

Amber Wells - Social Culture of Bridal Dresses Influence

For many decades the history of bridal gowns has been a symbolic representation for traditional love ceremonies. A bridal gown or wedding dress is worn by the bride, during a wedding ceremony. The social culture of bridal gowns has impacted the world for more many centuries. Different cultures, different traditions and religions all play a role in how a bride dress is created. The style, color and ceremonial significance of the bridal gown can depend on the culture and religion of the wedding participants. However in Western Culture, the most common wedding gown has always been the color white. It was first documented in 1460 at a royal wedding ceremony. In fact, it was popularized by Queen Victoria in 1840. “Queen Victoria made such a sartorial impression nearly 180 years ago that her example of wearing white is still considered mandatory by many a traditional bride.” (Miller, 2018).

Furthermore, the reasoning behind why a white wedding gown is so significant is because in the western culture the color white is affiliated with goodness, purity, light and virginity which is what a bride is supposed to embody. However, many women who wear white bridal gowns are not necessarily virgins. Overall it is a controversial decision that many women have to face when selecting a gown because of traditional beliefs.

In fact in many different cultures, each wedding gown has its own allusive interpretation for the bride. Traditional values, and beliefs all play major roles in the selection of a wedding gown. The idea of a wedding gown is to be able to represent a woman's identity, as an individual who is moving from being independent to now in new commitment and partnership. Nevertheless, there are various styles and colors of

wedding dresses that all have significant meanings as well. For many different cultures the selection of a wedding gown has always been so important because it brings people together and it is an integral part of the wedding process.

The main characteristic of this wedding dress consists in the way the fabric was laid down to be cut, on the bias.

Fashion designers today such as Vera Wang, Oscar De La Renta, Christina Wu, Andrea Pitter Campbell and many more are the current leaders in the bridal gowns industry today. Each of their gowns display a sense of elegance and femininity empowerment. However the bridal gown industry can be very competitive for entrepreneurs. Although each of these designers have a distinctive way of expressing their unique individual designs. For example, Vera Wang who is Chinese-American fashion designer, made her name by creating fantasy bridal gowns for Hollywood's A List celebrities. Her wedding gowns have certain distinguishing features, that are available in various silhouettes and styles. Her most famous collections are called White By Vera Wang, Black By Vera Wang and Vera Wang Love. She uses the best materials for creating all of her collections, and also each of her dresses are handmade. She also is known for her experiments for the usage of color in her wedding dresses, and she specializes in making dresses for women with all body types. "Vera Wang has turned what began as a single bridal boutique into a fashion and lifestyle empire with an overall retail value of over \$1 billion" (Fitzpatrick 2013).

In addition many designers have turned their way to becoming more amicable in being able to create a collection of affordable wedding dresses. These designers proactively address their innovation so that consumers can decide on long term usage of their products. Due to the fact that it takes considerable time to decide whether a consumer

wants to purchase a particular product or not. These innovated characteristics include: relative advantages saving time and money, compatibility, complexity/simplicity and trialability. For example Vera Wang, who has been creating wedding dresses for more than 30 years has launched a collection of affordable wedding gowns. Which prices range from \$600-\$1400, and they are on sale at David Bridal stores. Her wedding dresses are normally on the high end side and only well-off people can afford buying them. The prices of her luxurious collection ranges from \$6000 and may even go up to \$20,000 or more depending on what material and style the bride is looking for. According to an article published by Lana Vrzcina, Vera Wang in an interview explained the reasoning behind the high cost of her gowns in such a way : “There’s a real creative process that goes into it. And I think I’m a fashion designer who designs wedding gowns, as opposed to a bridal designer. I came in [to the bridal industry] with no knowledge — I had knowledge of fashion and no knowledge of bridal per se, so I think I brought a sense of freedom and rule-breaking without even knowing it. And it was sort of instinctive, it was whatever I felt and what I thought girls should want to wear or be available to them if they wanted to. It was that freedom and that fashion edge that really changed the industry”. (Vera Wang). Furthermore her reasoning for creating this line is because she wants every bride to be able to achieve luxurious elegant looks at an inexpensive price. Her philosophy has made her a very successful fashion designer in the industry today.

Fitzpatrick, T. (n.d.). Vera Wang Says Keep Your Feet on the Ground and Don't Get Ahead of Yourself. In T. Fitzpatrick (Author). Retrieved April 20, 2013, from <https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/first-person/first-person-vera-wang>.

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