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THE WEDDING LAMENT: A RITUAL-POETIC STUDY

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

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THE WEDDING LAMENT:

A RITUAL-POETIC STUDY

(abstract)

The wedding lament is a form of ritual folk poetry which has been widely collected amongst Russian-speaking peoples. It has been understood to be an expression of the bride's real sorrow in marrying a man she did not choose, but to whom she must be faithful and subservient. I have challenged the accepted interpretation of the genre on two main grounds. Firstly, I have rejected a uniquely socio-economic explanation of the causes and function of the wedding lament. I have done this on internal evidence, and have proposed an alternate explanation of the genre as the poetic expression of a rite of passage. Secondly, I have shown that wedding laments are by no means limited to Russian-speaking brides; such laments are known in many parts of Europe, and even in other continents. In particular, I have studied the ritual laments of the German brides, and have shown that they fulfill a similar function and satisfy similar generic requirements to those of the Russian laments. It is therefore possible to assume that the wedding lament is an international phenomenon of folk-ritual and folk-poetry, fulfilling and reflecting deeply rooted aesthetic, psychological and social needs.

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Last but not least, I am grateful to my husband, Artur, and to my children, Tamsin and Adam, for accompanying me in my travels, and for bearing with me through many years of wedding laments.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introductory Remarks

It seems incongruous to us, in our world of bridal showers, trousseau teas and honeymoons, that a bride should mourn her coming marriage in poetic terms and ritual gestures very like those used to mourn for the dead. Where the image of the bride is the biggest advertising gimmick of all, we find it hard to imagine a world in which the bride stands out amongst her friends and family as the drabbest and most forlorn of all the company. Yet brides have been weeping for centuries and in many regions of the world. While Russian brides have, in the past, been most noted for lamentation, their sisters throughout much of Europe, parts of Asia, Africa and Indonesia have also lamented, and it is quite probable that many of them are lamenting still, their poetry sadly neglected and unanthologized.

Why would one select the wedding lament as a topic of inquiry, when there are many fine wedding songs which lack the sadness of the laments, while a folklorist with a penchant for the melancholy could find even more scope with the funeral lament? The wedding laments are complex and rich in their poetry and ritual, and while students of the Russian lament have long been aware of this richness there is room for more studies and analyses of the form. Further, there are still a surprising number of unanswered questions concerning the genesis, performance and poetic structure of these songs. More specifically, two central aspects of the lament seem to me to have eluded the folklorist. I will designate these two aspects the function of the lament -- that is, why it should be performed at all -- and the relationship between the laments and their accompanying rituals. It could be

argued, and I shall be arguing, that these two aspects are in fact one. The lament does not function outside of its ritual accompaniment, and it is through this delicate interbalance that the creative power of the lament can be discovered.

I have said that the function of the wedding lament has not been fully explained. This remark may seem preposterous, since Soviet folklorists, in part under the influence of the Marxist Paul Lafargue,[1] have provided us with a detailed explanation of this function, based on the inferior position of women in pre-Marxist society, the economic importance of marriage and the bride's lack of free choice in the selection of a spouse. This viewpoint, eloquently expounded by such folklorists as N. M. Elias and K. V. Čistov, has led logically enough to the conclusion, as stated by N. P. Kolpakova, for example, that the wedding lament has been dying out ever since women were emancipated after the 1917 Revolution.[2] I will have more to say about this later and will give in detail my reasons for not accepting such an explanation. This school of thought has largely gone unchallenged because there has been little Western interest in the Russian laments or even in the lament traditions of other languages.

Yet my goal is not simply to oppose a now well-established point of view concerning the function of the wedding lament. Many of the studies have been useful and soundly researched. But Soviet theories have tended to view the lament from the outside, from society itself, and to see it as non-creative, as a sort of foredoomed protest. I would like to argue for an interior and a creative function to the lamentation. Thus I will be countering patriarchal with psychological concepts, socio-economic with ritual explanations, theories of the

"realism" of the collective with the more abstract idea of human destiny. The wedding lament, I will argue, is a poetic and ritualized rite of passage. Through its poetic motifs, its pattern of development and its ritual, it not only portrays the initiation of the young girl into womanhood, but prepares her psychologically for this transition. The power of the lamenting voice is made clear in the wording of some of the laments themselves.

While this is a comparative study and the lament is, as I will argue, a multi-lingual form, any work on it must invariably begin with and lean heavily on the Russian lament tradition. With the possible exception of some Finnic examples, the Russian laments would seem to be exclusive in their length, complexity and variety. They have been actively collected for over a century and a half by such notable folklorists as N. A. L'vov, P. B. Šejn and N. P. Kolpakova[3] and have intrigued and occupied a considerable number of Russian and Soviet scholars such as P. N. Rybnikov and L. Šternberg.[4] A few Western folklorists, such as W. R. S. Ralston of nineteenth-century England,[5] have written about and translated Russian wedding laments without giving a thought to the possibility that they might exist in other languages. Even today, some folklorists studying the wedding traditions of other Slavic peoples claim that their wedding songs do not contain the elements of the lament.[6] Soviet folklorists have shown little interest in finding parallels to their tradition in the poetry of other languages. Thus, most discussions of the wedding lament to date have concerned themselves exclusively with Russian examples. I hope to point out in my thesis that wedding laments and lament motifs do exist in other languages and other ritual traditions.

Having come so far it is only fair to ask "what is a wedding lament?" Remembering that there is a dearth of information on the form outside of the Russian tradition, it is wise to begin with a narrower definition, that of the Russian wedding lament. In its simplest terms it is a form of traditional poetry directly connected with the ritual of marriage, and expressing the solemnity of the change which the bride is in the process of undergoing. The change is both personal and social. The laments may express the bride's feelings in extraordinarily harsh terms. Although acquainted with the concept of arranged marriages, we may be astounded to learn that the supposed victim of an undesirable match would be allowed, encouraged, in fact be duty-bound, to express bitter resentment toward the father who arranged the marriage and toward the new family she is about to enter. Yet this is the case in the lament tradition. A bride who did not weep well was considered an insult to those who raised her. The "weeping" may include verbal abuse, resentment and pleas for mercy. In moments of intense lamentation the bride may tear her hair, throw herself onto the floor in gestures of supplication, or cling pathetically to her mother and friends. Not only do her pleas go unheeded, but they stop altogether the moment the initiation is complete and the bride has become a wife. The laments have a fixed form and ritual accompaniment, although there is considerable variety from region to region, indeed from one village to another. They are performed either by the bride herself, by a professional mourner, or by a chorus of the bride's girl friends. In their poetic structure they display similarities to other types of Russian wedding poetry and to the Russian funeral lament.

If the lament tradition is not limited to Russian-speaking peoples and to their near neighbours, and I suggest that it is not, then we must be wary of a definition which focuses its attention on specific social and historical criteria. To qualify as a lament, it is essential that a song be directly related to the wedding ceremony, be ritualistic and traditional, and present the perspective of the bride, although not necessarily in the first person, nor need it express only her perspective. Because it concentrates on the transition of the bride from girlhood to womanhood, the wedding lament is characterized first and foremost by ritual and poetic expressions of time and time change. Although this characteristic is everywhere present in the laments and is extremely powerful in its implications, it has been for the most part overlooked by folklorists. The aspects of time as expressed in the laments include change and decay, birth and death, movement and dance. The laments are concentrated in the present, which is a time of flux, while expressions and descriptions of the past and the future tend to be static. Perhaps the most fascinating of the time expressions, and yet heretofore unnoticed, is the Christian allegory of the Fall of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. Though not explicit in the words of the laments, this allegory plays a striking role in the structure of the imagery of the Russian poems. In some German wedding songs great emphasis is put on the story of Adam and Eve, although without the connotation of the Fall which makes the Russian laments so fascinating. The examination of these time motifs and their function will be a central topic in my study of the Russian laments in Chapter ii, of the German laments in Chapter iii, and, in Chapter iv, in my brief survey of wedding laments in other

languages.

The controversial nature of my approach lies not so much in its theoretical premises as in its application to a form of poetry traditionally taken to be the "property" of Russian folklore and of Soviet folklore theory. It could be considered daring to apply Western perspectives to Russian folk poetry, although no such hesitation is displayed in the study of Russian literature by Western scholars. In fact, the comparative nature of my approach makes a broader perspective imperative. Despite this, I am clearly breaking with tradition in examining the lament from the point of view of its interior and psychological function and its ritual implications.

Traditionally, Soviet folklorists have studied the wedding lament from its external manifestations. E. G. Kagarov,[7] for example, has studied the rituals, motifs and customs in an attempt to retrace the steps of history and thereby to discover the original nature of marriage and of marital relationships. Such an approach has only marginal interest if we are to establish the function of the lament, not its historical justification. N. M. Elias[8] has explained the necessity for bridal lamentation and its changing form through a stage-by-stage description of socio-economic history. Central to the Soviet understanding of the lament and its function is the concept of the patriarchal society, a stage in the history of mankind sandwiched between a more primitive matriarchal society and a modern communistic society. Although the idea has regained a certain vogue in the West as an expression of all that is wrong for women in a male chauvinist society, "patriarchy" has long been repudiated as a serious concept among Western anthropologists. On the other hand, it has been almost

a catchword in Soviet studies on the wedding lament. The idea began in the second half of the nineteenth century, most notably through the writings of Bachofen, W. H. Morgan and Sir Henry Maine.[9] The "patriarchal" theory was based on an evolutionary approach to social organization, and saw society as evolving in a series of predictable stages, beginning with a stage of chaos and promiscuity and continuing through a matriarchal and a patriarchal stage up to the "modern" stage of the family within society. Furthermore, the theory saw the Roman family structure as the universal and the elemental social form. Western scholars rejected the concept on all counts[10] and the term "patriarchal" has now all but disappeared from serious sociological and anthropological scholarly writing.[11] In Soviet studies of the wedding, however, it has remained, and its terminology has been used to explain many details in the Russian wedding laments. The free will, or volja, which the bride must put off, is seen as a symbol of her subjugation by her husband's clan. The journey which the bride expects to undergo is seen to be related to the social custom of marrying the daughters off to men from distant regions. Stages of social development are seen to be mirrored in the lament motifs. Matriarchal society, for instance, is depicted in motifs of the strong woman, while motifs of wife barter and of capture by force mirror other predictable stages in the evolution of family relationships.[12]

In the West, however, such an approach to social development fell early on into disrepute. Edward Westermarck's monumental History of Human Marriage[13] first appeared in 1891 and, in it, human marriage was seen as a condition which found its parallels in the natural world. His work was followed in 1902 by Ernest Crawley's The Mystic Rose.[14]

Both works were instrumental in establishing scientific principles for the study of what had hitherto been clouded by Romanticism. The theories of wife barter and wife capture were repudiated, Crawley writing of the one that "few theories of primitive society have had such a vogue as that of Marriage by Capture, yet few theories have been built on such slender foundations."[15] Crawley added a new dimension to Westermarck's work by tackling the question of wedding ritual. According to his interpretation, the rituals leading up to the marriage act involve a process, either lengthy or brief, of "inoculation" and the gradual (or relatively sudden) breaking down of mutual taboos in a process of assimilation which might extend beyond the actual wedding day, sometimes until the wife had borne her first child. Thus, the sharing of food is a marriage ritual of this type, in particular in societies where a taboo exists which would prevent a man and a woman, or two people of a different clan, from eating together.[16] The expressions of regret on the part of the bride (and, incidentally, in some societies, the groom also shows a lack of eagerness or even fear) he interprets as ritual expressions of sexual shyness.[17] As early as Malinowsky's Sexual Life of Savages[18] there has been an ever increasing trend toward precise and local descriptions, and Edmund Leach has cautioned against the danger of drawing general conclusions from specific examples.[19]

One of the most positive results of the Western approach to marriage studies from the point of view of the folklorist is that it allows for considerably more complexity in the understanding of female ritual poetry. A concept which sees the position of women in terms of male society can only interpret the ritual functions and symbolic

viewpoint of women in contrast to that of the male. Having broken down the barriers created by the patriarchal approach, one is much freer to approach female ritualization and symbolization in terms of itself. This latter approach is relatively new, even in Western society, but its need has been argued persuasively by a few anthropologists.[20] By describing and analyzing a predominantly female ritual in terms of female symbolism we can come much closer to assessing the perspective of the bride as expressed in the laments.

I do not consider the Soviet point of view to be entirely unjustified, but I do consider it inadequate in coping with the complexity of the problem. From Arnold van Gennep[21] we have learned to understand marriage as a rite of passage and much more recently from Claude Levi-Strauss[22] we have come to see that ritual actively affects the psychology of the participants rather than passively reflecting it. Without this understanding of the personal and creative force of ritual and ritual song, the power and function of the laments can be only imperfectly comprehended. In poetic analysis it is essential to see the bride's depiction of her past and future lives in terms of the transitional nature of the present. Understood in this way, the prevalent motif of the journey is not merely a reflection of the social custom of sending brides to husbands who lived some distance away; it is at the same time a metaphor of change, an expression of the journey into a new life or even into living death. The characteristics of change control not only the words of the laments and their descriptive passages but also the accompanying rituals. A prime example of this is the ritual removal of the maiden's cap and donning of the matron's headware following the nuptial ceremony, a practice which Schroeder

tells us is generally Indo-Germanic and Finno-Ugric,[23] and which is frequently accompanied by lamentation. While the past and future lives are depicted somewhat statically in the laments (they stand outside of time), the present is in constant motion, sometimes chaotic, and takes much of its poetic force from being within the element of time; in the Russian laments, as we will see, the present becomes a kind of miniature or capsuled life, beginning with birth (from a pastoral timelessness) and ending with a journey into living death (the married state). Thus the laments can serve an important function within the marriage rituals by preparing the bride for womanhood psychologically as well as socially. I shall dwell on this interior and moral development in particular detail in Chapters ii and iii.

To what extent can we separate marriage rituals and songs from the social institution of marriage? I cannot completely reject the Soviet viewpoint which sees the laments as a reflection of family relations since it would seem unlikely that wedding laments would be sung to any very great extent in a society where the bride married of her own free will and continued to live with her own family after marriage. Nor do we find evidence of wedding laments amongst the Nayar, for example, where institutionalized married life hardly exists (although marriage of a kind does take place).[24] I would agree that it is more likely that one would uncover a lament tradition in a society where the bride joins her husband's clan than in one where the opposite is true. Caution, however, must be exercised even at this point. While a Hindu or a Chinese bride often travelled rather a long way from home and only saw her family again under very formal circumstances,[25] the prevalent motif of the journey in Russian laments does not necessarily tell us

that the Russian bride underwent such a journey, or even that the motif has been transmitted from an Oriental source. The bride's fear, as expressed in the laments, of her new home and new family may, of course, indicate a very real fear of a situation where mother will be replaced by mother-in-law and her status will be initially very low, yet fear of the unknown is as strong as or stronger than fear of known terrors, and a bride might well tremble even before a kind and loving mother-in-law. It cannot be urged too strongly that these and other motifs, while they may and probably do reflect a certain social attitude, long gone or still valid, contain a much more poignant, psychological meaning pertaining to the rite of passage, the journey of change which the bride must undergo. The journey reflects a rift between child and woman, daughter and parents, girlhood and womanhood, between opposing internal realities rather than between external social changes of person or place. It is a division of the self.

In opposition, then, to the Soviet approach, I choose to internalize the poetics of the wedding lament. The same is true of the lament rituals, which, as I understand them, enact the personal transition of the bride from girl to woman. What is ritual? It has been defined in a number of ways. Raymond Firth offers us what he considers to be the narrow, traditional definition of ritual as a "symbolic action relating to the sacred."[26] Monica Wilson points to the "supposed antiquity" of ritual as an integral part of its common validation.[27] Somewhat more complex is the definition proffered by J. S. La Fontaine:

> Ritual expresses cultural values; it "says" something and therefore has meaning as part of a non-verbal system of communication[28].... A preponderance of

> symbolic over technical action (however technical the actors may consider the purpose of the rite) is what marks off ritual from the customary performance of the technical arts.[29]

A ritual action, however, can be in some cases extremely brief, unlike a complex ritual such as one used to solemnize marriage, and La Fontaine calls a wedding ritual "a set of cultural statements."[30] N. P. Kolpakova speaks of ritual moments rather than rituals in reference to Russian weddings.[31] A ritual moment would be the engagement, or the pre-nuptial bath or the maidens' evening (devičnik), rituals being the component acts or gestures of these ritual moments. According to these definitions, the wedding lament is not in itself a ritual, since verbal statements have been excluded. Laments, however, are ritualistic and closely linked to ritual; they are components of ritual moments in the wedding system, they are performed, and thereby an action, they are a form of communication, they relate to the sacred, and they express cultural values.

A ceremony is, to some extent, sequential. Ritual moment follows from ritual moment in a specific and clearly evident ordering of events. But "ceremony" is not a collective term. Its significance does not lie merely in the totality of its constituent activities. Most wedding ceremonies are colourful events with some of the quality and effect of a pageant. Russian and South Slavic folklorists speak of their wedding ceremonies as theatrical, dramatic, a production.[32] The ritual moments of the ceremony are like acts in a play; there are changes of scene and of intensity, monologue gives way to dialogue; song and dance, to magic and mystery; joy to sorrow; the participants are like actors with assigned roles -- assigned by tradition. The performers

vary from wedding to wedding but the persons they portray remain constant; all brides create in their laments, for instance, the image of the same bride, their individual traits submerged in the ritual being performed; concrete actions accompany the laments; the interrelation of performer with audience is different than in most folk genres. Yu. G. Kruglov, while outlining these dramatic characteristics, points out the differences. Instead of properties and decor, we have the setting of the bride's house, and her actions and her surroundings are poeticized by the words. This results in a form of poetic transformation, whereby the bench the girl is sitting on becomes the brusovaja belaja lavočka of the laments, her hands become the white hands of the traditional image, and so forth. He concludes that the Russian wedding is a lyro-dramatic genre, with a multiplicity of roles which he enumerates as aesthetic, customary, magic and socio-legal.[33] Yet there is another important aspect of drama, which is the acting out of human states of feeling. Dramatic production is not linear, but forms a pattern through the rising and subsiding of intensity. The bride's point of view is not constant throughout the ceremony, and an analysis of the laments reveals a shaping of its imagery in correspondence to the bride's relation to the process of change. This development is intensely dramatic, but it is an internal, moral drama, and its basis is as strictly ritual as is the ceremony it reflects.

A common idea runs through these descriptions of ritual and ceremony, and that is the idea of play. This is nowhere made so clear as in the Russian term igra which is traditionally used to describe the wedding and which may be roughly translated as play or game. Yet

few terms have caused as much trouble, for Soviet folklorists have persisted in seeing it as an indication of the degeneration of the wedding ceremony. Such a point of view, it seems to me, is without any clear foundation whatsoever. The confusion of meaning, whereby "play" is deemed to be "child's play," a trivial activity, a pleasing pastime, has been the cause of some misdirection in the Soviet understanding of the wedding lament. It is important enough to deserve a review.

In nineteenth and twentieth-century recordings of weddings we frequently encounter the term igra as well as the phrase "to play out a wedding" (igrat' svad'bu), as this formula indicates:

Боже, благослови, Христось,
Игру заигрывать,
Игру свадебную![34]

Anikin argues that the game refers only to the songs, to how and when they are sung and to what songs are to be chosen; the ritual, on the other hand, is solemn, as suggested by the fact that it is celebrated (spravljat') rather than played.[35] It is not clear on what he bases his initial assumption that the term "game" refers to the arrangement of the songs alone. Kolpakova shares his disquiet about the term, seeing the play aspect of the ceremony as relatively modern and a sign that the solemnity and significance of the wedding ritual is breaking down.[36] There is no evidence for any precise dating either of the term igra or of this assumed degeneration. Nor have we any reason for equating the term with an attitude of frivolity. If we examine the formula quoted above we will find that it expresses no ambiguity between play and celebration, between joy and solemnity. Structurally, the first line refers to and controls each of the succeeding lines, so

that they can be considered to be parallel to each other. The difference between the two lines lies in the second word of each, and it is to these words that we must pay attention if we are to understand the significance of the repeated word, igra. God's blessing is asked equally for the playing out of the game and for the wedding, which is also called a game; igra refers both to the enactment of the ritual and to the ritual itself. It would be presumption to attribute a merely figurative meaning to the first line and a literal -- and frivolous -- one to the following lines. It is more reasonable to assume that "play" and "playing out" are not taken to be incompatible with the holiness of the blessing invoked or the solemnity of the rite performed, as referred to in the first and the final lines. In the second and third lines, the term igra occurs in its verbal and substantive aspects, thereby indicating that the wedding is an activity as well as an act. Far from suggesting that the solemnity of the ceremony is degenerating, the formula shows that the performing of the rite as well as the rite itself is of a high seriousness, requiring the authorization of God. The term is well placed to illustrate the very primary function of ritual in motivating change, as play is primary to the development of human intelligence.[37]

In the following chapters I will examine ritual not as a phenomenon distinct from the lament but as its inseparable companion. In the intricate balance of lament and ritual it is made clear that the destiny of the girl to marry can only be realized through the activation of internal forces. The words of the lament not only enhance the ritual activity, they imbue it as well with moral sense through the impact of time change. Although the definition of ritual excludes

poetry as such, ritual is basic to the structure of the poems, and the criterion of ritual association is an important one in the definition of the wedding lament. Wedding poetry which lacks this ritual connection may, in some cases, be as melancholy as a lament but cannot be included in the definition. It is probable, however, that in some cases a non-ritual wedding song may originally have had a ritual connection which has been lost. Soviet folklorists have made some attempt to reconstruct the possible development of this kind of poetry from simple ritual song to a more descriptive and lyrical lament and finally to the non-ritual wedding song which would seem to be most prevalent in twentieth-century Russian weddings.[38]

Ritual connection means, firstly and most simply, that the laments accompany ritual moments in the wedding ceremony. N. P. Kolpakova has convincingly argued that the ritual moments are the common units of the wedding ceremony, while the ritual details, including the local variants in the accompanying laments, vary from village to village, from tradition to tradition.[39] Where a specific ritual act would, in one village or region or amongst one people, be unthinkable and only partially complete without the performance of a bridal song, and where this song is not sung under any other circumstances, then we can begin to speak about a lament tradition.

