
*Overview:* Jellison explores the wedding culture of America, focusing particularly on post-World War II weddings. *It’s Our Day* chronologically investigates the beginning of the white wedding culture, started in 1840 with the marriage of Queen Victoria and concludes in 2005, when the white wedding had reached mass consumption by the American public. Jellison’s thesis focuses on the ritualistic staying power of the white wedding, and how over the past six decades the wedding has survived despite political, social, cultural, and economic changes. *It’s Our Day* delves further into the American wedding culture by analyzing the cultural changes that solidified the concept that the white wedding – the phenomena surrounding wedding culture – was an American social ideal.

Jellison’s writing is non-complicated and direct, making the book a comprehensive, though sometimes dry read. The chapters are broken down into several historic periods, concluding with a glimpse into the modernized culture of the white wedding. Jellison begins with exploring the bridal-wear business and its role in promoting the wedding obsessed culture; followed by a chapter on the exposure of celebrity weddings to the American public, and how this prompted a booming industry; the next chapter explores the affect of the movie wedding on post-WWII brides; and concludes with the present-day media coverage of non-celebrity weddings in our reality television present day.

A main theme throughout the book that is reaffirmed throughout each chapter is the idea of the evolving wedding culture. The white wedding shortly after WWII was
viewed as a rite of passage for middle-class white females wearing virginal white to symbolizes their first day as a domesticated white. As the radical, feminist 1970’s rolled around, the wedding industry sustained staying power by changing and adapting to fit the new standard of the American woman. The industry became more accessible to nonwhites, career women, divorcees, and same-sex couples. Jellison contributes this to the idea that the white wedding has become a status symbol, and an opportunity to create a day seemingly constructed by a billion dollar industry. While Jellison exposes the mass consumption side of the wedding industry, she does not openly critique the role of marriage, nor does she comment on the status of marriage on the present day woman. The book scores for originality as it is the first one to explore the wedding though the lens of cultural changes, while incorporating historical text to support the main argument. It’s Our Day is an extremely readable text, and can be used as both an academic or non-academic book.

How this work can be applied to American Studies: Jellison, in her expose on the American wedding culture and the evolution of this culture since WWII, greatly contributes to an emerging division of American Studies found in U.S. women’s history and could even be applicable to classes such as the globalization of the American economy since WWII. It’s Our Day not only examines American wedding culture, but also attempts to explain the staying power of this billion-dollar industry, and how it has expanded to become an American norm. This book is a unique contribution to the field of American studies because it uses the combination of historical fact and economic development to explain an aspect of American culture. This interdisciplinary approach is
what makes the book an ideal example of contemporary American studies following WWII.