

## ABSTRACT

Title: Något gammalt, något nytt – skapandet av bröllopsföreställningar

English title: Something old, something new – Creating wedding performances

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The aim of this doctoral thesis is to study how human and non-human actors come to create wedding performances in today's consumer society. I have not looked at the actual wedding ceremony, but the spectacle of the wedding. The reason for this is my interest in consumerism, and so I have studied the wedding spectacle as a consumer event and as networks of both human and non-human actors.

To get married you do not need rings, special clothes, bouquets, or any of the material trappings that fill the pages of bridal magazines. But weddings are connected with many different concepts and material things, and it is precisely those ideas and things that are involved in weddings in which I have an interest.

Wedding checklists have bullet point lists with »what-to-do« tips like: 12 months before the wedding: Decide a date for the wedding. Decide what type of wedding you want. Book the church and wedding venue. The list becomes more and more detailed closer to the wedding. I use those lists as interludes in the thesis to connect the different case studies – which are clothes, rings, hair dressers and wedding photography – and to follow the planning of weddings chronologically. In the first interlude I notice that the checklists stress that it is important for the couples to set a date, to decide whether to have a church- or civil wedding and to decide what kind of wedding party they want. The wedding project has begun. Some of the early decisions like date, type of wedding and wedding venue give directions to certain paths. From the beginning the wedding could potentially take any form at all, but as soon as a path was tread and as soon as materiality was involved the decisions were narrowed down. When I write about weddings I use interviews with seven couples who are about to get married or have recently gotten married. I have talked to them about how they have planned their weddings and conducted qualitative lengthy interviews with them. Some of the couples have been interviewed more than once, and there are altogether thirteen interviews. I also interviewed a hairdresser, a priest, three bridal shops assistants, two goldsmiths and two wedding photographers. I have also followed and observed wedding photographers at work and attended bridal fairs; and even posed as a bride-to-be and visited weddings shops and tried on wedding dresses. During the process I read a great deal of wedding magazines, etiquette books and »how-to« wedding books. There are many Internet sites that are dedicated to weddings. I have followed some of the chat forums, and looked at what topics are discussed.

When the wedding morning dawns all the other potential weddings are forgotten. In the end all the multiple hybrids make one wedding, a wedding in singular. At the same time something completely new occurs, something more than the countable entities that were fed in to the wedding. Every thing, every actor and every connection that was made have transformed the wedding and made it unique in its composition.

To be or to become, that is the question is the headline in the first part the theoretical section. When I look at the world I see infinite number of processes of becomings. Both human and non-human actors constantly connect with each other. That is why I focuses on processes, flows, relations and connections. My general view is that there are no defined boundaries between what we usually call »the social« and »materiality«. There is no dichotomy between human and non-human actors, between material things and social influences, only differences in the tempo of changeability.

In the theory section I also present my analytical meta concepts: *connections, clusters and compositions*.

Weddings are not a special domain of reality but are created from the vast amount of connections. Connections can be made in different ways. And every connection translates what is communicated. In connections every part is changed. If actors are working together they can form a cluster and all the clusters and connections that make a wedding are composed in certain, but not determined, ways.

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