Secondly, ritual connection implies some form of accompanying ritual gesture. This is a more difficult point, since every act in a traditional wedding which is not accidental is in some way ritualistic. The lament, however, is generally accompanied by a greater or lesser demonstration of grief in the form of ritual sighing, swaying back and forth, weeping, bowing or kneeling, dancing, even walking in solemn

procession around the house which the bride is about to leave. In some cases we may find these ritual gestures without a lament accompaniment. Clothes of mourning are occasionally worn to symbolize the bride's grief, the death of her girlhood, or even her ultimate death.[40] In some Russian ceremonies, where the lament tradition is highly developed, in the moment of highest lamentation song may give away entirely to such non-verbal displays of grief.[41]

Thirdly, and somewhat more complexly, the ritual is expressed in the structure and the words of the lament. Most often, the opening lines of the song will indicate that some ritual act is being performed. In some cases, the entire lament will follow, step by step, the performance of a ritual. Such a structure may often be seen in farewell laments, in which each verse varies from the preceding one only in the name and epithet of the person from whom the bride is taking her leave.[42] Other such laments may accompany the dressing of the bride, beginning with the donning of the undergarments, and ending, climactically, with the placing of the bridal crown.[43] Very often, however, the laments are not so closely bound to concrete actions in their expression of the moment of transition, and the statement of ritual is relegated to a few words. The ritual affects the structure of the lament, too. The concept of time in the laments is the most interesting and complicated of these structural elements, since the past and the future often merge with the present in what may seem at first to be a most confusing manner. The way in which the laments handle the question of time is one of the factors which distinguish one tradition from another. Generally speaking, the present must be the fundamental time element in the lament from which the past and the future take

their reference. Another structural feature is the performance element of the laments. The singing of the songs, whether in chorus or solo, the interaction of chorus and solo parts in some cases, and the occurrence of refrain are all ritually stipulated.

Finally, the emotions expressed in the laments are ritualized. Grief at parting is an obligatory emotion; tears may be required as a part of good decorum, or the abstaining from tears by the bride while all around her weep copiously may be in some cases also requisite.[44] Sorrow, fear, regret, anger, resignation, and at times even eagerness all have their place in the laments and, consequently, within the total structure of the wedding ceremony. In one of its simplest forms, this ritualization is apparent when a bride grows solemn at the moment of parting and weeps.[45] Much more complex is the structure of emotion in a Russian wedding, and the poetic expression of these emotions is fixed within the wording of the laments as well as within the ritual moment of the wedding ceremony.

Closely bound up with the ritual aspect of the laments is the designation of traditional. Non-ritual wedding songs are common to many parts of Russia, but the lament is specific only to the village in which it is sung. Even neighbouring villages will know a slightly altered version of the same lament. In Germany, such well-known wedding songs as the Ehestandslied have encroached on nearly all regions; yet, even in that case, the song has nearly as many variants as it has places in which it is sung. There has been some controversy amongst Soviet specialists concerning the improvisation of Russian wedding laments. On the whole, as Yu. Kruglov has pointed out more or less conclusively, the Russian wedding lament is not improvised. In this it

differs from funeral and recruit laments, although in certain other respects the three lament types are similar. Some personal changes do enter the Russian laments, however, in order to stipulate such details as the position of the bride within her family, whether or not she is an orphan, her degree of wealth, etc.[46] German wedding songs do not appear to be improvised to any great extent either. In general, one can say that the wedding lament is a traditional part of the local wedding ritual, whether or not it is improvised.

We have already touched on the question of the performance of the lament. Wedding laments are female poetry, and are sung or chanted. The person or persons who may perform them are stipulated as part of the ritual. In certain cases, the choral performance of the songs may have a certain sacred function.[47] The bride may participate directly in the singing, or the songs may be performed in her name; elsewhere she is the addressee. In some cases, the laments take the form of a dialogue between the bride and another person or the bride and a chorus, singing antiphonally. Whoever sings the songs, they are addressed to some person, real or imaginary. Most often the bride addresses a member of her family or clan or her friends. The bride's point of view controls the poem, but this "point of view" is in itself ritually stipulated. The performance is accompanied by one or more displays of ritual gesture and may be exceedingly dramatic.

The force of ritual is so strong in the wedding lament that the poetry may be linked generically to other forms of ritual lamentation more easily than to non-ritual forms of wedding poetry. In the Russian tradition, comparisons between the wedding, funeral and recruit lament forms have been studied by Elsa Mahler, Mark Azadovskij,

K. V. Čistov and N. P. Kolpakova, among others.[48] All three forms are closely bound to ritual, and evoke the passage in terms of a journey. Čistov has remarked that all three lament types are based on a realistic reflection of the tragedy of peasant life, but that wedding laments differ from the other two in that joy is mixed with sorrow, and in this they are the richest poetically.[49] Wedding motifs have figured widely in other forms of Russian folk poetry, such as the byliny and the spring round songs (xorovody) to which they have been linked historically.[50] V. P. Anikin writes that a common motif of these xorovody is the complaint of a young girl who has been given in marriage to an old man.[51] But we must be very careful not to confuse lamentation with complaint. The sustained reproach of a young girl to her older husband is a poetic form known in several languages, and has a different set of thematic requirements from the lament. Furthermore, it is not ritualistic in the same sense. The unthinking equation of the two can lead to a misinterpretation of the meaning of lament. Such poetic forms as the so-called German Bauernklage[52] are not ritual laments and do not stand comparison on any level. Where the social position of both bride and peasant as underdog is taken as a point of comparison the theoretical basis of the argument must be immediately called into question, since, as my analysis will show, the bride is not construed as "underdog" in a social sense but as the victim of human destiny. Without ritual there can be no true lament. Closely linked to the question of social/ritual connection is the problem of the personal "realism" of the poetic expression. This problem has concerned Soviet folklorists considerably and with reason, since their understanding of social injustice and misery does not allow for expressions of personal

feelings. Some brides, after all, may have looked foreward to their new status as wives. B. P. Anikin argues that the laments are formed on the basis of the human situation in general, and as such the bride's feelings can be said to be personal and sincere. Fear of the future, he argues ingeniously, arouses sincere expressions of sorrow.[53] The problem cannot be answered in this vein, however, since it could well be argued that the reduction of personal feeling in conformity to a general feeling is an impoverishment both poetically and morally. In a bizarre description of a Votjak wedding by an outsider who is clearly fascinated and horrified by the scene at one and the same time, we are told that the bride begged her parting blessing from a father who was so drunk he could not sit up straight, while the bride wept so intensely that her face became distorted and ugly.[54] Later, the father-in-law was found to be lamenting and when asked why could not provide a very good explanation. In such a situation is there any room for sincerity? And where does collective sorrow enter the picture at all? Soviet folklorists consider marriage to be a social, rather than an individual act,[55] yet Crawley has argued that marriage is and has always been primarily a personal, individual joining of two people.[56] Certainly, there is nothing in the wording of the laments to suggest a collective identity. Anikin distinguishes the ritual laments from the non-ritual wedding songs and the wedding eulogies through the use of the generic sign "I."[57] German wedding songs generally prefer the second person (Du). Either "I" or "you" (Du) is a personal as opposed to a collective or general pronoun. It will be noted in the study of the laments that the isolation or singling out of the bride, or her feeling that she has been singled out, is a very major cause of her

grief and resentment. An understanding of the universal and inevitable nature of her fate brings the lamentation to an end. Thus there would seem to be little justification for the Soviet position of collective sorrow. Initiation, although nearly everyone must undergo it, is a personal ritual and causes a personal crisis which can only be resolved by its successful completion.

The association of virginity and defloration with the lament tradition poses another problem in interpretation. Anthropological studies have shown that there is no direct connection between ritual demonstrations of bashfulness at marriage and pre-marital female chastity.[58] It has been argued that the importance of the bridal crown as a symbol of virginity amongst the Ukrainians, Greeks and Poles has no parallel in Russian tradition.[59] Yet, for the Russian bride, the loss of her youth and beauty is dramatized through the removal of an elaborate bridal head-dress; this head-dress, the laments tell us, will be preserved by virgin nuns, or behind the throne of the mother of God, or at the top of an aspen tree, after the bride herself is no longer qualified to keep it. In Germany and Scandinavia the bridal crown has been associated with the crown of the Virgin Mary, and there is at least a suggestion that bridal attire in the Middle Ages tended to copy the clothing of the local statue of the Virgin.[60] The practice of placing a straw crown on brides who had lost their chastity was not uncommon in parts of Europe.[61] The connection between poetic expressions of loss and the actual loss of virginity is a somewhat tenuous one, even where social mores have subsequently come to laud the virgin and punish the impure. Certainly purity means more than virginity, as do maidenly youth, beauty and playfulness. One must, yet again, be

cautious of an overly hasty equation of symbols with actual social and moral teachings.

One major question has been overlooked entirely in my approach, and that is the history of wedding laments in the various languages under discussion. We need not concern ourselves overly about this in the case of those languages surveyed in passing in Chapter iv. The question is more important with regard to the Russian and German examples. Clearly it is to our benefit to know as much as possible about the origins of this folk tradition, about the dates of the first laments, about the original manner of their performance. Unfortunately, facts are at a premium and speculation tends to take the place of history, thus leading Soviet folklorists into the blind alley of social justification. Unless we know many incontestable facts about the prehistory of the tradition we are best advised to tread warily. All we can say for certain about a wedding ceremony of a certain village recorded in, let us say, 1860 is that the people of that village and at that time behaved and sang in those ways. It tells us no more about that village a hundred, two hundred or five hundred years before 1860 than it tells us about a different village in 1860, and it probably tells us a great deal less even than that. In the case of the Russian tradition we know much more about the history of wedding rituals than we do about that of the laments, nor do we really know at what point the two joined forces. Soviet folklore tends to disparage Christian teaching or its influence on folk traditions and to emphasize much earlier religious beliefs and magic rites, yet I have found a coordination of Christian and secular elements in the Russian laments and rituals which would suggest that the two forces were not entirely in

conflict with each other. It is useful to review the history of the lament as it has been reconstructed mainly because it sheds light on the perspectives of those who have done the reconstructing, although it aids us little in the understanding of the laments themselves. For this reason I will look at the lament "history" in the introduction, in which I am discussing methodology, rather than in the body of the thesis, since it would not help us in the interpretation and analysis of the laments and their rituals.

The European lament tradition may be seen variously as very old or as relatively modern. In many cases the form of the laments which we now know and the manner in which they have been performed have been traced back to approximately the seventeenth century.[62] Very little is known about the tradition upon which these seventeenth-century ritual songs were based. Far too little is known as well about the cross influences of folk poetic traditions in Europe for us to make any very firm statements at this point. Generally speaking, German wedding practices are considered to fall into three historical periods.[63] Up to the thirteenth century the influence of the Christian church was practically non-existent and it is assumed that pagan, Germanic practices were in use; we have almost no accounts of this period, however. Between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries the influence of the church gradually increased. Most of our evidence comes from legislation of the period and we have little in the way of ritual or poetic description. From the sixteenth century onward the wedding practices were inextricably bound up with the teachings and perspectives of the church, and the strongly didactic flavour of many of the German wedding songs is thought to have its origin in this

close fusion of church and popular tradition.

For both Russian and German lament studies we are working with texts which cannot be said to be much older than the seventeenth century. We have few reliable textual recordings before the nineteenth century. Any association of these songs with social conditions or religious perspectives before that time is conjecture, at best intelligent guess work. Soviet folklorists have been fairly active in their attempts to piece together the prehistory of both poetry and ritual although, as I have already stated, I do not find most of the results particularly useful.

According to Soviet theory, the wedding laments are considered to have been initially connected with agrarian society and with the spring round songs (xorovody), many of which are filled with motifs of marriage, happy or unhappy, the choosing of a mate, and so forth.[64] Poetic motifs have been isolated from the laments as evidence of the social periods in which they were first introduced. Allusions to the matriarchal stage in society, for instance, have been found in some wedding songs.[65] Marriage by abduction is shown to be reflected in the motif of the bridegroom as warrior; he is seen as coming to fetch the bride with a whole company of his men. The bride's brother is asked to barricade the road, and defend it with logs or spears freshly forged by the village smith. Yet the army advances despite these precautions, breaks down the gate and the door and carries off the defenceless bride.[66] It is considered as well that some of the hostility which the bride expresses concerning her new in-laws may rest in part with the fact that she was captured by them.[67] Marriage by barter is found even more abundantly in the laments as they are interpreted by

the Soviet method. The bride describes the coming of the matchmaker and the making of the marriage agreement as the arrival of unknown and cunning merchants who trick her gullible parents by getting them drunk and by promising them money and jewels in exchange for their daughter.[68] Laments on the krasota (beauty) may refer to the value of the girl's beauty as if it were a product for barter.[69]

Ancient ritual is believed by Soviet folklorists to influence much of the imagery of the laments.[70] For example, the lamenting bride, her head swaying and downcast with grief, her hair hanging free and crowned by the head-dress of the betrothed, her body supple, thin and white, is frequently symbolized by the birch tree. In fact, the association is extended to make the birch tree at the same time the sanctuary which will protect the girl's "beauty" (krasota) from harm and from the grasp of greedy and mercenary men:

Ты садись, моя да девья кра́сота,
Край пути садись да край дорожечки,
На белу баску да на березыньку,
На баску белу да кудреватую.[71]

Spring rituals, which included the decoration of birch trees in the shape of women and divination games on the water,[72] are thus seen as the link between poetry and social realism. Christianity enters the scene apparently as a force from above, which could not erase the pagan allusions, but which succeeded to some extent in merging them with its own symbols, so that icons hang above oak tables, the altar of the Virgin Mary rivals the birch tree as a sanctuary motif, the waters of faith drown out the water spirits of more primitive times.

The precise process of this extraordinary and arbitrary "integration" of such disparate beliefs is unclear. The world-view of the

lamenting bride retains an odd inconsistency and incoherence which cannot be resolved by imposing a social order or a primitive magic upon it. The various layers of belief, ritual and social system are incompatible with each other and tend to schematize rather than to harmonize the poetry. Yet the wedding laments create an impression of consistency and an organic system rather than of the melange of disparate elements which analysis from an historical point of view would show them to be. How can this be? Again, it is necessary to study the function of the lament. Peasant brides did not preserve a tradition because it reflected quaint beliefs of their forefathers, but because it made sense to them in its details as in its entirety. More precisely, a pagan ritual or a magic belief will not remain in a lament of the nineteenth century unless either the belief is still vital or it has been transformed into something entirely different. Kagarov, for example, has argued that many of the ritual steps leading up to the marriage itself are magic in nature, and originally had the effect of protecting the girl from harm and blessing her with good fortune.[73] The laments, however, developed at a time when this strictly magic implication was being modified by the influence of Christian ritual and social considerations. They, in their turn, reflect an interior, psychological confrontation which can hardly be described as magical, although invocational poetry still influences the structure of some of the laments. I would argue that the "magic" has turned inward, as it were, and protects and influences the moral or psychological preparations of the bride as much as her external fate.

Where do the songs and laments enter the history of the development of the Russian wedding ceremony? It would seem that no-one knows for

sure. The first reference to the practice of wedding lamentation in Russia comes to us from the fifteenth century, in the life of St. Stephen, first bishop of Perm, as described by Epiphany Premudryj.[74] But the description is frustratingly vague and does not make it clear whether these bridal laments were in the form of a monologue or were simple ritual expressions of grief. Eliaš argues that the songs developed over a period of time and show a gradual development from ritual to lyric description, expressive of the bride's real feelings and reflecting the landscape and setting in concrete terms.[75] Another indication of the development of the laments can perhaps be found in those examples where a very simple, ritual description has become framed by a more elaborate and lyrical opening and closing.[76] It can be tentatively supposed that the laments developed in conjunction with the rituals which they support, and we can thus see them as evolving over the same period of time, between the thirteenth century (when the wedding ritual, as we now know it, began to develop) and the seventeenth century. Presumably a very primitive ritual plač (weeping) is traditional long before this time, but of this we know very little.

Whatever the history of wedding poetry, it is not my task to unravel it, and I would caution against any very hasty acceptance of historic speculation. The most urgent reason for rejecting the historical approach is that it has, in the main, concentrated on social rather than personal reasons for lamentation, on long-forgotten rather than still vital beliefs as an explanation of ritual and motif, and on the separation of lament and ritual.

Following the methodological approach as outlined in this chapter, my study of the wedding lament contains three major divisions. In

Chapter ii, I will examine the Russian wedding lament. For that, the student has the advantage of an abundance of material and the general acknowledgement of the existence and importance of the subject. I will discuss the poetics of the Russian lament first, because in my approach to the subject I oppose a number of accepted Soviet theories. Furthermore, a theoretical background seems to be an advantage before I go on to study the ritual and poetic balance as it is found in local descriptions of whole wedding ceremonies. The German laments do not have the advantage of official recognition, and so, in Chapter iii, it is partly my aim to argue that the lament situation is present as an essential part of traditional German weddings as well. The nature of the German wedding ritual is considerably different from that of Russian weddings and requires a special study. The fourth chapter is devoted to the question of the distribution of wedding laments. This topic has no natural limits, but I emphasize in particular time formulations and ritual structure in this all too brief review. In my conclusion, I bring together the findings of the three sections and underline those points which seem to me to be of greatest significance.

FOOTNOTES

Introduction

[1]The Soviet edition of his work appeared in 1926: Pol'Lafarg, Očerki po istorii kul'tury, trans. S. Severdin (Moskva-Leningrad: "Mosk. rabočij," 1926); see especially Chapter ii: "Svadebnye pesni i obyčai," trans. Rezanova, pp. 52-89.

[2]K. V. Čistov, "Russkaja pričet," Introduction to Pričitanija, ed. B. E. Čistova and K. V. Čistov (Leningrad: Sov. Pisatel', 1960); N. M. Eliaš, Istoriko-etnografičeskie istoki tematiki i obrazov russkix svadebnyx pesen (Uč. zap. Belgorodskogo gos. ped. inst., 1959), II, 267-302; N. P. Kolpakova, "Starinnyj svadebnyj obrjad," Fol'klor Karelo-finskoj SSR, ed. N. P. Andreev (Petrozavodsk: Gosizdat K-F SSR, 1941), I, 163-89.

[3]N. A. L'vov, Veselaja erata na russkoj svad'be ili novejšee i polnoe sobranie vsex do nyne izvestnejšix svadebnyx sta tridcati trex pesen, upotrebljaemyx kak v stolicax tak i v drugix gorodax (Moskva, 1801); P. B. Šejn, Velikoruss v svoix pesnjax, obrjadax, obyčajax, verovanijax, legendax i t.p. (SPB: Imp. akad. nauk, 1900), I, 377-819; N. P. Kolpakova, Lirika russkoj svad'by (Leningrad: "Nauka," 1973).

[4]P. N. Rybnikov, Pesni, ed. A. E. Gruzinski, 2nd. ed. (Moskva: "Sotrudnik škol," 1909-10), Vol. III; L. Šternberg, "Novye materialy po svad'be," Materialy po svad'be i semejno-rodovomu stroju narodov SSSR. Komissija po ustrojstvu studenč. etnograf. ekskurskij, No. 1 (Leningrad, 1926), pp. 6-16.

[5]W. R. S. Ralston, The Songs of the Russian People as Illustrative of Slavonic Mythology and Russian Social Life, (London: Ellis and Green, 1872).

[6]See, for instance, W. Stscherbakiwskyj, "The Early Ukrainian Social Order as Reflected in Ukrainian Wedding Customs," Slavic and East European Review, 31, No. 77 (1953), 325-51.

[7]E. G. Kagarov, "O značenii nekotoryx russkix svadebnyx obrjadov," Izvestija AN, Series 6, Vol. 2, No. 9 (1917), 645-52.

[8]op. cit.

[9]Johann Jakob Bachofen, Die Sage von Tanaquil: Eine Untersuchung über den Orientalismus in Rom und Italien (Heidelberg: J. C. B. Mohr, 1870); Antiquarische Briefe (Strassburg: K. J. Trübner, 1880); Sir Henry Maine, Ancient Law (London: J. Murray, 1861); Lewis H. Morgan, Ancient Society: Or, Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Slavagery through Barbarism to Civilization (Chicago: Kerr & Co., 1877).

[10]For a detailed bibliography and discussion, see George Elliott Howard, A History of Matrimonial Institutions (New York: Humanities Press, 1964), I, 3-84.

[11]A Dictionary of the Social Sciences, ed. J. Gould and W. L. Kolb (New York: Free Press, 1965), pp. 485-86 ("Patriarchy").

[12]See, for example, the writings of Čistov, "Russkaja pričet," and his "Semejno-obrjadovaja poezija," Russkoe narodnoe tvorčestvo, ed. P. G. Bogatyrev, et al. (Moskva: "Vyssaja škola, 1966), and N. M. Eliaš, Russkie svadebnye pesni: istoriko-etnografičeskij analiz tematiki, obrazov, poetiki žanra (Orel: Orlovskij gos. ped. inst., 1967).

[13]Edvard Westermarck, The History of Human Marriage, 5th ed., 3 Vols. (London: Macmillan, 1921).

[14]Ernest Crawley, The Mystic Rose: A Study of Primitive Marriage and of Primitive Thought in its Bearing on Marriage, 2nd. ed. (London: Watts, 1931).

