From White to Green?
Weddings, Sustainability and Feminism in Post-Second Wave America

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Abstract

The white wedding, the most popular form of marriage ritual in America, includes a standard package of goods and services that are often lavish and unsustainably produced and ritual practices that pre-date modern gender relations. This paper examines three historical changes in feminist discourse and women’s movement that help explain the embracing of the “white wedding” by many contemporary, self-identified feminist women. My analysis is based on free association narrative interviews with single and engaged, feminist and non-feminist women of all sexual orientations that are part of a larger study of the popularity of the white wedding in the United States. First, I address the waning of marriage as a subject of feminist critique largely due to the success of the LGBT marriage equality movement. Second, I address the co-optation of feminism by advertising as the “new consumer feminism” that embraces self-improvement and beauty. Finally, I consider liberal feminism in its “third wave” and its focus on individual experience and “choice” which, taken to its logical extreme treats feminism as an identity and even lifestyle and not, to quote bell hooks, as “a movement to end sexist oppression” (1984). I argue that these three historical changes in feminism since the second wave of the women’s movement provide the context for the popularity of the white wedding, where no substantial counter-hegemonic forces exist to challenge its dominance.
On a cold November afternoon, white, heterosexual, middle class, MBA student Victoria sits comfortably across the table from me at a restaurant while we talked about her upcoming wedding. Between sips of coffee and stories of shopping and planning, Victoria grew increasingly restless and self-critical as she described changing her mind about the first dress she bought, selling it on eBay and buying another. She finally stopped and, laughing, said, “Yeah, It’s so superficial and terrible. This is awful.” I responded by asking her why she felt that way. She replied:

I have major guilt issues about this whole thing. It’s like, whatever, global warming’s not going away. But maybe if I like gave $40,000 to some fund to like sit down with a politician and talk about why no major politician in America is doing anything about global warming—other than Al Gore—you know, maybe I would actually make the world a better place, as opposed to me looking pretty on my wedding day.

Victoria went on to describe that while she felt bad for spending so much money on her wedding (in the end it was $80,000), no amount of guilt was going to stop her. This was an event she and her mother had been talking about since she was in junior high and to change her plans this late in the game was out of the question. A self-identified feminist and self-described “controlling” woman, Victoria strongly desired to marry via a white wedding.

Victoria was a participant in a study I conducted on women’s wedding fantasies and desires in order to better understand why the white wedding persists in popularity, despite the fact that many of its arguably sexist rituals predate contemporary society where gender inequality, while still present, is in decline. White weddings, the dominant form of marriage ritual in the U.S. (and other places around the world), consists of a standard package of goods and practices, such as a white wedding dress, a ceremony with vows, a reception with food and dancing and often a honeymoon. My study used a portfolio of qualitative methods to examine women’s subjective experience of white wedding desire, including participant observation, a
survey, and, most importantly, free association narrative interviews that included photo elicitation. Over 100 women in total participated, 31 of them interviewed. Ages 21-33, they were lesbian, straight and bisexual and mostly middle and working class. They were also primarily white, but African American, Asian American, Latina and Native American women participated. I found that most of the participants experienced wedding desire as pleasurable, but hegemonic, (i.e. taken for granted as “what you do” when you want to get married), while others, like Victoria, struggled with their desires through guilt or only selectively desired aspects of the white wedding.

Though this study focused mainly on issues related to gender and sexuality, examining wedding desire can also help us understand why some unsustainable consumer practices continue. After all, there is a long history in modern (and post-modern) society of, culturally speaking, coding consumption as feminine and also assigning the work of shopping to women as part of their reproductive labor (DeVault, 1991). Further, women’s consumer desire has also often been viewed as both necessary for progress through economic growth and threatening in its potential for voracious destruction (Kowaleski-Wallace, 1997). The dominant images of the contemporary bride—Cinderella and Bridezilla—represent this paradox.

