
UNDERSTANDING CONSUMPTION AND CLASS THROUGH THE MARRIAGE MARKET

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Abstract: As my research interest in this paper, I will be looking at consumption at the crossroads of culture and economy of particular classes in the urban society. What excites me towards writing this paper is the material economics of the drive towards conspicuous and symbolic consumption that characterizes cultural capital. To this end, I would like to look at urban middle class weddings in the neoliberal times and the political economy surrounding this. As such I would like to explore the impact of the growing market around weddings in India. The significant rise of professions like wedding planners, wedding photographers, body and beauty industry along with the impact it has on the Indian brides and grooms and the performativity of class and gender is what forms the crux of my study. In particular, how do the changes in the economy impact the individual's relationship with the community, especially in light of the tenuous terrain of consumption? In a word, then, my project will explore how do popular cultural practices like weddings impact the individual and the community at the ground level and lead to their subjectification through the complex interplay of inclusion as well as exclusion. The other pertinent question is – how have popular cultural practices changed into becoming sites of conspicuous consumption making them into a spectacle and marker of one's class and status? It becomes important to talk about advertising and media business because it is a particularly compelling point of mediation between culture and capital. Apart from this, I would be engaging at a deep level with the idea of middle- class in India, which occupies a significant part of the research. Through this what I would be doing, is to problematize the understanding of class altogether. What I therefore propose is to look at class not as a category that is fixed and frozen but something that is fluid and changing in the process. That is to say, I am going to study how class becomes amenable to transformation of taste and distinctions, as formulated by Bourdieu. The question then is- whether capital is shaping the tastes and pReferences of the social matrix with which it has to interact, and how it is acquiring new forms in the process? It thus becomes important to understand how increased circulation of desire, commodity, images and capital, inflect and reshape the existing class and consumption patterns.

On the ethnographical end, my interactions with wedding planners and wedding photographers would clearly sketch out the transition that the wedding industry has faced. In the course of my research, I have undertaken several visits to weddings and personally engaged with couples opting for conspicuous weddings which eventually lead to the expansion of the wedding industry. Thus, a discussion on movies and advertisements leading to the creation of desires, imaginations and demands that fuel the industry is a crucial part of the paper.

Introduction: The contemporary urban processes are shaped, as David Harvey points out, by the logic of capital circulation and accumulation; and in turn, they come to shape the conditions and circumstances of capital accumulation in time and space. I would like to explore this process of capital circulation and accumulation that gives rise to new kinds of practices, phenomenon and subjectivities in the urban milieu. To this end, I am interested in looking beyond the economic dimension of capital and engaging with its cultural aspect. In particular, I am curious about the material economics of the drive towards conspicuous and symbolic consumption that is characteristic of cultural capital. I would like to explore this terrain of the impact of capital and economic changes by a close study of popular socio-cultural practices in urban middle-class India, such as weddings. The purpose of the paper is to be able to tackle the phenomena of consumption at the crossroads of culture and economy of particular classes in the urban society.

Understanding class through practices of consumption

India, over the years has undergone huge transformations. With new economic policies, governments, developments, there has also been a rise and assertion of a new middle class in India. As India emerges as a global power, one overriding sentiment that infuses the middle classes world view is a new sense of pride. What constitutes as an important marker of their distinction from the old middle class includes their pReferences to visit modern departmental stores, shopping malls and have a more consumer lifestyle. It is because of these pReferences that Nita Mathur has observed that India's new middle class has recently become a major projected market for western- style clothes and accessories, cosmetics, cuisine, electronic gadgets, films and music products. As has been argued by P K Verma, middle class was the most visible class engaging in practices of consumerism. Hence we see credit cards consequently becoming very popular.

They function as the accelerator of consumer culture. They are also treated as we know practically as status symbol. This attempt at marking clear and discrete divide from the older middle class through display of consumption practices can be understood in the light of what Pierre Bourdieu argues that goods serve to mark differences and distinctions among people in society.

The proclivity to pursue personal well-being with little thought for any other social priority is another trait mirrored by Indian middle class. This well-being, a lot of times gets mirrored in the benefits and advantages that the new middle class in India is able to comfortably appropriate for itself. Hence, we see that the Indian middle class is an ardent advocate of privilege leading to the creation of an unequal society. By claiming to speak for the nation this category performs the cultural task of concealing inequality. Thus, Dipankar Gupta excoriates the Indian middle class by saying that its commitment to principles of democracy is weak. It thrives on connections, family and patronage. Instead of animating public institutions, members of this class are constantly undermining them. There has been immense heterogeneity in the scholars who have defined the middle class identity. However, this heterogeneity of the middle-class mirroring the expanding canvas of the economy has also an underlying homogeneity. There is some consensus that almost every member of the middle class is a traveler on the same highway of upward mobility and aspiration.