[15]Crawley, p. 332.

[16]Ibid., pp. 347-59.

[17]Ibid., p. 325 and elsewhere.

[18]Bronislaw Malinowsky, The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia (London: Routledge, 1929).

[19]Edmund Leach, Rethinking Anthropology (London: Athlone Press, 1966), p. 2.

[20]e.g., J. S. La Fontaine, "Ritualization of Women's Life-Crises in Bugisu," The Interpretation of Ritual: Essays in Honour of A. I. Richards, ed. J. S. La Fontaine (London: Tavistock, 1972), pp. 159-86, and Edwin Ardener, "Belief and the Problem of Women," ibid., pp. 135-58.

[21]Arnold van Gennep, Les rites de passage: Etude systématique des rites de la porte et du seuil, de l'hospitalité, de l'adoption, de la grossesse et de l'accouchement, de la naissance, de l'enfance, de la puberté, de l'initiation, de l'ordination, du couronnement des fiançailles et du mariage, des funérailles, des saisons, etc. (Paris: E. Nourry, 1909).

[22]Claude Lévi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology, trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest-Schoepf (N.Y.: Basic Books, 1963).

[23]Leopold von Schroeder, Die Hochzeitsbräuche der Esten und einiger anderer finnisch-ugrischer Völkerschaften in Vergleichung mit denen der indogermanischen Völker: Ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis der ältesten Bezeichnungen der finnisch-ugrischen und der indogermanischen Völkerfamilie (Berlin: Asher, 1888), pp. 144-45.

[24]See E. Kathleen Gough, "The Nayars and the Definition of Marriage," Marriage, Family and Residence, ed. Paul Bohannan and John Middleton (Garden City, N.Y.: American Museum Sourcebooks in Anthropology, 1968), pp. 49-71.

[25]See, for example, Joseph Braddock, The Bridal Bed (London: Hale, 1960).

[26]Raymond Firth, "Verbal and Bodily Rituals of Greeting and Parting," The Interpretation of Ritual: Essays in Honour of A. I. Richards, p. 3.

[27]Monica Wilson, "The Wedding Cakes: A Study of Ritual Change," Ritual, p. 188.

[28]J. S. La Fontaine, Introduction, Ritual, p. xvii.

[29]La Fontaine, "Ritualization of Women's Life-Crises in Bugisu," p. 161.

[30]Introduction, Ritual, p. xvii.

[31]N. P. Kolpakova, "Svadebnyj obrjad na r. Pinege," Krest'janskoe iskusstvo SSSR: Iskusstvo severa (Leningrad: "Academia," 1928), II, 173.

[32]Curiously, South Slavic folklorists would have the theatrical nature of their weddings as exclusive to themselves. See, for example, the article by Ivanička Georgieva, "Etnografsko edinstvo na svatbata u bulgarite," Etnogenezis i kulturno nasledstvo na bulgarskija narod: Sbornik (Sofija: BAN, 1971), pp. 103-09. Russian folklorists quite rightly see the same quality in their weddings, however. See, for example, V. Čičerov, Russische Volksdichtung, directed by Erhard Hexelschneider, trans. Annemarie Hexelschneider. Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin. Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für deutsche Volkskunde, 44 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968), p. 228. The idea that the drama determines the arrangement of the songs is not unrelated to the argument developed in the second chapter of my thesis that the ritual arrangement controls the thematic ordering of the laments.

[33]Ju. G. Kruglov, "Russkie svadebnye pričitanija: Poetika žanra," Diss. MGU, 1972.

[34]P. V. Šejn, Velikoruss', No. 1788, ll. 1-3.

[35]V. P. Anikin, Kalendarnaja i svadebnaja poezija (Moskva: Izdat. M-ogo universiteta, 1970), p. 75.

[36]Kolpakova, "Starinnyj svadebnyj obrjad," p. 183: "К прошлом было не игрою, а выполнялось в качестве серьезных обрядовых моментов."

[37]Susanne Katherina (Knauth) Langer, Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite and Art (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957).

[38]See, for example, Eliaš, Russkie svadebnye pesni.

[39]Kolpakova, "Svadebnyj obrjad na r. Pinege," p. 173.

[40]Examples of this will be cited in the third and fourth chapters, and will be taken from wedding descriptions from villages in Brandenburg and Gascony, respectively.

[41]See particularly the wedding description of the far north referred to in Chapter ii.

[42]This form is common in the German tradition. For an example see Josef Hofmann, Egerländer Hochzeitsbräuche um 1830, dramatisch dargestellt in neun Aufzügen (Karlsbad: Selbstverlag des Verfassers, 1924), pp. 92-3, "Abschied der Braut vom Elternhause"; the bride takes her leave of her mother, father, sister, brother, girl friends, cousins, grandmothers, relatives, garden, neighbours, foliage and grass!

[43]For a French example, see Jean-François Bladé, Poésies populaires de la Gascogne (S.d.; rpt. Paris: Maisonneuve and Larose, 1967), I, 254-57.

[44]The social requirement that the bride abstain from tears is, within the European context, an unusual one. This is the case, however, in the ritual of many Bulgarian weddings. See Christo Vakarelski, Bulgarische Volkskunde. Grundriss der slavischen Philologie und Kulturgeschichte (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969), pp. 291-2.

[45]See Sylvain Trébucq, La Chanson populaire et la vie rurale des Pyrénées à la Vendée (Bordeaux: Feret et Fils, 1912), I, 223: "Moment décisif où les coeurs se serrent, où les larmes silencieuses tombent des yeux .... La petite femme est prête à fondre en larmes."

[46]Ju. G. Kruglov, "Ob improvizacionnom xaraktere svadebnyx pričitanij," Voprosy žanrov russkogo fol'klora; Sbornik statej, ed. N. I. Kravcov (Moskva: Izdat. M-ogo Universiteta, 1972), pp. 35-57; for a discussion of the personal variants within the laments see N. P. Kolpakova, "Starinnnyj svadebnyj obrjad," p. 187.

[47]For a discussion of the originally sacred function of the chorus in Ukrainian ceremonies see W. Stscherbakiwskyj, "The Early Ukrainian Social Order," pp. 325-51.

[48]Elsa Mahler, Die russischen dörflichen Hochzeitsbrauche (Berlin: in Kommission bei O Haarassowitz, 1960), pp. 394-474; Mark Azadovskij, Lenskie pričitanija (Trudy inst. nar. obrazovanija v Čite, 1922), I, 31-6; K. V. Čistov, "Semejno-obrjadovaja poezija." p. 73; N. P. Kolpakova, "Nekotorye voprosy sravnitel'noj poetiki: Pričet i pesnja," Sovetskaja etnografija, No. 1 (1967), 41-53.

[49]Čistov, "Semejno-obrjadovaja poezija."

[50]A. M. Loboda, Russkie byliny o svatovstve (Kiev, 1904). A. I. Kozačenko, "K istorii velikorusskogo svadebnogo obrjada," Sovetskaja etnografija, I (1957), 51-57, argues that we should only rely on written, non-literary sources. Allusions in paintings, the byliny, etc., should be left for the specialist to interpret.

[51]Anikin, Kalendarnaja i svadebnaja poezija, pp. 44-49.

[52]Ibid., p. 49.

[53]Hermann Strobach, Bauernklagen: Untersuchungen zum Sozialkritischen deutschen Volkslied (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1964).

[54]Max Buch, Die Wotjaken: Eine ethnologische Studie. Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicae, No. 12 (Helsingfors: Finnische Literatur - Gesellschaft, 1882), pp. 56-58.

[55]See D. Zelenin, Russische (ostslawische) Volkskunde (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1927), p. 305: "Die Anerkennung der Ehe durch die Gemeinde ist eine der Hauptaufgaben des Hochzeitsrituals"; see also D. M. Balašov, Introduction to Russkie svadebnye pesni Terskogo Berega Belogo Morja, ed. D. M. Balašov and Ju. E. Krasovskaja (Leningrad: "Muzyka," 1969), p. 6: marriage constitutes the giving away of a girl to one man by society.

[56]Crawley, p. 288, and he adds: "It is a perversion of history, and of psychology as well, to make man more communistic the more primitive he is."

[57]Anikin, pp. 81-82.

[58]An interesting example of this is the ritual bashfulness displayed by brides of the Nuer, although they have enjoyed considerable sexual license before marriage; see E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Kinship and Marriage Among the Nuer (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951), pp. 49-74 (esp. p. 70, "Maidenhood is a social, not a physical, state").

[59]Stscherbakiwsky, p. 333.

[60]See Bernward Deneke, Hochzeit. Bibliothek des germanischen Nationalmuseums Nürnberg zur deutschen Kunst-und Kulturgeschichte, No. 31 (München: Prestel, 1971), pp. 88-93.

[61]Ibid., p. 93.

[62]This approximate dating of the seventeenth century has been made for many European countries. See also János Manga, "Varianten der Hochzeitlieder eines Dorfes," Acta ethnographica academiae scientiarum Hungaricae, 19 (1970), 251-52, where he dates the wedding songs as 17th to 18th century.

[63]Deneke, pp. 7-14.

[64]Anikin, pp. 44-49.

[65]Eliaš, Russkie svadebnye pesni, p. 5.

[66]e.g. Kolpakova, Lirika russkogo svad'by, No. 425, ll. 8-11:

Наруби-тко ты ельничку.
Часта мелкого березничку.
Уж и засеки-тко да путь-дорожечку.
Чтоб боярам да не проехати.

[67]Ibid., No. 497, ll. 6-8:

Они громко да подъезжали,
Ко мне смело да подступали.
Со мной смело да поступали.

[68]Ibid., No. 435, ll. 9-10, 13:

Уж и задали они руку правую,
Уж запропили да буйну голову/.../
И за чужого да за чуженина.

[69]Ibid., No. 455, ll. 27-8:

Оценили эту красоту
На три полные тысячи.

[70]See E. Kagarov, "O značenii nekotoryx russkix svadebnyx obrjadov."

[71]Kolpakova, Lirika, No. 500, ll. 5-8.

[72]Anikin, pp. 52-3.

[73]"O značenii."

[74]Žitie Svjatogo Stefana Episkopa Permskogo, nap. Epifaniem Premudrym, ed. V. G. Druzininyj (SPB: Inst. arxeografičeskoj kommissii, 1897), p. 96.

[75]Russkie svadebnye pesni, p. 44.

[76]Mark Azadovskij, Lenskie pričitanija, p. 31.

CHAPTER TWO

The Russian Lament

I: General Remarks

Russian wedding customs have appeared surprisingly often as imagery or detail in Russian literature. Žukovskij's Svetlana was an early example. The lament as well has attained a prominent literary position through its appearance in the final pages of Pilnjak's Golyj god.[1] There, the wailing of the wolves mingled with the lamentation of the bride as a descriptive symbol of Russia itself.

The earliest collections and recordings of Russian wedding poetry are to be found in the song-books (pesenniki) which abounded in the second half of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century. M. D. Čulkov's extraordinarily popular, four-volume collection of folk songs first appeared between 1770 and 1774 and contained a sizeable number of wedding songs.[2] There are no classifications of any kind in this anthology, and a reader with a special interest in any one type of poetry must search diligently through the pages. Čulkov's collection inspired a flood of song-books, many of which were subdivided into "types" of poetry, although the principles of classification were only consistent in their unscholarliness. Most of the collections were primarily or exclusively popular rather than traditional, and there is evidence of a considerable amount of rewriting. A few of the song-books included a number of fairly traditional wedding songs. The Rossijskaja erata of M. I. Popov[3] appeared in 1792 and includes twenty pages of wedding songs. In another collection of the same year (the anonymous Izbrannij pesennik)[4] wedding songs and xorovody containing wedding motifs are mixed together.

I. I. Dmitriev (Karmannyj pesennik, 1796)[5] is remarkable mainly for his recognition of the close conjunction of ritual and song. Of the ten wedding songs in his collection, several are accompanied by a note describing the time and manner of their performance. Finally, in 1799, a collection made by S. M. Komisarov (Samoj novejšij otbornejšij... pesel'nik)[6] devotes an entire section to wedding songs, and describes in each case the accompanying ritual. Strangely, Komisarov makes no mention of the occurrence of the poems in peasant villages, commenting instead that the rituals have been abandoned by the upper classes and are gradually losing their hold on the middle class. He "dates" the traditional wedding only as "very old." More important, however, is Komisarov's acknowledgement of the importance of ritual, and the obligatory nature of at least some of it.

The most important early collector of wedding songs, L'vov, first published his Sobranie narodnyx russkix pesen s ix golosami as early as 1790,[7] editions of which, some of them revised, continued to appear periodically for a quarter of a century. L'vov is remarkable in many ways. Unlike most of the collectors, he attempts to distinguish the special style of the folk song; he compares the Russian folk song to the French and Scottish varieties, and he recognizes the calendar connection of wedding songs. His greatest contribution is in his recognition of the importance of melody as an integral part of the song. His texts were produced in collaboration with the musicologist Ivan Prač. Another collection by L'vov appeared in 1801 and was devoted entirely to wedding poetry. This book, Veselaja erata,[8] is the first of its kind, and contains a large number of wedding lyrics and laments. The collection is, on the whole, disappointing, as it

contains no notes, no ritual descriptions, no melodies, and no distinctions between types of wedding poetry.

A note on wedding poetry in the preface of his folk song collection is, however, rather more rewarding. This note is seldom if ever cited in full by modern folklorists, although it is a statement of considerable importance, albeit unscholarly in approach. I will quote the note later in the chapter. In essence, L'vov attests to the antiquity of wedding songs (although, like Komisarev, he does not explain what he means by old), as well as to their close affiliation with local tradition and their revered status within each community. If for no other reason, the note is important for its acknowledgement of the predominantly local nature of wedding poetry and tradition.

A. V. Tereščenko, in the second volume of his influential Byt russkogo naroda, 1849,[9] examines the historical and prehistorical development of the igra and outlines, regionally, the wedding customs of his own time. While some songs are included, they appear usually only as excerpts and as illustrations of the rituals, and much of the historical tracing of the first chapter is speculative and rather Romantic. Throughout the nineteenth century, the regional approach to the study of wedding traditions and songs became firmly established. Many of these wedding descriptions are the work of such amateur folklorists as school teachers and clergymen, people perhaps unacquainted with the requisites of folkloric notation, yet people in many cases sufficiently interested in their subject to provide us with descriptions which are of tremendous value to us now. Without their work, we would know very little about the wedding laments, since they appear to have declined rapidly in this century. Newspapers, local archives and

journals contain most of these descriptions. The two most prolific sources for such articles are the journals Živaja starina and Etnografičeskoe obozrenie. A considerable number of these articles and monographs concentrates mainly or entirely on the customs. Where songs are included, they appear often only as excerpts; frequently only the first two lines are given, followed by a line of dots, presumably on the supposition that the songs belong to the common bulk of folk poetry and need not be recorded in full. There are, however, sufficient exceptions to this rule to make the search through old papers and journals a generally rewarding one. One of the better known book-length wedding descriptions of the nineteenth century was published in three parts, from 1887 to 1899, by Agreneva-Slavjanskaja.[10] Her descriptions, however, are not particularly valuable, are hardly local in orientation, and include very little song material of real interest. Of much more value for the present study are a number of shorter and generally more obscure articles and monographs, the difficulty in locating which has probably contributed to their comparative lack of fame.

For the folklorist interested primarily in wedding poetry, ritual or otherwise, two nineteenth-century collectors stand out with deserved fame. The first edition of P. N. Rybnikov's collection of songs appeared in 1861, a second edition in 1910.[11] Volume III of this collection contains wedding songs, mainly laments, complete with ritual description and local variants. P. V. Šejn's collection is considerably more extensive. First appearing in 1870 as Russkie narodnye pesni, the collection of songs was added to both by himself and by other collectors, and appeared in a massive edition entitled Velikoruss v

svoix pesnjax, obrjadax, obyčajax, verovanijax, legendax....[12] Of this, over four hundred pages are devoted to wedding poetry and ritual, each province forming a separate division and being in turn subdivided according to locality. Since not all of the information was gathered personally by Šejn, the quality of the entries varies somewhat. In the best of these, an exactness of poetic recording is augmented by a detailed ritual description, and local variants are distinctly pinpointed. Unfortunately, musical notations were not supplied in either Rybnikov's or Šejn's collection.

In the twentieth century, the amount of material available for study has decreased, but the methods of recording it have improved immeasurably, so that we can now rely on exact and complete recordings of wedding ceremonies, with or without the inclusion of laments. In the twenties of this century, L. Šternberg and N. P. Kolpakova, among others, set the groundwork for highly accurate and observant field work.[13]

Soviet interest in the laments has been quite strong in recent years. The major focus has been on demonstrating the poetic principles by which the laments depict the bride's position within society.[14] Čistov has demonstrated the method by which the girl's psychological experiences are transmitted into poetic terms.[15] In more general terms, questions of the collective origins and the improvised character of the laments have continued to fascinate folklorists in the Soviet Union.[16] Sociological and anthropological studies have continued, Eliaš contributing a study on the stages of development of the patriarchal society and its reflection through the development of imagery and the modification of poetic structure.[17] There has been

increased recognition of the importance of the musical structure of the laments, as of all folk poetry, and the advent of sophisticated tape-recording machinery has preserved at least some laments in the form in which they were traditionally performed.

A major difficulty facing the folklorist who wishes to study the Russian wedding lament is one of a chronological-geographical nature. A recording of a wedding ceremony from one village will tell us little about the ceremony of its neighbouring village. While a certain continuity does exist, there are surprising breaks in the pattern. A similar problem exists with chronology. Although the ceremonies are traditional, their rituals and laments bound by tradition, it is clear that changes occur over the course of time. Added to this situation is the unscholarly nature of much of the material. The more technically reliable recordings of the twentieth century have tended to place as little emphasis as possible on the laments, perhaps because the tradition is considered to be already dying out.

Partly, perhaps, because the lament is not deemed to be a modern folk form, there has been no very adequate attempt to classify wedding descriptions. Šejn organized his material along political-geographical lines. Quite obviously, such divisions as they concern folk poetry are artificial, yet geography has influenced local ceremonies to no small extent, and our only hope of clarifying the various regional patterns with any precision, and of comparing them with those of other regions, is to begin with a geographically oriented bibliography. The local distinctiveness of each ceremony and the regional patterns which develop must be considered, not only as a problem to be overcome, but as a generic characteristic of wedding poetry, and it must be seen in

conjunction with the date of its recording. From the literary point of view, the folklorist must be able to cope with the geographical question as Kolpakova has coped with it from an ethnographical perspective. As an attempt to establish some of the literary criteria for such an approach, I have restricted the texts examined in the final section of this chapter to a few regions. By avoiding the chaos of too many divergent rituals, it is possible to scrutinize the texts of a few areas with the closeness which they require. An attention to detail is essential in the study of ritual-poetic balance, and questions of chronological development and geographical distribution must be clearly separated from the problem of analysis.

Another problem faces primarily the folklorist living in the West who is interested in the subject of Russian wedding poetry. While most of the major collections are available, although not usually readily available, it is impossible to obtain most of the more obscure descriptions outside of the Soviet Union. With this in mind, I have tried, wherever possible, to limit my examples to a few texts (such as those edited by Šejn, Rybnikov and Kolpakova) and to provide as much of the poetical text as is necessary for the understanding of my argument.

Russian traditional weddings are an elaborate performance, involving the entire community and extending over a number of days, both before and after the marriage ceremony. It is an occasion for much merry-making, for dances, dinner parties, practical jokes. Custom and ritual, popular tradition and Christian belief join with hard work and sheer fun and a lot of music to make the event memorable for those involved and a paradise for the folklorist. In sharp contrast to the other participants, the bride stands alone, sad, often drably dressed

and with downcast face. Where the others eat and drink, she often sits motionless at the table. While the others dance, she cries. Even the work that has to be done in preparing the dowry and baking the wedding cake is performed mainly by the bride's girl friends. She sits in their midst and laments. Hardly a major ritual is performed without an accompanying lament.

As the laments vary from one ritual moment to the next in content and symbolism, it is impossible to describe or quote a "typical" lament. The bride depicts herself in terms of deep humility -- she is weak, foolish, unworthy:

> Я пришла к тебе, красно мое солнышко.
> Желанный родитель-крестной батюшко!
> Я пришла к тебе, молодешенька, -
> Побить челом и поклонитися.
> Ты прости меня, родной батюшко!
> Я была девица неразумная.[18]

By contrast to the bride's unworldly and unworthy simplicity, many of those people around her are either god-like in their perfection (the father is the sun, the mother the moon goddess, the brothers are eagles...) or they are monstrous in their inhumanity (the matchmaker is called in some poems a serpent with seven tongues!).[19] The bride herself, like her girl friends, is often described as a bird, most commonly the white swan,[20] and nature epithets are extremely prevalent in these poems in general.

"Love," in the form of an arranged and unwished-for marriage, strikes this fragile creature like arrows of lightning which enter an open window and strike her helpless in her bed:

> Уж и залетала да громова стрела
> На тесовую кроватушку,

На перьяную да на перинушку,
На пухову да на подушечку,
Да под соболино тепло одеялышко.
Уж и прострелила да громова стрела
Уж мою-то грудь белую.[21]

The bride makes it clear in her laments that she had no desire to marry, to become a woman, to leave her clan, her friends, and the security of her father's home. She sees the change before her in terms of a long journey, across high mountains or deep seas, and the way back home barred to her forever. In some laments, she dreams of turning into a bird and returning to her mother and to her former life unknown to her new family.[22] In others, she muses over the difficulties which would keep her from visiting her parents after her marriage.[23] The imagery is at times symbolic, at other times closely connected to the real landscape, at all times it is strongly visual and concrete.

