

**The Dress of Yes**

HCGBF

Aleah Summerville, Amber Wells, Arielle Gustave, & Jailyn Lavado

Dr. Alyssa Dana Adomaitis

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Think about the word *marriage* and *wedding*. The thoughts that may have come to mind is either two people uniting to become spouses, the wedding venue, the food that will be provided, or most importantly, the wedding dress. From 1406, the earliest documentation of white wedding dress onward to today, the most exciting part of every wedding is watching the bride walk down the aisle in her wedding gown. Whether the gown is slim fit or voluminous, white or pink, this gown embarks a commitment of a lifetime for a woman and shows her power. A wedding gown's versatility has the power to depict femininity and elegance at its finest. The color white has played a significant role for the wedding dress origin, but varies amongst different cultures around the world. Fashion leaders, such as Vera Wang and Oscar de la Renta, have influenced various silhouettes and specialized in creating hand-made wedding gowns for all body types. Also, the trends of wedding dresses are recurring cycles; whether it is designed from scratch, the idea has to steam from previous looks. A wedding dress will forever be a significant garment in the world due to its symbolization and the fact that it can be whatever a woman makes it for her special day.

### **Origin of the White wedding dress**



**Figure 1**

Queen Victoria's wedding dress

For many decades, the history of bridal gowns has been a symbolic representation for traditional love ceremonies. The bride wears a bridal gown or wedding dress during a wedding ceremony. The social culture of bridal gowns has impacted the world for many centuries. Different cultures, traditions and religions all

play a role in how a bride's dress is created. The style, color and ceremonial significance of the bridal dress can depend on the culture and religion of the wedding participants. The most common wedding gown color in western culture is white. It was first documented in 1406 at a royal wedding ceremony worn by Philippa of England. It did not gain traction until 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). According to CNN Style, the white wedding dress did not catch on at first due to it being symbolized as an unsullied heart. Furthermore, the reasoning behind why a white wedding gown is so significant is because the color white is affiliated with goodness, purity, light, and virginity, which is what a bride is supposed to embody but not all women were. Another reason brides took on the color white was to flaunt their status or showcase that the bride is wealthy. In the late 19th century, there weren't dry cleaners or laundromats; to maintain a white outfit, it took money. Overall, it is a controversial decision that many women must face when selecting a dress 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 significant roles in the selection of a wedding gown. The idea of a wedding gown is to represent a woman's identity, as an individual who is moving from being independent to being in a 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. This was not always the case. Before Queen Victoria popularized the white dress, the meaning was status and

wealth. Queen Victoria's dress caused the shift, "in the role of weddings, from a legal agreement to the full-blown romantic notion of today, a change that the exhibition highlights"(Toplis,2015).

### Before the white

As mentioned earlier, the wedding dress was worn to signify a legal agreement between the two parties; for economic and political reasons, but also to convey the woman's status in society. Brides were to be presented in the best manner and to do so, the materials of the dress would help amplify this idea. On one end, wealthy families were able to buy the most expensive fabrics such as furs, silks and velvet. Bold colors were also a big indication of wealth as back then, dyes were not easy to make compared to modern times. On the other end, poor families could salvage their best dress which could be their church dress. The "best dress" would eventually be dyed to be used again. In certain different illustrations/paintings dated to medieval times, women wore an arrangement of colors like pink, red and blue as shown in **Figure 2.** - Jailyn

Color has been a significant part of the origin of wedding dresses. For centuries, people have stuck to the Western idea of the white voluminous wedding gown. However today, many cultures have incorporated a significant amount of color to their wedding attire. As shown in **Figure 3**, "The sleek red phoenix dresses with



**Figure 2**  
Maria of Brabant's marriage with the French king Philip III of France, miniature in the manuscript *Chroniques de France ou de St. Denis*, British Library, London.



**Figure 3**  
Traditional Ancient Chinese Wedding Dress. Embroidered

mythical roots that are still worn by brides in China today, the wedding dress has become its own kind of talisman”(Brennan,2017). In India, brides wear a *sari*. Red is also considered to be the most favorable color among Hindus; however, other colors are also included such as yellow, green, and gold. In Japan, the bride is often seen wearing multiple different colors of kimonos on their wedding day. Beginning from the 14th century to the tradition of wearing different colors was popular. It is visible today as Korean brides wear silk robes that are red, green, and yellow. “Traditional Korean brides were also expected to embody a common theme in bridal fashion throughout the world, which is the emulation of royalty”(Brennan, 2017). Only the wealthy and royal had true influence to set trends which helps explain why wedding dresses took many different forms, such as the white wedding dress becoming a staple to western culture.

