established in 1538 securing documentation of the liturgical event. Cressey (1997) claims that while marriages arranged without religious benediction and without public avowal were described as 'clandestine marriages' most clandestine marriages properly ordained by a minister using the words of the Book of Common Prayer. These weddings were legal provided they were made in the presence of a witness and there was no lawful reason why the marriage should not take place but they were irregular and not quite respectable. It was more often the circumstances of clandestine weddings rather than the way they were conducted that made them irregular. They were often celebrated before sunrise or late in the evening and they often violated established conventions such as banns, licenses and consent (Cressey, 1997). It is likely that the sixteenth century Christian Reformation caused catholic recusants to undergo clandestine wedding ceremonies to avoid protestant liturgy and to ensure the old religion was kept alive (Cressey, 1997). The clandestine ceremony allowed some people to avoid the expense of a public wedding as well as display of matrimonial festivity. If couples were subjects of arranged marriages and wanted to escape then a clandestine ceremony was often their

only means of escape. It was also very difficult for couples with enormous differences in class background to marry, families were not likely to give consent or support the idea of marriage. As couples increasingly desired a love match incidences of irregular marriages grew and were often difficult to disprove.

In 1754 an act of Parliament demanded that all marriages in England and Wales must be performed in a church and recorded in parish records and only couples over twenty-one years could marry without parental or guardian consent. Weddings had to be performed within times stipulated by the Church and 'verbal spousals' that were non-church ceremonies would not be deemed legal. Scottish law still allowed couples to marry at sixteen so young couples determined to marry could cross the border into Scotland to marry at Gretna Green, the most southerly point that celebrated the wedding ceremony. Local blacksmiths who were locally held in high regard and were known as 'anvil priests' would usually perform the weddings. These weddings became so popular that in 1857 Lord Brougham introduced a law requiring couples to reside locally for three weeks to 'cool off' before they could marry and the ceremonies were relocated to the church. This remained until 1940 when all 'irregular marriages' were stopped. In 1977 the three-week residency was removed and couples had to give fourteen days notice of their intention to marry. In 1994 ministers were allowed to perform ceremonies at the anvil once again and in 2002 Registrars were allowed to perform weddings outside the registry office at approved venues. These clandestine weddings remained popular into the twentieth century and one 'anvil priest' claimed to have performed 5147 Gretna Green weddings between 1927 and 1940 (gretnamarriages, 2009). Gretna Green weddings historically provided a lucrative source of revenue for local entrepreneurs among others; ministers, inn-keepers and farmers providing accommodation and work. Twenty-first century

Gretna Green wedding venues and business advertise their wares through sophisticated websites and supply any wedding dream, especially focusing on the 'anvil wedding'.

5.5 Motives for marriage

Jules Draner (Jules Renard) *At the Salon,*
1879 – 1880, Le Monde Comique

Although cohabitation became socially accepted by the middle of the twentieth century, there is evidence that this situation was a preliminary to marriage. Otnes and Pleck (2003) claim that during the 1990s couples were moving away from the family home and about half of brides and grooms lived together before marriage (p.52). Cohabitation does not always lead to eventual marriage although the decline in numbers of marriages has been linked to cohabitation (Clark and Haldane, 1990). It is likely that cohabitation has lead to the increase in age at marriage. The average age at first marriage for men in 1950 was 22.8 years and for women 20.3 years. By 1970 these ages were 23.2 years and 20.8 years respectively while by 1990 these were 26.1 years and 23.9 years respectively. By 2007 the average age at first marriage for men was 36.4 years while the age at first marriage for women was 33.8 years (National Statistics UK, 2009, b). Mansfield and Collard (1988) suggest that the act

of marriage provides the most obvious means of validating adulthood in our society. Because marriage is the initiation of a sequence, it encompasses all other decisions concerning the future. Tradition has allowed single males time to mature and develop the skills that will earn them a living whereas women have customarily married at a younger age without any particular accomplishments. This has resulted in the pressure to marry being greater for women as their identity still relied on marriage and family. They have frequently seen marriage as a means of escape from expectation of the customary role of the family daughter destined to take care of aging parents and taking responsibility for running the household. Marriage also traditionally provided the means of establishing a place in society. Marriage is often considered to be a perforce; an occurrence decreed to take place at some point in an adult lifetime it is deemed a normal, conventional adult step. Marriage incorporates a recognised set of roles and identities that mark the transition into adulthood and whilst adulthood is recognised outside of marriage the ceremony acknowledges maturity. Giddens (1992) suggests previous generations of women associated marriage with leaving home. Women viewed marriage as independence but the act also presumed material dependence, and marriage can act as a means of forging a definite self-identity. In leaving the parental home and setting up a home of their own couples become recognised as adults with responsibilities in their own right, and in modern marriage where both might be employed they can expect identity as individuals and as a couple. Walter (1998) claims that at the end of the twentieth century women still earned 80 % of the male hourly wage with women employed in manual labour earning 69% of the money per hour of male manual workers (p.19). Modern women want to get away from the constrained domesticity of previous generations yet a

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paradox is that marriage is used as a means of achieving some measure of autonomy (Giddens, 1992, p.57).

Men have traditionally been the makers of history and they have recorded history. Men fall in love and have been influenced by romantic love but in a different way from women. Giddens (1992) claims that for most men, there is tension between romantic love and seduction and the connection between romantic love and intimacy were suppressed so that love was bound up with access to women who remained virtuous until their marriage. Men have historically been allowed sexual freedom not available to women. Clark and Haldane (1990) state that Victorian husbands moved between their work and domestic situations, their public and private worlds, and frequently enjoyed the moral latitude of the double standard (p.27). Victorian men did not necessarily marry for sex but that marital domestic comfort came at the cost of financial responsibilities and sustained work. Modern women are more sexually experienced when they marry than previous generations but while men claim they welcome equality but still have qualms about role issues such as child raising (Giddens, 1992). Ellis and Harper (1961) state, 'That many men have qualms about marrying is a well-known fact and is not surprising in view of the additional social and economic responsibilities a man must assume with a wedding band' (p.98). Clark and Haldane (1990) explain a view of 'traditional' men defining marriage in terms of 'role' rather than 'relationship' (p.29). This suggests that modern men still fear the added responsibilities brought about by marriage and fatherhood. Clark and Haldane (1990) report gender differences in working-class nineteenth-century marriage being defined by financial obligations and gender specific activities that did not call upon romantic love or verbal and sexual intimacy. Twentieth-century changes in patterns of female education and employment opportunities have diminished gender and class

differences to some extent but it is probable that the traditional gender role-image still exists. Askham (1984) states that women have more domestic tasks to complete once married. Many modern working women still accept responsibility for most of the housework and while modern men are involved in household and childcare tasks, they are more likely to select specific tasks while women do whatever has to be done. Walter (1998) suggests the beginnings of change in the male role of worker and provider where in future men and women will lead more flexible working lives with a better balance between work and home. Even so, she recognises that the average modern woman has an independent income that is only half that of the average man (p.3) so women are likely to still rely on a male partner salary to support her and their children during some periods of their lives. Modern men, on the other hand, are still likely to benefit from the comforts of home life with wives accepting most of the responsibilities for housework and child-care.

One of the major changes in lifestyle associated with marriage is setting up home independent from the family. Mansfield and Collard (1988) cite home ownership as expressive of self-reliance and recognition of independence making it a prime motivation for marriage. Ownership of a home provides privacy and states dominion so confirming claims to maturity and self-reliance. Giddens (1992) states, ' It is only over the past generation that striking out on one's own, for women, has meant leaving the parental home. In previous periods, for all but a small proportion of women, leaving home meant getting married' (p53). Beck and Beck- Gernsheim (1995) discuss the increasing movement toward free choice of partner from completely different social, cultural, geographic and religious backgrounds. Such relationships and marriages reflect individual choice and reflect correspondence with contemporary ideals of romantic love but they frequently leave couples without

mutually recognised support systems so the relationship is without mutual values and shared memories. Gillis (1999) writes that today's marriage rituals are less about creating social relations than about constructing personal identities. In discussing individuals developing personal identity through interaction with others, Askham (1984) claims that while there is need of the autonomy within marriage the institution is also subject to rules of widespread public acceptance. Askham (1984) defines the concepts of identity and stability and explains the conflict between them by looking at the place and role each partner within the marriage separately and together. A sense of stability occurs when they discover together ways to construct reality and discover their own roles and opinions within the marriage along with the instructions the pair receive about creating a marriage (Askham, 1984). This need to develop identity expresses the human need for a special type of 'other' person or a more intimate type of relationship. Intimate relationships need contact and periods of privacy and the home provides necessary shelter and protection to nurture relationships in terms of identity as a couple and as individuals within a partnership (Askham, 1984).

Many traditional reasons for marriage are no longer so significant in contemporary Western Christian society as modern men and women can achieve financial security, companionship and partnership and recognition and acclaim without being married. Despite this, Otnes and Pleck (2003) claim that some women grieve that they cannot enjoy the abundance consumer culture offers without a lavish wedding. The lavish wedding appeals to dreams, wishes and fantasies stirred by romantic culture and part of the appeal is because modern couples attempt to turn goods, services and experiences into symbols of romantic love (Otnes and Pleck, 2003). The cult of celebrity is idealised in the lavish modern wedding ceremony and while modern men and women live happy single or cohabiting lives the lack of

wedding ritual seems to frequently prompt fretfulness if numbers of marriages after cohabitation are taken into account. Cherlin (1992) states that about 60% of cohabitations end in marriage with 40% ending in total break up.

5.6 Love's demise

Because love is a fragile state, it is easily eroded or destroyed so as a singular basis for marriage it has proved unsound and unreliable. The romantic bliss of a new love usually happens quickly, it is exciting in its immediacy whereas falling out of love is generally a gradual process. Couples who were once close become indifferent and dissatisfied with their relationship and emotionally disengage with one another. Their interface becomes apathetic and indifferent or even hostile. Traditionally couples were expected to marry for life, the Christian marriage service includes such a clause in its ceremony, and the only escape from a marriage was the death of a spouse or, in very infrequent cases, an annulment of the marriage. Divorce was a rare option only accessible to the very wealthy and well-connected and denied to believers of the Roman Catholic Church, so incompatible couples generally remained locked into marriage for legal, social and economic reasons.

Until the marriage act of 1753, the Church had monopolised the content and programme of the marriage service and it had judged in the cases of marital dispute. During the nineteenth century the family was traditionally viewed as private and beyond the reach of concerns of the law. Divorce was only available to husbands since a wife was considered to be the property of her husband. In 1801 the first divorce case brought to parliament by a woman was the Addision/Campbell Divorce Bill 1801 when Jane Campbell divorced her husband Edward Addision on grounds of his adultery with her sister. Contrary to custom of the time, Jane was awarded

custody of her children (Parliament UK, 2009). The introduction of *The Marriage Act* in 1836 (implemented 1837) eventually allowed the state to challenge the authority of the Church by allowing civil marriages. The Marriage Act of 1836 was constituted to deliver consistency in the wedding service that had become so chaotic that formal marital records had become random and sadly deficient causing dispute at the legality of some marriages and the legitimacy of offspring. Confirmation of the status of many desirous of marriage was lax and bogus clerics were prepared to perform marriages without verification of identity or position. The married state had become easily availed yet there was almost no means of legal escape and while marriage was an attractive proposition at onset, if reality did not fulfil expectation the couple discovered they were bound into an incontrovertible contract. Legislated marriage became a public contract that was formalised and authenticated by state regulation and enforced by secular courts; a civil act contracted in the presence of a clergyman. The introduction of the *Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act* (1836) introduced civil registrars as legal supervisors of marriage ceremonies so that Non-Anglicans could also marry without having to participate in a Christian religious ceremony. Marriage became a civil ceremony rather than a religious one.

During the nineteenth century pressure on parliament to resolve solutions for termination of unsuccessful marriages grew to the extent that effective action became necessary. In 1857 divorce was sanctioned only by act of Parliament (National Statistics UK, 2009, b). This act allowed full divorce so that couples could legally remarry. Law was intended to support a husband in cases of marital breakdown and Gibson (1994) states that the House of Lords' tradition of allowing divorce only on the suit of the husband was adopted so that only he could (as a general rule) cite divorce. The previously mentioned Addision/Campbell divorce in 1801 was a rare

example of a divorce petition being served by a woman. The cost of divorce through

Act of Parliament was prohibitively expensive for all but the very wealthy. In the

case of a contested dispute, either spouse traditionally had recourse to examination of

evidence by a jury provided they could afford to bring the case before a court. Gibson

(1994) describes an especially salacious case of 1864 when a wife exercised her rights

to bring a trial before a jury to prove that her husband had 'made his house a brothel,

whose life was adultery, whose language was obscenity' (Gibson 1994 pp. 59 –60).