The laments tell us only what the bride feels (that is, what tradition obliges her to feel), and it is in opposition to the usual opinion or the prevailing atmosphere. She abuses her parents verbally, complaining that they have rejected her;[24] she pleads in vain for mercy from her family and friends.[25] She describes her former life in terms of opulence and pastoral bliss, and compares it to the poverty-stricken, miserly household she will be entering.[26] During the rituals of bathing and of combing her hair, she is inclined to withdraw into a fantasy world in which her youth, beauty and freedom become symbols and she searches for a place of safe keeping for them after she abandons them.[27]

There is no point in attempting to piece together an externally consistent world view from these laments. The bride's youthful home is

both a garden and a palace, they are poor-but-honest and at the same time wealthy. She is rejected by her parents, yet loved only by them. The new family, where life is hard and food is scarce, are yet termed in other places as lords and barons, much too good for the likes of her. The marriage is brought about by the trickery of deceitful merchants, and at the same time by the attacking of warriors, by her parents' betrayal, and by the cunning of the inhuman matchmaker.[28] The consistency is internal, revolving on the pivot of the time perspective. Good and evil are absolutes by which past and future, respectively, may be defined. The tension of the present arises in part from the mingling of good and evil.

I have said that the lamenting bride is alone, yet this is not entirely true. She is surrounded most of the time by her girl friends, who are asked to join her as soon as the wedding bargain has been made, who stay with her day and night, and who do most of the work involved in preparing the dowry. The farewell to the girl friends is as deeply emotional as the farewell to the parents. Pagan magic is again said to be the source for the gathering of maidens, since their presence at all times was supposed to protect the bride-to-be from evil spirits, to whose influence she was then most vulnerable.[29] The girls support the bride at times by joining her in singing laments or mournful songs, yet they are also allowed to dance and make merry. Only the bride remains constant in her grief. In universal terms, the girls must share the same fate; yet, for each, the moment of change is personal and unique.

The function of magic and of nature imagery in the laments (as, indeed, in wedding poetry in general) deserves separate studies. Some aspects of the nature imagery will be discussed in this chapter, since

it serves to create the illusions of time and timelessness within the laments. Otherwise, nature images can depict states of feeling, such as isolation, loneliness, fear, longing, or their opposites. Magic may function within the laments as a kind of supernature; events seem to take place through a force within themselves; doors and locks fly open in the face of the approaching bridegroom.[30] It functions directly within the laments to develop the theme which will be discussed in this chapter. More conventionally, magic is apparent in laments with an invocational structure, as where the orphan-bride asks her father to rise from his grave to give her his blessing.[31]

It has already been indicated that the wedding lament is to be distinguished from other forms of Russian wedding poetry as well as from other lament forms. Of the former, the three major types are traditionally classified as the lament, the lyric song and the song of praise. Of the latter, the wedding lament closely resembles in some particulars the funeral lament and the recruit lament. While it would take a separate study to consider all the aspects of this problem, the issue can be clarified to some extent by outlining briefly some of the distinctions which folklorists have already made in this regard. Kolpakova has recently published an article on the subject, the main object of which is to distinguish the two most easily confusable forms, the lament and the song.[32] The wedding lament, she says, is similar to the protracted lyric song, whereas the funeral lament is similar to the elegy. She distinguishes them on the grounds of their basic generic differences in function, content and means of artistic expression, while observing that the similarities in all three areas are often more striking than the differences. She points out that the chronological

order of generic development has not been finally determined. The most striking differences are the following: the musical structure of the lament follows the intonations of weeping and is recitatival, while the song is melodious with a wide range of intonations; the lament has generally a dactylic ending, while the song is much freer rhythmically (although it is tighter than other lyric verse forms); the lament depicts the concrete and the prosaic, while the song embellishes and poeticizes; the lament is more deeply psychological, while the song uses a much wider range of other motifs (including the riddle); while the songs make extensive use of imagery, the laments depict the bride primarily through the symbols of volja and krasota.

A number of terms are in use in Russian to describe certain aspects of the act of lamentation. Pričitanie is the most common generic term, although pričet is also found quite frequently in scholarly writing. There is no very clear distinction between the two terms, although V. G. Bazanov, in speaking of the funeral lament, considers pričet to be a form of lamentation which has already developed a social-political content and a mixture of epic, satiric and lyric elements, and pričitanie to have a wider potential than that of the ritual life of the genre.[33] Other terms, such as vopl' (wail), golosit' or gološenie (verbal and substantive forms meaning loud cries and lamentation), krik (cry or shout), and tuženie (from tužit', to mourn), also designate the act of lamentation or certain aspects of it. Roman Jacobson has studied the metrical distinctions of the plač and pričitanie, particularly as regards the funeral lament, and has compared them to the long and short forms of the Serbo-Croatian tužbalica. The longer Russian plač is of twelve to thirteen syllables, while the

shorter pričitánie is eight to nine syllables in length. Jacobson studies as well the Eastern Ukrainian laments (holosínnja) which, like the Russian and Serbo-Croatian forms, are clearly related to long heroic epics of the region.[34]

II: The Pattern of Lamentation

An individual wedding lament is not an isolated folk song but a small segment of a whole which is made up of all the laments in a certain ceremony, beginning with the first lament sung, and ending with the last. The actual number of days which elapses is flexible, the progress of the ceremony being shaped by its rituals and duties, these ultimately determining as well the duration of the pre-nuptial celebrations. While this period is often referred to as a week, a period of two weeks or a month is not uncommon, nor is it unusual for fewer days to elapse. The concept of a week does not imply so much a specific number of days, as it does a set number and order of ritual moments, leading up to the high moment of the actual wedding (Božij sud):

От субботы до субботы,
До девичьяго вечера:
В воскресенье мне матушка,
Ко суду Божью ехати,
Под золотым венцом стояти
Со удалым добрым молодцом,
Пофнутьем Трифоновичем.35

I shall begin my study by examining the laments from the point of view of their poetics, because I wish to show that the constituent motifs and the emerging picture of the bride form a pattern through which the function of the lamentation becomes comprehensible. It will be the task of the following section to examine this pattern as it is shaped through a fusion of ritual and lament in local ceremonies.

The ritual divisions made by Kolpakova in her collection are: the engagement (prosvatan'e), the days of preparation (predsvadebnaja nedelja), the central rituals (devičnik, raspletanie kosy and banja)

and the departure for the church (ot"ezd k vencu).[36] The pre-nuptial wedding ceremony is a ceremony of parting and a preparation for joining. All ritual moments and ceremonies reflect one or another aspect of this pattern on a variety of levels such as the practical or business level, the social level, the personal level and the mystical level. The laments themselves focus exclusively on the bride's position. In the fusion of ritual and lament, this focus is deepened and extended.

The betrothal agreement is made in a variety of ways depending on the region concerned. Certain common features can be found however. The initiative comes from the groom's family, who sends a deputy to the bride's house at a fixed time of day, and ritual and formula are observed by both parties during this time. The bride is seldom present, although she may be called in after the matter has been talked over, and her feelings are seldom if ever consulted (the groom may, on occasion, be allowed to express an opinion). There may be two engagement ceremonies, the second one occurring either at the bride's or at the groom's house. The decision is not reached until the question of the dowry has been discussed and the two houses have been inspected, or at least the parties have had time to discuss the match with their own clans. The agreement is solemnized by the lighting of a candle beneath the icon (a gesture which is accompanied by the two parties making the sign of the cross, often bowing and praying), and the ritual handshake, like the handshake made to strike a bargain amongst traders and businessmen. These two gestures, the lighting of the candle and the handshake, are seen by the bride as a sign that her fate has been sealed. The agreement can be dissolved afterwards but seldom is, and to do so is considered to be rather extreme. Further ceremonies which

confirm the engagement may follow at either the bride's or the groom's house.

In all wedding laments the girl expresses her grief and fear in terms of questions. She asks who?, why?, and where? Fear of concrete hardships appears in a few laments (she may suggest that life with her new mother-in-law will be difficult, winter will be cold, work will be hard), but a much darker fear of the unknown is reflected in nearly every lament. The recognition that this unknown factor has become the shaping principle of her life dominates the girl's attitude to all the rituals she must undergo. On one level, the girl is asking about her future. On a deeper level, she is asking about her own identity. At the deepest level of all, she asks the one basic question -- "Who am I becoming?" In some laments, the question is readily apparent through the use of the interrogative form, in others, the interrogative is implied through such phrases as "I don't know," "tell me," through the subjunctive, or through the allegorical extension of images into a dream future.[37] It is tempting to interpret these motifs as if they were expressions of real social or physical hardships, or of real dislike of the new family. But consider this example from Rybnikov's collection:

В почетном в большом углу
Сидять гостюшки нежданые,
Сватовья сидят незваные
Вы зачем сюда приехали
Да вы что зде-ка проведали. (Rybnikov, No. 57, 11.3-7)

Note that the basis for the girl's unease about the strangers is solely their strangeness -- that they have come uninvited and that their mission is not quite clear; added to this is the girl's awareness that

these strangers want something of her. In the first two lines, the juxtaposition of the holy corner and the seated strangers reflects an intrusion of outsiders onto the familiar. Note also the interrogative structure of the two last lines of this quotation.

In the engagement ceremony the questions, stated or implied, emphasize the sudden encroachment of the unknown, of the insecure, indeed of darkness onto the hitherto safe existence of the girl. In one lament, the girl looks around her house and sees that it has changed; it is pitch dark and weeping. She then tells the reason for the change: the sun has not risen, her mother has given her away, and she will no longer be amongst the young girls.[38] The failure of the sun to rise suggests the advent of eternal darkness, and this parallel between the end of girlhood and the end of the world is to be found quite frequently, especially in the laments sung in the early stages of the wedding ceremony. Darkness and sorrow belong together, and the suggestion of death in this connection is to be found in some laments and is highly developed in certain regions (we will be examining one wedding ceremony where the parallel to death is an important part of the imagery of the laments). Line 4 tells us that the betrayal of the girl by her mother and father has caused the world to end. The result of this betrayal is that the girl will no longer be a part of the flock of white swans, or maidens, as she once was. With this last image, the connotation of the betrayal is widened; the world has stopped for her alone, her sorrow is a personal one and the betrayal a personal one; she is singled out and isolated from her former life and fellows. The following points are characteristic of the first stage in the wedding ceremony:

1) The bride regrets the end of her past life in terms of encroaching darkness and death;

2) She considers this change to be the result of a personal betrayal;

3) She feels isolated and sees her fate as unique.

In the following lament the bride watches her parents prepare themselves to go to the groom's house, where they will formally agree to the match:

Они ку́ды собираются,
Они ку́ды снаряжа́ются.[39]

When they return, she can tell from their joyful demeanor that the bargain has been made. Her lament is now full of questions concerning the "foreign side":

Уж ты был, мой батюшко,
На чужой-дальней стороне,
Тебе що погленулося,
Тебе що поглазалося?
Тебе хоромы ли высокие,
Тебе сусеки ли горбатые,
Или скотинка рогатая,
Или чу́жой-то чуженин,
Или чужо́й отец - мати,
Или суседи-то ближные,
Или суседки голубушки? (Kuklin, p. 82, ll 22-32)

We find the same ordering of description as in the last lament, beginning with the house and property, moving on to the parents, and ending with the clan in its broader sense. The girl does not ask questions for the sake of information, but in an attempt to determine her fate; an interest in her future life is not shown until somewhat later on in the wedding ceremony. Throughout the engagement ceremonies, the focus is on the past and on the break with the past.

Besides the interrogative situation, the imagery of the engagement laments reflects the point of view of the girl at the beginning of the wedding ceremony. Looking first at the poems in Kolpakova's collection, I will quote three passages in which the abrupt loss of youth and the irrevocable end of life as it has been is expressed through the image of the circle:

1) Уж колесом ли оно да прокатилось; (No. 423, ℓ 6)

2) Уж как сыр в масле купалася,
Уж как по блюдечку жемчужинкой да каталася;
(No. 423, ℓℓ 14-15)

3) Золотым кольцом пробряколо. (No. 424, ℓ 15)

In the first image, the girl compares her sorrow-free girlhood with a revolving wheel; the implication is that, like her girlhood, both the freedom from sorrow and the revolutions of the wheel have come to an end. The circle is clearly a wheel or an orb, and one thinks of the paradox of the ring which has an end. Compare with this line the opening lines of the same lament:

Все прошло до прокатилося,
Все да миновалося. (Kolpakova No. 423, ℓℓ 1-2)

The abrupt termination of its course is seen as something unnatural. This awareness of the unnatural is typical of the early stages of the ceremony. In the second passage, the two images are proverbial and they describe the girl's former happiness in terms of circles of opulence and motion. Both express a concentration of energy which is essentially self-contained, just as the sun contains its own fire and its own course of rising and setting; in the same way the girl's youthful being was a union of nature and spirit (I will discuss this in more

detail later in the chapter). The third passage expresses the departure from girlhood in terms of the crashing of a falling ring. The ring is of gold, and the association with the sun is intentional. This last image is part of a series of images which describe the pastoral setting of girlhood. The disruption of the circular movement implies death.

What is particularly noteworthy in these passages is that each circle image contains associations with each of the others. Thus, the circle signifies the sun (and, by extension, the father, whose epithet is krasnoe solnyško). It also implies the turning of the spheres, and is an image of eternity, and in this a parallel to the Garden of Eden is to be found (a parallel of some significance, which will be discussed in greater detail later). When the circle stops, the sun fails to rise, the ring falls with a crash. What ensues is chaos and darkness. The girl reacts with fear and a yearning to return to the light which has gone out. The circle image depicts girlhood as something natural and self-contained, and the end of girlhood as a violent act and as a personal calamity. The disruption is seen as coming suddenly, without warning, and is irreversible.

Ritual is basic to the lament structure of the engagement ceremony, since it is through ritual that the girl's fate is sealed. For this reason, the emphasis at this stage is not on the nature of the life that lies ahead of her or on the life she is leaving behind. Instead, poetic energy is to a considerable extent concentrated in the depiction of movement and the cataloguing of detail:

Отворочу я лицо белое
От ясного красна солнышка,
От светлого-то месяца,
От больша угла переднего,

От иконов лику божьего,
От свещей да воску ярого,
От столов да от дубовые,
От ествов от сахарние,
От непитков разналивные,
От стаканов зелена вина,
От братыней пива пьяного,
Я от свата от лукавого,
От змия да семиглавого,
От враля да редкозубого! (Kolpatova, #428, ll 2-15)

Much of the effect of this passage comes from the arrangement of detail in a stylized parallel structure that seems at first glance to be merely decorative, but is not. The list begins with the firmament (the sun and the moon), turns next to the icon corner with its holy symbols, then to the table laid for a feast, and finally to the matchmaker who has come to destroy. It is a descent from heaven to hell, man's spiritual and his physical self being framed, on the one hand, with the symbols of heaven and, on the other hand, with those of hell (the matchmaker is depicted as a soulless monster). In this juxtaposition of the spirit and the flesh there is no chance arrangement of figures. The cataloguing describes a descent which is underlined by its accompanying ritual, the focus of both moving from eternal bliss to eternal despair; from the father, who is depicted epithetically as the sun, to the matchmaker, who is seen as a serpent; thus, the triumph of the matchmaker over the father is a triumph of the forces of darkness and evil over those of eternal life. The extreme comparison of heaven to hell is less pronounced in later laments, but references to the spiritual world of the father's house and the worldly, heathen one of the bridegroom's are not uncommon. It should be remembered that in these ritual descriptions we find the context for the comparisons which are made poetically, and we must be wary of over-hasty conclusions by which the bride may be

seen to lament an actual aggressiveness and a dishonesty in her new family.

While terms of deepest abuse are reserved for the matchmaker, it is the father who is seen to be the instrument of the girl's destruction, even though he is often said to have been tricked into making the bargain. The girl watches every movement her father makes, and feels that his agreement to the betrothal is a personal betrayal. The parallel structure of the laments creates a dramatic tension in which we accompany the eyes of the lamenting girl:

Не ставай-ко, мой гора высокая,
Со лавицы со брусчатоей,
На белы полы на еловые,
На часты мелки перекладинки!
Не мой свои да руки белые
Ключевой водой да ты холодноей,
Не три свои да руки белые
Шитым-браным полотенышком!
Не ставай-ко против господа,
Не клади поклон по писаному,
Не твори молитву полн-Исусову!
Не давай свою да ручку правую
Ты злодею, свату большему,
Через столы через дубовые,
Через столешенки шатровые,
Через скатерти да шито-браные,
Через питья-ества сахарные,
Через рюмочки да хрустальные,
Через стакашики да через пивные! (Kolpakova, No. 427, ll 1-19)

The order of descriptions reflects the movement of the ritual. The eye follows in particular the movement of the father's hand, which serves both holy and destructive purposes at once, which betrays while it blesses. Through the parallel repetition of "čerez", the eye follows the hand as it reaches across the table to shake hands with the matchmaker. The lament is a clever visual transference of the bride from the house of her father (described in the first lines) to

the "other side" (the unseen presence on the other side of the table). The juxtaposition of the spirit and the flesh is cleverly concealed behind the ritual description. The lament begins on the father's side of the table and reaches with him over the spread-out feast to meet the other side. Prayer and sacred ritual are corrupted by gluttony, and good joins hands with evil. The hand is cleansed for holy purposes and then is contaminated by a handshake with the matchmaker. The negative imperative form clearly expresses the undesirability of this movement away from the father's bench (1.2) and toward the enemy (1.13).

It is a frequent poetic device in these laments to express the betrayal of the girl by her father through the transitive form of verbs meaning to pray and to drink. Thus, the clever matchmaker gets the father drunk so that he "drinks away" his daughter's freedom, or, ritually, he crosses himself and bows before the icon, thereby "praying away" her stormy head, as in this passage:

> Не молись да не промаливай
> Ты меня-то, да красну девушку,
> Горюшницу да горе-горькую,
> Ты кукушицу да сыроборну
> Во чужи-то да люди добры.
> Люди добры да незнакомы. (Kolpakova, No. 426, ll 25-30)

The lines following the verbal line contain a cluster of images all of which have acquired a certain force through their association with the verb. The sorrow which envelopes the girl and the strangeness of the people who now have claim to her have their origins in this one ritual gesture. In these poems, ritual and poetry have become one.

Where the lament does not refer directly to the ritual, the structure is somewhat different. Motifs of trading and of betrayal may reflect a not dissimilar mixture of good and evil:

Много я надосадила
Много я напрокучила,
Что запоручил, сударь батюшко,
Ты меня молодешеньку,
Мою буйную голову
За поруки за крепкие,
За заклады великие;
Вам не выкупить, не выручить
Ни златом, ни серебром.
Не имением, богачеством. (Kuklin, p. 82, ll 45-54)

Noteworthy, here, is the insistence on the indissolubility of the great pledge which the father has made, as well as the suggestion, which we will meet in many laments of the early period, that the father's betrayal was the result of the girl's failure to be all that a daughter should be -- she was wasteful or lazy or bad-tempered, or in some way she incurred her parent's displeasure. This motif of personal guilt closely tied up with the motif of personal betrayal, and as the laments become more complex in the later ritual moments, both these aspects dwindle in importance.

Another very important theme, which begins in this early period, is the description of the girl as she used to be and of the life she used to lead. However, this motif is more highly developed in the laments which follow the engagement ceremony, and I shall describe them at that time.

In conclusion to this discussion of the engagement laments, I would like to add a few general observations. The most important aspect of these laments is their emphasis on the personal. The girl's betrothal is a personal sorrow, her father's act is a personal betrayal, he does so because of her personal guilt. The girl is isolated from her friends because of her seemingly unique fate. Secondly the girl sees her fate as something negative, in contrast to the

good life which is gone. Her former life, her former self, and her former friends all represent the positive in contrast to her present state, which is bad. Thirdly, because of their focus on the past, these laments do not very clearly describe the future, either as something good or as something bad. It is the act of betrothal, not the prospect of marriage, which is being lamented.

After the betrothal has been agreed to, a number of the bride's girl friends come to the bride's house and live with her until the wedding day. In the days which follow, these girls sew the gifts which the bride needs for the groom's family. The bride does not take part in any of this work, but sits amongst her friends, sometimes veiled, and sings laments, the same ones often being repeated at the opening or closing of each day. Other songs of a melancholy nature are sung, and the girls sometimes sing joyful songs, and even dance. Needless to say, the bride does not join in the festivities. The laments sung during this period are significant in their lack of any strong ritual accompaniment. They tend to be more lyrical in nature. In these laments, the bride, while dwelling on the past, preoccupies herself as well with thoughts of the future. She wonders where she will be going, why her parents are sending her away, and how she has offended them. She seeks information about the other side from those -- especially her married sister -- who have been there. Many of these laments are allegorical and quite long. Without strong ritual basis, the laments center on the agony itself, and the bride depicts herself wandering in the forest and rocking on the waves of her grief and her unknowing:

Уж я лесом шла, да елки машутся,
Я увалом шла, да песок сыплется,

Я к реке пришла, да рыбка мечется,
Рыбка мечется, вода колыблется!
Уж ли тут ли моя, молодость осталася,
Уж не тут ли моя девья красота.
Во сыром бору да во темном лесу,
Что на горькой осиночке,
Что на самой на вершиночке? (Kolpakova, No. 438)

The search for the "krasota", which is found perched on the topmost branch of an aspen or a birch tree, is a common motif throughout the central parts of the wedding ceremony. Specifically, this motif relates to the unbraiding ritual, where the removal of the girl's headdress and the change in her hair style is symbolized poetically in the split between herself and her "beauty." On the deeper level, this division is in herself. Through the imagery of these poems, the bride expresses the impermanence of her present state of change and the aimlessness of her wanderings in time. The laments sung at this time display a lack of goal and a fear directed to this lack.