Conspicuous consumption is one of the main roads through which the new affluent middle class aims to achieve its aspiration of upward mobility. Conspicuous consumption becomes an important tool as well as a key marker of the new affluent middle classes in neoliberal India in their desire to be visible and move up the ladder. Christiane Brosius in her analysis on consumption practices among the Indian middle class focuses on how globalised and enclave India are imagined, visualized and sanctioned in and through lifestyle aesthetics. On similar lines, Leela Fernandes relates the growing visibility of the new middle classes to the emergence of the wider national political culture one that has shifted from the older ideologies of a state-managed economy to a middle class-based culture of consumption. Scholars have argued that the majority of the nation belongs to these globalised middle class elite. Therefore, we see that today's urban middle classes are the central agents in this revisioning and reimagining of the Indian nation. Brosius argues that it is the aspiration to become a member of both a cosmopolitan and nationalist class of Indians that characterizes and fuels the imaginary of the global Indian, the global superpower and the global Indian takeover.

For Fernandes, the new middle class is a social group integral to producing the state-led strategies of market restructuring. She argues that middle class agency is constituted by a range of state and private strategies which are mutually interdependent and productive and thus the binary between market and state disappears. The new middle class in India shapes, and is shaped by the nation in ways that are conflictual and contestatory. In her discussion on the new middle class she argues that since the mid-eighties, with liberalized policies beginning to emerge in new India, the new middle class embodies "a self-image as the primary agent of the globalizing city and nation", associated with high-tech, managerial efficiency and global economic competitiveness. However, this middle class is far from being a homogenous and politically unified social group. She argues that the policy of economic liberalization initiated in India since the early 1990s have centered around consumption practices and wealth generated by the new liberalizing middle class. However, the newness of this middle class is a cultural characteristic that is marked by attitudes, lifestyles and consumption practices associated with commodities made available in India's liberalizing economy. Nita Mathur argues on a similar streak that the new Indian middle class is characterized by a considerable increase in consumption practices and aspirations for privileged lifestyles, strengthening and reinvigorating its social and class identity through a conspicuous consumer culture, which according to scholars was unseen in the country earlier.

It is around the same time that we see a shift and transformation that occurs in the understanding and accepted patterns of consumption. Consumerism is no more a bad word anymore and the world seems to be united by advertisements for an ever increasing spectrum of objects of desire. There was a rise of mass consumerism in India in the 1980s which is seen as an explicit challenge to the developmentalist dispensation of the post-Independence years by many scholars. Scholars like Ulrich Witt have argued that the motives behind the first class of consumption were specifically linked to innate, physiological needs. In contrast, the second class of consumption motives arises from needs that are not physiologically determined, but that seem to be partly innate as well. Examples of these are the needs for sensory arousal, for social recognition, or for consistency in one's self perception. Similar to this, William Mazzarella, argues that the new consumerist ontology bases its understanding on the idea that the sovereign consumer is the final arbiter of all normative questions. Thus, the idea that becomes hegemonic is that- 'the customer is always right.'

Ulrich Witt goes on to argue that the corresponding expenditures in the second class of consumption are

motivated mainly by the symbolic value they have for transmitting the signal. Thus, what has now come to count is consumption's socially agreed capacity to function as a symbol. Goods and representations of goods are seen as signifiers. It was the positions within structures of signification that rendered the goods meaningful in particular settings. This socially agreed capacity to function as a symbol can also be broadly referred to as the practices of symbolic consumption.

Scholars have argued that symbolic consumption operates at two levels: outwardly in constructing an ideal self we expose to the world and inwardly in creating a desired self-identity (Elliott, 1997). Joan Pearson and Fiona Syson argue that possessions symbolic of their former role, remind their owners to cherish happier times, memories and to preserve a sense of past. On the other hand, possessions symbolic of their new role assist the individual to redefine herself/himself with a new sense of self (Vinsel *et al.* 1980), allowing them to fill the gap between imagined short-comings and their perceived ideal, enabling them to adjust more readily to their new role. It is for the above mechanism that symbolic and conspicuous consumption plays that it becomes crucial for us to engage with this entire process and transformation.