The lady apparently brought applause from the courtroom spectators who supported

the innocent and blameless woman. Initiation of divorce was expensive and difficult

and those who determinedly pursued termination of their marriage had to be prepared

for intimate and personal details of their lives to be publicly discussed and examined

in a court of law. The experience was both humiliating and shaming for those

involved and was not for the faint hearted.

Women were greatly disadvantaged by divorce since they rarely had personal

means of economic support and relied on their husbands to provide for them and any

children from the marriage. Any wealth and possessions the wife brought to the

marriage became the property of her husband so a divorced woman could find herself

homeless and destitute. A lone working class woman with children to support was

destined to rely on the charity of the workhouse for sustenance or else resort to

prostitution if she was unable to find another husband to support her. A wife was

unlikely to leave her husband except in very dire circumstances whereas a husband,

with his employment prospects, was better placed to abandon his wife. Until 1922,

adultery was the only recognised grounds for divorce other than annulment (National

Statistics UK, 2009, b). If a wife was found guilty of adultery then she could lose

everything she ever possessed, including rights to her children and her husband could

seek damages against his adversary. An erring husband was not considered guilty of any misdemeanour if the object of his attentions was unmarried since no man's rights had been violated. It was not until the 1922 (implemented 1923) reformed divorce law wives were given formal equality in the grounds for divorce, despite dissent and altercation in both parliament and the Church. Law decreed that adultery alone would prove grounds for divorce so unless a husband was prepared to allow proof of his adultery, his wife could usually only hope for a legal separation since the cost of protracted divorce was prohibitive to a dependent woman whose husband was likely to contest the case. If a couple mutually agreed to divorce the law still demanded proof of adultery in which case evidence had to be fabricated whether adultery had taken place or not. Gibson (1994) describes the case of a petitioning gardener who declared at his divorce hearing that adultery had not taken place although this was cited on his petition. He was charged with conspiring to manufacture false evidence and his application was dismissed. He and his wife had mutually agreed to divorce and had he been an adulterer, his divorce would have been granted. The law was absolutely clear about what constituted justification for dissolution of marriage.

During the later twentieth century access to divorce became more available for many people through the introduction of 'irretrievable breakdown' as a result of the *Divorce Reform Act* of 1969 that was implemented in 1971. This introduction of a single ground for divorce which could be established by proving one or more of certain factors; adultery; desertion; unreasonable behaviour or separation of two years with mutual consent and separation of five years at the sole wish of one partner. The latter clause meant that neither partner had to prove guilt and that either partner could petition for divorce. Along with the introduction of a new legal aid scheme established to provide some financial support for those unable to afford the costs of

divorce, legal dissolution of a failed marriage became widely achievable. By 1984 the *Matrimonial & Family Proceedings Act* reduced the waiting time from 3 years to 1 year. Toward the end of the century, divorce became accessible to the extent that the National Statistics Office (2000) publications confirmed that one third of modern marriages would end in divorce (National Statistics UK, 2000). The same office of statistics also informed that during the year 2007, the number of divorces fell by 2.6% but numbers of first marriages had also fallen to the lowest since 1895. Government statistics show that in 2007 there were 270,000 marriages in England and Wales while the divorce rate had fallen to its lowest level since 1981 (Office for National Statistics UK, 2009,b). Marriage remains relatively easy even if the wedding is increasingly expensive yet the increase in numbers of divorces and associated costs are rarely affect decisions to marry. During a BBC interview, Sir John Mortimer described marriage as '…similar to a hurricane – starts off with all that sucking and blowing and you end up losing your house'. (BBC1 August 5 2004). Although numbers of first marriages is currently decreasing, the number of marriages for the second time or more has increased. Martyn (1989) suggests that almost half of divorcees remarry within five years of their divorce. An article by Kingston published in *The Sunday Times* (2008) asks 'Can we beat our divorce addiction?' and goes on to query the ending of 406 British marriages each day. The article quotes internet contributors asking why marriage is so easy and readily available and remarks that 'Nobody seems to challenge the right to a big shouty wedding'(p. 12). Bryony Gordon (2008) writing for *The Telegraph* suggests that as the recent credit crunch bites even deeper a number of 'trophy' wives are rushing to escape their marriages before their husband's investments and any potential divorce settlements further diminish. This is alternatively likely to mean that many couples cannot afford to divorce as the value of

the family home diminishes and lenders become unwilling to provide loans for partners to buy each other out and banks are unwilling to supply a mortgage without a substantial deposit. Those couples whose equity is tied to the family home are likely to have to stay together for some time yet.

According to Gillis (1999), the fascination of marriage is like gambling on a lottery where rather than being afraid of speculation; the gambler is attracted by the risk factor. He describes the allure of love as 'deep play', which reveals things about the individual that can only emerge when the world of choice moves to the realm of chance. The enormous importance of marriage to Western society suggests that it is likely to be the most pivotal event in adult life, Otnes and Pleck (2003) inform that an American poll taken in 1988 asked couples to recall their most memorable day and one quarter claimed this to be their wedding day. Other traditional celebrations such as birth and death have become much more procedural through the intervention of modern medicine and this has resulted in lack of ritual and attendant mystery. Marriage alone has retained esoteric and enigmatic ideology. (Gillis 1999, pp.47-54).

Until the 1950s marriage was an automatic decision for most women and love and marriage were inseparable, love preceded and progressed into marriage. During the mid twentieth century, the female workforce flourished when dependable paid employment became more readily available in occupations previously only available to men. Women had been trained in a variety of professions during World War II and their subsequent contribution to the rebuilding of the country's economy was a valuable asset. Society sanctioned female employment prior to marriage, but new opportunities arose to remain in the workforce during marriage without incurring undue social censure. Most complied with expectation and gave up work upon marriage to rear children while the husband provided for the family, but attitudes to

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female employment had broadened. By the middle of the 1960s, work was plentiful

and many young women had become used to a high standard of living and some

financial independence after their education. The Equal Pay Act of 1970 and the Sex

Discrimination Act of 1975 were specifically designed to equalise women's position

in the workforce. A young woman could live in self-sufficient style without needing

to rely on a husband for financial support so early marriage became less attractive to

independent women. The relaxation in moral attitudes to pre-marital sexual

relationships meant coition no longer automatically progressed to a wedding and

couples could openly enter into intimate relationships without the resolute

condemnation apportioned to previous generations. Marriage was no longer

absolutely necessary for social approval; cohabitation was an admissible alternative

although society was still uncomfortable with this option and stigma was still attached

to illegitimate birth.

5.7 Cohabitation, an alternative to marriage

Cohabitation became an increasingly accepted relationship choice during the

1970s. Lewis (2001) suggests that cohabitation may be avoidance of a legally binding

relationship in order to move on if the relationship flounders or it may attest to a

greater degree of equality in the union. She goes on to claim that increases in divorce,

cohabitation and childbearing outside marriage have all contributed to the separation

of marriage and parenthood. Cherlin (1992) also regards cohabitation as a phase

where partners can leave their options open and in which neither person is thinking

much about marrying or having children in the near future (p.17). Askham (1984)

predicted in 1984 that marital change would be based on more cohabitation, more

symmetry between the roles of husband and wife and more divorce. Young people

are now more likely to live in a household where parents have divorced with the likelihood of periods of time living with a single parent or a stepparent and this could affect attitudes to marriage (Askham, 1984). The recession of the 1980s meant that many young people faced unemployment and financial struggle rather than consumer-led affluence. This new generation appeared on one hand sceptical of marriage yet they also looked for increasingly high levels of personal satisfaction and fulfilment (Clark and Haldane, 1990). Getting married, setting up home and exercising some degree of power in the consumer market is only possible for people with an income. The poverty and disillusionment experienced by many young working class of the 1980s meant that cultural values of waged employment conflicted with the circumstances they were experiencing. Cohabiting couples could experience self-identity through leaving the parental home along with some degree of stability within a relationship without the cost of a wedding.

Information regarding numbers of cohabiting couples and the duration of cohabiting relationships is problematic to compile because of the difficulties in assessing numbers. There is no certain way of discovering whether adults residing at the same address are cohabiting or sharing a residence so figures are approximate. According to the Office of National Statistics fact sheet (2000-2002), between 22% and 31% couples living in England and Wales aged between sixteen and fifty nine years are cohabiting. Percentage differences depend on location with Wales and Northern England favouring less cohabitation than Southern England. National government statistics informs that the recent steep fall in first marriages at a young age will partly reflect young people replacing marriage with cohabitation (whether permanently, or temporarily with marriage being delayed), and partly people choosing to live alone (Shaw and Haskey, 1999). The potential for impermanence within the

relationship could be comparable to that of modern marriages where divorce most commonly takes place between years seven and eight (Shaw and Haskey, 1999). Gibson (1994) explains that couples favour cohabitation where one or more partners have previous experience of marriage. He states that unmarried cohabitation is now an institutionalised part of pre-marriage selection patterns where those who have been married previously frequently elect to test the strength of a relationship prior to further commitment or while they await legal dissolution of their previous marriage. Living together acknowledges sex outside marriage and where pre-marital sex had been denied by previous generations, more liberal attitudes towards pre-marital sexual activity recognised that modern young people were likely to live with more than one partner throughout their social development. Children born to cohabiting couples registered in the family name of either parent are acknowledged as legitimate although Gibson (1994) refers to Debrett's *Peerage and Baronetage*, 1990 edition which allows acknowledgement of illegitimate and adopted children but stipulates that neither can inherit titles. Cohabitation has challenged marriage as a basis for relationship and the advantages and difficulties of one situation over the other have become clouded to the extent that either condition depends on personal choice. Otnes and Pleck (2003) recognise that for couples wanting to reject the traditional ritual of a social institution cohabitation proved an alternative to marriage but claim that for the most part it was the style of wedding rather than the ceremony itself that provoked feelings of rebellion. Many couples still publicly and legally declare their commitment through marriage in later years but there is no longer implicit social pressure.

Cherlin (1992) claims that while cohabitation allows assessment of mutual cohabitation and should ideally champion refinement of criteria for prospective

partners and jettisoning unsuccessful relationship, it could be expected to lower divorce rates yet this is not so. Cherlin (1992) explains that the ethos of cohabitation allows ending a relationship if either partner is dissatisfied so they bring this ethic to their marriages. Adults who do not cohabit are likely to have a more traditional idea of the sanctity (and permanence) of marriage and they bring this to marriage (Cherlin, 1992). Askham (1984) talking about independent choices claims,

> ' The continued existence of the more traditional forms of behaviour alongside the newer means that a far greater degree of choice is available to couples today: the choice of whether to have a legal marriage ceremony, whether to stay married for ever or not, and whether to organise marital roles symmetrically or not' (P.p.3 – 4).

The author goes on to speculate that having the opportunity to make choices might be preferable to not having choices but it does make life more difficult than acceptance of conventional standards.

Cohabitation seems to be the most common form of first partnership for young adults today with more than one and a half million childless couples cohabiting in 1996 while numbers are predicted to rise to three million in 2021 (Shaw and Haskey, 1999). Increasingly cohabitations will result in marriage with 22% of children being born into cohabiting unions (1997 statistics) although since cohabiting relationships are four times more likely to fail than marriages, these children are unlikely to grow up with both natural parents.

Cohabitation was not recognised in law until the 1970s and until this time the law took a negative view of couples living together outside of marriage (Smallwood and Wilson, 2008). Marriage remains the focus of 'adult' family law and is a legally privileged status compared with cohabitation. Privileges of marriage over

cohabitation include matters such as; next of kin; inheritance and succession rights and transference of pension rights. Law in England and Wales has not adequately responded to social change and while laws pertaining to the rights of same-sex couples who have celebrated a civil ceremony are attempting to deal with rights issues, heterosexual couples have the option of 'opting into' marriage if they want legal protection. There is still no legal definition of cohabitation in that there is no time minimum for relationships to be recognised. Law is not yet able to take account of each partners contribution to a relationship without some acknowledgement of the relationship and the beneficial entitlements of cohabiting partners has not been successful quantified (Smallwood and Wilson, 2008). A Law discussion paper published in 2002 (The Law Commission no. 278, 2002) suggested that couples living together or intending to do so should investigate the legal consequences of their situation. They should make express written arrangements setting out their intentions clearly and, where necessary, executing declarations of trust. While the law has begun to recognise and respond to increasing social diversity through establishing civil partnership registration, individuals can still suffer financial hardship when a relationship outside marriage breaks down and there is no protection. The safest options for couples are either to marry, and be within the protection of the law, or at least to devise some statement similar to a pre-nuptial agreement.