The poem is constructed along the idea of time and motion. The waving trees, sifting sand, swarming fish and rocking waves count time. Water suggests death. The forest, the embankment and the river seem like sanctuaries of calm until it becomes apparent that they contain motion and time. At the same time, the description is lyrical, the forest and river desirable. They represent life in its beauty and time in its recurrence as well as the running out of time. The grove, by contrast, is dark. Here is death without time or life. The darkness of the grove is "bitter," as is the girl who is about to leave her youth and beauty there. The lament begins with a quest (the bride walks through the forest and down to the river in search of a sanctuary) and ends with a question. This inconclusiveness is typical of this

stage in the ceremony. The future is unknown.

In the Tot'ma region, a lament is sung during this period in which the bride tells of two birds, an eagle and a swan, that visit her in her high tower where she is sorrowing.[40] The eagle tells her that she must not cry, that at the "foreign side" three fields of corn are watered with honey and fenced in with joy. The swan advises her to weep, for those fields, it says, are sown with sorrow, not wheat, and are watered with tears and fenced in with sadness. Only the ultimate position of the swan's description suggests that it is the more accurate. Strangely, it does not cancel out the description by the eagle, but interprets it from the bride's point of view. Sorrow negates the joyful effects opulence is thought to bring, but does not negate opulence itself. Thus, this lament is not a juxtaposition in poetic terms of two descriptions, but of two points of view. The first, as expressed by the eagle (the epithet for the bridegroom in many laments), is the wordly, cold and unfeeling attitude of the father who sells his daughter for his own gain, and of the tradesman (svat) who cunningly deceives the father, also for his own gain. It reflects not only the "other side" but, also, the "other" (alluding, as well, to death) world of adulthood. The swan's point of view coincides with that of the sorrowing bride. Thus, the lament describes not the harshness of the life ahead but the depth of the girl's grief and fear concerning it.

These laments sung during the week of preparation are characterized by their lack of ritual connection (except in so far as some of them recall the engagement ceremony) and by the general mood of hovering, wandering and suspension. They lack the dramatic conclusions of the ritual poems, and have less focus. In one poem, the bride is

depicted metaphorically as wandering off on a search and coming to the blue sea. There, in a little boat, she is rocked by her tears, but carried nowhere, waiting to discover the final destination.[41] The image of the boat suggests both the bride's sorrow and also her helpless suspension on the sea. She is the wanderer, and the sea of tears is her own life, as well as her death.

The rituals which follow prepare the bride for the final farewell. She bids farewell to her childhood and to the symbols of youth, and she is purified in preparation for her marriage. The central moments in this stage are the devičnik, in which the bride makes her farewells to her girl friends, the raspletanie kosy, or ceremonial unbraiding of the bride's hair which she wore in the manner of unmarried girls but elaborately adorned in celebration of the occasion, and the banja, or ritual bath. The mood of suspension noted in the poems of the week of preparation is lifted in these rituals. Once more, the demands of the ritual influence the dynamics of the poetry, and the laments either become increasingly immediate and direct, or they escape altogether into allegory. In either case, the poems are considerably more active and dramatic than were those just discussed, the ritual poems following closely the steps of the ceremony, the allegories interpreting it in symbolic terms. A certain ambivalence of attitude is thematically basic to these poems. No longer rocking on the sea of time, unsure in which direction the wind of fate will blow her, the bride now stands in emotional confrontation with that fate. In the betrothal ceremony, the ritual brought only destruction, by putting an end to the bride's previous life and bringing uncertainty about the future. But here the ceremonies are two-sided; by removing the krasota, the bride

symbolically loses her girlhood and is prepared for womanhood; the bath washes away her youth, but purifies her in readiness for matrimony. Thus, the bride expresses both reluctance and eagerness, fear and joy. Yet neither ceremony is in itself the final step, and the incompleteness of the transition is also expressed, as in this passage:

Не могла я тоски смыть,
Не могла слез да сполоскать
Со бела лица да румяного,
С ретива сердца да желанного. (Kolpakova, No. 482, ll 1-4)

In laments of both the unbraiding and the bath rituals, water, and particularly a river, is a prevalent image. The bride's sister, or mother, or girl friend may be asked to fetch water for the bath from the river. The krasota is depicted in a number of laments as floating down a river to find its sanctuary.[42] The river signifies the water in which the bride bathes herself. It is also a separation between herself and her parents and her former life. She has begun a new stage in her life and can never return across the river. The image of the mirror is not uncommon in bath rituals. On the ritual level, the bride looks at herself in the mirror. On the poetic level, the mirror reflects the land across the sea (it is commonly called morsko čisto zerkalo).[43] The bride is led ahead through the mirror toward her new life, instead of backward to a time lost forever. Water and the mirror also symbolize death and rebirth, and look ahead, beyond reality. This ability to look ahead as well as back is new to this stage. But although she accepts the inevitability of change, the bride need not be pleased about it. In fact, it is natural to the lament that the bride should express an unwillingness to change. In a lament collected by

I. Zyryanov, it is clear that the bride is resigned to what she knows must be, while preferring that which has been:

Вы топите теплу парушку
Мне смывать да дивью красоту --
Намывать да Бабью красоту.
Бабья красота не будет красити --
Она будет меня остарити,
Ко сырой земле клонити.[44]

Young though the bride may be in actual years, in ritual terms she must wash in the stooped old woman while washing out her own youth and beauty. The laws of nature are strong and inexorable.

We have noted the frequent occurrence of circle imagery in the engagement laments. The earlier laments depicted the betrothal as the paradoxical ending of an unending circle. There, the bride's parents were blamed for this deed. Here, however, the splitting of a circle is the division of one's own self, and this division is symbolized through a skilful word play, by which the krasnaja devuška is separated from the dev'ja krasota. With this changed focus, a difference arises in the question of guilt. The lamenting bride (krasnaja devuška) is no longer united with her own beauty (dev'ja krasota), and the interrelation of the two creates a balance between the personal and the abstract, the individual and the universal. On the abstract level, fathers are not considered guilty of selling their daughters. The accusations in the early laments were of a personal (though stylized) nature, and this aspect slowly disappears. The balance of personal and abstract is characteristic at this stage. Motifs of isolation are still common, but the girl's personal fate becomes absorbed into the abstract in the strongly traditional bath ritual. This change reflects, too, the change in ritual emphasis, strictly practical matters in the early stage

yielding place to matters of a more philosophical nature. Choosing the right partners and the right dowry is, after all, a practical matter, while rituals of bathing and unbraiding are essentially traditional, and take their meaning from the tradition. After marriage, the old era cannot return, and the girl cannot be reunited with her krasota, her former self. Yet she will become spiritually united with her husband, and a new harmony and a new cycle will begin. In terms of the laments, this new life lies ahead, and it is feared because it is not yet known. It is not in their scope to tell of the reunion into a new self since it is their purpose to look back instead of ahead.

The symbols of krasota, volja and molodost' dominate the poetry of this stage. They represent different aspects of girlhood and, from the standpoint of ritual, have different symbolic meanings. Balašov goes so far as to suggest that the volja represents the parting and joining as such (in other words, the rite of passage). He calls the parting of the girl from her free will the "central dramatic moment of the wedding," and says that it symbolizes her parting from the clan and her friends, and her subjection to the power of a man.[45] This, he says, is symbolized by the unbraiding ceremony as well as by the laments and acts of magic. I do not accept a functional distinction between the volja and the krasota as poetic symbols. The krasota references are the most numerous, and most of the allegorical laments at this stage concern the krasota. Very often, the two symbols seem to be virtually interchangeable, the one or the other, as we shall see, being depicted on the top branches of a tree.[46] Molodost' occurs less frequently but, when it does, its poetic function and meaning seem to coincide with those of volja and krasota.

This parallel meaning of the three symbols within the context of the wedding laments is understandable. Firstly, one must point out that they represent three different aspects of girlhood which can be translated quite literally as youth, beauty and free will. All three need some explanation since it is clear that a bride of sixteen will lose neither her beauty nor her youth and that, if we follow the socio-economic interpretations of wedding laments, she was never free, being under the domination of her father before being given in marriage to her husband and master. Essentially, the loss has nothing to do with the details of her marriage, with the man to whom she is being forced to subject her will, or with her dislike of the marriage state. Youth, beauty and freedom are, in poetic terms, symbolic of a change, not in marital state, but in being. The bride describes her old life in terms of pastoral bliss and domestic harmony, a life out of the bonds of time and change. She describes her young self not only as beautiful, but also as weak and stupid. With marriage comes maturity, wisdom, strength and death. The laws of nature are abandoned to the laws of time. It is a common structural device that the girl asks her father or another relative a question concerning her fate --- where am I going?, who are these unknown guests who are arriving?, why are we putting on our finery?[47] She then upbraids herself for her stupidity ("Ja glupa, glupa devica,/ Ja glupa, nerazumnaja, / Ne s uma slovo molvila," - Kolpakova, No. 474, ll. 15-17) She stands in relation to the ceremony before her as naively as an innocent child. She then interprets the ritual and answers her own confusion. In this wisdom she has lost her innocence. She calls her girlish arms white, her legs swift and thin, her shoulders weak, and her life she describes in general terms as a blossoming

("Irasovalasja").[48] Physically, of course, she is a virgin. Freedom, in this case, is not her freedom to choose her own wedding partner, or her freedom to run her own affairs and make her own decisions. There is no note of rebellion against man in her lament for the loss of her will, any more than for her loss of beauty and youth. That her life will be governed by another is as indisputable for her as the fact that matrimony brings old age and ugliness:

> Девья жира лебединая,
> Девье прозвище да хорошо
> Девье прозваньице да дорогое.
> Женска жира да не дородна,
> Женско званье да не хорошо:
> Нету ножечкам да ходу,
> Белым ручушкам нету воли. (Kolpakova, No. 469, ll 6-18)

The new world the girl is forced to enter is strange, hostile, worldly. The bride accuses her husband's clan of professing the new faith, of not revering old traditions and old holidays, and not honouring their dead. They are also foreign. They are businessmen who drive a hard bargain and resort to trickery to accomplish their ends. There is no particular distinction made between these various accusations. The warrior, the merchant and the New Believer all merge into one figure of the bridegroom. He is foreign and comes from the foreign side.[49] It is clear that "foreign" describes not so much the bridegroom himself, whom she may have known all her life, as the change that will take place in the girl's own self. She will become that foreigner, just as she will become wise to the ways of the world.

As a girl she was natural, in the sense that an animal is natural, and this is depicted in one of the laments sung at an early stage in the wedding ceremony:

Все прошло да прокатилося,
Все часом да миновалося
Честно хорошо девичество;
Соколом мое пролетало,
Соловьем мое просвистало,
Черным вороном прокуркало,
Серым волком провояло,
Серым заюшком проскакало,
Горностаюшкой пропрядало,
Золотым кольцом пробрякало
Серой утицей проплавало
Что по тихим-то по заводям,
Красной девицей проплакало
Во высоком новом тереме. (Kolpakova, No. 424, ll 6-19)

The garden is used here as a pastoral motif familiar from literary as well as from mythical sources. In a clever use of epithet and parallel structure, the animals are at one and the same time the animal inhabitants of the garden (and here the effect is highly descriptive) and also images of herself. The theme of departure from the garden is interwoven in the lament with the depiction of the natural state. The opening and closing two lines of the passage given here contain this theme, which is also suggested in the image of the crashing ring in line 15. The first five lines of the lament (not given here) describe the girl as she sits mournfully on the bench. In lines 6 and 7 the reason for her sorrow is explained (all is passed), and the circle image is suggested in the word "prokatilosja". Lines 18 and 19 parallel the structure of the preceding lines, so that the girl weeping in her tower is juxtaposed with the grey duck swimming on the quiet marsh. This parallel structure emphasizes the sorrow of the girl that she is not a part of the world she has known and has been a part of. On a deeper level, the image of the circle in lines 6 and 7 contains the idea of the sun, and, in line 15, the image acquires a note of violence

in the crashing of the ring; sun and ring have become one, and the unity of nature has been disrupted. Yet the parallel structure of the last lines makes the girl's weeping seem as natural as the movements and actions of the animals. Thus, curiously, the departure is seen as violent and sad but also, in its own way, as natural. Man is not animal, and it is his fate that he should abandon the natural state in becoming mature. In this, the personal and the universal are in balance. The girl's private sorrow dominates the opening and closing lines, with their emphasis on concrete description. But through the comparison with the natural world, the girl becomes symbolic of all brides, just as the swimming duck and whistling nightingale symbolize all ducks and all nightingales. Here, it is not possible to ignore a thematic parallel to the Fall from the Garden of Eden. After the expulsion from the garden, paradise became a symbol instead of a reality, and Adam and Eve acquired wisdom and, with their wisdom, sorrow. In the laments, the effect of the disruption is to create a split between the symbolic and the real.

Poetically, this split is seen in the standard epithets and static descriptions which refer to the past. It is shown in the opposition of krasnaja devuška and dev'ja krasota. As a result, the personal situation of the young bride facing a confusing and frightening change in herself does not conflict with, but balances, the universal implications. Because marriage is construed as a change in nature, it would seem to be inaccurate to apply sociological criteria for the girl's grief. There is no evidence that she questions society's rights over her freedom any more than that she questions the loss of innocence which marriage will bring. Both are part of destiny.

That the girl's loss is inevitable is shown in this lament passage, sung during the week of preparations:

> От чужих людей нет обороны,
> От дождя-то нету затулы,
> От чужих людей нету да заступы! (Kolpakova, No. 444, ll 11-13)

The effect of the parallel structure in this passage is to create a curious triple comparison. The loss of girlhood is seen by the bride in military terms (capture by the enemy), in natural terms (a rainstorm) and in religious terms (a supplicant without intercessor). Against all three she is defenceless. Physically, her body will be captured and violated, and she will become a woman. But the violence of that image is followed by the suggestion that leaving the garden of childhood is as natural as becoming wet when out in a rainstorm. Thirdly, on the spiritual level, the acquisition of knowledge brings with it the loss of innocence, the departure from the garden brings an end to the known and the secure.

I have noted a parallel here with Adam and Eve's Fall from the Garden of Eden, the animal state mirroring man's natural moral state as the child of God. The sorrow brought on by the departure from the garden are the sorrows of mankind, not those of a private and perhaps avoidable loss. Furthermore, the change is permanent; there is no road back. The permanence of the split is depicted in realistic terms:

> Осенью да бездорожьце,
> А весною да безпольице.
> Летом - летния работушки,
> Зимой - зимушка студеная.
> И не спустять меня, бедную,
> На родимую сторонушку. (Rybnikov, No. 40, ll 94-99)

But how descriptive of real life can this situation be? Not always would the bride marry a man who lived very far away from her own village; at times, even, the groom would make his home in the bride's house, and there would be no actual departure from the paternal house. Similarly, poetic references to the "foreign" side, the unknown guest, and lands beyond the sea can hardly be said to describe a common situation. In Tot'ma, a standard phrase in the bridal laments is the assurance that the guests are unknown, that they have never before been in her father's house:

> Я не знаю молодешенька
> Этих дорогих гостей. (Kuklin, p. 90, ll 55-56)

In Pinega, the sister of the groom comes with gifts for the bride from her brother. The bride does not want to accept the gifts, and calls the girl and her brother strangers. She tells the sister that the bojar should seek out a beautiful princess instead of her.[50] Clearly, the groom is not really a stranger, and his home is not in a far-off land. Rather, it is the woman the girl is about to become who is a stranger, and it is the life she is about to enter which is new and foreign. I have argued that she does not lament solely her lack of personal choice and her lack of freedom. Both aspects are present, but are external to the poem, reflecting a social reality (the girl goes from her father's authority to that of her husband) and an archaism (in former times, it is speculated, the bride was on occasion carried off by force), and they do not dominate the structure of the poems. Far more, the lamentation carries the theme of man's mortality and the sorrow which is his lot.

It is here that we are led back to krasota, volja and molodost'.

In their loss they have become symbolic of the past state. They have no more place in the girl's life. But, because they represent innocence, they become sacred, and it is important that they not be tarnished. Thus, in a number of allegorical poems on the krasota/volja theme, the girl seeks a sanctuary for her krasota, where it will be looked after when it is no longer hers (ritually, this occurs with the removal of the bridal headdress), and where the symbol of what she has been will remain holy. These poems tend to follow one of two themes. In one, a strongly religious note is to be found, the krasota generally finding its safe resting place at the throne of the Virgin. In the other, the krasota or volja is found perched on the top of a tree and becomes emblematic of sorrow. We will examine a few laments in which these themes are to be found:

Он увидел, свет батюшка,
Честну девию кра́соту
Да во церкви божественной.
Да купил мой свет батюшко
Честну девию кра́соту,
Да принес мой свет батюшка
Да из церкви божественной.

Наложил мой свет батюшка
На мою девью голову
Честну девию кра́соту.
Да сказал мой свет батюшка:
"Уж ты крась-то, крась, кра́сота,
Крась сердечного дитятку.
Уж ты крась покрасивее.
Я во сад тебя по́сажу,
Я тыном тебя о́тыню,
Честну девию кра́соту."
Шили красные девушки
Во Петрово говеньицо
Во денечки во долгие;
Оценили эту кра́соту
На три полные тысячи.
Я снесу мою кра́соту
За престол богородице:

Это тут моей кра́соте
Тут и место, и местечко. (Kolpakova, No. 455, ll 4-10; 14-32)

The girl goes on to describe her own betrayal -- her father denies her bread and salt; her mother, clean laundry; her sister, gay clothes; and her brother, frolics. In this poem, the split between person and symbol is central to its structure. While the sanctuary is now denied the bride, the symbol of her youthful beauty will find a secure place for itself. The concept of the enclosure is important in the sanctuary theme. The garden and the house are sanctuaries, and they are also enclosed. We noted one lament in which the swan and the eagle argue over the prosperity of the groom's family; one says the fields are fenced in with joy, the other that they are fenced in with sorrow. Here, in lines 21 to 22, krasota is enclosed inside the garden, and this enclosure brings security. The girl becomes beautiful in her enclosure as a flower or tree comes to bloom in a garden. It is an unusual addition, in this lament, that the krasota was originally found in a church. That its origin should be holy and the girl's youth should be like a flower in a garden is a coincidence, here, of religion and nature -- again, a suggestion of man's first state as child of God. The disruption of the garden world is portrayed in terms of business dealings, a monetary value being placed on something holy. Yet only the girl is tarnished. The krasota returns to whence it came. The split in their destinies -- the girl is profaned, but her krasota remains holy -- is underlined by the ordering of lines:

Это тут моей кра́соте
Тут и место, и местечко.
Солнышко закатается,
Девий век коротается.

Солнышко-то опять взойдет,
Девий век не воротится. (Kolpakova, No. 455, ll 31-36)

The natural world continues, and is separate from the world of the bride or the fate of the krasota.

In another poem of the same theme, the order is reversed, the lament beginning with the girl's avowal that in her house there is no place for the krasota. Her mother has too much hard work to do and her sister's own krasota is not adorned. In other words, the krasota cannot find its sanctuary at the place where the girl was rejected. The split is complete, and she cannot find a way back through a symbol of what she was. Instead, she must find a place for it which is appropriate to what it is. She sends it down a river to the holy South, bidding it a safe journey, and praying that it not be caught by branches or stones along the way. It will then come to a convent, to a monastery of virgins:

Тут и выйдет монашенка
С дубовыми ведёрышкам,
С кленовым коромысличком,
Да размахнет широкошенько,
Да зачерпнет глубокошенько.
Почерпнет мою красоту.
Принесет мою красоту
Во девьей во монастырь
И посадит мою красоту
За престол богородице.
Тут моей девьей красоте
Тут и место, и местечко
Моею покрасивее. (Kolpakova, No. 474, ll 32-44)

This poem is interesting as a poetic statement of the girl's recognition that there is no way back. It does not refer to the foreignness or unpleasantness of the partner, or to sexual roles within marriage. The girl has changed, not her home. The split is within her, and the

krasota must find a sanctuary which will be appropriate to the value of what is gone. In the river image, the water of the bath is also symbolized and, indeed, this particular lament is sung during the bath ritual. Further, though, the water is emblematic of death and also of purification, both of the girl and of her krasota. Death threatens both. As well, the bride is purified in preparation for marriage, her krasota is purified from its contact with the world, in readiness for its place beside the Holy Virgin.

In this poem, as in the last one discussed, the krasota is threatened, in the first by the merchants who set a price on it, in this by the natural hazards of the journey it must undertake. Death, and the threat of death, reinforce the theme of passage. The journey of the krasota suggests the journey of the soul. A similar set of hazards threatens the safety of the krasota in those poems where it is blown, or flies up, to the top of a tree:

> Пусть не дуют да ветры буйные,
> Не мочат да дожди мокрые! (Kolpakova, No. 500, ll 9-10)

In these poems, the split between the girl and her beauty is effectively depicted in reference to the actual head-dress which is called her krasota. Here, emblem and symbol work together in a curious way:

> Уж как села твоя девья красота
> На проезжу-то дорожечку,
> На шапочисту-то березыньку,
> На шапочисту, на кудрявую,
> На саму-то вершиночку! (Kolpakova, No. 488, ll 17-21)

On one level, the tree with the krasota on its summit is the girl with the head-dress on the top of her head. The tree is a birch tree, and

its white supple form is emblematic of the young girl. In other poems of the same theme, sorrow is said to be located at the top of the tree; the waving branches represent the swaying of the girl in grief. Yet, the two images -- that of the girl weeping in her head-dress, and that of the tree with the krasota in its upper branches --- are not identical. On the first level, the krasota will be removed in preparation for matrimony. On the second level, it will remain a symbol of youth. The birch tree, both as an object of nature and as an emblem of sorrow, commemorates the loss of youth. The wind that might shake the tree and the rain that might fall on it refer to tears and the swaying of lamentation (on the ritual level), to the dangers that might threaten the sanctuary of the krasota (on the allegorical level), and to the course of time and ultimate death (on the thematic level).