The theory of conspicuous consumption concerns a particular form of rational purposive conduct, one in which status considerations predominate as has been generally implied by Thorstein Veblen that individuals consciously seek to "excel in pecuniary standing" and so "gain the esteem and envy of (their) fellow-men". Conspicuous consumption then is a category of intentional actions in which the goal is to bring about an improvement in others' opinions of oneself. However, what lies at the root of consumption and ownership, according to Veblen is the motive of emulation. Emulation is the stimulus of invidious comparison which prompts us to outdo those with whom we are in a habit of classing ourselves.

Thus, a common way of describing conspicuous consumption is to present it as a pattern of conduct that is intended to realize the goal of maintaining or enhancing an individual's social position. Veblen considered primary utility as a consequent of the direct service of consumption to enhance life and well-being on the whole. He believed the purchase, ownership and consumption of commodities is invested with secondary utility as evidence or social confirmation of the consumer's relative ability to pay. Veblen argues that wealth confers honor however an individual's self-esteem depends on the esteem accorded by others. It follows that fluctuations in an individual's perceived wealth will lead to changes in self-esteem. Thus according to Veblen too,

conspicuous consumption leads to two different consequences: one in terms of the changes that must have occurred in the attitudes and opinion of others and two the changes that the aspirant consumer imagines that might have occurred. It is such a rationality that is manifested in the wedding industry. Weddings have occupied a central and sacred position in the Indian society and in recent time conspicuous consumption around weddings are seen as enhancing one's status. It brings about a change in the perception of the other and upgrades one's status at the same time.

Thus, we see that consumerism gradually becomes the new integral value through which one's social positioning is determined. However, in order to gain greater legitimacy among the people, tools of media are appropriated and co-opted. As Arvind Rajagopal argues that the economy runs through the rhetoric of the image and the image itself runs through the rhetoric of the economy. It is with such an understanding of the role of media, image building and consumption that, scholars have argued that advertisement and other tools of media use popular cultural practices more as symbolically rich forms. The economic changes, along with a dynamic role of image making that is played by media, then produces a hegemonic discourse stressing on the aspiration of what is a good and desirable life, affecting individuals and communities and their relationship with one another.

It also becomes important to talk about advertising and media business because it is a particularly compelling point of mediation between the local and the global, between culture and capital, between popular and distinct and between aesthetic and utility. What is also done by media is that it draws the connecting line between all these categories through the creation of aspirations and desires. William Mazzarella goes on to argue that the Indian advertising discourse is self-consciously modeled on a global paradigm in which consumerism as an inclusive formal system that strives to appropriate and also produce local cultural difference as content. Mazzarella very lucidly points out that locality and difference constitute modernity and they are not subsumed by it. Scholars have thus argued that the consumerist globality not only absolutely circumscribes but even produces resistance to itself as yet another possibility of consumption. Roger Mason in his analysis of how conspicuous consumption functions argues that a wide range of utility goods are made more attractive and are sold more easily by being linked to claims of potential status gains. The point that they try to make is that status-linked goods are more effectively exploited. Mazzarella argues that in the production as well as circulation of commodity images, appeals are both to

the populist aesthetic politic and a cultural logic of distinction. He goes on to theorizing that the practice of advertising can be conceived as “public cultural production, centered on a distinctive form of commodity production, the production of commodity images”. It is in such a context that Arvind Rajagopal raises an important question in relation to class and desire. What he asks is how increased circulation of desire, images and capital inflect and reshape the existing class and caste configurations. Though he specifically talks about advertisements, we can try to extend his arguments to cover a few agents of media like television shows, movies and newspaper advertisements, which can be seen at the interface of the economy and culture and help to illuminate the realm where aesthetics and utility are made to merge. In order to understand this interface it becomes pertinent to look at the churning that takes place within the social space. Social space and practices play a crucial role in determining one’s social positioning in society. Thus, what Christiane Brosius argues about social space becomes relevant to frame the practice of marriage. For her social space is a field of cultural production in and through which social agents seek to position themselves by improving or stabilizing their status, negotiating access to values and rules of the game allegedly played. Class then becomes a struggle of different social factions over access to cultural space, the accumulation of prestige through the performative accumulation of various forms of capital. Weddings as a social practice could be seen as one such social space of cultural production where the social agents, the urban middle classes in our case, seek to position themselves through conspicuous consumption.