The 'Prenuptial' contract was devised and refined during the 1990s in an attempt to isolate and separate elements of wealth earned or acquired prior to a new relationship from the legal obligations due to this partner in the event of marital breakdown. The rising demand for pre-nuptial agreements by rich and famous stars and celebrities has become almost standard prior to a wedding arrangement. This contract was not recognised in Britain until July 2009 but is popular in America.

5.8 The Prenuptial agreement

Modern society accepts that marriage has become overtly temporary with the probability of breakdown. This has lead to the legal safeguarding of money, property and valuable possessions to limit their accessibility to a new marriage partner in case of marital breakdown. The contract designed to protect wealth is referred to a prenuptial contract, or prenuptial agreement wherein a potential settlement is negotiated prior to a marriage.

Prenuptial agreements have an inverted snobbery value attached to them since usually only those people with vast wealth are prepared to go to the trouble and expense of drawing up such a complicated and generally unreliable contract. The contract is required when the material and financial assets of one partner are considerably greater than those of the other and such previously acquired worth needs protection from the jurisdiction of the divorce courts.

Recognition and acceptance of the impermanence of the married state and the increasing probability of complex family units through the birth of children within varying and changing relationships has affected historical attitudes to inheritance. This has necessitated social and legal revision of responsibility and inheritance law. Traditionally, a child born out of wedlock was not only denied inheritance but was unlikely to be publicly acknowledged by the father. Illegitimate children were the sole responsibility of the mother and were socially inferior. Times and attitudes have changed but whilst a parent may be disposed to support their own offspring, they may not be prepared to maintain those of others or they may not be prepared to sustain them in equal measure.

The prenuptial agreement reflects the confused and complex views of contemporary society. On one hand a couple are organising and anticipating a wedding whilst simultaneously settling details of a prenuptial contract to protect against the consequences of marriage failure. *ABC news online* reported in 2000, 'The British press is abuzz with the rumour that…actress Catherine Zeta Jones and Michael Douglas are squabbling over details of a pre-nuptial.' *The Sun* newspaper reported that the wedding plans were stalled while the actress and her future husband determined how to divide his reported two hundred and twenty-five million dollar fortune should they divorce. The prenuptial agreement appears more likely when at least one partner has gone through divorce. The experience may well have proved financially bruising to someone who has earned wealth so preservation of a current situation becomes paramount. Michael Douglas had earned a substantial fortune throughout his acting career but when his previous marriage ended his former wife received in the region of forty million pounds. Catherine will allegedly receive one million pounds for every year of marriage if they separate, along with an undisclosed lump sum negotiated at the time of their wedding. They have also supposedly agreed a five million dollars (almost three and a half million pound) sum if he is ever unfaithful (*Hello*, 2000). The recent divorce between musician and ex- Beatle, Sir Paul McCartney, and his second wife, Heather Mills-McCartney aroused huge press interest since at the time of the wedding no pre-nuptial agreement was formulated. He has accrued an immense fortune while her career as a glamour model proved considerably less successful and profitable. Press gossip suggested that Paul's adult children allegedly opposed the match, accusing Heather of marrying a vulnerable recent widower for acquisition rather than genuine love. To the malicious delight of

the popular press and gossip magazines, Heather was finally awarded £ 24 million, approximately £100 million less than she demanded.

Celebrity earnings are usually far beyond those of any member of the public so agreements regarding divisions of wealth should the relationship fail are complex, especially if there are children born to either or both parties. The actress Jennifer Lopez is rumoured to have demanded that a clause in her prenuptial agreement with actor Ben Affleck included a 'no cheating' clause, similar to the one Catherine Zeta Jones allegedly demanded from Michael Douglas. Lopez and Affleck eventually announced the 'postponement' of their 2003 marriage amid unsubstantiated press speculation that one of their stumbling blocks was disagreement about the terms she demanded of the prenuptial agreement. Subsequently no marriage between them has ever taken place and their relationship drifted apart.

Pre-nuptial agreements have been recognised for more that ten years in North America and have become increasingly accepted in Europe but not in Britain. A prenuptial agreement was given significant recognition in English law for the first time in July 2009 when a wealthy German heiress won a landmark battle with her former husband (Adams, 2009). Heiress to a paper industry in Germany, Katrin Radmacher married her French husband, Nicolas Granatino in 1998 in London although their prenuptial agreement was signed in Germany. Because the couple married in London the case was heard in England. The couple lived together in Britain and New York before their marriage broke down in 2003 after Mr. Granatino left a lucrative post in banking earning £330,000 a year to become a biotechnology researcher earning an annual salary of £30,000. The couple divorced in 2006 (*The Independent* , 2009). The case was brought to Court of Appeal to challenge an earlier ruling in the High Court when Ms. Radmacher was ordered to pay £5.85

million to Mr. Granatino despite the couple having signed their contract agreeing never to make claims if the marriage failed (Rayner, 2009). The Appeal Court ruling cut the settlement to about £1 million as a lump sum in lieu of maintenance with a fund of £2.5 million for a house that will be returned to Miss Radmacher when the youngest of their two daughters (currently six years old) reaches the age of twenty two. Appeal judge Lord Justice Thorpe said it had become increasingly unrealistic for courts to disregard pre-nuptial agreements. He claimed that current lack of recognition of pre-nuptial agreements 'reflects the laws and morals of earlier generations. It does not sufficiently recognise the rights of autonomous adults to govern their future financial relationships by agreement in an age when marriage is not generally regarded as a sacrament and divorce is a statistical commonplace' (BBC, 2009). Lord Justice Thorpe stressed that 'a carefully fashioned contract should be available as an alternative to the stress, anxieties and expense of a submission to the width of the judicial discretion' (Rayner, 2009).

This ruling could effectively make recognition of prenuptial agreements acceptable in British courts. Traditionally, people who did not want to be bound by their prenuptial agreement could apply for divorce in England and Wales where the agreement has never before been accepted. If prenuptial agreements become an overriding factor in divorce settlements then parties would leave the marriage with whatever they had previously agreed. The rise of the prenuptial agreement is reflective of changing attitudes to marriage where belief in the institution of marriage as a lifelong commitment has diminished and wealthy individuals see insurance against divorce through a prenuptial agreement as increasingly necessary.

5.9 Endurance of love and marriage

Wood, Grant, 1930, American Gothic, The Art
Institute of Chicago, VAGA, New York

Artist Grant Wood claimed that his painting American Gothic

portrayed a respectable small-town couple as rural settler ideal, but critics interpreted

the work as a satire on the puritanical values of the Mid-West. The couple were

perceived as typifying a marriage sustained by duty, decency and complacency. He

clutches a gardening hand-fork and wears faded blue overalls. She has her hair

severely tied back and is buttoned up to her neck. Behind them is a building that

looks like a rural church indicating their religious respectability. There does not

appear to be romance between the couple and both look careworn and sombre. It

appears that any frisson between them has long disappeared and the symbolism

apparent in the work is of a dreary and unadventurous long-term dutiful marriage.

Government statistics indicate that divorce rates in year 2005 suggests that

approximately 45 % of marriages will end in divorce and almost half of these divorces

will occur before couples reach their tenth anniversary. Assuming there are no

changes in divorce and mortality rates from 2005, statistics predict that approximately 10% of couples marrying in 2005 will celebrate their diamond(sixty years) wedding anniversary with the remaining 45% of marriages ending in death (Smallwood and Wilson, 2008).

In the 1970s divorce rates rose rapidly and this rise is usually attributed to changing legislation (the Divorce Reform Act 1969 and Matrimonial Causes Act 1973). The Divorce reform Act 1969 acknowledged irretrievable breakdown of the marriage as grounds for divorce while the Matrimonial Causes Act broadly examined division of assets and provision for divorcing adults and any children of the union. While collected data suggests that marriages of young people are more likely to end in divorce there is an increase in the probability of divorce for longer durations of marriage. For marriage duration ns of 30 to 40 years, divorce is increasing (Smallwood and Wilson, 2008). By the end of year 2005 it was estimated that 10% of marriages would survive for sixty years with 45% of marriages ending in divorce and 45% ending in death indicating that the risks of divorce and death vary by duration of marriage. Once marriages have lasted for ten years then under 31% end in divorce while of marriages lasting twenty years 15% are likely to end in divorce. The proportion of marriages ending in divorce varies with age at marriage and it seems likely that those who marry younger have higher proportions of marriages ending in divorce (Smallwood and Wilson, 2008). Marital (and relationship) breakdown affects couples and children emotionally but also affects societies in general. In year 2006 over thirty thousand families with dependent children were accepted as homeless, primarily through breakdown of a relationship.

Divorce in England and Wales is currently granted on the basis of irretrievable breakdown of marriage. There are five ground which can be relied on as evidence of

irretrievable breakdown; Adultery; Unreasonable behaviour; Desertion; Two years'
separation with consent; Five years' separation without consent. The first two of
these grounds involve less waiting time, when a marriage breaks down some sort of
unreasonable behaviour can usually be established providing a quick route to divorce
when couples have fallen out of love.   In a *Sunday Time Review* (2008) article Tim
Kingston claims that numbers of women citing violence and infidelity as grounds for
divorce has diminished while numbers citing overwork has grown. The article states
that motives for divorce today include personal growth and emotions. Examples
supplied in the article included a golfing professional who had become so obsessed by
his sport that his wife claimed that even between sporting events he was not
emotionally involved in his marriage, his thoughts were elsewhere. A further
example was a businesswoman who divorced her husband after twenty-nine years of
marriage. She explained that the separate job demands of her and her husband led to
gradual estrangement. She is quoted as claiming that when she married at a very
young age she anticipated the union would last whatever the circumstances, but
mutual career pressures meant that her views on the permanency of marriage had
changed (Dobson and Habershon, 2006).

The illustrated Grosz image of a married couple illustrates an image of an
elderly couple smartly dressed and comfortable in each other's company. Their
marriage would almost certainly have been the first for each of them since divorce in
1930 was rare. They walk close together and each protects the other, she carries her
handbag nearest to him and he walks with his stick nearest to her. Their union
appears to be one of familiarity and ease in the company of one another.

George Grosz, 1930, *A Married Couple*
Tate Britain, London

Their marriage has endured and they have grown old together. The work is not portraiture but stereotypes the dress style and comfortable familiarity of a typical elderly long- married couple Caucasian of a bygone age.

It appears that twenty-first century marriage remains a popular option but modern marriages stand a high chance of failure. Romantic love has replaced family arrangement to become the emotional force that governs choice of marriage partner. Love is seen as a natural efficacy causing hope to triumph over experience, practicality and reason. Contemporary reasoning supposes that romantic love is unlikely to last a lifetime for the majority of people and modern divorce statistics support this view. Most mature adults professedly accept that romantic love either evolves into companionship and comfortable intimacy or it dissipates altogether to be revitalised by a new quarry. Yet for many, romantic love is a necessary reoccurring condition and whilst negative aspects of love cause it to appear a fickle, treacherous and insubstantial emotion; it remains the irrational and uncontrollable driving force

leading to relationships and marriage. Watson in the *Sunday Times* (2006) describes an upsurge in the popularity of marriage among young professionals. Marriage is described in the paper as 'the ultimate romantic gesture' and 'the final frontier in the relationship game'. The article goes on to quote an interviewee as stating, 'You fall in love and then what? You need to do something beyond sharing a bed'. The article goes on to suggest that the avant-garde image of living together appears to have become considered old fashioned among some groups and marriage is increasingly being viewed as the adventurous choice. Marriage would appear to once again represent the supreme declaration of love and mutual intention. The couples described in the article were articulate and mature young adults who recognised the fragility and endurance of love but who had made marriage a considered modern choice. While many modern marriages are statistically doomed to eventual failure, it appears that belief in the strength of love between each couple remains constant and triumphant although should the marriage flounder divorce is expensive but easily accessible and division of assets can be organised through a prenuptial agreement.