The krasota symbolizes, too, the split in time between past, present and future. It represents the past, yet it transfers it into the present. Being static, the krasota is beyond the power of time. The girl's youth was unaffected by the course of time until it suddenly came to an end. This timelessness is preserved in the sanctuary where the krasota will come to rest. Through the krasota, the past is made eternally present. Implicit in this concept, however, is its opposite. While time is frozen into a symbol, the real bride becomes subject to its laws.

Three general characteristics of the krasota symbol can be identified. Firstly, it represents a split between the actual girl and her idealized past. Secondly, by contrast to its own timelessness, it subjects the bride to the laws of time. And thirdly, it furthers the balance between private sorrow and universal destiny; the girl laments

her own fate, but the krasota, by symbolizing youth, beauty and free will in the abstract, expands the image of the krasnaja devuška to incorporate all women and all time.

This third point, that through the symbol of the krasota a balance between private and universal destiny is made possible, is portrayed as well in terms of the allegory. The krasota finds its sanctuary at the throne of the Virgin or on the top of a birch (or aspen) tree. Both the tree and the goddess are symbols of virginity. Further, the nuns who take in the krasota are virgins, not just in their calling (being married to God rather than to man), but in a special way; they live in a community of nuns in a convent dedicated to virginity and to the glorification of the Virgin Mary. The virgin/girl, the virgin/birch and the virgin/nuns are clearly related. Yet one is a real person, one an emblem, and one a collective image. Both of the latter two relate to the first, the emblem abstracts the bride's sorrow and the virgin nuns generalize it. In both, the uniqueness of a personal loss is honoured in the granting of pride of place for the bride's own krasota. In both, as well, the personal is crystalized into a symbol of universal relevance.

In another lament sung during the unbraiding ceremony,[51] the quest for a sanctuary is structured along rather different lines. Here, it is the "volja" instead of the krasota which is removed and for which a home must be found. The volja serves the double purpose of signifying the bride's head-dress as well as the act of removing it. In this, the unbraiding ceremony has the additional function of symbolizing not only that a change is taking place but that the girl must take this change upon herself. The time for a personal attack on her parents for their

betrayal is gone. The structure of the poem is built up by a series of metaphorical poses; the girl tries on, as it were, various sanctuaries and rejects them as she sees them rejecting the volja. She refuses to remove her head-dress until she finds a sanctuary which seems to be appropriate. The first picture follows the traditional pattern which we have seen in the other poems, and is set in the girl's home. But rather than asking her parents to safeguard her volja, she imagines it as a guest in her parents' home. It is offered the bread and salt of traditional hospitality; it eats, thanking Christ for the food which it receives as a welcomed guest. The bride then rejects this picture, and imagines instead a series of pastoral settings for the sanctuary. She sends it on wings into the forest with the foxes and the martens; it joins the grey ducks in the marsh and the salmon in the fresh spring water. But each of these sanctuaries is shattered by the intrusion of the hunter or fisherman, who shoots the fox and the duck or catches the salmon in his net. Finally, she sends her volja over the wide pools and the high sky to the very sun and moon and stars and to their rising and setting. There, she says, her volja will be free and her beauty will rejoice. At last she can part with her head-dress:

> Улетай, моя вольная волюшка
> Со младой со головушки! (Rybnikov, No. 41, ll 55-56)

As in the other poems discussed, the volja, here, finds its place of safe-keeping beyond mortality and the laws of change.

In this study, we have come a very long way from an interpretation which would see the bride as lamenting in vain the subduing of her will to that of a stranger. I reject this theory simply because there is insufficient internal evidence that would uphold it. There

is no consistent attitude of the bride toward her new husband and new family nor any identifiable complaint against the social structure as such. Such a theory, it seems to me, must be argued from inside the poetic text, and not from external social evidence. The changing and developing focus of the laments from the personal to the universal, on the one hand, and to the abstract, on the other, confounds an interpretation which is the same for all the stages of the wedding ceremony. Furthermore, if the sole purpose of the bride's lament were to complain about a situation which cannot be altered, it is unlikely that she would sing more than a few laments. Instead, the lamentation is extended over a period of several days, occasionally even more, and involves all or most of the pre-marriage ceremony. There is internal evidence to suggest that her lamentation is not in vain, not a cry of protest which will be inevitably and tragically stifled on the wedding day. Instead, a pattern emerges which can best be termed despair and resignation. In the growing recognition that the change in nature which she is undergoing is not the effect of personal rejection by her parents, or her personal guilt, but a universal and natural pattern of human destiny, her agony does not become any less intense or any less personal, but it allows her to attain a certain resignation to her fate, a resignation which is as essential a part of marriage preparation as the purification ritual in the bath or the final blessing of the couple before their departure for church.

This resignation is expressed most clearly in a number of ritual laments sung usually on the day of the wedding, but before the departure for the church. In I. N. Šmakov's account of weddings in the Kola Peninsula, a lament is recorded in which the bride counsels her god-

mother in the sewing of the bannik (bread which is sewn up in a tablecloth with one long, unbroken thread). It is to be sewn in gold and silver, and into the four corners are to be embroidered the sun, the moon and the earth, and in the centre (it is not clear what has happened to the fourth corner) she is to sew God's holy church, with its crosses and its icons. It is the church she is about to be married in, and the embroidery depicts the subservience of man and nature to God and his laws. Following this description the bride laments:

Девья жира да коротается,
Бабья старость да приближается.[52]

The laws of nature and of God cannot be withstood, but they can and must be lamented, as an expression of sorrow at the human lot.

In one ceremony, this resignation is associated with the bath ritual in an interesting way, the bride singing to her sister:

Сходи на крутой то на красной бережок
По свежу водич ключевую:
Мне-ка есть вера, раденье великое,
Отмыть горьки слезы горячие,
Намыть радость веселья великая.[53]

A number of pagan and Christian associations are working together. Spring water and holy water are brought for the purification ritual which, in turn, foreshadows the ritual transformation to come. The association of water and faith is more complex and, in the context of the pre-departure ceremonies, it evokes the embroidery metaphor in the ceremony cited above. There, the church reflected the oneness of man with nature's laws, the unity of man and God. Here, faith has the power to bring joy and to wash away grief. The water of faith assuages personal sorrow, the individual being submerged by a unifying

joy as drops of water are submerged into a stream.

The central stage of the wedding ceremony is dominated by the rituals of the devičnik, the unbraiding and the bath. Poetically, the central image is the krasota. In the laments of this stage, a new balance of personal and universal destiny has been introduced. Ritually, this central stage contains the most highly emotional and most ritualistic laments. The bride does not always sing her own laments, but sways and bows while a professional mourner sings the words. The bath ritual is strictly traditional, and the laments are for the most part less inventive and allegorical than are those of the unbraiding. Often, the bride asks for her parents' blessing before going to the bath, and she thanks them after returning from the bath. She is often greeted on her return as a guest, and is honoured with food, drink and presents, a ritual which signifies that she has undergone a transformation, and is, in some way, already a new person. She is accompanied to the bath by her girl friends, and usually one or two of her closest friends go into the bath with her, while the others stand outside and sing. Historically, their presence may have been intended to protect the girl from evil spirits at a moment when she was deemed most vulnerable. Laments sung during the bath tend to describe the ritual of cleansing, beginning with the water which is often said to be fetched from a cold spring; she washes herself with scented soap, combs her hair with a fine comb and looks at her reflection in an exotic mirror. Her feelings alternate between sorrow (the water can wash her body, but cannot wash away her tears; her parents are mourning because a river separates them from their daughter; she has washed herself for the last time as a maiden) and a certain

thankful solemnity for the ritual which she has undergone, the blessing and the presents she has been given.

The laments sung during the bath ritual have been analysed by Igor Vahros in his study of the Russian sauna.[54] He distinguishes two types of bath laments, those concerning the heating of the sauna ("Rastopisja, banjuška") and those enjoining the destruction of the sauna ("Raskatisja, banjuška"). The function of the first type is to make the bride weep, and the frequently occurring images of pearls and stones in these laments symbolize the tears of the bride. The second lament type is sung by the bride herself as she leaves the sauna and is on her way home. She sings charms against the sauna because she sees it as a confirmation of her misfortune. Vahros sees the bird image appearing in these laments as a death symbol as well as a symbol for the flight of maidenhood. The image of smoke disappearing up the chimney has a similar combination of meanings. Overt Christian symbolism is lacking from all sauna laments.

The theme revealed by the pattern of disruption and reunion is, broadly speaking, the theme of change. We have seen that the girl is depicted, and depicts herself, in a state of change. The past is already the past; the future has not yet begun; the present is in itself an uneasy shifting of past and future. The complexity of this theme must not be underestimated, for it conceals within itself a state of contradiction --- the bride is still pure, yet already defiled. The central rituals are two-sided, both a parting and an initiation, and the ambivalence of the laments at this time expresses both her sorrow at the one and her readiness for the other. Anticipation and regret hang in a balance.

This structure of contradiction sometimes serves other purposes as well. We have already noted that in many laments the girl will observe a ritual without comprehension, and then, having accused herself of stupidity, will interpret the ritual correctly. We have suggested that this expresses the contrast between the innocence of the young girl and the wisdom which comes with maturity. In others, the girl will beg her father not to allow the strangers to enter her house or to sit down at the table, or to drink and eat as honoured guests. Then she will contradict herself, and ask her father to welcome them and to pour them so much green wine and home-brewed beer that they become drunk, and forget to take her away with them. This structure of contradiction is not a mere stylization, empty of meaning; it ritualizes the bride's yielding to her fate.

In the last ceremony before the wedding, the bride bids a final farewell to her family and her home. She is blessed by her parents, who bear the icon and the bread and salt. The young couple is blessed together. In many regions, the groom must "buy" his entrance into the house, and he "pays" for the bride by dropping a coin into her glass. Rituals dominate over song in this final stage. In a number of the laments sung at this moment, the bride asks why she is being dressed up, where she is being taken to, and, most significantly, to whom she must submit herself. She knows she must turn her head away from her father and mother, her home and her table. Regretfully but inevitably, the laments look ahead to the future, and reveal an interest in what lies ahead, in who the bride is about to become. The groom's arrival is usually heralded by the sounds of revelry, laughter, song. The entire retinue, their horses and the sled are gaily decorated. In

contrast, the bride is often still in her somber clothes, and she compares the arrival of the retinue to thunder:

Что за шум шумит, да что за гром гремит?
Не от ветра ли, не от вехоря
Широки ворота да растворилися!
Что за люди, да что за гости
Что к нам в дом да въехали?
Они громко да подъезжали,
Ко мне смело да подступали,
Со мной смело да поступали. (Kolpakova, No. 497)

The image of crashing thunder and whirling wind is a metaphoric description of the violence of the strangers' arrival. The gates would appear to have parted under the force of the wind rather than by the natural force of people's hands. By this means, the arrival is impersonalized; the fate which threatens the girl is mysterious and supernatural. Against their approach, as against the wild strength of wind and thunder, there is no defence. This impression is strengthened in the sixth line, where the adverb "gromko" refers acoustically to the thunder as well as syntactically to the arrival of the strangers. The poem is structured to express a progression, and with it an increase of violence. The thunder begins as noise and the cyclone as wind, and both noise and wind are extended to describe the strangers; their arrival is announced by the impersonal opening of the gate, but, having entered the house, the strangers boldly approach and lay hold of the girl. No more is said. The evil is anonymous, and its entrance into the sanctuary is in itself a violation of the virgin within.

In one lament sung at this stage, the bride and groom are symbolized by a swan and a goose, each flying in a flock of its own kind.[55] The swan leaves her flock and joins the flock of geese, and the swans ask the goose not to rebuke their dear friend. The laments of this

kind are highly stylized, less intensely emotional than laments of an earlier stage, and they mirror the ritual pattern of disruption and joining. In other poems of this time, the girl asks her parents for their blessing; she tells them that she does not ask for sustenance or possessions, for home or for the fields around the home, but only for God's holy blessing. In this condensed structure of imagery, built around a negative, the girl expresses her resignation to the loss of her youth and her acceptance of her parents' good will.

The last laments which are sung take place, in some regions, after the wedding ceremony, when the bride's hair is finally combed out and rebraided in the manner of a married woman. The bridegroom himself may perform this ritual. As the woman's cap is placed on her [redacted] now married bride expresses her grief in terms of the final encroachment of blackness over her life:

Темнота будет вам, да русы волосы
Да тягота будет да буйной голове.[56]

We have noted a change in the laments from personal admonishment of the parents for their betrayal to an acceptance of universal destiny. We have also noted that there is no consistent criticism of the groom's family except in so far as they are foreign, unknown, uninvited. They are depicted as worldly, as traders, crafty, but we have argued that this describes in a much more general sense the world outside the garden, and describes as much what the bride will become as it does the man she must marry. The laments of the final stage express fear at the approach of strangers, a sense of finality that their approach does not signify so much the end of what has been (this has already taken place in the earlier rituals) as the inevitable

beginning of something new. The girl knows she must turn her head toward new people, but asks who they are; that she must go somewhere, but asks where that place might be. In many regions, the final stage before the marriage includes the humorous cursing of the matchmaker, in terms of abuse which are sometimes obscene, sometimes nonsense, and sometimes witty. In one such poem, the bride says that the matchmaker will have thirty sons and daughters, yet be unable to marry off a single one of them.[57] Surely, a fitting punishment! But in this humourous curse, it becomes clear that the blame for the bride's destiny is not directed personally against her family or the family of the groom. The matchmaker is impersonal, a businessman, evil or ridiculous, but not quite human.

I have called the pattern created by the laments one of disruption and resignation, since it reflects the bride's initial reluctance to break with the past and her gradual acknowledgement of the fate which is before her. I have noted the impersonal nature of the danger which confronts her, that neither her parents nor the bridegroom and his family have actually caused the sorrow which she feels. The gradual encroachment of the future on the past defines the laments as one poetic expression of a rite of passage. Essentially, and this is most notable in the crucial ceremonies of the unbraiding and the bath, the bride's concentration is almost exclusively with herself. Split within herself, the bride wavers between past and future. Although addressed on the ritual level to family or friends, the laments express, on a deeper level, the bride's search for unity within herself. The poems do not show the mere passing of the bride from one figure of authority to another, but, much more significantly,

they show her passing from one self to another. The parents and parents-in-law portray cryptically two states of being within their peculiar social contexts. This is apparent in the fixed epithets with which they are described, which are static and contain within them no potential for metaphor. Where they appear dramatically, it is in direct relation to the bride, as her betrayers or captors. In other words, they exist only in relation to the transition. In contrast, the image of the bride is highly dynamic to the extent that it is the controlling principle of the poems themselves. The sanctuary, too, exists in relation to the girl who was a part of it, and it ossifies into an epithet after the ceremonies of the krasota. In the poems of the final ceremony, the girl turns away from the world she has known:

> Я прошу у тебя, . . .
> Не житье-бытье, да не имущество.
> Не хоромы прошу я тя высоки,
> Не полосы да я широкие. (Kolpakova, No. 498, ll. 2-5)

In short, I would argue that the stylization of the wedding lament is dynamic, its shifting patterns not the haphazard rearrangements of motif and ritual, but the poetic expression of a deep significance. Social injustice, economic oppression and pagan superstition are reflected in the poems but do not create them.

In conclusion, one can schematize the thematic development of the Russian wedding lament by dividing the world view or consciousness of the bride into three sections. First is the period of her youth up to the moment of betrothal. The transition period from betrothal to marriage is the mobile period of the laments themselves. The married life which lies ahead is looked at with fear as if it signified death.

Youth is portrayed as a garden reminiscent of the pastoral imagery of myth and literature. At that stage, there is a complete harmony between man and nature, between the universal and the personal. The bride as child was physically (she was frail and weak and colourless), morally (she was a virgin) and mentally (she was foolish, had no knowledge or awareness of herself or her world) not only undeveloped but, in a sense, unborn. Youth appeared to be timeless and outside the laws of destiny.

Marriage itself hardly enters the wording of the wedding laments, if at all. The change that is effected is not one of social status, but one which is closely bound up with two rites of passage which are even more universal than marriage -- the rites of birth and death. Strangely, we cannot separate birth from death completely, and say that the bride is born out of her youth and dies into marriage. The two are part of each other, the bride is born into death, and she dies into life. While this may seem unnecessarily rhetorical, the meaning will become clear if we examine the nature of the symbolism. The crashing ring and the stopping circle imply death, yet they also imply that the bride has ceased to be a part of nature, unborn, and has entered the realms of time. The bird symbolizes death and the journey of the soul into the afterlife, but it also symbolizes the journey of the girl into marriage. Water imagery implies death as well as rebirth, and the "dying" krasota finds a sanctuary in the water in a number of laments. Through the rescue of the krasota, the idea of a possible salvation for the bride herself is intimated. Death may also be life. In this apparent confusion of death and life is to be found a parallel to the Eden myth, where Adam and Eve find death (mortality

and pain) through their Fall from the garden; but only through the Fall can the life cycle be established.

In the past and the future, time is static. Only in the period of transition is time really in motion. And only the bride is affected by the movement of time, all the supporting characters being static. The period of transition is a miniature life in capsule form. Birth is the end of innocence and the beginning of knowledge. The bride comes to see herself as an individual, separate in her being and in her destiny from the world around her. She sees herself as part of time and the laws of destiny; hence, she must inevitably die. The seeming passivity of the laments is an illusion. The bride does not submit meekly to the will of others. The laments express anger, resentment and even aggression toward the people instrumental in her fate. Ultimately, she accepts not the will of another but the force of her destiny. But she submits without being entirely clear of the ultimate nature of that destiny. "Who are these strangers?" she asks, "Where am I being sent?" She bows to them and goes away with them; still unknowing but already prepared.

III: Lament and Ritual

The laments and the wedding ritual have one distinctive feature in common. Both are fixed and more or less invariable within the local tradition. Even more, the particular fusion of ritual and lament common to one village will be slightly different in the next village, and completely different in the next province or region. Cultural factors affect the nature and form of the ritual and laments. The length, intensity and degree of ritualization of a lament tradition distinguish one region from another and are dependent to some extent on the degree of wealth of the inhabitants of a certain area, the effects of isolation on them, and their way of life. Wedding ritual and wedding poetry were held in deep veneration. This has been astutely remarked in a little noted comment by the earliest publisher of Russian wedding poetry, I. F. L'vov:

> Свадебныя и Хороводныя песни весьма древни, между оными нет ни одной в нашим времяни сочиненной: к сему роду песен особливо к свадебным есть между простых людей некое священное почтение, которое может быть еще остаток древним Гимнам принадлежащий. Легко статься может, что сие самое невежественное почтение есть и причина непременному их состоянию: осмелится ли мужик прибавить или переменить что нибудь в такой песни, которая в мыслях его освящена древностию обычая? Свадебныя сии песни во всем пространном государстве нашем и словами и голосом столько единообразны, что из за несколько тысяч верст, пришедший прохожий по голосу оных и знает, в которой избе свадьба.[58]

It is greatly to be regretted that L'vov did not pursue his train of thought any further. L'vov points out not only that the poems (he does not distinguish between songs and laments) are very old, and that their

composition is fixed, but adds the interesting commentary that they are held in almost sacred reverence by the simple people who sing them, and, further, that the reverence they were accorded may account for their invariability. Since no work has been done on the question of a possible connection between these poems and another, possibly religious, poetic tradition, it is not possible at this time to judge L'vov's statement on literary-historical grounds. It is possible, however, to examine the poems as they appear within the "igra" for any trace of a sacred function which such a reverence would imply. L'vov suggests that the poems are repeated because they are sacred, but it could be argued the other way round, that the veneration of the poems is a result of, rather than a cause of, their traditional nature. Whichever is the case, this point of view contrasts sharply with one which sees the "igra" as a loss of solemnity, as a game that has become frivolous.

If we take the word of Soviet ethnographers, the wedding lament is fast disappearing. Kolpakova has recorded with precision the impoverishment of the ceremony in the town of Pinega and compared it with those ceremonies in the surrounding villages as well as with nineteenth-century descriptions of the Pinega ceremony.[59] Edemskij, in 1910, reports that the younger generation of brides no longer knows many of the laments.[60] In the Kola peninsula, laments have disappeared altogether, although the songs are still being sung.[61] The speed with which the wedding ritual is apparently disintegrating is only surpassed by the almost complete disappearance of the lament in some areas. Very few laments have been recorded since the Second World War.