According to Featherstone, what is central to consumer culture is a certain use of the concept of transformation. The magazines, advertisements, television etc present a range of material on the transformation of lifestyle, living space, relationships, identities and bodies. Featherstone argues that the body is considered the central vehicle of the consumer culture of good life: the source of pleasurable sensations which must be looked after. On the other hand, body is also understood in terms of its image as a visible indicator of the self, and thus there is an increasing need to pay attention to the look.

It is with these developments that William Mazzarella’s concept of aspirational consumerism becomes relevant. It is this aspirational consumerism that marks the new kind of subjectivity and agency in the neoliberal India. Commodity fetish along with the desire to upgrade one’s status is the driving forces behind aspirational consumerism. It thus becomes pertinent for us to briefly engage with Marx’s understanding of commodity fetishism. Fetishism in

anthropology refers to the primitive belief that godly powers can inhere in inanimate things (e.g., in totems). Marx borrows this concept to make sense of what he terms “commodity fetishism.” *Commodity fetishism* can be seen as a process through which an object is ascribed magic “phantom-like” qualities, whereby the human labor required in making that object is lost once the object is associated with a monetary value for exchange. Under capitalism, once the object emerges as a commodity that has been assigned a monetary value for equivalent universal exchange, it is fetishized, meaning that consumers come to believe that the object has intrinsic value in and of itself. The object’s value appears to come from the commodity, rather than the human labor that produced it. In modern times too, the commodities are believed to possess phantom like qualities and the monetary value of exchange becomes the most important attribute.

Thus, consumption is no more a vice and has transformed into being a virtue, and this shift has been characterized by Mazzarella as ‘progress by pleasure’. The expansion of the wedding industry can be seen as a consequence of these developments and a marker of progress by pleasure. Big weddings of the present day can be best understood by engaging with the outstanding work done by Brosius. According to her, weddings are not celebrated these days but are performed. The meticulous attention that is paid to details about the décor, food, dress, jewellery, venue, invitation, lights, entertainment, photography, make-up etc strengthen her argument of weddings now being performed. It is through acts of performance that we can also argue that marriage is not just a social contract as it has been defined all this while, but significantly an economic contract with renewed definitions of capital, class and status. It is thus, that Brosius argues that the boom of the wedding industry in India has also been termed as ‘the fastest growing sunshine industry’ of the early millennium.

It is through the aesthetics on the wedding day that a clear and vehement statement is made about the class that one comes from. Through an ostentatious wedding and the aesthetic taste reflected through the wedding one is able to gain the envy and prestige of the other. In Indian society, since marriages occupy a very important part of our lives, ostentatious weddings do not gather criticism. On the other hand, such ostentatious spending has achieved some legitimate acceptance. Through such spending it has also becomes easier for one to mark its taste as distinct from the other. It is this display of distinct taste and wealth is what affects the perception of us by the other which gets easy attention from the others who are a part of the community one comes from. The irony is that the gaze of the other which would have otherwise been criticized becomes

welcoming. The gaze of the other is not just welcoming but is also a significant reason for an ostentatious wedding being performed in the first place. It is because of this that ostentatious weddings cannot be treated as just another consumption practice. It is thus, that Brosius argues that, while weddings are certainly important as a key life-cycle ritual, the idea that they are the biggest celebration of a single person's life is a rather new, and part of a shared imaginary of a largely urbanized and educated audience.

Dilip Cherian (head of a leading Public Relations Company called Perfect Relations) is of the opinion that weddings have become the single most visible expression of a person's social standing and wealth, which is also an expression that is both acceptable as well as expected. The spread and reach of the wedding industry can also be captured by what Jayshree Menon says-

"Here in India, weddings are meant to be grand, meant to be big. Weddings, in fact are the biggest celebration of a person's life. The size and scale of your wedding determines your pecking order in society... But suppose, you can't manage an Antwerp or Bali wedding and a French chateau is totally out of the reckoning; you can always create a Venice in Goa, a Rajasthan fort in Mumbai or a tropical forest in Delhi. As disposable income grows healthier, more couples than ever are opting for professional planners to see them through their weddings rather than depending on the sage advice of uncles and aunts who would otherwise have pitched to help with wedding preparations... Today, you too can have your own version of the big fat Indian wedding."