For most people weddings are something experienced personally as rare events, often only occurring once or twice in a lifetime. Yet, collectively they add up to more than a 160 billion dollar industry, involving the consumption of numerous unsustainably produced goods and services, including apparel, air travel, cut flowers, gold jewelry, and beef (Mead, 2007). Only a few women in this study considered the environment in relation to their weddings, such as Victoria above and Danielle, a white, lower middle class lesbian who hoped to have a sustainably produced wedding with locally grown food, no cut flowers and a wedding dress that
can be worn again in everyday life. But the majority of the women who participated in this study embraced the white wedding uncritically, including feminist-identified women. What has happened to the critique of white weddings, which previous came primarily from the women’s movement in the 1960s and 1970s? During the second wave of the women’s movement weddings were heavily criticized as instruments of capitalist patriarchy, to the point that Bride’s Magazine came close to going out of business (Ingraham, 1999). While some researchers look to the influence of mass media or to changes in the symbolic meaning of the white wedding (Jellison, 2008) here I focus on the decline of the feminist critique itself. By understanding why feminists have, by and large, stopped protesting the white wedding I address one of the objectives of this conference, that is, “To improve our understanding of the complex driving forces underlying prevalent consumerist lifestyles in the wealthy parts of the globe” (scorai.org).

In what follows I examine three historical changes in feminist discourse and women’s movement that position these brides differently relative to their 1970s counterparts. First, I address the waning of marriage as a subject of leftist critique in general, largely due to the success of the LGBT marriage equality movement. Second, I consider the co-optation of feminism by advertising as the “new consumer feminism” that embraces self-improvement and beauty. Finally, I look at liberal feminism in its “third wave”—the period in which most of the participants of my study came of age—with its focus on individual experience and “no one correct way of being a feminist,” (Walker, 1995: xxxi) which, taken to its logical extreme treats feminism as an identity and not, to quote bell hooks, as “a movement to end sexist oppression” (1984). I argue that these three historical changes in feminism since the second wave of the women’s movement provide the historical context in which the popularity of the white wedding can grow, where no substantial counter-hegemonic forces exist to challenge its dominance. It is
in this context that the wedding industry has successfully constructed the white wedding as a sacred and singular event, where no expense—and no product—is too extravagant.

**W[h]ither the Critique of Marriage?**

In the last decade, LGBT activists have taken on marriage equality as a central goal of the gay and lesbian liberation movement. Historian George Chauncey (2004) attributes this sea change in attitudes toward marriage to several important historical developments. One is the impact of AIDS on gay men who became more interested in monogamous relationships and, more importantly, saw the significance of access to a spouse’s health insurance. Another was the lesbian baby boom of the 1990s. New reproductive technologies, including in vitro fertilization, made it possible for lesbians to conceive children and many did. Legal marriage became more appealing as a way to provide social support/legitimacy for their family structure, especially for the non-child bearing partner. Third, Chauncey argues that the institution of marriage had changed substantially enough by the 1990s that it was no longer necessary for a marriage to include both a husband and a wife. Absent these gender roles, the institution is less heteronormative and hence more appealing to contemporary gay and lesbian couples and heterosexual feminists.

The lesbian participants included in my study that forms the backdrop of this paper either embraced the white wedding as something they genuinely wanted or desired only selective elements. With some exceptions, even the lesbians who did not want a full white wedding generally avoided criticizing it as a sexist or heteronormative ritual, preferring something more “appropriate” for two women. For example, while looking at images of traditional weddings
during the photo elicitation portion of her interview, Danielle expressed her support for gay couples who do want a full white wedding:

…just because I don’t want to do like a traditional wedding doesn’t mean that there aren’t, you know, a thousand gay couples out there who are like hell yeah, we want tuxedos and white roses all over the place and you know, a frilly white gown, that’s what I’ve always dreamed of and I’m going to…you know, of course I want, you know, a diamond and a this and that and the other thing. Like…why does it have to be “special,” you know? [Special referring to separate publications for gay and lesbian wedding advertisements.]

While many feminists continue to criticize problems within heterosexual marriage, including violence against women and unequal divisions of labor, few now argue that marriage as an institution should be abolished or even avoided. The transformation in LGBT attitudes toward marriage, especially lesbian feminists’, in part explains this shift. Some even suggest that lesbians should marry because by definition the institution would then be changed further and for the better (Lewin, 1998).