Bridal dresses are shown to take many different shapes and forms throughout the world, but this fashion forecast takes a deep look into Western bridal dresses.

### Trendy Wedding Dresses



**Figure 4**

Wedding dress from 1884

Before the 1970's most wedding dresses reflected the style of the time. The Metropolitan Museum of Art displays a collection of fashion plates that reveal how wedding dresses have changed over time. During the 1880's the bustle came back into fashion with body hugging clothing and a lot of decorations (Franklin, 2019). This style was translated into a white wedding dress as shown in **Figure 4**.

Another example of wedding dress, which follows a trendy style of the year, is 1921. As it is known, the 1920's is associated with loose boxy silhouettes with short bob hair. In **Figure 5**, the

brides are wearing a white wedding dress that is loose, boxy dress with short hair.

The dress is accompanied by a *train*, which ranges from short to long. As mentioned earlier, after the 1970's wedding dresses became

garments that followed what

the bride wanted it to be. In current modern times, most bridal gowns have lace in some form and an array of different silhouettes for the wearer to choose from. The gown can range from A-Line, Ballgown, Mini, Empire, Necklines, Strapless and V-neck which are the most popular picks. - Jaily



**Figure 5**

Two wedding dress from 1921. Follows the style of short hair and loose clothing.

### **Wedding Gowns Fashion Leaders**

Fashion designers today like Vera Wang, Christina Wu, Oscar de la Renta, Andrea Pitter Campbell, and many more, are the current leaders in the bridal gown industry today. Each of their gowns displays a sense of elegance and femininity empowerment. However, the bridal gown industry can be very competitive for entrepreneurs. However, each of these designers has a distinctive way of expressing their unique individual designs. Vera Wang, a Chinese-American fashion designer, made her name by creating fantasy bridal gowns for Hollywood's A-List

celebrities. Her wedding gowns have distinguishing features that are available in various silhouettes and styles. White By Vera Wang, Black By Vera Wang and Vera Wang Love are some of her famous collections. The dresses are handmade and have great textiles that are used in all of her collections. Vera Wang is also 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).

Also, 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 a long term usage of their products. Since it takes considerable time to decide whether a consumer wants to purchase a particular product or not, these innovative 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. Prices range from \$600-\$1400 and are on sale at David Bridal stores. This opened up more options for non wealthy people as Wang’s wedding dresses are high-end. The price ranges from \$6000 to \$20,000 or more depending on what material and style the bride is looking for. According to an article published by Lana Vrz, Vera Wang, in an interview, explained in an interview why some gowns are expensive, “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 a low price. Her philosophy has made her a very successful fashion designer in the industry today. - **Amber Wells**

### Trends in the Bridal Gown.



**Figure 6**

Princess Diana's wedding dress, designed by David and Elizabeth Emanuel, 1981

that flows with great volume and with big shoulders as shown in **Figure 7**. The designers, David and Elizabeth Emanuel, made Princess Diana's dress to showcase her iconic essence. As noted, the dress

There are many ways for fashion to spread around and in this case, we will be looking at *trickle-down theory*. "...It is the fashion norms of the rich that trickle down to consumers"(Galak, Gray, Elbert, & Strohminger, 2016). This is visible from Princess Diana's wedding dress. It is an ivory taffeta lace wedding dress, with a *veil* and *train* as shown in **Figure 6**. The dress has puffy shoulders with ruffle cuffs while the lower half of the gown has volume and flows. Diana's dress encapsulates a woman's

fantasy;the princess one. As seen in pictures or famous depictions, a princess character is often wearing a dress



**Figure 7**

Ariel, Cinderella and Snow white wearing voluminous dresses while big poofy shoulders.

was coming from a royal and created an effect on future brides, "...many girls ask about the large puff sleeves and full skirt" (Rodd. D, June 1982). This dress ended up influencing the whole 1980's bride wear as it " became the gold standard for wedding gowns long *-long-* after the dress itself went out of style"(Nixon-Knight, 2007).

Another example of *trickle-down* theory can be seen by an American actress Grace Kelly. Kelly wed Prince Rainier III of Monaco in 1956. Her wedding gown was gifted by MGM and designed by Helen Rose who was a costume designer at MGM. It was also a big surprise as it was kept secret from the public. Once revealed, many saw that Kelly's dress," featured long sleeves and covered the bride's entire front and back. Made in four parts, the dress consisted of a bodice with an attached underbodice, skirt support and slip, which were covered with a skirt and a smoothing petticoat, a ruffled petticoat and an attached foundation petticoat"(Gilbert,2006).



