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**SUMMARY
of the doctoral thesis with the title**

Wedding in Valcea. Structural constants and diachronic and synchronous hypostasis: between the ceremony and the show

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In this paper we intend to make a wedding presentation as an event and ceremony both on the axis of the diachronic and in synchrony, analysing the ritual dimension and its spectacular dimension. For this we have turned to the strategies and methods specific to ethnology and those of cultural anthropology, but also to contextualizations and tools related to the social history and the history of the mentalities, therefore the research having an interdisciplinary character.

Thus, the thesis proposes, first of all, a way of understanding the changes that the wedding has passed over time, an interpretation of recent theories about ceremonial, rite / ritual, spectacle. Achieving this general goal requires several stages and levels of description and analysis, illustrating and identifying the structural elements of the wedding.

And because the wedding is part of our lives, taking part in it from different standpoints and fulfilling different roles - most of us including the main one, we have understood that this direct experience can be used for participatory observation.

For a fair view of the wedding phenomenon, an updated understanding of the ritual and its camouflage in the "show society" - a show that marks social life at all its levels –it is necessary to realise that the rite still dominates the social.

A wedding officially commences the family, which leads to reconfiguration of kinship relations, to changing social status. That is why we have also taken into account the results of family sociology, according to which, in recent decades, the quality of family relationships has improved, becoming a pure relationship that exists through itself, without external constraints. This pure relationship is not only about love, it is also true for the others: parents - children, relatives and friends. This is a consequence of the woman's emancipation. Over

time, power relations within the traditional family have been weakened, parental involvement in choosing the partner has diminished. Social functions have remained, but their configuration depends largely on marital choices, and family formation no longer involves the woman's professional sacrifice and its social definition exclusively through marriage, by the status of the housewife.

We have analysed these paradigm shifts through a succession of perspectives, taken from established ethnologists and anthropologists, to whom we have added data and information gathered from monographs of localities with very limited circulation. By putting together the customs, the texts that entered the repertoire of the wedding, with the suggestions of poetics and their philological interpretation, we paid attention to the playful and humorous dimension, to the distribution and redistribution of the roles, to the "scenography" elements of the moment.

The wedding memorizes important data for the history of the mentalities, crossing as a theme or motive the history of literature and the history of art, contributing both to the shaping of the sensibility of an era and to the shaping of the nature of the social relations therein. Many references in 19th-century literary canonical texts, for example, are of great help to penetrate into the spirit of wedding styles in their various historical ages.

The work involves a spatial cut-out: Valcea County, which is why we tried to establish the correspondence between the habits of this area and those encountered at national level and we looked for the elements and customs specific to the delimited area, recurrences and new elements.

The title of the work, *Wedding in Valcea. Structural constants and diachronic and synchronous hypostases: between ceremony and performance*, includes both this spatial cut-out and the timeless reference, because our explorations go up to the historical roots, that is, from where the documentation comes, to the present. It also includes the two terms that also teach the praxiological approach: the ceremony and the show.

The wedding presents itself in the contemporary world, both as a series of rituals - expressions of tradition - and as an event that the protagonists try to customize, having as a "screenwriter", in general, the future bride. The customs are maintained, with the mention that *the ceremony* is replaced with *the show*, and there is tension in the wedding, following the oscillation between them.

The wedding therefore has its own sphere and does not continue in the show but dissolves itself, loses the consistency that defines it, "profane", although, following Mircea Eliade's logic, survives even in these *forms in this reality*.

Thinking of the magical-ritual type has weakened with the *emancipation* of the individual, including in positioning the wedding. But its social roles have not diminished, but have, on the contrary, preserved and, in some ways, amplified their effects and importance.

The specialized bibliography has signaled the changes that took place in the organization of the wedding, but it did not analyze them in terms of the tension that arouses the "confrontation" between the ceremony and the show, this being an element of innovation of the present work. We have not only pursued it through descriptive elements, but also through analytical incursions that highlight the importance of this antagonistic game based precisely on the primacy of the spectacular elements.

The bibliography on the wedding is an exhaustive one, the synthesis of some works and the reconstruction of a narrative of the "wedding" in Valcea County being an objective in itself. That's why we used some suggestions from the postmodern anthropology studies to get an updated meaningful image. We did not summarize, therefore, a panorama, but we proposed a vision based on current hypotheses and theories, explaining the way the individual assumed this event, which is still rightly considered "the rite of passage".