**New Consumer “Feminism”**

A second important historical development is the advent of what has been variously called the “new consumer feminism” (Rosen, 2000) or, more recently, “commodity feminism” (Dworkin and Wachs, 2009). Starting in the 1970s and expanding in the 1980s, advertisers incorporated or even co-opted the language of feminism into their campaigns, which redirect women from criticizing social problems to focusing their attention on their individual lives. They are encouraged to find self-worth in their appearance or individual development and to create their identity and express themselves through shopping. Rosen locates this development in women’s magazines. While also offering articles on the women’s movement and feminist issues in the 1970s, publications such as the *Ladies Home Journal* began featuring articles that directed
women’s interest in social change to the construction of the self as a “personal project.” Women were given advice on how to “dress for success,” think positively and work hard for professional satisfaction. While attention was diverted from such issues as employment discrimination the magazine also alienated many housewives who felt the movement did not care about them (Rosen, 2000). Mary Talbot (2000) similarly finds that the rhetoric of liberal feminism as freedom of choice has or is being used to sell everything from products that are harmful to women (e.g. cigarettes and vaginal douche) to firearms (often by companies who oppose restricting firearms sales from those convicted of domestic violence). She has also found advertisers who make fun of women’s movement by using images of feminist activism to sell products, such as an advertisement for Ryker crackers that encouraged women to “stand up for what you want.” She dubs these ads “post” or “anti” feminist.

Douglas (1995) calls the new consumer “feminism” “narcissism as liberation,” or more recently “enlightened sexism” (2010) as “women’s liberation became equated with women’s ability to do whatever they wanted for themselves, whenever they wanted, no matter what the expense”(268). She focuses on campaigns such as L’Oreal hair color, which tells women they should buy their product, not because it will make them pretty, but because they are “worth it.” She further examines the way the women’s health movement—which, in part, sought to give women access to sports and make them stronger and healthier—had been redirected into women’s “fitness” where women were instead encouraged to reduce fat and cultivate a body shape that looks like an adolescent girl. (Dworkin and Wachs (2009) document an analogous history in the transformation of the magazine Women’s Sports & Fitness, where upon being purchased by Condé Nast shifted from a focus on women as athletes to fit aesthetics until they discontinued the magazine and shifted subscriptions to another publication, Self, instead.)
Finally, she considers the way women are encouraged to “take control,” of their lives, not through institutional change, but through cosmetics and their pseudo-scientific systems:

Turning on its head the feminist argument that the emphasis on beauty undermines women’s ability to be taken seriously and to gain control over their lives, advertisers now assured women that control comes from cosmetics. Cosmetics were sold as newly engineered tools, precision instruments you could use on yourself to gain more control than ever over the various masks and identities you as a woman must present to the world. (273)

Taken together Rosen, Talbot, Douglas and Dworkin and Wade suggest that the “feminist” messages that are communicated by advertising are not feminist at all in that they teach women that empowerment is to be found in the cultivation of the self by exercising the “freedom” to choose products that can make oneself more attractive. Thus, advertising and popular culture were agents in the gradual transition from a focus on sisterhood (not without its own problems) and the beloved community to a “post-feminist” cultivation of the individual self (Siegel, 2007: 123).

While advertising led the co-optation of feminism it did not stop there. The new consumer feminism also manifested as “girl power,” represented by pop music groups such as the Spice Girls in the 1990s and Pussycat Dolls in the 2000s, the time period when the participants in my study came of age. For some, the empowerment of girls was no longer associated with institutional change, such as legal victories like Title IX, which required educational institutions receiving federal funding to provide equal opportunities for boys and girls. Girl power meant embracing a type of individual self-esteem and being proud to express yourself. The character Buffy, from the television show Buffy the Vampire Slayer drew on girl power and is seen by many as the girl power cross-over to (pseudo) feminist icon in the 1990s. A white “girlie girl” former prom queen and cheerleader turned super hero, Buffy again and again saves her town from vampires and demons using quick wits, physical strength and martial arts.
She defies convention by being blonde, pretty \textit{and} powerful, while also tackling such issues as teen dating violence and reclaiming public space for women. She is neither a sexualized Wonder Woman nor ironic in her love of shopping and boys. “Buffy constantly treads the fine line between girl-power schlock and feminist wish-fulfillment, never giving satisfaction to either one” (Fudge, 2006(1999): 380).