**Figure 8**

Grace Kelly's Wedding dress.  
Designed by Helen Rose, Gifted  
by MGM.

Textiles of the dress consist of silk taffeta, "*peau de soie*", tulle and rose point lace. The lace can be seen on the upper half of the dress featuring a high-necked collar with small buttons in the middle while the lower half has a bit of volume and contrasts the pattern of lace as it is solid. Grace Kelly's veil was 90 yards. This is seen in **figure 8**. It was such an inspiration as the dress was modern compared to other wedding dresses. Designers such as "Oscar De La Renta commented that, 'On her wedding day, Grace Kelly gave new meaning to the word icon. Her

whole look, from the regal veil to the feminine lace details and the conservative gown, made her



**Figure 9**

Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge's wedding dress. Inspired by Grace Kelly's wedding dress.

an ageless bride””(Leaper,2020). It is so influential that Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, had her own rendition of Grace Kelly's wedding dress as shown in **figure 9. - Jailyn**

### **Pendulums, Reoccurrence cycles of The Wedding Gown**

Wedding gowns have evolved significantly over the past 100 years and displays a very interesting form of the pendulum.

Fashion Pendulums is a movement where fashion

swings from one extreme to another. As mentioned earlier, In 1840, Queen Victoria started the pendulum

and wore a “structured, eight-piece bodice, which features a wide, open neckline. The off-the shoulder sleeves are short and puffed and the dress resembles a basque

shape”(Lee, 2020). Queen Victoria also wore a satin train over six yards long. Then we moved on to the 1910s where brides started to wear looser dresses. “Many brides wore

floor-length, floaty dresses in which they could move

more easily. Dancing at weddings became custom

during this era, with dances like the turkey trot

coming into fashion”(Krause, 2020). Then we move



on to the 1920s, where more flapper style wedding gowns were coming out. Then we move onto the 1930s, where Queen Victoria style dresses swing back around but with slight differences. Brides are displaying a simple but classy look incorporating long sleeves to gowns, high necklines, and bold silhouettes. In the 1950s, we saw a shift in dress structure as the ball gown got introduced. These ball gowns include huge skirts, a small waistline, and also strapless styles were then introduced.

### **Reoccurrence Cycles**

Fashion does not have a timed period .Society dictates what is popular at a certain time. According to the article,“The cycle of Recurring Fashion always has 4 components which is the Rise, the Decline, and lastly the Rejection”(Meondra, 2016). The cycle of the wedding gown attends to this cycle. Introduced in the Victorian era, the rise happened as the white wedding gown became desirable. The decline occurred when brides started to stray away from the traditional gown and redesigned it to fit the aesthetic of the era like the flapper style wedding dress in the 1920s. Lastly, what has been rejected for wedding gowns were the traditional silhouettes that included short puff sleeves and “the overt rejection of sexual mores at play in the traditional wedding dress. Wedding dresses have always been, on some level, about sex: the white as a sign of the bride’s virginity”(Garber, 2015). Due to older women getting married, brides tend to stray away from the princess-driven designs that emphasize virginity. Vera Wang and Yolán Cris both created a wedding dress that demystified this idea by making a transparent wedding dress. -**Aleah**

**Summerville**



## **Color of Fall 2020**

As mentioned earlier, white has become a staple hue but can have variations to present a bride's dream. The fall 2020 bridal collection for certain designers showcases the popular hue of white, ivory in their dresses. Oscar de La Renta's fall 2020 bridal RTW demonstrates 12 different looks. Eleven out of the twelve dresses are ivory while there is one pastel blue dress. Vera Wang's bridal RTW showcases a majority of dresses with ivory, some with crepe and one black wedding dress. Monique Lhuillier's bridal RTW also shows a lot of ivory dresses with an occasional crepe. There are some other hues such as pale pink and a tea green dress. Lastly, in Marchesa's bridal RTW, the whole collection consists of ivory colored dresses.

## **Fabric and Fit of Fall 2020**

Using the right types of fabrics when constructing a piece is a vital part for making sustainable garments. When it comes to Bridal Fashion, strong reliable fabrics must be used. Fabrics like Satin, Charmeuse, Chiffon, and Lace were all included in the making of wedding dresses all across the world. "In general, fabrics made from natural fibers breathe better, but they can also be more expensive or wrinkle more easily, thus the rise of blends and synthetics"(Bouchon, 2019). The most popular fabric used today in 2020 is the silk zibeline. It is a constructed fabric and it is excellent for structured designs like fit-and-flare or A-line styles which we see as a common design for dresses at this time. "Zibeline is woven in a single direction from straight fibers for a shiny finish"(Donovan, 2020).