Chapter 6

SAME SEX MARRIAGES

6.1 Defining homosexuality in the context of this research and its historical significance

> For a significant minority of persons in the human community, erotic desire is focused, primarily or exclusively, on persons of the same sex. Psychiatrists are divided on whether to label this de facto variation pathological or not. Similarly, moralists are divided as to whether this orientation is an inclination to moral perversion, or a simple variation in the human quest for intimacy. If it is pathology, medical science should look for a cure; if it is an ingrained tilt toward unconscionable behaviour, ethicists must counsel its containment.
>
> (Maguire, ed: Baird & Rosenbaum, 1997 p. 57).

Pairing between long-term cohabiting heterosexual couples usually ends in marriage sooner or later because cohabiting couples do not have the same legal rights as married couples, no matter how established the relationship. Cohabiting couples are not legally recognised as next of kin and unless both have made adequate legal provision for the other in case of death, the law does not acknowledge any rights of the remaining partner to possessions or kinship. In the case of relationship break-up, married couples are eligible for maintenance and any property to be jointly shared or sold and the proceeds to be shared. Unless a property is owned in partnership by cohabiting couples it belongs to whoever's name is on the deeds so that if a new partner moves in with an established home-owner, the new partner has no claim on the property, even though they might have substantially contributed. Only married couples can claim exemption from inheritance tax so that the remaining partner of a cohabiting couple could find themselves in substantial debt should their partner die.

Modern heterosexual couples usually experience a number of emotional and

sexual liaisons but for most, marriage is still an eventuality. Marriage has always been the normal prerogative of heterosexual couples and while same sex relationships have historically been acknowledged among a number of archaic nations, notably ancient Greek and Roman states, their being has been reviled within Christendom, certainly from medieval times until the mid twentieth century. Homosexuality was considered unnatural, a crime heinous enough in 1300AD to warrant a treatise in England prescribing sodomites be burned alive (Stonewall, 2009).

Most historical writing and proclamation about same sex relationships, or indeed any historical documentation, referred to men writing about men, simply because men held power and were educated. Material relating to female sexuality is sparse in comparison so the term 'homosexual' is used in historical context to describe both male and female same sex partnerships within this writing, although it was likely to be male relationships that caused conflict and concern within communities. The term 'lesbian' is introduced to describe exclusively female liaisons where evidence or documentation relates specifically to these while the more modern and currently more acceptable term 'gay' replaces 'homosexual' later in the writing in contemporary context. The terms 'same sex partnership', or 'same sex union' are not attempts at coyness but are used to differentiate same-sex relationships from heterosexual relationships.

Same-sex couples cannot legally marry in the UK although from 2005 their relationships could be legally recognised through a Civil Partnership ceremony. There are a number of countries that recognise same-sex unions as marriages and these are identified within this work. Where same-sex unions are accepted as marriages they are referred to as same-sex marriages while if the union is not legally

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acknowledged as being equal to heterosexual marriage the union will be described as a civil partnership.

6.2 Christianity and homosexuality

Intolerance toward homosexuality in Christian societies has historically been legitimised by religious belief but translation and interpretation of biblical stories and messages has been open to explanation and construction based on contemporary belief and prejudice. The Bible appears full of ambiguity and contradiction because it was never written as a single document but as numerous separate writings put together as a basis for Christian doctrine subsequently developed from New Testament writings. Apparent condemnation of homosexuality appears in the Biblical Old Testament; Genesis 19 which refers to the evil of Sodom and from which the word 'Sodomy' is derived, but since the people of Sodom were behaving in a hugely wicked and corrupt manner their sexual behaviour made up only a fraction of their depravity. Boswell (1981) suggests that Sodom was destroyed because of the wickedness and inhospitality of the residents rather than their sexuality and he goes on to parallel his hypothesis by referring to the destruction of the city of Jericho (Joshua 6). Like Sodom, Jericho was destroyed by God because of the inhospitality of the people and only a lowly prostitute was spared even though prostitution was prohibited (Leviticus 19:29 and Deuteronomy 23:17). This implies that the Old Testament does not condemn particularly on grounds of sexual behaviour, but because of unacceptable social behaviour. Boswell goes on to suggest that while evidence to support the story of Sodom as one about punishment solely for homosexual behaviour is slight, it is this interpretation that has persisted and influenced Christian attitudes.

The converse of such a claim could be cited in the Old Testament book of Leviticus that states

'Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination' (18:22)

The focus of the New Testament is on heterosexuality and writing about marriage and family is exclusively heterosexual implying that heterosexuality is the norm. The early Christian writing of St. Paul disapproves any form of sexuality performed solely for pleasure and while he did not suggest that sex should be performed only for procreation the reference is implicit. These dogmas have been increasingly used throughout the development of Christianity to denigrate the sex act wherever possible and certainly outside of marriage whilst grudgingly tolerating heterosexual marriage and censoriously condemning same-sex liaisons. Christ's teachings championed monogamy and fidelity and these instructions were utilized to further the institution of marriage between one man and one woman only, without adultery, divorce or any divergent or unorthodox behaviour. The New Testaments seemed much clearer and focused in moral directives providing the guidance wanted and needed by those followers who would not necessarily question their beliefs, but act as disciples and devotees prepared to accept and support the rules within their religious ideology. Old Testament writing upheld Jewish law while the New Testament accrued converts from numerous beliefs and geographical locations from the length and breadth of the Roman Empire. New doctrines had to be compatible with the myriad lifestyles of converts; dietary laws needed to comply with custom and food availability wherever disciples settled and ancient rules about appropriate hair and clothing were not relevant to many new Christians.

Altogether, early Christianity was a comparatively liberal and welcoming religion so it is likely that dictums and taboos would be heeded and obeyed because they were

relatively few. As Christianity progressed, St. Paul's recommendations for celibacy and sexual abstinence (1 Corinthians 7: 32-38) made sex an issue and while zealot's denounced sex altogether, less radical interpreters of religious writing extolled the virtues of marriage as an acceptable justification for sex, citing procreation as a necessary outcome. St. Paul's abhorrence of sex for pleasure without intention of reproduction was supported and sustained with the example of Sodom used as reason for self-restraint. St. Paul advocated self-control to the extent that humans would even curb their own prolificacy through celibacy in pursuit of the religious belief that abstemiousness would greatly aid their entry to the kingdom of God. (1 Corinthians: 7, 7-8, 32-35).

Marriage was acceptable because of need for reproduction but homosexual preferences were denounced (Leviticus 18:22). Same sex relationships have always existed alongside heterosexuality and communities have usually been uncomfortable but grudgingly accepting of them provided relationships were clandestine and discreet so could be ignored. Such relationships were, according to Christian dogma, indulged for gratification rather than for generation of offspring so they were regarded as alien to fundamental Christian teachings, but recognition of human nature and human needs allows that most people thrive within a partnership. The illustration depicting the close companionship between Christ and St. John is represented by two young males who sit closely together with the younger figure laying his head on his companions shoulder while holding his hand. Because Christ's mother, Mary, and John's mother, Elizabeth were cousins, the familiarity of the two young men represents the closeness of family relationships so would not arouse suspicion and censure. The image is suggestive of companionship and the intimacy of a close and touching friendship because the figures possess divine status in Christian ideology.

Intolerance grew toward numerous minority groups during the latter part of the twelfth century when Jews, homosexuals and heretics became undesirables in Christian communities. The term homosexual did not exist but 'sodomites' became

Christ and St. John, German , fourteenth century.
Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin,

publicly outlawed and sodomy became a crime punishable by burning. In Britain, King Henry VIII brought sodomy within the scope of statute law in 1533 making it punishable by hanging and this remained law until 1861 when the death penalty was commuted to imprisonment (Stonewall, 2009). The first published use of the term 'homosexual' was published in 1869 by a German-Hungarian, Karoly Maria Kertbeny and this began to replace the term 'sodomite' during the late nineteenth century. In

1885 a criminal law amendment act of 'gross indecency' was passed in parliament that was specifically anti-homosexual. Under the 1885 act poet and playwright Oscar Wilde was tried and sentenced to two years in prison with hard labour in 1895 for his obvious and undenied homosexuality amid a blaze of lurid newspaper publicity (Stonewall, 2009).

Homosexual men continued to be prosecuted and shamed for their sexuality. Alan Turin who was one of the men who had helped to break the Enigma code during World War II committed suicide shortly after his prosecution. Male homosexuality was studied throughout the twentieth century and in 1948 research by American professor Alfred Kinsey into sexual behaviour and reproduction identified 4% of males as exclusively homosexual with 37% having experienced at least one homosexual encounter in their lives. His 1953 published research concluded that 2% of females identified as exclusively lesbian while 13% had experienced at least one lesbian encounter. This suggested that homosexuality was not absolutely exceptional. Giddens (1992) claims that Kinsey's findings shocked a disbelieving public at the time. Any sexual orientation other than heterosexuality was regarded as perversion.

Weeks (1981) reports that there had been politically mild but sustained campaigns to change the laws regarding homosexuality in 1950s Britain. Finally in 1967 the Sexual Offences Act came into force and decriminalised homosexual acts between two men over twenty-one years of age and 'in private'. The law was beginning to acknowledge homosexuals as people with rights and homosexuality as a sexual orientation or preference rather than wicked deviancy or an illness or disease requiring a cure. Homosexual men adopted the self-description 'gay' during the late 1960s in America and this description was quickly popularised throughout the western world. The gay liberation movement exploded with vast energy in America

in 1969 and reached Britain by the end of 1970. This movement was located in a long history of homosexual self-definition within the terms of a morally and legally oppressive society (Weeks, 1981). The Gay Liberation Front launched in London in 1970 offered three central principles; a sense of validity of homosexuality as a sexual orientation; belief in openness about homosexuality, and emphasis on collective endeavour and self-help (Weeks, 1981, p. 285). Prejudice and apprehension were still common among the public but acknowledgement that homosexuals and lesbians were part of society with associated legal rights became more admissible, although declared homosexuals and lesbians were still denied access to 'role model' professions and the armed forces. They were still separated from the commonality since their rights were not commensurate but progress was being made to end outright prejudice through legal recognition and protection of rights. Once any group has legal protection then some degree of acceptance is inevitable but even after civil partnerships were made legal in Britain in 2005, many Church of England clergy objected to blessing gay civil partnerships. In June 2008 the Church of England House of Bishops issued a statement on gay partnerships that reaffirmed that clergy of the Church of England should not provide services of blessing for those who register a civil partnership (Guru-Murthy, 2008).

6.3 Changing attitudes and the emergence of gay rights

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) claim that World War II caused returning men and women employed in the armed forces to disperse to unfamiliar towns and villages as they followed friends or loved-ones they had met during the war. Women had been employed in the armed forces during the war for the first time and once the conflicts were over servicemen of both sexes returned back to civilian life to marry

partners from different areas and backgrounds. Considerable dispersion of ex-service people to different and unfamiliar towns and villages to follow loved ones met during the war further eroded community and large and extended family units. Many of these young couples married and settled wherever they found suitable employment relying on each other for support, friendship and comfort and further isolating themselves from their parents and grandparents lifestyles and community living. Movement away from familiar homes and localities expanded experiences and outlooks as well as broadening beliefs and opinions. Established social restrictions were challenged and many became regarded as old-fashioned and inappropriate to modern standards. This individualization was the culmination of numerous changes, political in women's education and employment and greater consumerism and materialistic wants and demands. Beck and Beck- Gernsheim (1995) explain and describe the many changes at a number of levels that took place bringing about an individualization process that released people from traditional beliefs and social relationships. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) suggest that this process;

> …can be seen in our complex economic system with it's intricate infrastructure, and an increased secularisation, urbanization, personal mobility and so on. More and more people have been affected by it, and it has reached unique dimensions in the present. As a result each of us is increasingly both expected and forced to *lead our own life* outside the bounds of and specific community or group. (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 1995,p.46)

They go on to discuss that for the individual, the severing of social ties gave freedom from prior restrictions and liabilities while the support and securities of close-knit societies simultaneously began to erode and cease. New secular living patterns caused the disappearance and replacement of previous beliefs and symbols.