Watching a wedding nowadays, it is hard to separate the moments of the tradition from which the *structural constrictions* of the wedding come, the recurrences that are fashionable and will become such *structural constants*. For this reason, their recording and inventory also takes the form of predictions, based on a complex understanding of social realities. For example, in the book of *Wedding* of Simion Florea Marian, one of the fundamental works of the domain, in the section dedicated to "after the wedding" we do not find any reference to any analogy to the "honeymoon", a habit that also grounded in culture Romanian popularity of the last decades. Although we often meet it as a "after-wedding" ritual in many of the urban couples, it has not raised too much interest among the researchers. It seems an imported habit, but even so, the mechanisms that led to its takeover can not leave us indifferent. It exemplifies not only an act of imitation, but also a way of enriching the bridal event, so it captures a form of its development in a world where travel plays an extremely important role.

In this paper we tried, on the one hand, to establish the attitude towards the theme and, on the other hand, to make the method, the argumentative line by acquiring some theoretical aspects. We sought to explain, to express our motivation and to set our goals, so that the thesis has a forming role as an "initiation" in the skill and use of the means of ethnology and anthropology.

We have thought of the work on two large chapters comprising five chapters, with illustrations of the unfolding of the wedding from the general to the private and from the past to the present.

In the first part with chapters I and II and III we considered the phenomenon of change and for this reason we referred not only to the transformations that took place in the event, but also to the pace of these transformations in the rural area, respectively in the urban environment. We have consulted the specialized bibliography imposed in the field and recognized as a support for studying the phenomenon, through which we highlighted the structural segments of the wedding, its general picture, on time layers and stages of the conduct. Then we presented the wedding being careful to identify the ceremonial and the spectacular elements, not to separate them, but to reveal the mechanism by which the wedding process changed, the way in which aspects of fashion became habits, some of them ritualistically, anticipating what the elements that could have the same evolution are.

This part has a very theoretical stake, and the methods we have used were, as we have already mentioned, (1) the direct observation, (2) the participatory observation (including the marriage and married woman position, with various other roles - godfather 4 times), (3) the study of the established bibliographic sources, interpreted by the theories of anthropology.

Another objective of the paper is also the theoretical and deontological reporting of these changes. As the information is numerous and heterogeneous about the contemporary wedding in the urban environment, still unstructured scientifically, we sought to capture the most general.

In Part II, Chapters IV and V, we began a two-stage investigation: recovering and consulting valuable materials and information from works with a very limited circuit focused on the Vâlcea area, generally monographs of localities and anthologies of texts. Therefore, we fix the variants and constants on the diacron axis. Chapter IV consists of the panorama of this material. The second step of the survey was accomplished by elaborating a questionnaire drawn up by us in the theoretical parameters approved by Professor Nicu Panea, the coordinator of this thesis and its application both by direct work on the field and by the coordination of a group of eighteen people who gathered information to complete it. There were 21 responses, structured as such in Part V of the paper. This is also the most consistent part of our approach, the original part, in which we actually confronted the bibliography we consulted with reality, we compared two distinct periods, following in parallel the way in which the wedding took place in the past in the traditional environment and the transformations that arose nowadays, with the customs taken from the ceremony of the

wedding in the urban environment. In this second part we have seen the changes in the wedding in the localities with a high degree of resistance to (post) modernization, in rural areas, where preservation has another dimension and another notion. Even here, we have kept the deontological precautions that have been stated and upheld. The last two chapters present the bridal event in the Vâlcea area, using a specific material, monographs of localities in this realm, information gathered through direct observation or the direct observation of some authors we know and with whom we have entered into dialogue on this topic.

The traditional wedding - configures the "classic" wedding image in Valcea, in the 20th century, which is "illustrated" with three samples: Gheorghe Fira, Ion Meïtoiu and Constantin Mohanu. The standard version of the Vâlcea wedding is only that of Gheorghe Fira, which he calls it like that because it captures the oldest stage (the first decades of the 20th century), refers to the Vâlcea area as a whole (even if the musical repertoire is being picked , predominantly from the southern sub-area Drăgășani) and is published under the aegis of the Romanian Academy, being authoritatively recommended by Constantin Brăiloiu. Its scientific value is also recognized by the ethnologist Mihai Pop, who is based on the exegesis of the Romanian wedding, in the work *Traditional Romanian Customs*, on the study of Gheorghe Fira, that is, on the Valcea version of the ceremony. The other two variants (Meïtoiu and Mohanu) complete the image of the traditional wedding in Valcea County. The diachronic dialects of the Valcea wedding are highlighted by the surprise of the custom in the following folkloric sub-areas: Loviștea, Horezu, Drăgășani, the "Hungarian" wedding (Vaideeni and Băbeni), Bălcești area and Valcea area.

We have combined work with purely livelihoods with field work, which is essential in the writing of an ethnology and anthropology work.

We have always take into account the artistic dimension of the wedding, because it preserves all the dimensions mentioned, including *profanation* - through humorous and even ironic and parodic passages inside the lyrics and songs. In the dramaturgical dimension of the event, the ceremony is intertwined with the show, and many episodes have been and remain a drama with accents and comic effects, making the "passage" easier.