While the dying out of folk traditions has been an inevitable symptom of developments in contemporary society everywhere, Soviet

folklorists have tended to understand the case of the laments in a special way. On the subject of funeral laments, A. N. Lozanova attributes the demise of ritual laments to the coming of a Communist society.[62] New laments are composed on the death of great leaders (she cites Lenin, Stalin, etc), built along traditional lines, but without the ritual connection and without the tone of unremitting grief. With this view that social evils engender lament forms, the disappearance of the forms is heralded as a positive sign of a new society based on optimism. A similar point of view is expressed by D. M. Balašov in a collection and study of wedding songs of the region of the "Terskij Bereg" made in 1969 by him and Ju. E. Krasovskaja.[63] He bases his observations on the total disappearance of the wedding laments from this region, and on the fact that the laments (in the recordings of previous folklorists) were in part sung by professional mourners. He argues on these grounds that the lament was, contrary to the view of earlier collectors, by no means the central part of the ceremony. On the contrary, he insists that it was of little importance, while the songs, which can still be heard in their traditional form, have proven by their prevalence that they are the core to the wedding ritual. Similarly, Kolpakova has pointed out that modern wedding ceremonies show a decrease both in lamentation and in the religio-magical elements.[64] She attributes this to the modern freedom of choice young people enjoy in finding their wedding partners, and in contemporary society's freedom from the burden of old superstitions. The ceremonies, as a result, have become notably shorter, gaier and livelier. The custom has disappeared because there is no longer any domestic necessity for it. This positive explanation of the disappear-

ance of the ritual and poetry goes hand in hand with an exclusively negative explanation of its previous necessity, and Kolpakova further states:

> Не только семейное угнетение женщины рисуют нам старые свадебные причиты. Они говорят также о тяжелых условиях труда, угнетавшего деревню прежде, о непосильной физической работе, происходившей в одиночку, без помощи коллектива, без помощи техники.[65]

Elsewhere, in her comparative analysis of the Pinega ceremonies,[66] she argues in a similar vein, using as evidence the actual difference between the highly poetic, ritualistic, strongly religio-magic and quite lengthy ceremonies of the nineteenth century (as found in folkloric descriptions of the town) and of modern ceremonies in outlying districts, with the short, rather sensual and poetically uninnovative ceremony of twentieth-century Pinega. In order to make this comparison, Kolpakova has studied in detail the ceremonies from six communities along the Pinega River which are close to each other geographically. These ceremonies reveal a remarkable structural similarity except for the ceremony performed in the town of Pinega itself. Wherever possible, Kolpakova has compared her findings with those of previous collectors. The results, which she insists can be no more than tentative, reveal a very close relationship of all the ceremonies from the river communities, all of which, however, differ from each other in numerous minor details. By comparing all these with previous descriptions, she finds fairly conclusive evidence that the Pinega ceremony was at one time also similar to the five country ceremonies and that the process of disintegration has affected the town much more quickly than it has the

country. Not only is much of the traditional ritual omitted, but the entire ceremony is shortened from nearly a month to about a week, entire laments and songs have been omitted or reduced to the repetition of certain phrases, weeping and lamentation have been replaced by a mournful demeanor, sensuous details crowd out the simplicity of the traditional forms. Nearly all religious and magical elements have been toned down, even in the country ceremonies, or have disappeared altogether.

Three standpoints are disclosed in the explanation outlined above. Firstly, it is implied that the laments give us a concrete and directly interpretable description of social relations of the time in which they were sung. Unlike the songs, the laments are believed by Soviet folklorists to express the real feelings and the real situation of the bride. This, according to Kolpakova, explains why the songs are identical in many regions, while the laments are peculiar to one village, and vary slightly from wedding to wedding.[67]

More concretely, in her description of the wedding ceremony of the Onega region, Kolpakova makes it clear that the bridal lament reveals the girl's true feelings, and the eulogy she sings immediately afterwards to her bridegroom is required of her as a social obligation.[68] This point of view even affects that scholar's interpretation of the function of ritual, and she sees the pleas of the bride to her father ("Do not sell my young head," etc.) as an earnest effort on her part to alter the course of events. Having recorded a lament in which the bride asks her parents not to go to the groom's house to confirm the wedding agreement, Kolpakova comments in all seriousness: "No etogo

plača nikto ne slušal."[69]

The second assumption is that ritual customs are the result of social necessity. Girls had to lament their marriage because their marriages were lamentable. Girls no longer lament their marriages because their marriages no longer enslave them:

> Им не за что удержаться в быту: исчезла бытовая потребность в них.[70]

According to such a point of view, the disappearance of the religious aspect of wedding ceremonies and the disappearance of the laments are seen as parallel to each other but unconnected. Both are seen to be the result of social necessity, and they have been unloaded in the process of society's changing needs. Yet the loss of one is not seen as bringing with it the loss or impoverishment of the other. In other words, in this explanation of the "necessity" of domestic ritual, the intricate balance of religious belief, poetry and ritual has no place. Furthermore, this necessity is seen as something negative. The end of necessity is construed as the beginning of freedom, and poetry is sacrificed to change. An increased frivolity would imply a deterioration in poetic wealth but an enrichment of life itself. By this token, poetry is not only determined by social consciousness; it is also functionally inferior to it.

Thirdly, it is suggested that, in the disappearance of certain aspects of the wedding ceremony, the relative unimportance of those aspects can be determined. If we follow the logic of Balašov, in the article just cited, the lament cannot have been central to the wedding ceremony, since the ceremony and the songs still exist while the laments have disappeared. Furthermore, Balašov argues, the laments

were at times sung by a professional mourner; the assumption made is that the bride would have lamented herself if she had really cared about it. I feel that Balašov has failed to understand the significance of the professional mourner, but this point will be discussed when I examine the wedding ceremony of that region in detail. As to the other half of his argument, I would suggest that the rapid disintegration of the wedding ceremonies, as observed by many folklorists, and most concretely by Kolpakova in her analysis of the Pinega ceremony, would indicate that those very aspects which had kept it alive are no longer there. The songs have survived because they are less vital, ritually speaking, than the laments. It is significant that the breakdown in the form as revealed in the Pinega ceremony brings with it an obscuring of the mystical elements which supported the ritual in its earlier form. Without the very ancient magic elements (for instance, the wizard/witch -- vežlivyj -- has disappeared without a trace) or the less ancient Christian elements (the ritual blessings have been significantly shortened, church weddings are less common, etc.), ritual has become custom, an empty tradition of mainly sentimental interest. The breakdown in ritual provides us with a clue to the disappearance of the laments. Lament and ritual are closely fused, both deriving their viability from the significance of the whole. The disruption of this close union causes the eventual deterioration of the form in all its aspects.

In pointing out these three assumptions which, it seems to me, Soviet folklorists are overly hasty in making, I do not wish to argue against a close connection between folk rituals and the society in which they are practised. It is clear that brides lamented the

incipient loss of their freedom to some extent at least because marriage brought them exactly that. Death imagery is understandable in a society where child-bearing was fraught with very real hazards, and hard work aged young bodies before their time. But we must remember that, in the wedding ceremony, the bride laments the act of getting married, not marriage itself, and I cannot accept the interpretation that the bride's regret at parting from her former life is an expression of unresigned pessimism toward the life before her. Nor do I see her fear of change as a recognition of the harsh reality this change will bring. Kolpakova writes that the wedding songs have not disappeared because they are still relevant:

> Эти песни ничуть не противоречат своим общим тоном сегодняшнему свадебному торжеству в деревне и зачастую на нем присутствуют.[71]

Modern wedding ceremonies, she tells us, have become merrier, as they have become poetically inferior. Yet she has described these very songs as decorative, rather than symbolic, and essentially non-functional. Many songs have now lost their position in the ritual and have become gay refrains and dancing songs.[72] The loss, it would seem to me, is in the ritual significance of modern marriage ceremonies. Not only has society changed, but the function of the marriage ceremony within society has changed; it no longer solemnizes the rite of passage, but celebrates the union of two people who love each other. Atheism as a social policy has removed from marriage many of its mystical connotations. It is repeated in almost every wedding description from the nineteenth century that the young couple did not marry out of love, nor was love considered by the parents in arranging

the marriage. Yet it does not follow from this that dislike was taken for granted, that children grieved over that which their parents desired. In the poetry of the wedding ceremony, the bride's love or lack of love for her prospective husband is not important; what is significant is the change which she must undergo. In modern wedding ceremonies, where young people choose their marriage partners, the emphasis is not on the deeper significance of marriage but on the joy the couple anticipates in their coming union. In other words, the function of the wedding ceremony has changed and has lost its significance as a solemn rite of passage. For the purpose of a modern wedding ceremony, gaiety and decorativeness are more appropriate than tears, veils and gestures of distress. But whether or not the actual experience of the marriage state has changed is outside the realm of the wedding ceremony or the songs and poems which accompany it.

In the concept of necessity as outlined by Kolpakova, religious belief and magic acts, poetry and ritual are parallel to each other, but all are ultimately dependent upon the society they seem to reflect. Magic and religion reflect archaic superstitions and the desire of the society to protect their young couple from harm and ensure them wealth, health and fertility. Ritual and poetry each reflects, in its own way, the bride's distress at her ensuing marriage. All three are interrelated only on a superficial level -- ritual acts are depicted in the laments, magic acts are performed with ritual gestures. This explanation is not complex enough for poetry of the artistic level which we are dealing with. In fact, it is through a very special balance of ritual and poetry that the social function of the wedding ceremony was maintained. Through a detailed examination of this balance in specific

ceremonies we are able to observe its social function much more clearly than we could by forcing a preconceived social interpretation onto poetic, ritual and magic expressions independently of each other.

In this section, I will be examining selected examples of wedding descriptions in which the interaction of ritual and lament is illustrated. While the amount of material available is vast, I have eliminated texts where detail is lacking, where the poetry is represented by only fragments of the whole, and where the recording procedures are inadequate. I have examined hundreds of descriptions in the Lenin Library, but due to the unavailability of sources in Canada for the reader, I have taken for discussion and analysis a few texts in detail, rather than referring in general terms to a large variety of texts. Such an approach is preferable, in any case, where one wishes to analyze the text in any depth. I have kept to a certain continuity in geography and have, wherever appropriate, supplied additional bibliography. As already noted, discrepancies in chronology as well as in geographical location and recording methods make comparison difficult.[2] One must bear in mind, as well, that nineteenth-century descriptions may be amateurish, while those from the twentieth century record ceremonies already in their decline. In the process of analysis, three aspects should be considered. Firstly, the ritual-poetic balance: this is observed in many ways, particularly in ritual moments where both aspects are highly developed. Where lamentation is lacking, we will not examine the ritual. The intensification of both, and the pattern of this intensification are of interest, as are such details as the relation between clothes and lamentation, and between lamentation through gesture and lamentation through words. Secondly,

the pattern of resignation; we observed this purely on the poetic level in the previous chapter. And, thirdly, one should consider the balance of the personal and the impersonal, or abstract: this is of particular interest, since it brings with it the question of the social or collective nature of the wedding ceremony.

The Terskij Bereg:

In his description of wedding ceremonies in the area, made in 1903, I. N. Šmakov[73] outlines the life style of the people of the Terskij Bereg, who are mainly fishermen, and deplores what he considers to be the loose morals of the people of that region, comparing their social and domestic relationships in general unfavourably with those of the Laplanders. His description is relatively detailed and reveals some interesting aspects of ritual and poetry, to which I should now like to turn.

While most marriages, by 1903, were arranged with the wishes of the young people in mind, marriage arranged totally between the parents was still fresh in the memories of the people of the area, and still took place in some cases. The betrothal ceremony does not include laments. The engagement, or rukobit'e, is followed in the evening by a gathering of the bride's friends and includes the ceremonial unbraiding of her hair and the placing of her head-dress. This is later followed by the arrival of the bridegroom. No songs or laments are recorded for this evening ceremony.

The next day the smotriny ritual was celebrated; everyone came to it, only relatives of the bride and groom and a few guests of honour being invited officially. At first, the bride remains in another room, but later joins the company; the girls sing songs and dance, and

the groom presents the bride and her girl friends with a number of gifts. The laments in honour of the girl's krasota are not begun until after the departure of the groom, and they are sung by official mourners (who are paid with presents and shows of hospitality), the bride echoing the words she hears. Šmakov says of this that "without the mourners the affair could not come off, since the brides do not themselves know the laments."[74] Oddly enough, the bride sings and laments on other occasions without the help of outsiders. In the first lament recorded, the mourner, in the bride's name, asks God's blessing on the unbraiding of her hair and asks her parents why they are giving her away. Meanwhile the bride raises her hands and claps them together, bowing occasionally to all sides. The following laments are addressed to her relatives and friends, beginning with a lament addressed to her parents, in which she reproaches them in terms familiar to us from the thematic analysis. The bride expresses her fear at approaching and addressing her beloved parents in her own home, she asks them under what authority they are sending her away (did you pray to God on my behalf?) and what she has done to offend them.

On the morning of the wedding day, the bride is awakened by her mother, and the bath ceremony follows. The bride sings a song, similar to the one in which she asks her girl friends to prepare the bath; they must go down to the river and draw three jets of spring water, but they must take only the third jet, which they should draw up in a golden bucket. Then they must find a birch tree where no mournful cuckoo is watering the branches of the tree with its tears; from this tree they must take a switch and bring it back for the bath. After the bath, the girl is greeted by her mother and her relatives and is offered

presents; the girl friends sing a number of unrecorded songs. In one recorded song, the water of the bath merges with the image of water which separates the bride from her parents, and the life before her is seen as a new "age." The water has washed away her old self, the gulf is unbridgeable; there is no way back:

> У меня у красной девушки есть грозень батюшка
> с матушкой.
> Я с ними разставаюсь, как с водой, разливаюся,
> Отдает меня батюшка на веки
> С молодцем этим век вековать.[75]

After this ritual, the groom's retinue brings formal greetings to the bride from the groom, which she returns, also in a traditional formula. The bride weeps profusely, asking of her parents their blessing. The lament continues, being addressed in turn to other members of the family and clan, in which the bride asks them for assistance in various ritual matters. The removal of her head-dress by her mother is accompanied by a seemingly inexhaustible flow of tears and lamentation, during which she bids farewell to her family, her friends and her dev'ja krasota. The bride then changes into her wedding dress and quietly awaits the bridegroom. She hides when he comes in order to observe his mood (a gay mood ensures a happy marriage, a melancholy mood a sad one), and is at last led out of her corner by two girls, and the bride and groom meet. A ceremony follows in which the groom places a ring in his empty glass and gives it to the bride to put on, she, meanwhile, lightly touching the glass. The bride then retreats into a corner where she is blessed by her parents and tearfully takes her leave of them. Her father covers not only her head, but her hands as well, and leads her to the groom. Songs follow, including ones

humorously condemning the matchmaker, but in terms so highly offensive to the collector that he records only the one he deems least vulgar. That one is in the form of a prolongued and very light-hearted curse, and our collector records that the matchmaker smirked at the songs in which he is labelled "the great matchmaker, betrayer of maidens." This is followed by the departure of the young couple for church.

In this ceremony, the two major rituals are the smotriny and the wedding morning, the girl's večerinka being of low ritual content. While the groom is present for a short time during both the initial večerinka and the smotriny, the bride's participation in the ceremonies is small until after he has departed from the smotriny. The lamentation of the bride seems to be initiated by the arrival of the groom and the presentation of gifts to her by him. In this, the intrusion of his life on hers is recognized and gives vent to lamentation after his departure. Furthermore, the ensuing lamentation is performed by outsiders and is accompanied by exaggerated ritual gestures and sounds on the part of the bride. Our recorder says that the bride merely echoes the words sung by the mourners. His explanation for this -- i.e., that brides of the region no longer know the words of the laments -- is inadequate. The bride proves herself capable of singing and lamenting on her own on other occasions. The words of the laments are fairly formal, composed to some extent of reproach motifs, and beginning with a request for God's blessing. The bride does not sing her own lament, not because she cannot learn the words, but because they are too solemn for personal, lyrical expression. By echoing the words and supplying the gestures of reverence and despair, the bride enhances the purely ritual aspect of the ceremony. Furthermore,

professional mourners are common in laments for the dead.[76] The smotriny ritual contains no overt expression of farewell and joining, both of which occur on the morning of the wedding, and the reproach motifs of the lament suggest that it is a celebration of regret and fear.

The bath ritual initiates the process of transformation, which was not begun at all in the smotriny. The holy water and the branch from the birch tree show that it is a ritual of purification, and the bride afterwards is greeted and honoured as a guest, a new person. Farewell and joining merge in the following ceremonies, greeting between bride and groom being alternated with parting laments between the bride and her kin. The removal of the head-dress is followed immediately by the change into the bride's wedding dress.

In the highly condensed form of this ceremony, much greater emphasis is placed on reproach and fear, these motifs dominating the ritual and the poetry of the markedly ritualistic smotriny. This is to some extent an emotional highlight in the entire ceremony. After the bath ceremony, rituals of parting and joining alternate. The vilification of the matchmaker, albeit in fun, supports the theory already advanced that, by blaming him, the antagonism is depersonalized, abstracted. It is by this means possible to lament without accusing, to grieve for the change which must come without imperiling the tranquility of the future relationship, to deplore one's fate, yet laugh at the instrument of that fate. In the smotriny, the girl reproaches her parents, and the mood is only made less personal because the laments are ritualistic rather than lyrical, and the bride does not even sing them herself; the words are highly formal. In the

rituals of the wedding day, the grief is personal, and the bride really cries and really sings the laments, but the theme is less so; she is no longer betrayed by her own father, but by a figure of fun (the matchmaker); her fate is no longer caused by the trickery of merchants, by the weakness of her parents or her own unworthiness, but by destiny.

Thus, in this ceremony, ritual and poetry work together in a highly interesting way. The context of the laments contrasts with their performance. In the earlier ritual, the personal fate of the bride is ritualized into an abstraction. In the final stages, parting and joining alternate with each other, and the girl's grief is expressed with greater personal immediacy but without personal reproach. In the poetry of this ceremony, a balance is maintained between the personal and the impersonal, through which the bride's fate is both her own and universal. This ceremony is remarkable for the strong interplay of ritual and poetry, beginning with the departure of the groom from the smotriny.

North and South Karelia: A Folkloric Description

Kolpakova, in her description of lyric songs of the Karelian Finnish Republic,[77] divides the republic into two regions, a division which she admits is only partially viable. While the southern region, around Lake Onega, is fairly agricultural, with cultural and economic connections with St. Petersburg, the northern area is mainly a fishing community, and has more connections with the eastern regions around Pinega than with the larger cities. This distinction, Kolpakova adds, is no longer true for the younger generation of Karelian Soviets. The southern region (Zaoneže) in part introduced sentimental romances and

stylish dances from St. Petersburg, at the expense of its own folk traditions, while the north (Pomor'ja) has retained its old songs and melodies and its rather strict religious beliefs. Speaking more specifically about wedding poetry and customs,[78] Kolpakova tells us that the ceremony in the Pomor'ja is more traditional, shorter, more condensed than in the south, and she explains it through the economic and social conditions of the area. For instance, in the north, the severity of the climate and the hard work required for subsistence leave no time for wedding frivolities. In conclusion, she writes:

> Может быть, излишняя вольность, неоднократно встречающаяся в свадебном материале Заонежья, сдерживалась в Поморье общей суровостью быта и большей, по сравнению с Заонежьем, религиозностью населения. Во всяком случае, следует отметить, что поморский северный свадебный обряд, с одной стороны, архаичнее, с другой - суше, короче и строже, чем обряд более южных районов К-ФССР.[79]

We noted this same shortness of structure in the ceremony just discussed. The ritual moments Kolpakova lists for the northern ceremony closely resemble those met in the Terskij bereg. She gives them as 1) svatovstvo (rukobitie), 2) smotriny, 3) vinopitie u ženixa, 4) buženie nevesty, raspletanie kosy, banja. 5) provody nevesty, 6) venčan'e and 7) pir u molodyx. By comparison, the wedding ceremony of the south contains eleven major ritual moments, several of which are considerably protracted. For example, one includes two or three evenings of dancing at the bride's house. Another noticeable difference between the two regions is the relative number of recordings from the south in comparison to the northern region.

The White Sea: Kem to Onega

A fairly similar pattern to that noted for the Terskij Bereg is also to be found in the coastal region of the White Sea between Kem and Onega. Recorded by Vasilij Baev and S. V. Maksimov in 1868, this description is contained within Šejn's collection, under the heading of "Arxangel'skij gubernij."[80] The central rituals are the bol'šoe rukobit'e, otherwise called the den' zaplački, and the wedding morning (utro svad'by). The rukobit'e takes place in two houses, in the first of which the girl takes leave of all her friends, inviting them to her wedding. During this ceremony, the bride's godmother arrives, bringing with her the betrothal head-dress called a počolok, which is placed on the girl's head. This is followed by a ritual of unbraiding. Later, she and her friends return to her house, where she bids farewell to her entire family and to her house, and where she receives a blessing from her parents.

The intrusion of the girl's godmother and the placing of the počolok initiate the lamentation, as the arrival and subsequent departure of the bridegroom initiated it in the previous ceremony. The bride questions the godmother's reasons for coming, and finally puts the blame on her parents:

По чему входишь, повеленью да благословенью,
Заходишь в тихую беседу смиренную?
Со слова ли с докладу и ласкотников, желанных
родителей,
Не от своёго-ль ума да от разума? (Šejn, No. 1285, ll. 10-12)

The bride notes that never before has her godmother joined the gathering of girls, and her presence is a shadow over the gathering, an omen or foreshadowing of the bride's departure through marriage from the

company of unmarried girls, The unprecedented arrival of the godmother signifies a change in the bride by singling her out. The motif of isolation noted previously is introduced through the presence of the godmother, rather as the groom's presence did in the Terskij Bereg:

> Прежде этыя поры, прежде времени
> Сидела я, глупа косата голубушка,
> В собраной своей тихия беседы смиренныя
> Не обывала крестовая ласкова матушка
> Во собраной то моей тихой беседы смиренныя.
> Со хорошей то моей дорогой воли вольня.(Šejn, No. 1284, *ll.* 18-23)

Significantly, the intrusion of the godmother is coupled with the placing of the počolok on the bride's head. The external adornment of the bride suggests an impoverishment of inner beauty and an impending change in external appearance through old age. There is a parallel drawn between the lavishness of the head-dress and the natural beauty of a garden and of the assembled maidens:

> Не во саду ли я, бедная, обсиделася,
> Не на сад ли я, бедна, огляделася,
> Не на травку муравку зеленую,
> Не на всяки цветочки лазуревые?
> Не вода ли подо мной разливается?
> Не огонь ли подо мной разгорается? (Šejn, No. 1284, *ll.* 1-6)

The bride answers her own questions: the water is her tears, the fire is the burning in her heart; the image of the garden dwindles under the actual presence of the počolok. In conclusion to this ceremony, the bride's friends unbraid her hair and the godmother places the počolok on her head. After that they return home, and the bride's greeting of her mother, who comes out to meet her, and of her house, as she enters it, suggest that she has been changed in some way since she left them not many hours before. Once at home, she addresses her

parents in lamentation, asking them why they sold her, what she had done to offend them. The rebuke motifs are familiar to us from wedding ceremonies of all regions.