According to Brosius traditional weddings have been a key arena of conspicuous consumption and hence lead to the generation of symbolic capital. What is new according to her in the themed weddings is their emphasis on scale and pomp and on the new global aesthetics and taste. Thus what is new is the celebration of class and not so much of the caste. It is thus that she argues that these weddings have become an event, a theme park or an action film of romance.

Brosius argues that in liberalizing India, life cycle rituals have become lifestyle rituals. She argues that weddings have become a stage for the display of world-class lifestyle. The wedding industry is vast and specializes in the creation of pleasure and desire, distinction and status, the marketing of travel destinations and culinary and other sensuous experience, status, style and etiquette. Therefore she concludes that weddings are a highly structured event through which consumption and experiences are fetishised and controlled. It is because of the above mentioned complexities that Gerhard Schulze argues that while people search for happiness in a

growing consumer society, there is a constant production surplus of desires and fears which in turn places sensuous everyday experience at the centre stage. The promise of happiness is not located at a distance but its fulfillment is in the present and more importantly by the constant comparison of oneself with the other.

Aspirations and desires are however, not the only driving force of consumerism. According to Veblen, the basis on which a good repute in any highly organized industrial community rests is leisure (exemption from productive work) and conspicuous consumption of goods. However, the common factor in both these basis is the principle of conspicuous waste. Neoliberal weddings in urban India reflect both the practices of leisure as well as conspicuous consumption and thus result in conspicuous waste. Patricia Uberoi has argued on similar lines that in the South Asian context, the most visible site of conspicuous consumption and conspicuous waste is-weddings. There thus seems to be an acceleration of commodity culture which plays with the desires and aspirations of the people which then leads to the crafting of neoliberal subjects who are disciplined into consuming, behaving and looking in certain ways. What marks this process of subject formation is co-opting the target group with certain restricted kinds of freedom.

As Patricia Uberoi argues that today being modern, global and also Indian has started to mean the freedom to choose in all spheres of consumption. However, she points out that this freedom is just limited to selecting the commercial products and services and not about freedom to make important decisions like the freedom to choose one's life partner. This participation of women in consumer culture, as Lieu argues requires an intense regimen of self-maintenance that demands attentiveness to microscopic detail. Thus, we see the subjectification of women and to some extent of men to patriarchal notions amidst intensifying capitalist consumer culture particularly in the context of Indian wedding. Brosius' in her book talks about what Miriya C. maintains which is, that nowadays there is a celebration of the beautiful self. She interestingly points out the difference between feeling good and looking good. For her the first refers to a subjective awareness of one's own self relevant for the shaping of personal identity. However the second involves the fetishisation for an external beholder. It is through this process as has been argued by Brosius that the previously declared economic independence of the 'new women' or for that matter men is overshadowed by the subtle panoptic social controls which is internalized and reproduced as 'care of the self'. This implies that there will be no status and recognition until there is submission to particular norms of self-

regulation and self-disciplining. The new codes and regulations for a good life, as argued by Brosius, appeal to specific forms of physical and mental wellness and beauty. For her even when these appear natural and liberating they reflect the panoptic gaze of the emerging pleasure-driven disciplinary society. Hence such a discourse becomes problematic and difficult to accept. Thus, consumer culture along with being a major source of production and employment has also become a key mode of legitimation, a visible sign of economic success and standing of people, community and nation-state.

Modes of representation through media

I would now like to briefly extend my observation through a brief discussion of other modes of representation which are at work, for example, various movies and television shows. What becomes crucial in the movies and television shows is the visual consumption. I specifically want to focus on a few films like, *Monsoon Wedding*, *Band Bajaa Baraat* and *Queen*. *Monsoon Wedding* is a brilliant display of the economic travails and desires of the new middle class. It shows the anxieties and financial crunches that a metropolitan middle class household has to undergo in order to meet the high levels of consumerism and standards set by the society while getting their daughters married. With *Monsoon Wedding* for the first time we witness that a whole movie or plot of the story can be around a wedding. It marks the small industries that start to flourish around weddings because the movie is very implicit yet subtle ways depicts the entire process of the preparation of the wedding. This involves scenes depicting shopping for clothes and jewelry. Cultural events like sangeet are shown as becoming part of the event which is shown by an emphasis on choreographed dances which had been absent in the Indian cinema till then. Whereas, in the movie *Band Bajaa Baraat*, one gets to clearly see the logic of the other side of weddings that is the market at work. The flourishing market around marriages can be captured by one of the scenes right in the beginning of the movie where the protagonist says she wants to become a wedding planner for as she puts it -“*best business hai, kareena, Katrina ki teen filmey pit jaye to woh to out, lekin recession ho ya inflation shaadiyan to hoti rahengi, log lakho lutate rahengey*”. These can be taken as of what is happening in the larger society in general. There is a glorification of the wedding ceremonies motivated by consumerist practices with the idea of showing the status one comes from or the status one would want to get elated to. In this movie what we witness is the percolation of planned weddings into the lower middle classes and this is also one of the various reasons why the two protagonists become successful. It also shows the different scales at which weddings could be