Probably the most earnest attempt to link girl power and consumer culture with feminism was written by “third wave feminists” (to be discussed below) Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards in their book \textit{Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism and the Future} (2006(2000)). They call the intersection of third wave \textit{culture} (music, zines, etc.) and \textit{feminism} “Girlie” arguing that “you don’t have to make the feminine powerful by making it masculine or ‘natural’; it is a feminist statement to proudly claim things that are feminine, and the alternative can mean to deny what we are”(302). In other words, they are cultural feminists focused on a feminine presentation of self. For example, “Using makeup isn’t a sign of our sway to the marketplace and the male gaze; it can be sexy, campy, ironic, or simply decorating ourselves without the loaded issues…”(302-3). Most of the “Girlies” are “white, straight, work outside the home, and belong to the consumer class”(304). Rather than stating that feminist waves differ because the social structures of an era differ, they suggest that different types of feminism have different \textit{styles} that are associated with the popular culture of the period in which feminists came of age. Baumgardner and Richards do assert that “Girlie” does not amount to feminism by itself, and can even be considered “silly” without concomitant attention to politics. But they do not see emphasized femininity and feminism as irreconcilable. This concept of the “Girlies,” it would seem, describes many of the women who participated in my study. They do not argue that, for example, wearing makeup makes them a feminist; however, they see no incompatibility between
identifying as a feminist and constructing themselves as a beautiful bride. For example, in regard to her sister’s choice not to wear a veil, engaged, feminist-identified Christine said, “I think she’s just more—the veil is more symbolic of, you know, of old kind of handing off of women. I think she’s much more concerned about like the—not theory, but the symbolism of the veil as a negative thing. Whereas I’m more like: it’s pretty.”

Third Wave Feminism

The term “third wave feminism” connotes multiple meanings. In its most common sense, the wave metaphor describes a resurgence in feminist activism. However, that is generally not how the term has been used in feminist writing for the past fifteen plus years. It variously represents the generation of feminist women who came after or are the daughters of second wave feminists, which would include many of the women in this study; women of color feminists who emphasize intersectionality (beginning in the 1980s); and feminists (young at the time) who disputed the claim made by Time Magazine (and others) in the 1990s that men and women were now equal, feminism was dead and that we are in a post-feminist era (Heywood, 2006; Looser and Kaplan, 1997; Siegel, 2007). Some associate the “new consumer feminism” discussed in the previous section with third wave feminism and indeed there is some overlap in works like Manifesta (2000) as previously discussed. In the remainder of this section I will address third wave feminism in its dominant liberal iterations as discursive context for the proliferation of the white wedding.

Naomi Wolf is often cited for her contributions to third wave feminism. Though she is probably most well known for her book The Beauty Myth (1991), which is a critique of beauty culture in America, Wolf was more recently criticized for her conceptualization of “victim” and
“power” feminisms in her book *Fire with Fire* (1993). In this text Wolf embraces liberal feminism in her call to feminists to give up what she sees as victim-oriented feminism and embrace the power they have the potential to wield. Wolf states explicitly in her text that she does not mean that women have never been victimized or that they should cease combating victimization that occurs, or that it is “all in their heads,” but that where feminist has come to equal victim *as an identity* the connection should cease. Nevertheless, Wolf has been harshly criticized for denying that women have been the victims of patriarchal society.

I draw attention to Wolf’s power feminism and its “central overarching premise” of “more for women” (2006: 16) for the way it connects to her ideas about weddings. In her list of principles she includes that power feminism “has a psychology of abundance; wants all women to ‘equalize upward’ and get more; believes women deserve to feel that the qualities of stars and queens, of sensuality and beauty, can be theirs” (16). Wolf’s ideas here connect with her separate essay (1995) on the appeal of the white wedding gown to women. Through previously having deep criticisms of the white wedding, Wolf developed a strong desire for a white dress upon getting engaged and looking at bridal magazines. She concludes that the wedding dress is desirable to so many women because it recalls a period in history (Victorian) when women’s sexuality was revered and protected, rather than easily available and exploited as in contemporary pornography. (Of course she is referring here, without historical accuracy, to affluent, white women’s sexuality.) Taken together there is an affinity between power feminism, which is a liberal feminism emphasizing women’s individual desire and choice, and her ideas about weddings where bridal gowns are desired for lifting women up rather than tearing them down. In these terms, bridal gowns become vehicles for women’s empowerment and celebration,
not dressing for their objectification. To me, her formula represents a third wave approach to the white wedding.

A second component of third wave feminism that I would argue is central in shaping the way women in this study (who, again, roughly came of age during this period) think about feminism today is the dominance of discourse on being a feminist. According to Deborah Siegel (2007) many “young” women do not want to associate themselves with the “label” of feminist, which “had become conflated with victimology, sexual protectionism, humorlessness and [Antioch style] rules” (114). Third wave feminists reject the notion that there is one right way of being a feminist and suggest that sometimes feminist politics are “messy” (Heywood and Drake, 2006). Rowe-Finkbeiner (2004) argues that:

part of this movement entails personal experiences and individual perspectives taking the place of identity politics or a monolithic theory. It is no accident that many books published about the third wave are anthologies, collecting multiple women’s voices, not books of overarching theory on the future of feminism…The message: there is no ‘one way’ to be a modern feminist. (91-2)

Rebecca Walker, the woman who began using the phrase “third wave” first, who is also Alice Walker’s daughter and one of the founders of the Third Wave Foundation also has stated:

Constantly measuring up to some cohesive, fully down-for-the-feminist-cause identity without contradictions and messiness and lusts for power and luxury items is not a fun or easy task…. For many of us it seems that to be a feminist in the way that we have seen or understood feminism is to conform to an identity and way of living that doesn’t allow for individuality, complexity, or less than perfect personal histories (2006(1995): 27-8).