## **Silhouette Styles for Fall 2020**

There are innumerable amounts of silhouette style wedding gowns. For Fall 2020 the six signature wedding gown styles are the Empire style, A-line, Ballgown, Trumpet, Sheath, and

Mermaid style. The Empire style gown is stipulated by the waistline, which "sits just below the bust from which the rest of the dress flows down to the hem. Skimming over the hips and tummy area, this silhouette is perfect for pear-shaped brides." (Lizelle, 2020). The silhouette of the skirt distinguishes the A-line wedding dress. The A-line section is fitted at the hips area and moderately flares out from the natural waistline. It emphasizes the shape of the capital letter A, and it can also feature any length of the train. The Ballgown wedding gowns are fitted at the waist, followed by a full skirt that can reduce the waist and conceal the hips, legs, and buttocks.

This style gown has been fashionable for many decades, and it is considered the Cinderella gown. The Trumpet style gown hugs the body in all the right areas and gradually flares outward. The flare begins near the mid-thigh area giving it an elegant mermaid style effect. The Sheath style gown is very fitted to the body and falls straight to the floor."The elongating nature of this design will help petite brides appear taller. However, the column dress does not allow much room for hiding problem areas, such as a larger lower body. It can conceal minor flaws if you opt for a constructed style that will stay in place, but the slip style will be unforgiving".(Lizelle, 2020). Lastly, the Mermaid Gown is a fitted style gown that contours the body from the chest to the knees (or lower) to highlight a woman's curves. This style gown flares at or below the knee, creating the illusion of a mermaid tail undisputedly graceful. - **Amber**

**Wells**

### **2020 Trends on Bridal Fashion**



Due to COVID-19, many couples had very different wedding photos than they could have possibly anticipated a few months ago. The wedding photos now include facemasks that match the brides'

gowns and the grooms' suits. The facemasks has become the new accessory for 2020 trends in bridal fashion. Designers are now incorporating matching facemasks as a part of the full gown look and this may become a part of fashion history. These face masks can be made with leftover fabric from the dress with lace, embellishments, crystals, embroidery, etc. Jackson Wiederhoeft, a couture designer, included masks in his spring/summer 2021 bridal collection. Wiederhoeft created two masks that one protected you from small particles and the other was more strictly for a design aspect since it was a sheer mask.

Internationally looking at the bridal mask effect during COVID-19, Turkey and Dublin took part in creating bridal masks after marriages were allowed to take place again. Oana Chaicac, owner of Angelo Bridal in Dublin, said she decided to put face masks on the mannequins in the window for fun. (Bedo, 2020) Also, she thought that if she created bridal masks, she could raise money for frontline staff in St. Vincent's Hospital and even around the country according to Fox News. For turkish brides on their wedding day, they generally receive a set of gold jewelry and other pieces of gold from family and guests. (Sabah, 2020) However, master craftsmen in the southeastern province of Kahramanmaras have begun producing gilded masks or surgical masks bedazzled with 14-carat and 22-carat gold to adorn brides. (Sabah, 2020) Alike most masks, these masks are still taking precautions against COVID-19 but are taking on the stylish aspect that cost over a thousand dollars to custom make.

### **Color in the Future**

A possible color trend that we may see is the potent ivory hue and will be here to stay for a while, but slowly customers will see pops of color as seen in some Fall 2020 trends. Oscar de la



Renta has a pastel blue, Vera Wang has a black and Monique Llohuillier has pastel pink and teal green. Due to COVID-19, people might feel brave enough to try a different shade for their wedding dress after being in isolation after all this time. For those who want to venture out, pastel colors can potentially open doors for non-traditional white hues that still can convey the “dream dress” to brides. Brides might be willing to wear pastel hues of colors mixed with white as it will still maintain the “traditional white”. The trend might have a slow rise as people slowly start to accept. It will most likely need a fashion leader to catapult the trend due a drastic change. Once the *fashion leader* brings awareness to a *peach parfait* , *scallop shell*, *celandine*, *hushed green*, *clearwater* and *lavendula* it can be used in their wedding dress. These shades are a follow up to the “Cleanse” momentum that is viewed in FashionSnoops. After being cleansed, the belief



of starting from zero can be considered the “Growth stage”. These colors in turn represent things that often grow in nature or nurture said growth. *Celandine* and *clearwater* are two factors that produce growth; sun and water. *Scallop shell*, *peach parfait*, *hushed green* and