By the second half of the twentieth century, new lifestyle and educational opportunities provided a better standard of living. Earlier beliefs and interpretations were questioned and attitudes changed as large economic family units changed to small family units and previous traditions and beliefs, guidelines, social certainties and prejudices were displaced. Once the security of being a member of a large group disappeared families concentrated on their own family group and personal privacy. Partner selection based on romantic love provided person-related stability where life meaning and needs for security were directed towards one person. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) write exclusively about heterosexual relationships and do not consider non-heterosexuals yet their writing could equally apply to homosexual or heterosexual individuals and couples. Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan (2001) suggest that 'family' embraces a variety of social, cultural, economic and symbolic meanings but it is also a deeply ambiguous a term in the contemporary world. Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan (2001) go on to suggest that the term 'family' is in common use among many non-heterosexuals who use the term to suggest networks of relationships based on friendship and commitments that are not linked by blood relatives. This implies a need for the community, emotional and material support traditionally provided by family kinship but increasingly being replaced in adult relationships by ideas of commitments that have to be negotiated so responsibilities are created. Throughout the twentieth century homosexual and lesbian relationships were generally censured or at best ignored among Christian communities.

The 'other woman' advertisement from 1957 declares that the other woman in the picture has no designs on the future bridegroom but offers wedding planning and preparation services to the busy bride- to- be. At no point was there any indication that the two women might be the subjects of mutual romance, such a possibility

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would not even have been considered in 1957 and would certainly never have been

allowed advertising space if there had been any concern. Such an idea was

scandalous. Only retrospective liberalism recognises the possibility of double

entendre in the advertisement's scripted catchline but since the publication is directed

toward heterosexual women readers, what could appear risqué is, in fact, entirely

guileless.

A National Bridal Service advertisement , 1957,
National Bridal Service; courtesy the John W. Harman
Centre for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History;
Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collection Library,
Duke University Libraries, US.

By the 1960s those children born at the end of World War II grew up in a post-

war boom with generally economic affluence as capitalist economies experience

economic expansion. They experienced material comforts and greater freedoms than

their parents or grandparents who had all lived through wars (Weeks, 1981). The

relocation of individuals and groups of people after World War II contributed to the

disintegration of neighbourhood communities so that established prejudices began to

crumble through lack of interest and changes in attitudes to the behaviour of others (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995). Communities became much less interested and involved in others business as individuals became more focused on themselves and their immediate family and social group. The availability of the birth control pill that allowed women sexual freedom without fear of pregnancy contributed to greater sexual freedom but Weeks (1981) suggests that young people during the mid-1960s were generally conservative in their attitudes to sex, marriage and homosexuality. Despite being labelled in the press as the 'permissive society', most expected eventual marriage and youthful promiscuity was not a major problem (p.254). Homosexuality was more freely acknowledged but was not generally accepted and homosexuals still suffered prejudice and known homosexuals were still likely to experience personal threat. Throughout the 1970s campaigns for homosexual and lesbian civil rights continued and public awareness of homosexuality increased.

The appropriation of the word 'gay' by homosexuals during the late 1960s and 1970s marked a decisive stage in the evolution of homosexual consciousness. Weeks (1981) explains that the self-adopted term suggested a new defiance of moral norms and a new sense of pride in self. 'As a public affirmation of the validity of homosexuality the axioms of "gay pride", "coming out" [public declaration] and "coming together" reinforced each other as necessary components of a new homosexual identity' (Weeks 1981, p.186). Giddens (1992) maintains that '…the term "gay" also brought with it an increasingly widespread reference to sexuality as a quality or property of the self' (p.14). In 1971 gay and lesbian action groups campaigned publicly in London for recognition and equality and began to appear as a distinct social grouping. Throughout the 1970s 'gay' bars and clubs emerged

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demarcating a variety of tastes and issues and appealing to homosexual and lesbian singles and couples wanting to meet and mix or to feel safe or included.

A bill to reduce the age of consent for homosexual men was defeated in the House of Lords in 1977 while during the same year a 'Save Ulster from Sodomy' campaign was launched in Ireland. Sexuality is part of the person and as such can be acknowledged, cultivated, examined or ignored. Homosexuality was still not generally tolerated by communities or in law although it was increasingly evident in the media and television. The publication *Gay News* was published while London Weekend television commissioned the first British gay TV series and a first gay bookshop opened in London. Although the early gay liberation movements demanded justice and equality and full inclusion it also offered a challenge to heterosexual hegemony especially in its form of the family (Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan, 2001).

As homosexuals challenged heterosexual privilege and campaigned for acceptance of their relationships and revision of legally supported social and sexual exclusions, the struggle for recognition made some progress. By 1983 Labour Party candidate Peter Tatchell openly acknowledged his homosexuality then in 1984 member of Parliament Chris Smith was the first MP to declare his homosexuality while in parliament (Ekklesia, 2004). Public figures were increasingly confident about announcing their sexuality making it less of an issue should tabloid press and gossip publications want to voice concerns. The Human Embryo Fertilisation Bill of 1990 accepted that lesbians should have access to services while in 1991 the gay movement 'stonewall' entered discussions to lift the ban on homosexual and lesbian entry into the armed forces (Stonewall, 2009) although homosexuals and lesbians were not allowed to serve in the armed forces until 2000.

The legal rights of same sex partners began to be established when in 1999 rail companies agreed to give same sex partners the same travel subsidies and heterosexual couples, same sex partners were allowed to succeed a tenancy and in 2002 gay and lesbian couples were allowed to foster and adopt children commensurate with heterosexuals (Stonewall, 2009). In 2004 the Civil Partnership Act was passed in parliament giving same sex couples the same rights and responsibilities as married heterosexual couples. The British government announced that registration of the first civil partnerships on 5 December allows the first legal ceremonies to take place on 21 December after a waiting period of fifteen days. This finally allowed gay and lesbian couples to legalise relationships.

6.4 Recognition of gay rights and the beginning of change

As a result of greater tolerance, the 1980s saw a fashion within popular music stars for flamboyant ambiguous gender dressing. The 'New Romantic' movement saw young men using cosmetics and beauty products usually only associated with female fashion and wearing colours, fabrics and dress accessories generally considered exclusive to women. Fashion favoured layered and baggy clothing that made the gender of the wearer even more difficult to identify when males and females wore the same styles of dress and make-up. Contemporary fashion historian Peter York (1984) explains that this indeterminate sexuality within contemporary youth fashion presented itself as a mixture of anarchy, glamour and respectability. Sexual orientation was not always obvious through identifiable hair and dress styles and the resulting obscured sexuality of the individual became publicly recognised and accepted among young music fans imitating the flamboyant contemporary fashion. Obvious feminisation of males and masculinization of females became commonplace

among those cult followers to the extent that the fashion eventually failed to shock those sober and conservative individuals holding traditional customs and values (York, 1984).

The New Romantic music movement was manufactured and club-orientated and devotees dressed extravagantly and glamorously encouraging exhibitionist dress style. Bands such as *Adam and the Ants*, *Duran Duran* and *Depeche Mode* were probably as famous for their performance style and clothing as they were for their music. One of the most extremely exhibitionist performers was singer George O'Dowd (*Boy George*), lead signer of the band *Culture Club*. His unconventional appearance and overt sexual uncertainty intentionally ruffled established gender conventions when he suddenly emerged into the popular music scene during the early 1980s. George ensured publicity by wearing copious amounts of conspicuous well-applied cosmetics and highly individual colourful clothing styled more like woman's clothing than that expected of men. His image parodied fashionable 1980s glamour and outlandishness (York, 1984). George's deliberately androgynous appearance provoked adverse reaction among many born of a generation reared to accept heterosexuality as normal and homosexuality or sexual ambiguity as alarming or even abhorrent. 'His barely concealed homosexuality, although no problem to his many fans, caused considerable comment in the tabloid press (www.muze.com, 1989 – 2009). George's outspoken opposition to the British government's 1988 bill that prevented local authorities 'promoting' homosexuality helped to publicise the bill resulting in protests in London and Manchester. The BBC newsroom was invaded in protest as newsreader Sue Lawley read the Six O'Clock News (Stonewall, 2009). Such action was guaranteed to publicise the bill to large numbers of the general public. Further protests about the

bill in Amsterdam and New York helped to bring public attention to the unequal
treatment of lesbians and gays in British law.

Photograph courtesy Peter Anderson.
Pop and fashion icon George O'Dowd,
popularly known as *Boy George* was as
famous for his outré image and gender
ambivalent style of dress as for his
musical talent during the early 1980s
(Peter York, 1984).

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Throughout the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s celebrities were increasingly
prepared to declare their homosexuality. Actor Ian McKellen made his sexuality
public during the late 1980s along with actor, singer, director, Member of the
European Parliament and labour MP Michael Cashman (Stonewall, 2009). Other
famous celebrities to 'come out' as homosexual are actor Stephen Fry who declared
his homosexuality during the 1970s and Stephen Gately, member of the music chart
topping band *Boyzone,* who announce his sexuality to fans in 1999. Openly gay
television presenter Graham Norton (born 1963) and *Little Britain* comedian Matt
Lucas (born 1974) have never made any secret of their homosexuality and both have

used their sexuality to advance their careers rather than moderating their performances. British singing star Will Young won the televised talent show Pop Idol in 2002 and declared his homosexuality soon after winning. Despite early shock newspaper headlines he made a successful career after winning the competition and went on to sell enormous numbers of records. Will Young is comfortable with his sexuality although he is clear about not wanting to act as a champion for the gay community (Robin for Queer Attitude, 2009). Even though attitudes have become increasingly tolerant of non-heterosexuals in art, music and theatre, not all celebrities have been willing to declare their sexuality. British musician George Michael was exposed as homosexual by the press after he was arrested for lewd conduct in a Los Angeles public lavatory. Initially damaging to his career, his popularity revived to some extent after he went on to mock the incident in a music video titled *Outside*. American actress Jodie Foster in 2007 finally paid tribute to her lesbian partner of fourteen years after newspaper reports about her female companion but probably the most famous celebrity in denial of his homosexuality was musician Elton John who initially married in 1984 but divorced soon after. It was after his divorce that Elton John finally acknowledged his homosexuality to the press and public (Grum for Queer Attitude, 2009).

During the early twenty-first century same sex cohabitation was increasingly acknowledged among more liberal and unconventional societies. Giddens (1992) claims that a high proportion of gay men and the majority of lesbian women are in cohabiting relationships at any time. Cohabiting same sex couples increasingly discovered that while their relationships were legally acknowledged they did not have rights commensurate with heterosexual cohabiting couples. Gay and lesbian men and

women demanded that their relationships were legally recognised with the rights and privileges of heterosexual marriages.

Holland was the first country to expand its legal definition of marriage to include same sex couples in April 2001 although there was not equal access to marriage as same sex marriage was restricted to nationals and residents but the same sex ceremonies were given legal recognition as marriages. Belgium allowed same sex marriages in January 2003 but these were restricted to marriages allowed by the national law of each partner (so that Belgians could marry other Belgians or partners from states or countries allowing and recognising same sex marriages) closely followed by Ontario in Canada in June 2003. By November 2004 most of Canada legally recognised same sex marriage and by July 2005 same sex marriage was recognised as legal in every Canadian state although Prince Edward Island did not immediately allow civil rights to same sex couples and would not issue marriage licences to them for almost a month.

Spain followed Canada and in June 2005 passed laws allowing same sex marriages (B.A.Robinson, 2006). In 2004 the British government passed the Civil Partnership Act that came into being in December 2005 when same sex British couples could legally formalise their relationships with civil partnership ceremonies, but these are not yet accepted as marriages with all the legal and social rights and recognition of marriage. Those couples married in countries that fully recognise their partnerships as legal marriages are not recognised as married in Britain. The Civil Partnership Act was met with opposition from a number of Christian groups (www.civilpartnershipsinfo.co.uk, 2009). When heterosexual couples enter into marriage certain information becomes available for public viewing including names, occupations and addresses of both partners. Because of the controversy surrounding

civil partnerships the government decreed that limited information should be publicly available. Only the names and occupations of prospective civil partners are made public (Civil Partnerships Guide, 2009). The Civil Partnership Act (2004) does not allow any sort of religious activity to occur during the process of registering the union. Couples wanting a ceremony have to contact a registration authority where the union is to be entered to book a ceremony. Couples speak vows prior to signing the legal registration documents and have to provide two witnesses, exactly like a heterosexual marriage couples.

