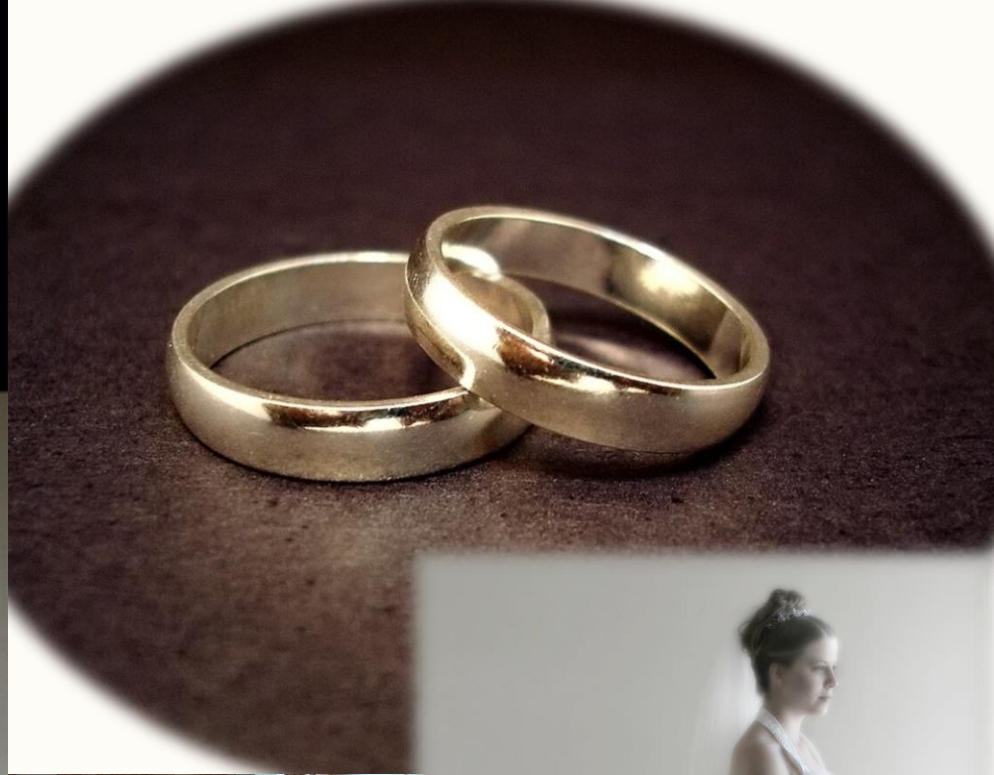


The wedding: constructing family meaning through ritual

Dr Julia Carter

Canterbury Christ Church University





The wedding performance: 'doing' a wedding, doing a relationship

Cathy: 'I think it was just that celebratory feel where all our close family and friends are all in one room together [...] and kind of the 'here we are. We are together forever now'.

Steve: 'Being with all the family, families coming together, I think that's going to be a good key part'

Steve: 'showing an expression of how much she means to me and that I want to be with her. Indefinitely.'

Jane: 'it's the end. Well it's not the end...it's the happily ever after'.

Marilyn: 'we did... for us which is why we just wanted it fairly small... it just signified where we were at in our relationship and securing our future as a family unit'.

Derek: as far as I could see on the area that we had was full of our friends and our family'.

Ritual consumption

Yeah, to me personally [...] it does mean so much. You know, that like, you're going to have that day and erm [...] you know it's really, really important. Really important to me [...] I just think it's a gift to myself. Like, I've never spent this amount of money on anything. And erm, and to you know... I sort of thought to myself you haven't done expensive holidays, you haven't done these things. **Give yourself this, give yourself this gift of this memory and this event**, you know. [...] **I want my Cinderella day**

Grace

'Fortunately, for the last 18 months, I've had an incredible job that paid me an awful lot of money. So, my budget...well, didn't really have a budget, because money was no object. However, we still needed to live. And, we need to be realistic...but, it would be worthwhile, because ultimately we were only ever going to do this once. We both feel like that. It's only ever going to happen once.'

Darren

Ritual consumption

Couple	Venue(s)	Cost (£ approx.)
James & Maria	Castle wedding venue	14,000
Jess & Kevin	Church, farm wedding venue	20,000
Grace & Steve	Castle wedding venue	9,000
Alison & Derek	1. Registry office 2. Church, hotel	12,000
Josie & Mike	Castle, barn wedding venue	14,000
Jane	Manor House wedding venue	17,500
Darren	1. Church 2. Country house	25,000
Emily	Barn, cottage wedding venue	12,000
Marilyn	1. Registry office 2. Hotel wedding venue	19,000
Cathy	City Bar	500

Wedding traditions and family meaning

Derek: 'all our friends are pretty much couples that have either been married for years or they've recently got married and I think ... I wanted to be part of that club. So, you know, I wanted to make you [wife] feel special, I think, and be a Mrs instead of just being a live-in partner'.

Kevin: 'Just erm, picking what car I have [coughs]. Picking the suits and that. And I think that's as far as I'm going'

James: '....because that's how my Mum and Dad got married. So probably, I mean, it is probably just following suit without realising it. The next thing down the line to have kids and follow tradition really. Follow what our families have done'.

Darren: 'It's all been quite easy but, kind of preparing Mary, giving her that insight, so kind of making it easy for herself, so I've got everything planned out. So, she can see and then visualise it'.