organized. Thus, what the movie shows is how wedding planning or wedding planner becomes a carrier option for the middle and lower middle class in India. The economic nuances are brought about in a much more forthright manner because in this movie there is an acknowledgment of the demand and the market for such weddings and for wedding planners. Even after the two protagonists separate, they individually manage to survive in the market which implied that the market has space and can absorb new elements. *Queen* on the other hand can be seen as a movie that shows small challenges and resistances that are erupting in the society at large with regard to the market as well as marriage. It is a movie that depicts a phase of transition. In this movie we see the protagonist asserting herself through her choice to go abroad. The movie depicts a transformation to a new woman who is lot more independent. However this independence is limited and defined through choice of consumption. This movie defines an independent woman as a potential consumer which gets translated through personal taste and markers of distinction. This new taste is more of a global and cosmopolitan taste. By acquiring this taste the woman is turned into a commodity merely for better status, acknowledgement and recognition in the patriarchal world. Through practices of consumption, this movie defines who is a marriageable woman which is problematic because it is a limited and regulated opening or independence for women. However, though these movies clearly mark the presence of the market in Indian weddings, they fall short of depicting the extent to which it particularly affects Indian brides and women in general.

To bring out the impact of these developments on women and men, and specifically on the brides in India, I would like to discuss and analyze a television show run by the channel NDTV Good Times called *Band Baja Bride*. In this show weddings are shown as a special once in a lifetime experience and how it becomes a crucial responsibility of the women getting married to make it special, to begin with, by looking special. The entire show thus, focuses on how to make the bride look perfect by focusing on the bodily aspects of the bride, thus turning her into a commodity. Every minute detail about how her smile looks, her facial hair, texture of the hair, jewellery, dress and location is taken care of. Thus, a bride is shown as a package with glowing skin, perfect body, fabulous smile, no facial hair and flawless hair. The episodes show how the entire process of preparing for the wedding can involve visits to and treatment of by a range of specialists, like dentists and dermatologists. This show is linked to practices like-going to the parlors, getting facials and other kinds of treatments done makes you feel fabulous, wearing

diamonds makes one look beautiful, it is good and normal for the brides to sacrifice, make all the efforts to look good, not for herself but for the groom and that in order to be happy for a life-long, a big wedding becomes a must. These episodes very candidly spell out all the elements and small industries around the market of marriage which stresses the importance of looking in a particular way just for one day. These shows emphasize on the importance of the synchronization of the dress, make-up, jewellery, flowers, décor, venue and food. It not only highlights the excessive need for grooming of the self that is required by the bride and groom, more so by the brides. This show also tells us about the entire economy that is silently functioning from behind making these weddings go bigger in scale. Thus, it becomes a good study of patriarchy and market at work. What also becomes crucial for us to examine is the range of advertisements and their frequency during this show. There are a lot of advertisements by cosmetic companies in these shows. The main purpose of these advertisements is to put desires into action or a concrete shape in terms of accessing particular range of products devoted to the beauty industry. Thus, even here we see that even

though there might be some independence and autonomy given to women in making choices, this autonomy and independence is strictly defined and regulated.

Conclusion: Thus, to conclude I would say that through the various ways of conspicuous consumption, weddings have become sites of social performance of one's class and gender. In is in this context, that Beauvoir's idea of body being a continual materializing of possibilities and a historical situation can be seen to be appropriated by the patriarchal and capitalist processes in society. The ideas of a perfect body and beauty which can be achieved through following a particular regimen of life, involving the conscious and careful cultivation of fashion, clothing and style, prompted by the capitalist market leads to the constant objectification of the brides, grooms, men and women in general, which in turn results in crafting of women as new kinds of fetishized subjects. What makes the situation worse is the fact that they give willing consent to their own subjectification oblivious of the consequences. It is these free subjects who are without any shackles that need to be rescued and engaged with.

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