The question of why same sex couples want to marry needs to be asked, especially males who are traditionally believed to be less reliant on marriage for prestige and position and are more likely to be earning self-supporting salaries so are unlikely to be so reliant on the security provided by marriage. Same sex couples cannot have biological children together and that has always been regarded the major reason for Christian marriage (Gratsch, 1985) although there is no evidence of opposition to sterile heterosexuals marrying. Marriage is no longer closely followed by the birth of children, it's nature has changed and it seems that the reasons of companionship, security and commitment (Dryden 1999) and monogamy form reasons for marriage and have contributed to the desire for acceptance into communities by both heterosexual and same sex couples. American writer and National radio contributor Frank Browning (Sullivan, 1997) writes about heterosexual marriage in terms of, 'modern marriage tends to isolate couples from their larger families and friends …the [modern] marriage model could prove especially problematic for rearing children' (p.133). Browning goes on to support the idea of gay marriages claiming 'In a gay family, there are often three parents…' (p. 133). Lesbian intellectual E. J. Graff condemns pro-marriage liberals for plying the rhetoric

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of fairness and love to heterosexual marriage 'as if no one will notice that for thousands of years marriage has meant Boy + Girl = Babies' (Sullivan, 1997, p. 135). She goes on to suggest that same-sex marriage possibly represents an enormously radical step by transforming one of the most powerful institutions in Christian society. Graff (Sullivan, 1997) believes that 'Same-sex marriage will be a direct hit against the religious right's goal of re-enshrining biology as destiny' (p.135). Andrew Sullivan (1997) suggests that the conservative argument against same sex marriage is that public acceptance of homosexuality subverts the stability of self-understanding of the heterosexual family. The argument is around the fact that homosexuals are still part of heterosexual families but conservatives insist that the threat to the stability of the family posed by public disapproval of homosexuality is not as great as the threat posed by public approval. The argument rests on perception of homosexual behaviour being a way of life that subverts gender norms in order to unsettle the virtues that make family life possible. Sullivan suggests conservative opposition to homosexual marriage stems primarily from belief that homosexual marriage undermines the institution of the heterosexual family, and distrust of those outside the heterosexual norm. Sullivan (1997) claims that 'the apex of emotional life is found in the marital bond (p.155) and writer and academic Hadley Arkes (Sullivan 1997) writes about Sullivan 'the man who wrote these lines is headed, irrestistibly for marriage. What he craves – homosexual marriage …' (p.155). Sullivan soundly commends the ideal of marriage for homosexual men and women.

Both heterosexual and same sex couples want the choice of marriage and to have their relationships sanctioned by the laws of their country of residence and acknowledged by society in general without discrimination or difference. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) claim that;

The fundamental theme behind marriage is not just the social structure of our lives; it is also increasingly a matter of *identity* (p.51).

Giddens (1992) relates problems with identity to the female struggle to break free from pre-existing gender roles and to homosexuals by again looking at how self is currently identified and recognised. Giddens describes the modern identification of self as a reflexive project where past, present and future are continuously questioned. Rosemary Auchmuty (2004 p.103) states that;

'It [marriage] has a symbolic significance that exists beyond, and sometimes in spite of, the legal and material reality. Marriage confers upon individuals the highest social status and approval'.

Marriage provides identity as individuals within a couple and as a couple within a community.

The legal uniting of two adults is traditionally certified by participation in a wedding ceremony that publicly announces their union, a right customarily denied to same sex relationships. Homosexuals were often driven into heterosexual marriage for purposes of inheritance, to maintain respectability and to avoid censure. The marriage of socialite and author Vita (Victoria) Sackville to Harold Nicholson, son of Sir Arthur Nicholson was a marriage between two individuals who frequently indulged in affairs with members of their own sex. Vita's diaries clearly record her numerous amours with women, but convention determined heterosexual marriage as the expected norm (Nicholson 1990).

As same sex cohabitation was increasingly acknowledged and finally legalised in Britain, greater numbers of same sex couples have elected to have their commitment acknowledged through participating in a public ceremony. This could be a vehicle to publicly declare their love and involvement and dedication as well as to

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claim legal rights of taxation, immigration and healthcare. For many same sex couples desirous of equal marriage, the legal civil ceremony performed in Britain is still not the same thing. Civil partnership is not universally recognised so does not provide all legal protections and benefits of marriage and it is still considered by some same sex couples to be inferior, like a morganatic marriage. Sue Wilkinson and Celia Kitzinger (Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2005) question reasons for same- sex marriages rather than cohabitation or civil partnerships and go on to provide some answers. They list the problems and drawbacks of civil partnerships when compared to marriage. They acknowledge that cohabiting couples can make arrangements so that partners can benefit from some degree of legal protection such as mutual powers of attorney, trusts, wills and healthcare proxies but none of these signifies a legally recognised relationship. Until civil partnerships British law denied cohabiting same-sex couples the rights to vote by proxy, automatically to receive pension and income related benefits, registration of a partners death, exemption from inheritance tax and legal recognition of kinship when hospital visiting. Many same sex couples had lived in long term relationships without having any way of legalising their commitment to one another. Wilkinson and Kitzinger (2005) state that discrepancies in national acceptance of same-sex civil partnerships leaves many couples vulnerable should they want to settle outside their country of residence or within certain American states that do not acknowledge civil partnerships.

Wilkinson and Kitzinger, (2005) suggest the difficulties experienced by same sex couples in gaining legal recognition of their unions by citing the account of American lesbian couple, Julie and Hillary Goodridge. They were among a group of the first same sex couples to marry in the state of Massachusetts in May 2004. They decided to press for the right to marry after their young daughter made a remark about

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the fact that they were not married and if they loved each other they should be. For four years they became lead plaintiffs in a lawsuit that finally resulted in legal marriage of same sex couples in the state. Although this state welcomed same sex marriages, conservative America did not wholeheartedly follow. Only six months afterwards, eleven US states voted to restrict the definition of marriage exclusively to heterosexual unions. Liddle and Liddle (2004, p.53) describe their decision to marry as 'an act of counter-cultural rebellion'. This couple wanted to make a point of law by marrying to claim the legitimacy of their same sex union even though it was not recognised by the US government. The article published jointly between the two women volunteers little information about them, their life styles, location, employment or personalities although it does suggest that there is a substantial age difference between the two and it was the younger partner who desired an extravagant modern wedding complete with reception and all trimmings. It also states that the wedding guests of the younger partner were her biological family whilst the other invited friends as surrogate family. They remark on their fortune that friends and family supported their ceremony so sending out invitations was not cause for concern although the challenges incurred through acceptance in a wider public field, such as selection of a photographer or disc jockey caused more concern in an area where their relationship was not generally accepted. This couple obviously planned and considered their ceremony with great care since their commitment was not customary and was not acceptable to all family members. Their declaration of sexuality was deliberated since they believed the reactions of work colleagues was likely to be ill-disposed. The younger partner, Becky, deeply desired a wedding ceremony and was resentful of the fact that the travel and gift giving associated with weddings was never likely to be reciprocated since, as a lesbian, she would never marry. She does not

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directly suggest resentment at loss of exhibitionism and traditional expectations along with right of passage but that is implicit in the paper. The very word 'marriage' evokes for many a mixture of pagan and Christian church symbolism where the wedding represents celebration of public pledges sanctified by religious ritual and followed by a party. It gives rise to the aspiration of celebrity status of the marriage principals and the opportunity to act out a childhood fairy tale, especially for the bride. Becky's own ceremony, traditionally paid for by her family, dissipated all her previous resentment and provided her with her anticipated rite of passage while her older partner was accepting that 'rituals could be created and enacted for any relationship' (p.55) so did not feel the need for traditional public declaration although prepared to humour her partner and accede to her wishes. The rights and protections afforded to heterosexual couples had not at the time, been afforded to committed same sex couples and whilst the two women had publicly pledged themselves to one another their commitments were not legally recognised either worldwide or elsewhere in the country where they celebrated their union.

This same sex couple desperately wanted their personal commitments and relationship to be acknowledged and accepted both within law and within their society and working environments. Their ceremony served a dual purpose, to publicly declare their personal relationship and to make a stand for the civil rights of same sex couples to be recognised in the same way as heterosexual couples. Whilst in no way ideal for many same sex couples, ceremonies of this sort were, and still are, usually seen as a way forward moving progressively toward a future where same-sex marriages are universally usual and normal.

The Civil Partnership Act that came into effect in Britain in December 2005 provided same sex couples a package of rights and responsibilities along with a means

of formally dissolving a failed relationship. Ceremonies could be performed anywhere where civil marriages were licensed and same-sex couples could finally publicly declare their legal union. Legal status and protection of same sex couples recognised and acknowledged rights but it is still not marriage with all its tradition and symbolic significance. Registered civil partnership is only concerned with the public statement, social status and legal state of formal union without acknowledgement of the sacramental nature of the ceremony. Civil partnerships must be celebrated without any reference to religion so there can be no religious music or religious icons.

Auchmuty (2004) claims that heterosexual couples marry mainly for love and that in most cases legal details are secondary and often unknown. Material benefits of marriage are frequently taken for granted or purposely ignored, rarely do couples bother to find out about family law and many cohabiting couples live under the misconception that their relationship is legally recognised in England and Wales. Marriage provides numerous automatic rights not available outside this institution. The civil relationship offers same sex couples a formal legal procedure for the dissolution of the relationship as well as for purposes of immigration, elections, court testimony, pension rights, prison visiting, protection against domestic violence and acting as attorney should one partner become mentally or very seriously physically incapacitated. It also revises adoption rules so that a partner can gain parental responsibility for their partner's children. It provides in case of death so that a same sex partner could not be left destitute or excluded from their partner's deathbed or funeral or from registering their death. Not all same sex couples want to marry, exactly like heterosexual couples but the option of equal legal and social status has become increasingly important in a world that is becoming more accepting of same

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sex relationships. Whilst the symbolic nature of marriage and the desire for a traditional wedding is an aspiration for some, the practicalities of pensions, inheritance, kinship and immigration are important to everyone, as well as protection should the liaison break apart.

Much has been made of the legal and financial benefits attributed to being married but a major social benefit of marriage is its mien of normality. Humans are mainly naturally gregarious and want social acceptance and integration, they want to belong to a group whatever their nationality, age, creed, culture, gender or sexual orientation. Same sex relationships are still not acknowledged or accepted and welcomed in all sections of society but marriages (or civil partnerships) provide public declaration of a sound relationship and with that a pathway into the marriage club. The traditional marriage model that anticipated gender roles but presupposed the woman's subordination has never been established in same sex marriages so the bonds between the couple are likely to be agreed between two people of similar character and outlook; neither can be sexually inferior. Giddons (1992) claims that;

> 'Gay women and men have preceded most heterosexuals in developing
> relationships, in the sense that term has come to assume today when applied to
> personal life. For they had to "get along" without traditionally established
> frameworks of marriage, in conditions of relative equality between
> partners'(p.15).

Although discussing heterosexual marriage, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995, p. 62) could just as easily apply their comment to same sex marriage when they declare that; 'for the first time two people falling in love find themselves both subject to the opportunities and hindrances of a biography designed by themselves'.

Legal same sex union cannot replicate heterosexual marriage because it is a state union accepted but not approved by the Christian churches. Liberal societies might approve homosexual marriages and civil partnerships but within Christian countries the notion is divisive. The Christian Coalition opposes same sex marriage on scriptural and religious grounds. The elevation of same sex unions to the same moral and legal status as marriage challenges social practise and moral ideal to Christians. Alternatively, Baird and Rosenbaum (1997) suggest that;

> Marriage is the highest form of interpersonal commitment and friendship achievable between sexually attracted persons. Nothing in that definition requires that the sexually attracted persons who are co-joined in committed, conjugal friendship must be heterosexual. (p.62)

Because homosexual relationships have been illegal in Christian Britain until recent years same sex couples were not allowed to openly commit to one another even if they wanted to. While liberals such as Baird and Rosenbaum interpret marriage in terms of commitment and friendship, this interpretation is not acceptable to the Catholic Church where marriage is a sacrament to be celebrated exclusively between men and women.

Relationships resulting in marriage crave recognised emotional involvement and the nourishment gleaned from love, disregarding the proven instability of the institution of marriage.

> Erotic desire is deeply interwoven into the human desire and need for closeness and for lasting relationships. The desire for a significant other with whom we are uniquely conjoined is not a heterosexual but a basic human desire. (Baird & Rosenbaum, 1997, p. 59).