*lavendula* represents fruits, flowers and nature that range from this color. Once there is an *interest* in these selected colors, many might connect the “Growth” hues to represent themselves on their special day, a peach that is perfect or a calm lavender entering tranquility. As mentioned, some people love to present themselves in their best manner; especially on important dates such as a wedding, brides can *evaluate* whether the color is better than a traditional white. It does not



necessarily mean these hues will change the market overnight but it is an available option for those who are daring. *Trialability* comes once these colors are available in store and then *adoption* as a bride buys the colored dress. As said earlier, this will not be possible unless there is a *fashion leader*, perhaps a royal but most likely a celebrity of our time, so that the mass market can accept it. With that said, brides will still be engulfed with ivory, perhaps small instances of crepe and pastels.

### **Fabrics for Fall 2022**

In SS21 brides have a range to choose their bridal dress. Using Romanzo by Julie Vino as a starting point, many dresses have a lot of lace, organza and satin. The belief is that these fabrics will still be highly used since these materials help the dress become a dream dress for the wearer. For Fall 2022, these materials will still be heavily used but lace will be a major fabric choice as it is still in its high point on the *pendulum*. Due to lace being used for a full body, some dresses might still incorporate that idea or give brides who do not want a lot of lace the choice of only lace on the upper half and a bit of organza. Although there will be a lot of lace there will also be the option of no lace. Dresses with satin can provide the shine for the bride.

### **Silhouette for Fall 2022**

SS21 follows these silhouettes: mermaid, ball gown, sheath and modified A-line. Due to Fall 2022's fabric choice, we might see a slight trumpet coming from the mermaid to give a little more space as we slightly stray away from the tight fitting dresses. Fall 2022 will also have a smaller option to present the "growth" ideal with its ballgowns as it gives space in the leg area for the bride. The voluminous lower half of the dress will give the impression that a flower is blooming hence the "growth" theme.

## Target Market

The Target Market strategy for most bridal shops centers the attention on selling wedding gowns, and the slightest effort is dedicated to other necessary items. Their target market is between women in their 20's and 30's. Since the target market audience is relatively young, it is easy for people who are in the bridal industry to grasp the attention of these young consumers who fantasize over having the most glamorous wedding. "Recycled Dreams will be targeting its chosen segments through an advertising campaign that involves advertisements in the local newspaper. Weddings in general are very social occasions and the social scene is captured in several different sections within the newspaper." (Software, 2020). -**Amber Wells**

A wedding gown is the one dress that will be remembered for a lifetime. Whether it is passed on from generation to generation or kept for memories, the connection between the bride and the dress will never go away. The origin of the white, the various silhouettes, the recurrence of styles, and the fashion leaders who encourage femininity power depicts why a wedding gown is significant in the world. Wedding gowns do not have a particular gender, color, or silhouette which allows them to be customizable to all. Also, they have become affordable to most but still luxurious looking. All in all, the wedding dress has more thought behind it than when the final look is presented.

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### *Figures*

*Figure 1* “Queen Victoria's Wedding dress”

*Figure 2* “Maria of Brabant's marriage with the French king Philip III of France, miniature in the manuscript *Chroniques de France ou de St. Denis*, British Library, London.”

*Figure 3* “Traditional Ancient Chinese Wedding Dress. Embroidered”

*Figure 4* “Wedding dress from 1884” Gift from Thompson, W. (n.d.). *Wedding 1870-1929* [Photograph]. Fashion plates, 1790-1929 Costume Institute Fashion Plates, Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.).

*Figure 5* “Two wedding dresses from 1921. Follows the style of short hair and loose clothing. “ Thompson, W. (n.d.). *Wedding 1870-1929*, Plate 060 & *Wedding 1870-1929*, Plate

061 [Photograph]. Fashion plates, 1790-1929 Costume Institute Fashion Plates, Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.).

*Figure 6* “Princess Diana’s wedding dress, designed by David and Elizabeth Emanuel, 1981

*Figure 7* “ Ariel, Cinderella and Snow white wearing voluminous dresses while big poofy shoulders” .

*Figure 8* “Grace Kelly’s Wedding dress. Designed by Helen Rose, Gifted by MGM.”

*Figure 9* “ Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge’s wedding dress. Inspired by Grace Kelly’s wedding dress.”