While I can relate with struggles to live out a feminist life where the personal is political, my take on this sensibility is that these women are simply not familiar with the diversity of second wave thought and its internal debates. For example, Joan Morgan asks, “Can you be a good feminist and admit out loud that there are things you kinda dig about patriarchy?”(2006(1999): 9). Here she is thinking about how equality is not “sexy” for her in the bedroom, that dominant
men turn her on, and her fear that feminism “has made us wholly undesirable to the men who are supposed to be our counterparts” (11). Feminists had already addressed complicated questions about sexuality and power, for one issue, including BDSM, in the 1980s (see Benjamin, 1988; Vance, 1984). Of course her experience is important and one cannot be aware of all things happening in feminism at one time. But there seems to be, or has been in the late 1990s and into the twenty first century a preoccupation among young feminists with what it means to be a feminist. Though Rowe-Finkbeiner claims that third wave feminism entails individual experience taking the place of identity politics, it seems more likely that these ideas have combined such that feminism is understood by some to be more of an identity and a lens for interpreting personal experience than, as I stated previously, a “movement to end sexist oppression” (hooks, 1984). From this point of view, feminism can be embraced by anyone. You can be a feminist model, a feminist aerobics instructor (Findlen, 2001; Walker, 1995), and taken to its logical extreme, even a feminist Republican, as conservative Sarah Palin labeled herself in 2010. Of course there are many age appropriate feminists, including myself, who do not consider themselves to be “third wave,” who are involved with activism, and/or whose writing is mostly academic. But these ideas from popular books on the third wave are the ones most widely circulated and that can resonate with consumer “feminism.”

Feminism and the White Wedding

In a historical context where the institution of marriage is rarely criticized on the left, a consumer society where advertising pushes the “feminist” message of empowerment through

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1 For me this is not necessarily a rejection of some third wave ideas, because there are many that I would support, given the various definitions of third wave described earlier. My point is that I do not think about whether or not I identify as third wave because I do not primarily think about feminism as an identity at all, but as theory and action, a movement for social justice and change.
self-improvement and beauty, and a feminist moment where issues of personal identity and choice prevail there seems to be no public, counter-hegemonic feminist force that opposes the white wedding. Of course there are feminists who critique white weddings in writing for popular audiences, but they are few and far between. Jaclyn Geller is probably most well-known for her scathing critique in *Here Comes the Bride: Women, Weddings, and the Marriage Mystique* (2001); though her history and research are respected, her feminist take on weddings and marriage has generally been reviewed poorly (Otnes and Pleck, 2003: Porter Benson, 2001). Other feminists criticize aspects of the ritual, such as the unequal division of labor, but do not call into question its general structure and practice (Blakely, 2008; Montemurro, 2002; Sniezek, 2005). The point is that absent a collective critique of the white wedding, in the context of a powerful industry it has flourished.

There is no one “talking back” to the women who participated in this research who take for granted that a white wedding is just “what you do” if you want to get married. Even women who generally do not want to participate in such events as bridal showers, do so and express support for the bride out of social obligation (Montemurro, 2002). White weddings have become normal over time to most of the women featured here because they attend many other white weddings and while there often have powerful emotional experiences that solidify their sense of the ritual’s importance and desirability. When women (lesbian and straight) see men react to the beauty of the bride, they do not think of her as being objectified. They think of her as valued by the man who has agreed to marry her. Ally, a white “queer”-identified woman, for example, even interpreted a friend’s husband’s emotion at the site of her friend in her bridal attire as a sign she was in a “healthy relationship.”
The “new consumer feminism” also provides context for the near universal desire among participants to have a wedding that reflects “who we are,” where style and material objects become the building blocks of self-expression and “empowerment.” No wonder most of the women in my study evaluate the style and organization of the weddings they attend and discuss their experiences and assessments with their female friends, family members, co-workers, and roommates. It is also not surprising then as well that the mass media have become a “teacher” of how to do a white wedding for these young women instead of their mothers or other family members. The lesbian feminists in this study are poised to have the greatest impact on the white wedding, but probably more as innovators within the practice of the ritual than anything else. Yet, some of these women even support the practice of the white wedding as long as individual women choose it. It appears that in regard to twenty first century wedding culture, anything goes as long as, in the words of Ms. feminist blogger Anushay Hossain, “it is right for you”:

The most important feminist aspect about my wedding was the decision I took to get married in the first place. I married when I wanted, how I wanted, to the man I wanted, when it was right for me. Everything happened under my terms and in my own time. After all, when feminist icon Gloria Steinem got married at the age of 66, she made me see that feminism is really all about making the right choices when it is right for you.

What she neglects to mention is that Gloria Steinem got married in blue jeans in a small Native American ceremony, while Hossain had a lavish white wedding. Does it matter? Is this emphasis on individual choice good for society? Is it good for women? Who will care?

**Feminist Critique and the Sustainable Wedding**

In this paper I have argued that the waning of feminist critique of the white wedding can be attributed to three historical changes since the second wave of the women’s movement in the
1970s: the success of the LGBT marriage equality movement, the advent of the “new consumer feminism” with its emphasis on individual “empowerment” through lifestyle choices and consumer goods and the dominance of liberal feminism in the women’s movement’s third wave. What we now need is conversation between feminists, marriage equality activists and environmentalists (and some are, of course, all three) about alternatives to the traditional white wedding that are non-sexist and non-heteronormative, as well as sustainable. Hopefully we can begin that dialogue through the Sustainable Consumption Research and Action Initiative (SCORAI).

I would agree with scholars such as Juliet Schor (2010) and Bill McKibben (2008) that people will be more supportive of sustainable consumption if it is experienced as abundance and not a threat to the “good life.” This is especially important in the case of weddings now that more and more people in same gender relationships can legally marry. It would be cruel to diminish the celebration of marriage just as this population is gaining access to it. For that matter, calls for change will probably fall on the deaf ears of heterosexual couples if it means diminishing their “special day” as well.

As fundamentally creative beings, I believe that we can devise a marriage ceremony worthy of representing love, commitment, family and community that is sustainable, non-patriarchal and non-heteronormative. Graduation ceremonies provide one potential model. Men and women wear identical caps and gowns that call attention to their special day and status transition. Just as graduation places an emphasis on achievement more than appearance, the emphasis for the wedding would be placed more on celebrating partnership than on feminine beauty. Also, graduation gowns are usually rented and returned to the college or university, which is a more sustainable option than buying one, or now sometimes two, dresses that are only
worn once. Many grooms currently rent tuxedos, so the model is already partly in place. The graduation model is simply one of many possible sources of inspiration.

Regarding my second point, about the cooptation of feminism by advertising, both feminists and environmental activists should find a way to encourage marrying couples to stop relying on wedding industry literature as guidance for planning their weddings. Multiple women who participated in my study said that they wanted to have a “traditional” wedding, but did not know what they were supposed to do. So they purchased bridal magazines and planners to teach them. If a truly traditional wedding is desired they need only look to their own families and communities for inspiration. What bridal magazines offer is really what Rebecca Mead (2007) calls the style of the “traditionalesque,” which is basically a way to legitimize having a wedding that looks upper class. In earlier periods of American history, most women either wore their best dress to their wedding or, if affluent enough, would purchase a new dress (that could be a variety of colors including blue or brown) that would be worn again after the wedding, in everyday life (Jellison, 1996). Those are genuine American wedding traditions that could be resurrected in the contemporary moment.

Ultimately, my hope for dialogue between feminism and environmentalism would shift the focus away from some third wave politics as lifestyle or self-expression (the trendiness of driving a Prius comes to mind as much as having a lavish white wedding) to emphasize politics as social justice and change, the fostering of sustainable communities and the end of patriarchal heteronormativity. What else can we do, what else can we change, what else can we create to have an inclusive and sustainable marriage ritual for all who participate?
Work Cited


And feminism is simply the recognition that all of those forces have affected women’s lives and the determination to organize to try to address those injustices and create a more equal society. Beginning of Feminism. There is no one feminism. There are many feminisms, so when you consider the history of feminism you have to take into account many different kinds of movements by women and allies of women. Often feminisms have intersected with other types of movements, so there have been movements that involved black and white women, poor and rich women, young and older women, and all of them ha