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6.5 Consumerism and same sex legal partnership

Always a highly lucrative business, commerce quickly reacted to same sex civil partnership 'weddings' in the UK by the promotion of a variety of commodities targeted at couples planning same sex marriages. Examples of 'Mr. & Mr.' and 'Mrs. & Mrs' cards appeared in *Asda* supermarkets and the sale of towel and soap packs embroidered 'Darling, Dearest, Queerest' went on sale in *Superdrug* pharmacy stores. *The Times* newspaper displayed a new heading, 'Civil Partnerships' under it's family announcements section. New 'pink' websites emerged targeted at same sex relationships promoting welcoming venues, specialist wedding planning services, selective same-sex wedding favours and products such as cake toppings and dressings, clothing services and more. Established 'pink' overseas websites already had a plethora of products prepared for the anticipated UK wedding rush. Cake toppings portraying two women or two men in a selection of skin tones and a variety of dress styles and choices included 'butch' or 'femme' representations. Printed invitations and acceptance notes, special albums and gift lists and a variety of printed ceremony selections appeared. In fact, the same type of speciality paraphernalia available to any couple planning their wedding but targeted especially to same sex couples. The wedding business prepares to expand and prosper from same sex weddings and take advantage of another diverse and potentially highly lucrative aspect of the marriage market. Same-sex honeymooners immediately became targets for specialist tourist trade offers of package tours to hospitable venues within liberal countries. Same sex weddings have provided traders with a merchandising treasure-trove and the legal commitments between a number of high profile celebrities have effectively contributed to the lucrativeness of same sex wedding events.

Exactly like heterosexual couples planning their wedding ceremony in England, many same sex couples are caught up in the current fashion for showy excess and ostentation. The usual ornaments and trinkets associated with weddings could easily be commandeered or adapted for modern same sex civil partnerships and the occasion could prove equally opportune for theatrical and lavish garb usually worn by the bride and groom to be worn by one or both same gender principals. Establishments compete for wedding custom whatever the sexual orientation of the participants, commerce is paramount and for those couples wanting a service rather than a ceremony there are individuals prepared to perform a form of religious service. A whole new marriage market has begun to emerge and with it whole new aspects of the speciality marriage business. Dominic Casciani (2005) claims 'the wedding industry is awash with profit and operators are rapidly jumping on board to chase the pink pound'. Newly formed companies such as 'Pink Products' formed especially to target gay celebrations while numerous local councils competed to appear gay friendly. Councils such as Hertfordshire launched the motto, ' Embracing our gay and lesbian community' with a specially designed brochure of gay friendly venues and services. The gay ceremony has opened opportunities for new highly lucrative business opportunities.

Those couples previously excluded from marriage service are being welcomed into the commercial world of fairy-tale and fantasy weddings but while the mercantile aspects of the ceremony have extended their embrace, Christianity has remained more circumspect. Liberal and tolerant vicars are increasingly prepared to bless a same-sex couple after their civil partnership ceremony but where couples do not have access to they have had to search out the services of a dissident or defrocked priest prepared to perform a service (Robinson, 2006). One increasingly well-known character is the

Bishop Pat Buckley who has set up a website specifically targeting gays, lesbians and others outside the normal limits of Christian religious marriage. Bishop Pat, as his website calls him, was originally ordained as a catholic priest in 1976 and while working in Belfast where became involved in the problems of slum housing, unemployment and youth issues within the area. After differences with his Church he set up an independent ministry in 1986. In 1998 he was consecrated as a bishop although the Catholic Church declared his consecration valid but unlawful since he had not obtained Papal Mandate. Bishop Pat ministers to divorcees, mixed faith couples, to Chinese, Jewish and Asian communities with marital difficulties and to those who feel alienated from the Church including the gay and lesbian community. His Episcopal motto is; Tolerance – Love – Diversity and his Episcopal coat of arms, granted by the Irish government in 2000 shows a bishop's crozier and a black sheep. Bishop Pat Buckley works as a journalist for the Irish edition of the *News of the World* as well as conducting his unofficial ministry. His charge for conducting a basic wedding ceremony at his headquarters in Ireland is two hundred and fifty pounds. He regularly conducts wedding ceremonies at venues of his customers' choice either in Ireland or overseas at negotiable costs (Bishop Pat Buckley, 2006). Bishop Pat has successfully realised a business opportunity provided by disenfranchised couples and has extravagantly publicised his services. Evidence of this has been available for many years with divorced couples requesting a religious blessing following their civil service but demand goes beyond only divorcees to include those previously excluded.

The desire for retention of traditions within the marriage ceremony has contributed to Bishop Patrick Buckley becoming a minor celebrity among those needing an alternative celebrant through his willingness to attend to those traditionally

excluded from any religious ceremonial. With his aptitude and enthusiasm for self-publicity and flamboyance he has endeared himself to a disaffected or alienated congregation. Bishop Pat provides a serious and important service but his role also reflects a major aspect of modern wedding culture; that is admiration for the unconventional and a desire for celebrity, albeit reflected. Bishop Buckley's achieved celebrity has come about through his determination to offer his services to those desirous of religious blessing but previously debarred, along with his ability to recognise a particular market where he could apply his skills and learning and strength of personality. He is recognisably outside convention exactly like those he ministers to and he effectively utilises his nonconformist behaviour to appeal to substantial dissident minorities.

Sir Elton John and partner of 11 years, David Furnish,
after their civil partnership ceremony in Windsor
21st December 2005. Photograph BBC News,
Thursday 22 December 2005. http;//news.bbc.co.uk

The first high-profile music star to 'marry' his same sex partner was Sir Elton John who married David Furnish, his partner of eleven years, on 21 December 2005 at 11am in Windsor registry office. Anticipation as to what the usually flamboyant Sir Elton would wear was whipped up by attending press but both he and his partner

appeared soberly dressed in traditional mourning attire, their only difference in dress

being individual ties. The crowds of fans waiting outside for a glimpse of the couple

for several hours were rewarded with photo opportunities after the service. The

couple then went home to a party attended by numerous film, fashion and music

personalities. The party was reported to have cost in the region of £1 million and was

attended by celebrities such as Victoria Beckham, Donatella Versace, Claudia

Schiffer, Ringo Starr, Lulu and Cilla Black (Gay News, 2008). The couple turned

down a £5.7m offer for exclusive rights to the union by a US television channel but

they told *Attitude* magazine that they wanted the actual ceremony to be a personal,

quiet affair out of respect for both sets of highly supportive parents.

Sir Elton John and David Furnish after their ceremony
wearing matching diamond rings. Photograph BBC News,
Courtesy;http://news.bbc.co.uk

Elton John achieved his first major chart success in 1970 and went on to be

probably the most successful rock pianist in the world. Early in the 1970s he went on

to announce that he was bisexual. On February 14 1984 Elton John married sound

recordist Renata Blauer in a heterosexual ceremony. The marriage was not successful

and was dissolved in 1988 when Elton finally declared his homosexuality. Within a

relatively short space of time, this major music star had found the confidence to dissolve his fraudulent heterosexual marriage and declare his homosexual orientation to a acquiescent populace. Elton John's career did not suffer after he finally openly acknowledged his homosexuality although he was one of the first major celebrity pop stars to openly announce his homosexuality to fans and the public.

Elton John celebrates his heterosexual wedding to
Renata Blauer, February 14 1984

Another celebrity civil partnership was quietly celebrated in Islington between actor Sir Anthony Sher and his theatre director partner of over eighteen years, Greg Doran. In Brighton, three couples simultaneously celebrated their civil unions by making their bookings for the earliest available time of eight am GMT and their examples were coincident with numerous other couples throughout the country. Legalised civil partnerships became a popular triumph.

In the face of demand, the twenty-first century has extended access to a form of marriage to those previously denied admission. They have gained entry, albeit restricted, into an institution where they were previously excluded and ostracized. Acquiescence is not universal and many communities, religious bodies, races and governments still demand that marriage is exclusively for heterosexual couples. Same

sex couples want marriage; they can already have a wedding ceremony but the desire and need for equal marriage has become vital for many. While the popularity of marriage waxes and wanes among heterosexual couples it seems that many same sex couples covert the institution. The constitutional and emotional benefits of marriage exercise a great attraction for many individuals wanting security, protection, safety, friendship, companionship and love within a legal framework. It is highly likely that those couples who have been subjected to dreams of together forever and ideas that marriage will last a lifetime, the marriage fairy-tale defies proven fact and the lure of the wedding ceremony appears still as attractive in the twenty-first century. No one is immune to the idealistic beliefs and the temptation of the ritualistic ceremony, communities' change, and society moves on but the place of marriage within it is stalwart.

Chapter 7

7.1 CONCLUSIONS

During the early twenty-first century practising and non-practising Christian couples in Britain and North America carry on celebrating marriage with an increasingly lavish wedding ceremony although cohabitation is generally acceptable making marriage no longer socially necessary. This thesis set out to analyse and explore what constitutes a modern marriage, how the concept of marriage has developed and changed and how the contemporary wedding ceremony reflects attitudes to modern marriage.

There are legal benefits to marriage such as employment pension benefits and inheritance benefits at the death of a spouse but these are rarely foremost considerations in the early stages of a relationship and the wedding ceremony remains a significant occasion and a rite of passage. Even though marriage is in decline and 2007 statistics recorded the lowest rates in England and Wales since records began in 1862 (Great Britain, 2009), the ceremonious ritual remains a popular option and fashionably stylish weddings have been elevated to an acme of modishness. Modern women's magazines and popular journals still frequently portray weddings as a beautiful desirable ideal, depicting a luxury style wedding as supreme accomplishment.

The rise of celebrity culture analysed by Rojek (2001), Evans and Hesmondhalgh (2005) and Ewen (1998) has infiltrated all aspects of modern life. This includes the wedding where lavish celebrity style has set modern wedding standards (Otnes and Pleck 2003). Despite the recent credit crisis couples still want a luxuriously expensive special wedding (Wallop, 2008) and popular magazines such as *Hello, OK* or *Chat* compete vigorously to feature lavish weddings of the rich and

famous displaying photographs of the couple with special attention being paid to the brides dress and the luxurious surroundings. Celebrity guests are photographed and lauded and their clothing is described in detail. Further descriptive comment focuses on venue, style of wedding cake, food and drink menus, styling and varieties of flowers, decoration and any eye-catching accessories likely to interest readers. The implication is one of achievement and success and the accent is on conspicuous consumption where success of the occasion appears to be measured by luxury, glamour, acquisition and recognition. The wedding ceremony has proved a popular and ideal vehicle for displays of exhibitionism and lavish conspicuous consumption duplicating the style of popular celebrities. Campbell (1997) discusses consumption around the two discourses of need, further defined as comfort and satisfaction and want, further defined as desire with its origin in Romantic-inspired pleasure seeking. Campbell (1997) claims that 'both ideologies and their associated rhetoric's are institutionalised in contemporary society' (p.235). This is apparent in modern stylish weddings where wedding businesses ensure that certain commodities such as flowers, luxurious venue, souvenirs, ice-sculpture table decorations are now considered necessary to the success of the occasion and have become needs where once these would have been considered desirables. Campbell (1997) goes on to explain that 'modern "affluent" society is characterized by an economy geared to the gratification of wants rather than the satisfaction of needs' (p.240) and this is typified by the modern celebrity style luxury wedding.

The increasing speed of change in economic and social life has made celebrity status largely achievable while compelling media promotion has made celebrity highly desirable to fans and followers. A *Which* magazine feature claimed that 14% of people said spending on their wedding day had been driven by one-upmanship with

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family and friends, while 25% said they felt pressurised by pictures in the media. One in six grooms said that their fiancée had 'got completely carried away' (*Which*, 2008). The wedding ceremony has become an increasingly spectacular occasion since the last decades of the twentieth century as couples from all walks of life aspired to a ceremony influenced by fashionable lavish celebrity style. Emphasis has changed from historical aspiration for marriage to a modern dream of a perfect and memorable wedding. The perfect dream wedding is a product of romantic consumer culture that presents couples with an achievable Utopian dream (Otnes and Pleck 2003). Couples now appear at their weddings as stars and this opportunity to appear as the major celebrities and hosts of a lavish show has become increasingly important to the successful modern wedding.