Following the general analysis that we made on the basis of the data gathered through the questionnaire, we noticed, through the responses from the two epochs facing each other, that all changes have generally occurred from the form to the background, from the resemantizing of the space wedding and time compression, and the social dimension has gained more popularity compared to the spiritual one.

As these transformations arose through the rethinking and redevelopment of the space, we discovered a major change, the emphasis falling, at the same time, on the great party at the end of the ceremony, on organizing it in a neutral place, not *at home*. There is a tendency to organize the wedding together, at the restaurant or in a special tent rented for this purpose. If during the 60s and 70s the ceremonial moments were in parallel or in succession, separate, i.e. home to the bride and home to the bridegroom, the road crossed by the participants was much higher, in the years 2000-2020 the two gatherings are united in one . However, social functions have not weakened, but other forms have been found to strengthen them.

In order to draw these general conclusions, we relate both to the answers in the questionnaire and the importance and to the substantial forms of the ceremony captured by the specialized bibliography, the depth of the diachronic being in this sense much greater. This overall view leads us to consider that the main dimension of the evolution of the wedding is "emancipation", especially in the case of brides, the total assumption of the event by the couple. Reunited through engagement, a variable period of time, the two members of the couple get to know each other very well, to adapt and harmonize their lives for cohabitation, to reconfigure and define their private environment, to adopt a certain shared public conduct.

These changes, this individual assumption, the exodus of young people under the guardianship of parents through social actions of passage that precede the wedding: self-study, to mature ages, entry into the labor market etc. are visible including in rural areas. Continuing the direct observation conclusions also, we explain the tendency of couples (either engaged or not) to build a good material situation just for the great passage through the wedding.

As the researchers of the phenomenon, we focused our attention more on its social dimension and less on the spiritual one, the latter reinforcing the former, confirming and legitimizing the commitments made between the bride and the community. Economic dimension also has the role of social definition of couples.

The exchanges between rural and urban, from the fashion imposed by the mediatization of some weddings in the fashionable world or even in the traditional village have led to an acceleration of the wedding evolution, even the tendency to uniform them.

In this respect, we observe that in the era of audiovisual and virtual dissemination, reaching the deepest layers of society, it has become commonplace that immortalization has a significant role to play in the memory of the couple, therefore solemn moments and gestures symbolic, older or newer, of the event being always captured: the last photograph of the group of friends as unmarried young people, the signing of the act of marriage in a certain attitude, the

exchange of rings, the worship of weddings and the sacrament, the clinking of the champagne glasses, the bride's dance, cutting the cake, etc.

We have proposed, through this paper, a way of understanding the changes the wedding has passed over time. More precisely, we have made an interpretation grid built by aggregating, comparing, cropping and identifying the event's structures in the diacron, and the meanings of its stages in synchronicity.

We found that the functions of the wedding did not change in their fundamentals: the reconfiguration of family relationships remained equally important, the change of social status was equally obvious and with the same consequences, the founding of a new family remained one of the goals, social solidarity and community commitment is confirmed and continues through the wedding. But there was a transfer of responsibility. The directors are now the brides and the grooms, masters of their own destinies and the main deciding factors in the wedding, which mirrors and confirms their ability to organize their lives in harmony with their neighbors, or their community.

Regardless of the length of engagement time, in order to remain in this change, the wedding transforms the lives of the grooms and their families, both through their spiritual and legal implications, that is, reconfigures their spouses on a personal and social plan.

The wedding celebrates a fundamental commitment, recognized as such in both rural and urban areas.

As a general conclusion, we draw attention to the determining social function that the wedding continues to have. Through it, the family is made up, configuring and reconfiguring the kinship networks, solidarities, influences, "the people" as a homogenization element, as the main group of belonging.

Returning to the change of customs, to the dynamics of tradition and to the actual unfolding of the wedding, we draw attention to those customs from the end of the party: removing the bride's veil and putting it on the head of an unmarried young woman who wants to marry and who, therefore, enters the transition moment; "throwing the bouquet" which, like giving the veil, symbolizes the preparation of another woman. This last gesture also has the character of marking the entry for *the other* in the preparations for her own passage. These new habits, quite neglected in specialized bibliographies, reflect a continuity between weddings, the fact that they have a special significance beyond their conclusion, and the end of one is dedicated to the preparation of another ceremony.

On these observations, possible only after the accumulations and panoramas carried out, followed by analyses and our own field research, our general conclusion is: The wedding

establishes a kind of traditional chain, a fundamental narrative thread for the community. The understanding of this nature and in these parameters, which we have tried to set as objective as possible, gives us, we believe, a natural and, at the same time, pragmatic perspective of the wedding, at the social and even spiritual level.