Marriage traditionally combined love with sexual activity (Giddens 1992) and was a permanent commitment but many modern social relationships are entered into for whatever the two individuals can derive from a sustained sexual, emotional and financially supportive association and might only last as long as it continues to satisfy both parties. Giddens (1992) claims that many modern marriages are founded on this concept of individuality within a relationship that works successfully at that particular time but will not necessarily last forever. If the marriage doesn't work out then either or both parties can choose to marry again without censure. Couples can now create a dream wedding for the second or third time on a par with first weddings making the repeat wedding day extravagantly memorable despite having failed marriages behind them. Romantic love rarely lasts and unless a relationship can be based on more than romantic love then it is unlikely to permanent. Cohabitation prior to marriage or marriage at a later age allows both partners opportunity for varied social and sexual experience and modern marriage is no longer considered a life-long institution in

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society's where divorce is common and legalised pre-nuptial agreements pre-empt a possible contentious separation.

Handelman & Linquist (2005) describe historical Christian marriage in terms of rite; 'a conjunctive, transitive, or transitional process – a reformational or transformational organization of action facilitating change within society' (p.37). Marriage is a historical rite upheld by traditions, most contrived by the Church but marriage has evolved and modified and diversified to comply with changing social attitudes, beliefs and situations.

Christian teaching anticipated that the ritual of marriage would be celebrated exclusively between heterosexual couples and since homosexuality was a criminal act in England and Wales until 1967 (anon 1, 2006) same gender liaisons between males were punishable and between females were mostly disregarded. The legalisation of same gender relationships represents the greatest advancement in attitudes to marriage. Legalised civil partnerships give same gender couples the same legal rights as marriage but they cannot claim to be married (in Britain) because Christian marriage is exclusively heterosexual. After years of political lobbying by homosexual and lesbian groups determined to eliminate discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation same sex couples were finally allowed to register their partnerships in Britain and legally celebrate civil partnership ceremonies in December 2005. Same sex relationships might have been legally acknowledged but this caused divisions within the Christian Church. While the bishops of Chelmsford, Manchester, Norwich, Oxford, Peterborough, St. Albans and St. Edmondsbury favoured the legislation and supported the move, other Christian's opposed it (Petre, 2009). *The Times* (2008) reported that council registrar Lillian Ladele had refused to perform same sex civil partnerships that were against her Christian beliefs (Hamilton, 2008). Ladele's court

appeals highlighted the continuing discord and conflicts between the church and state with regard to same sex legal unions. Both same sex and heterosexual couples desire the security and possibly the respectability of marriage or civil partnership for financial and emotional reasons and probably because it is more difficult to exist as a single in modern societies than as a couple or part of a multiple. Otnes and Pleck (2003) discuss the exclusion of permanent singles from enjoyment of abundant consumerism at their own special wedding event and this previously affected same-sex couples wanting a special occasion but legally denied one. Desire for celebrity recognition and a special day has prompted modern businesses to target same sex marriages every bit as assertively as they assault heterosexual celebrations with a growing plethora of specialist trifles.

Until the early twentieth century, marriage was deemed the only acceptable and legitimate way for heterosexual couples to cohabit and children born out of wedlock were socially inferior and stigmatised. Illegitimate children were denied automatic inheritance rights and were rarely registered with their paternal family name. Even in the twenty-first century, cohabiting couples (heterosexual or homosexual) have no legal duties to maintain one another and the share of property is based on financial contributions. Women who have brought up families so have not contributed financially are not legally entitled to any share of home ownership unless the property was bought jointly or is registered in both names (The Law Commission, 2002).

The role of women has changed within marriage with the education and employability of women in the workforce. Married women historically became the property of their husbands upon marriage, along with any financial resource or goods and property they owned prior to marriage. The family was a private zone largely

beyond the reach or concerns of the law. It was only in 1870 and 1882 that the

Married Women's Property Acts allowed women to retain and acquire assets

independent of their husbands and legislated that a wife was not the property of her

husband.

Paula Rego, 1994, *Bride,* Tate Britain

One of a series of works by the artist under the title 'Dog Woman'.
Bride shows a woman cocooned in a white wedding dress with
her veil spread around her posed in a vulnerable attitude of
surrender. The pose is submissive, like that of a pet dog. The irony is
deliberate, Rego visually suggests that in many modern Christian
countries a married woman is still subordinate to her husband despite
laws legislating gender equality (www.tate.org.uk/britain/exhibitions).

Victorian society was opposed to married women working at all and objected

to men and women working in close proximity (Doepke and Tertilt, 2008).

Restrictions on hours led to lower wages for women. Wages for unmarried working

class women were barely enough to sustain them, they could not borrow money to

buy property and as married women they were discouraged from work so were

financially dependent.

Legislation in 1919 provided that no one should be disqualified by sex or

marriage from holding any public office, from entering any profession, or from

graduating from universities (Doepke and Tertilt, 2008) making marriage a less inevitable destination for most young women and more of a choice. Government statistics have recorded the increasing age at which couples marry throughout the late twentieth century. Over the last ten years the ages at which couples marry has increased by two and a half years so that by 2007 the mean age at marriage for men was 36.4 years and for women 33.8 years (Great Britain, 2009). Cherlin (1992) discusses the main reasons for postponement of marriage among American couples in terms of more women in work, greater acceptance of pre-marital sex and the availability of reliable contraception and abortion. 'It was also the first generation in which cohabitation outside of marriage became widespread among the middle classes…It was a generation in which nearly one-forth of all births occurred outside of wedlock. And it was a generation in which half or more first marriages were projected to end in divorce' (Cherlin 1992, p.125). Giddens (1992) further claims that romantic love has traditionally had a gender imbalance and female dreams of 'for ever' 'one and only' romantic love have too often led to 'grim domestic subjection' (p.62) whereas female emancipation and autonomy presumes emotional and sexual equality.

Marriage has traditionally been upheld as sacred within Christianity and religious doctrine ensured that the wedding ritual served to codify and celebrate injunctive norms. Marriage was the desirable adult state and once sanctified, was historically irrevocable except under very exceptional circumstances decreed under ecclesiastic rules. Divorce by legal process only became possible in England and Wales after the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857.

By the middle of the twentieth century divorce became increasingly accepted and more easily affordable and this has continued into twenty-first century Britain.

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Relaxation of divorce laws along with diminished regard for religious doctrine made divorce affordable and feasible for the populace and slowly eroded social slur. The 1969 Divorce Reform Act implemented in 1971 allowed irretrievable breakdown of a marriage as grounds for divorce (Great Britain, 2008). Since then divorce has become progressively commonplace to the extent that couples with prior personal wealth increasingly now attempt to legally protect their assets in the event of marriage failure. The 'Pre-Nuptial Agreement' is a formal agreement made prior to marriage arranging division of assets in the event of divorce. Such agreements are usually made when one partner has accrued considerably more pre-marital wealth than the other. Prenuptial agreements have been recognised for a decade in North America but until a German heiress made history in British law when her prenuptial agreement was legally recognised, they have not been acknowledged in British law (Gentry, 2009). This case further identifies impermanence of modern marriage and it focuses attention on change to greater equality in gender balance, in this case it is the personal fortune of the modern woman at stake.

Since the introduction of civil wedding ceremonies in 1837, there has been a shift away from religious ceremonies to civil ceremonies. By 1993 civil ceremonies began to outnumber religious ceremonies within the United Kingdom and by 1997 three in five weddings were civil ceremonies (Great Britain, 2009). The marriage act of 1995 allowed couples to marry by civil ceremony outside their district of residence in approved premises. This allowed couples to choose where they wanted to marry, provided both partners were legally free to marry in the United Kingdom, they did not have to marry in their local area. Government statistics (Great Britain, 2009) suggest that younger couples are more likely to favour religious ceremonies while the most mature couples favour approved premises. No particular reasons for this are available

but mature marriages are more likely to be the second or subsequent marriages of divorcees whose remarriages are frequently not welcome in Christian churches.

While the traditional purpose of marriage has become less assured, the rise of celebrity culture identified throughout the late twentieth century has affected the style of modern weddings so that brides and bridegrooms are encouraged to view themselves as celebrities for the duration of their wedding day and their wedding must reflect their spending power. Wedding venues can now include castles, country houses as well as unusual venues such as the Orient Express or London Bridge (anon 3, 2009). With emphasis being increasingly on the production of the wedding ceremony rather than on the religious aspects and with marriage being potentially less permanent, attitudes to the wedding day event and marriage itself have changed. The increasing importance of outward appearance at the ceremony, the location, brides dress and accoutrements deemed necessary at a modern ceremony demonstrates the theories of art historians Winkelmann (1717-68) and Panofsky (1892-1968) who used all relevant sources of information to analyse arts, artefacts and images in context of their culture. Having applied their theory to the modern wedding ceremony analysing images within the work and text supplied by image makers Frosh (2003) and Strano (2006), it is argued that the bridal white dress now distinguishes the bride as special rather than as virginal; the sumptuous location, flowers and expensive cars are representative of desire and aspiration of wealth and station and are the products of business marketing. The modern wedding still portrays an idealised romantic image of a fantasy but this is manufactured by way of calculated and aggressive marketing. The spiritual dimension associated with the wedding day remains but consumer and celebrity cultures have endorsed idealised romantic fantasy images that require perfection. Photographs and videos now attest to the success of a day when

the bride was at her most beautiful, extravagance was abundant and everyone was seen to have a good time. Images of the modern wedding portray the importance of exhibition and presentation and every aspect of a modern wedding is contrived to show style and standing.

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) suggest that as a result of increased secularisation, urbanisation and personal mobility each person is expected to 'lead our own life' outside the bounds of any specific community or group (p.46). Giddens (1992) supports this claim in his analysis of the modern 'project of self- the condition of relating to others in an egalitarian way' (p.189) when discussing modern couples pursuing individual leisure activities and having individual interests while living as a couple. Democratisation of rights and duties within a relationship establishes negotiation and fair liaison, mutual appreciation and freedom to work together or independently so that individuals can determine and regulate the conditions of their relationship (Giddens, 1992). Democracy within a relationship presumes equality in responsibilities of domestic work and child-care despite the likelihood of men's greater earning power. Giddens (1992) claims that the aim would not necessarily be for parity but for an agreed arrangement of divided labour not brought about by pre-established criteria or imposed because of unequal financial resources. Walter (1998) acknowledges these assertions but suggests that despite legislation women still accept traditional female roles within marriage that include the bulk of housework and child care. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) go on to claim that the traditional nuclear family with father, mother and children will continue to exist alongside 'singles, living together before and during marriage, living with others, various parenthoods after one or two divorces and so on' (p.143). This demonstrates favourable changes

in attitudes toward single living but couples are still likely to enter into marriage and participate in a ritual ceremony through doctrine or desire.

The white wedding tradition carried on and survived the deprivations of two twentieth century wars to become an aspirational occasion for most young women. Relationship psychotherapist Paula Hall (2009) listed reasons to marry for a BBC publication as follows: citing love, making a commitment, an integral part of inhabited culture, decisions to start a family and simply because it felt like the right time (Hall, 2009). While divorce statistics prove that about one in three marriages end in divorce, of 283,730 marriages in 2005, 146,120 were first marriages while 98,580 were remarriages for both parties (Hall, 2009). This demonstrates that people still want to get married despite acceptance of cohabitation and increasing divorce. Marriage and cohabitation are generally modern alternatives but even when couples happily cohabit, 60% eventually go on to marry and the modern wedding ceremony is a public declaration of decision to commit (Hall, 2009).

This thesis examines and analyses the practicalities of marriage and investigates the affects of changes in gender roles within the heterosexual institution through applying theories of Giddens (1998) and Walter (2003) to marriage and the wedding. It examines the wedding ceremony as a product of the patriarchal Christian Church (Gratsch, 1985) and how demise in the power of the Church affected and was affected by female emancipation and changes in attitudes to women in the workplace and the female role within marriage.

The work investigates developments within the wedding ceremony from a mainly religious pledge that formed the portal to a binding lifelong commitment to a legal contract that is open to negotiation and is not totally binding. The work acknowledges same-sex legal liaison as a very modern phenomenon within an age-old

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ceremony but the work analyses the social changes that allowed these liaisons legal

recognition. It also looks at the transformation of the modern ceremony from a

personal celebration with friends and families to an exhibition of excess that will be

photographed, filmed and possibly published on a variety of electronic websites for

the voyeuristic entertainment of complete strangers.

The lavish celebrity style of the modern wedding ceremony allied with desire

for identification and recognition has proved a major reason for contemporary

weddings, and it appears that couples are still desirous of formal commitment so the

marriage and the wedding persevere and remain robust into the twenty-first century.

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