The morning ritual begins with the waking of the bride by the groom's retinue. In actual fact, the bride has, previous to their arrival, been hidden by her friends, and she finally reveals her hiding place and sings a lament. In this lament, she recounts the dream she has had during the night. In the dream she fortells the unbraiding ceremony (which, in fact, is about to begin) in imagery suggestive of parting -- she depicts herself sitting in her home amongst her friends, but she alone is unbraiding her hair. Initially, the dream begins with the image of grey ducks on the still pond. She alone is different from this flock of ducks; she alone must let down her hair; she alone is about to be married. The message of the dream and of the lament seems to be that she is being singled out. It reflects the essential loneliness of a girl confronted with her own destiny. There is no suggestion that she dislikes the man she must marry, or that marriage in itself is terrible.

It is only by observing this aspect of the bride's loneliness that we can understand the lament preceding the bath ritual, already mentioned in the previous section. Having asked her sister to fetch water for the bath she adds:

> Мне-ка есть вера, раденье великое,
> Отмыть горьки слезы горячие,
> Намыть радость веселья великая. (Šejn, No. 1305, ll. 11-13)

Individual grief is assuaged by faith in a universal God. The process of resignation and preparation for marriage has begun.

Following the bath ritual, the bride and her girl friends ride off to bid farewell to friends and relatives. When she returns, the groom's female relatives have already arrived. Significantly the bride leaves her family, and returns to find that the "other side" has intruded and taken over. This time not she but her home and family have been transformed.

Before the arrival of the groom, the bride puts on a better dress and head-dress, and she performs a ceremony by holding the head-dress in her hand and striking it, which is called nevesta krasuetsja. She bids farewell to her family, who offer her prayers and presents. At the groom's arrival, she puts on her best dress, and is covered with a shawl. The father blesses the pair three times with the icon, and they depart for the church.

In its shortness and terseness, we are reminded of the ceremony of the Terskij Bereg. But there is less pronounced ritual, certainly nothing comparable to the professional mourner and the ritual gestures of the smotriny. A certain parallel can be noted between the clothes which are worn and the degree of solemnity inspired by the occasion, the head-dress symbolizing, as well, outer adornment but inner depletion.

South Karelia: A Note

Before leaving this region, a note should be added concerning Kolpakova's description of wedding ceremonies in southern Karelian-Finnish S.S.R.[81] While the ceremony is considerably more elaborate and rather less traditional than that of the northern area, I am nonetheless including the description because it illustrates most clearly

a kind of methodological problem folklorists have to cope with.

According to Kolpakova's description, the first lament is sung the moment the betrothal is agreed to. During the ritual of betrothal, the bride conceals herself behind the stove, and when she hears the pounding which signifies that an agreement has been reached, she immediately begins, not only to lament, but also to bang her head against the bench, to emit heart-rending sobs, and to tear herself out of the arms of her friends who are holding her. In the lament, the girl first describes the warning given her by a nightingale and a canary that her parents no longer desire her, that they will be made drunk by strangers and sell her to them. She then pleads with her parents not to sell her to strangers, adding that she would be a great help to them:

> Не давайте им меня да на остудушку.
> Вы на двор меня возьмите в огороднички,
> На гумно да вы возьмите в замолотнички--
> Я услуживать вам буду с утра до ночи.[82]

Kolpakova describes the girl as listening behind the stove with "sinking heart", and adds that no one at the table pays any attention to her lament. While some girls, in love with their prospective husbands, will lament out of respect for tradition, for many, Kolpakova writes, a very real tragedy is behind the secret despair of the bride. She laments to her friends that her volja has been valued at one hundred rubles, her krasota at a thousand, and for herself no price is set; and Kolpakova comments:

> Подруги, сочувствуя горю невесты, не могли, однако, ничем помочь ей, кроме доброго совета. И, не ожидая для нее ничего хорошего от брака с нелюбым женихом, они советовали ей запасаться терпением.[83]

This approach to the ritual and lament continues. The bride throws herself at the feet of her parents, "but it does not help her." When she realizes her pleas are to no avail she laments in another vein, expressing her despair in the sorrowing of the house, the bench, even the glasses on the table ("Ne postaromy stoit da ne poprežnemu.") Her mother, Kolpakova tells us, "sympathizes with her daughter's grief." Following these lamentations, but before the departure of the groom's relatives, the bride sings eulogies to them. Yet, while the laments are seen to be genuine in a very direct way, the songs of praise are sung "through all these tears," and through the demands of custom.

Such an interpretation of ritual and poetry is weak. Its main fault lies in its inadequacy to come to terms with the problem of the personal and the impersonal in folk poetry. Just because most brides did not marry for love, because their fate was determined by economic considerations, and because once, long ago, they may have been bartered or abducted, there are not adequate grounds for seeing in each engagement ritual an earnest attempt on the part of the bride to dissuade her parents from agreeing to the betrothal. If this were the case, surely the lamentation would begin before the agreement was made, and not immediately after. We have seen, in the two ceremonies already discussed, that lamentation was initiated by the intrusion of an unexpected guest (the godmother) or an outsider (the bridegroom). In both cases, the guest represented the change which was impending. This is true to an even greater extent here. Kolpakova fails to differentiate between three levels of expression: the actual, individual feelings of the person; the girl waits with sinking heart, the girl friends anticipate no great happiness for the bride, the mother

sympathizes with her daughter's grief; the ritual acts of weeping, swaying, supplication. The girl emits heart-rending sobs, and she throws herself at her parents' feet; and the words of the laments. These are composed of motifs of supplication, reproach, dispair, etc. While there are no grounds for disclaiming at least a partial concordance of all three with each other, and there is ample socio-historical evidence for assuming at least some congruity, these three levels are not as simplistically related as this description would make them seem. It is patently unacceptable to suggest that brides lamented with sincerity most of the time, and out of respect for tradition if they happened to love their betrotheds, or that the emotion behind the laments is genuine, and those behind the songs of praise merely obligatory. With this assumption of the direct intervention of the real emotion into its ritual expression, it is no wonder that Kolpakova would explain the disappearance of laments in the twentieth century as an emancipation from necessity.

Pinega (Prugavin):

There is more material on the subject of the Pinega region than we found for the more northerly areas. Šejn's collection of wedding poetry and ceremonies includes one from Pinega, as recorded in 1850 by S. Prugavin.[84] The studies by Kolpakova of Pinega and neighbouring communities we have already mentioned, but we will deal with them again in greater detail.

The pre-marriage ritual of Pinega, as described by Prugavin, is divided into two major ceremonies, known as the posedka, which lasts about two days, and the rukobit'e, which continues until the wedding,

the second part of which takes place on the wedding day. These two ceremonies appear to complement each other in several ways. Whereas the posedka is attended almost entirely by women, the rukobit'e is attended mainly by men. The first is a ceremony for the friends and relatives of the bride; in the second the groom himself is present. Quite obviously, the first ceremony is one of parting, the second of joining. This is borne out by the songs and rituals which accompany the ceremonies, and to which we shall now turn.

The posedka is composed of three stages; with each successive stage, both lamentation and general solemnity are intensified. This intensification is reflected in the dress of the bride, who appears first in fairly ordinary clothes (more precisely, Prugavin calls it "middle" attire), changes in the second stage into a "good" dress, and for the third stage adorns herself with jewelry and puts on her best dress. Correspondingly, the laments of the first stage are short and extremely formal, being addressed in turn to God and then to all the members of the bride's family. In the second stage, the laments are long and protracted, but are not yet high lamentation (that which Prugavin terms "velikoe pričitanie"). Some of the laments are more formal, consisting mainly of praise for the bride's friends and thanks to them for coming to her posedka. The second stage comes to an end with the arrival of the groom's sister and the bride's initial rejection of her and the gifts she brings. Her eventual recognition of the uninvited guest and acceptance of the gifts brings on the third stage, which begins with the lament of the pearl (plač' žemčug) and may continue up to half a day, with such expressions of sorrow and despair, including lengthy lamentation and displays of intense emotion, that

our collector was finally unable to stay in the house any longer and made his escape, commenting later in his notes that one must be born and bred to these customs.

I have said that, in the first stage, the laments are short and formalized and the bride's attire is ordinary. In comparison with the remainder of the posedka, there is a lack of tension and a low emotional tone. Yet this stage is not as completely formal as it first appears, and there is a certain emotional development as stage one continues. The ritual connection at the beginning is direct, the girl standing before God's holy icon, later turning to each member of her family as she addresses him or her. Formally she presents herself to the person addressed and asks for mercy or expresses her grievance. The motifs are characteristic and are familiar to us. She begins by invoking the highest authority -- God -- and continues downward, as it were, through the family. The lament at the icon is really a form of prayer for God's blessing "in this first step." As she turns to her parents, she seems at first to be equating formalistically the holy family with her own family:

Схожо красно мое солнышко
Родитель мой батюшко,
Свет Григорий Селенович!
Ты желанна моя болезна,
В день денная моя плакальщица,
В ночь ночная богамольщица.(Šejn, No. 1317, ll. 1-6)

This analogy is brought into doubt later on in the lament when she questions the high authority of her parents in agreeing to the engagement -- did they consult with her godparents or come to their decision alone? Were her parents in fact betraying her trust in them? Were

they acting with the wisdom which the attributes of sun/father and goddess/mother associate them with? In other words, while the ritual is moving formally downward from God to man, the tightness of the lament structure is breaking down correspondingly. The first father and mother bless and preserve; the earthly father and mother have betrayed. As yet, the lamenting bride is merely the figurative innocent -- the white swan and bowed head which signify the sorrowing maiden. The lament is directed toward the addressees.

This changes somewhat in the second stage of the posedka, where the shift from family to friends brings about a change in emphasis from the act of betrayal to her farewell to the past. The presence of her girl friends symbolizes the world she once belonged to and must now part from. Her own sorrow becomes a central part of the laments. She dwells on the abrupt ending of her former life ("vse proŝlo moe i prokatilos'"), and with this change the ritual connection becomes less direct. Her sorrow is not immediately related to her actions or to the person she is addressing, but is evoked by both of these. This allows for a poetic expansion of imagery and a greater scope for sorrow. The collector reports that the length of the laments depends on the closeness of the friendship or relationship; obviously, intimacy and the longing for the past are symbolically, not ritually, connected, yet here the ritual of lamentation becomes the vehicle for its poetic expression.

The arrival of the groom's sister brings on an intensification of the emotional tone. The reason for this is clear if we remember that the posedka is a ceremony of parting, and that mainly women and relatives of the bride are present. The groom's sister comes from the

"other side," and she is uninvited. Her presence is an intrusion of the future on the past and deepens the sense of loss by adding a note of aggression and hostility. A parallel intrusion has already been noted in the northern ceremonies, lamentation being released by the presence of the groom, or of the godmother, the bringing of the headdress, and the arrival of the delegates from the groom's family, who came to arrange the betrothal. It is significant in this ceremony that the girl does not accept food and drink from the bride's parents (nor is it offered her) until after the gift-giving ceremony. Not having received hospitality in the house, she remains an outsider, and her presence is that of a stranger. This sentiment is enhanced in the lament, the bride addressing the outsider with the formal vy, declaring that she does not know her name, that the girl has never been in her house before, never drunk beer there or received bread and salt. She then acknowledges that she does know who the outsider is but that her tongue will not form the name. This structure, in which a statement is made and them seemingly rejected, is prevalent in the laments, and is not merely decorative, as it might seem. In this instance, the progression is actually three-fold, culminating in the final recognition of the girl by the bride, who accepts the gifts from the bridegroom, while sending a message to him that he should seek a better, more beautiful and more richly attired maiden than she. Through this progression of recognition the bride's feelings are expressed on more than one level, and it is made clear that her acceptance of the girl is symbolic -- it is her duty to accept her -- but not emotional -- she does not accept her in her heart.

Strangely enough, after singing this lament the bride is trans-

formed into just that more beautiful maiden whom she has begged the bridegroom to pursue. This is accomplished through a change of clothes and the addition of jewelry. While the bride is changing her clothes, the uninvited girl receives the food and drink which transform her into an accepted and honoured guest. Thus, the transformation is two-fold -- the bride makes herself acceptable by turning herself into the princess to match the prince, and the groom's right to intrude is established by the offer of hospitality to his sister.

Stage three begins with the lament of the pearl, where the presence of the groom's sister, and the bride's rich adornment, are both seen as tokens of foreboding. The bride asks her mother whether fine clothes or youthful beauty adorn her, and she answers herself that her beauty is not that of a young girl. The poem ends with images of encroaching blackness:

> Потемнела, да почернела
> Черно черного потолка,
> Черно ворона да поднебесного. (Šejn, No. 1326, *ll.* 24-26)

With an intricate multiplicity of associations, the stranger at the beginning of the lament is both the groom (represented by his sister) and the bride, herself. By dressing herself in her finery, the bride has changed from the simple girl, whose beauty was her youth, into the princess of the foregoing lament, whose beauty is external and, as such, is in the process of decay:

> Не красит и не хорошит
> Дорога моя девья красота. (Šejn, No. 1326, *ll.* 22-23)

Similarly, the ambiguity of the ending leaves us with the suggestion

that the rich clothes, rather than enhancing her, have actually made her ugly, and the association of black with the clothes of old women is suggested as part of the picture of the transformed bride and the black, smoky huts. In this lament, a number of associations on both the ritual and poetic level allow for a high degree of lamentation in the subsequent poems. Unfortunately, the collector's excessive sensibility has deprived us of an account of the laments which follow.

After the posedka is over, the bride may not cross any threshhold without crossing herself. Presumably the crossing of a threshhold symbolizes the move she will soon make from her parents' house to that of her bridegroom. More significantly, this new taboo symbolizes the fact that the bride is, from that moment onward, in the act of crossing over. This crossing must be guarded against evil and, furthermore, the ritual gesture of crossing herself signifies that she is in a state of change and vulnerability.

The rukobit'e consists of two stages, extended over two days. The first stage begins with the bath, and its high point is the formal introduction of the bride and the groom. For this ceremony, the groom's family are all present, and the groom, having first named the bride and declared his love for her, is led to her, where she is lamenting the approach of the "foreign foreigner," the "unknown man." Here, too, dress plays an important part in the ceremony, and the bride first goes and changes into her best dress before acknowledging the groom. The two laments, sung by the bride at the first attempted introduction and at the actual introduction, complement each other. The first lament begins with rejection of the bridegroom whom her parents want to bring foreward:

Вы родны мои родители!
Не подходите, да не подводите
Вы чужого ко мне чуженина
И незнаемого человека. (Šejn, No. 1335, ll. 1-4)

She ends by accepting the stranger, however reluctantly:

Выводили да становили
Перед чужого да чуженина,
Перед незнаемого человека. (Šejn, No. 1337, ll. 18-20)

In between, the bride expresses, first, her shame in the presence of her friends and family at being presented to the stranger (again the idea of being singled out, of isolation in her fate). Then, after she has changed her clothes, she questions her father: "What is this celebration?" "Who are these guests?" "Where are you sending me?" In answering these questions herself, she is accepting the change that has been imposed upon her. The ceremony of joining has begun.

Stage two of the rukobit'e takes place on the day of the wedding. It begins with the unbraiding ceremony and ends with the departure for church. In the krasóta songs, the bride pictures herself far away from her dev'ja krasota in another land. Verbs of parting and going away, and reference to distant lands underline the fact that the moment of separation, both for the krasota and the bride, is very close:

И отойду, Млада, послушаю:
Не плачет ли, не кичет ли
Дорога моя девья красота
О моей да буйной головы?
Не услышали уши чудные,
Не плачет и не кичет
Во дали отдаленныя.
И распростилась, я, многокручинная,
Со своей девьей красотой. (Šejn, No. 1340, ll. 24-32)

The bride's change in mood from willingness to reluctance at parting from her krasota, as well as the search for a sanctuary for it, are typical of the krasota poems we have already studied. Because this ceremony takes place on the day of the wedding, the significance of parting in enhanced, and it refers as much to the wedding that is about to take place as to the ceremony at hand.

The lamentation increases as the moment of parting comes closer. The structure of the laments, similar to those studied in the previous chapter, concentrates on the bride's apprehension of the journey before her and on her questions to her parents: "Why are you dressing me up? Where are you sending me?" The immediacy of the departure signifies, as well, the impending end to her girlhood, and the approach of old age:

> Девья жира да коротается,
> Бабья старость да приближается. (Šejn, No. 1346, ll. 42-43)

We have already discussed the lament which the bride sings during the sewing of the bannik. In it, the girl depicts in embroidery earth and the firmament grouped around the picture of a church. This poetic portrayal of creation is followed by the couplet just quoted, with which the lament concludes. The focal point on church is both ritualistic (the girl is about to depart for this church) and philosophic (the church is the place of God in the world). Thus, the final couplet also serves the double function of reflecting what will take place in that church (youth will yield place to old age) and the inexorability of the course of human destiny (youth always yields to old age). Through this image, resignation and regret are allowed to stand in

balance with each other.

After the groom has arrived, but before they depart for church, the couple is blessed by the bride's father, with the icon, and by her mother, with bread and salt, and she is led to the waiting bridegroom. The bridegroom then covers the bride with a long shawl, known as the gumul'ka, and they depart. The final moment is pure ritual, the procession, the blessing of the couple, and their departure together being a culmination of the rituals and laments which led up to it. The white swan has left her flock and joined the grey geese. The time for lamentation is past and for rejoicing not yet begun.

From Prugavin's description of this ceremony, it would seem that the bride's lament has as its contextual basis social and personal relationships; the essence of the ceremony, poetically and ritually, is not the bride's lack of choice, but her transformation. This is depicted in many ways, most evidently in her change of clothes in correspondence with the degree of lamentation. In the lament of the pearl, the external change of clothes reflects an inner change and, significantly, while the outer change is for the better (the bride puts on her finery), inwardly her beauty is seen to diminish, and the splendour of the jewelry ironically yields to an image of ugliness, youth to a suggestion of old age. By allowing the groom's sister to be received as a guest, and by accepting the gifts which she proffers, the bride has accepted the change which their intrusion represents. This is portrayed by the change of her clothes (youth's unadorned beauty is gone), expressed in the intensity of the subsequent lamentations, and symbolized in the stricture that she must now cross herself when crossing a threshhold. Likewise, in the rukobit'e, the bride

changes her clothes to acknowledge her bridegroom, associates parting from home with parting from her krasota, and, in reference to her imminent departure for the church, she depicts marriage as a transformation of girlhood into old age. In her first lament, the girl sees this transformation as an act of betrayal by her parents, but by the end she grieves over the imagined depiction in embroidery of the unity of God's law with that of nature. She has moved from a recognition of personal change to an acceptance of universal change.

A curious feature of the poetry is revealed through this ceremony. It is generally accepted that the close fusion of ritual and lament is a sign that the traditions are very old and stem from a time when the actual social and economic position of the young girl was the original impulse for the creation of the laments. But, in this ceremony, the poetic expression of grief and the actual tears of the bride are less intense in the most formal of the lamentations. As the laments become more abstract and less personal, reflecting less directly her own "betrayal", the grief becomes more intense. Where the words most clearly reflect the kind of social context considered to be the basis for bridal laments (particularly the reproach laments), the emotion seems to be the most stylized. As the reproach theme subsides and the context becomes less immediately personal, the overt display of grief increases. It would seem, in this case at least, that high lamentation is achieved not by the individual predicament, but by the individual experience of a universal predicament. In the ceremony of the Terskij Bereg, a similar abstraction was achieved through the elaborate ritual gestures and the professional mourners during the smotriny.

Tot'ma:

An examination, ritual for ritual, of the structure and function of Russian wedding laments need have no conclusion so long as there are recordings left to be considered. While a typological comparison of rituals from region to region could yield interesting results, that too would be a study of considerable magnitude. Nor is it the task undertaken in this dissertation to note and compare the peculiarities of each village ritual. Rather, we have set out to discover the basic features of ritual bridal lamentation and to see the Russian tradition in comparison to that of German weddings. For this reason, we must not lose our focus from the act of lamentation itself. Here, in conclusion to this chapter, I shall examine the act of lamentation from the point of view of the lamenting bride. In this, the fusion of ritual and lamentation is precise, indeed, the act of lamentation and the words expressed being mutually dependent upon each other.

The ritual ceremony which I will be examining in this regard comes from the village of Rykalovskij, Spaskaja district, Tot'ma county, in Vologda province.[85] Unlike the wedding rituals of the north, which were sparsely collected in the nineteenth century, recordings from Vologda province are numerous. Early recordings preserved a rich tradition which was already on the wane by the time V. A. Aleksandrov made his recording in 1863.[86] Aleksandrov tells us he had to resort to the memories of the very elderly, that by his day lamentation was limited mainly to the devičnik. By then, as well, the veil was in constant use only in isolated communities. In 1896, N. G. Ordin recorded the wedding rituals and laments from rural districts of the Sol'vyčegodskij country.[87] N. A. Ivanitskij contributed recordings

from Vologda in 1890,[88] laments without ritual description appear in an article as early as 1841,[89] and the Šejn volume includes a number of laments from the province of Vologda but with no consistent ritual description (the laments are taken from a selection of localities). By the time of the Edemskij recording, in 1910, the traditions of the more central regions of Vologda province had been comparatively well documented, and were furthermore noticeably in decline. Kokšen'ga interested Yedemskij on two counts -- because it needed to be recorded still, and because in its form it was somewhat different from the other areas of Vologda province. We will now turn to this rather unusual wedding ritual in an attempt to discover the function of lamentation as understood by the bride and expressed, poetically, in the wording of the laments and, ritually, throughout the ceremony.

The major ritual divisions follow the predictable pattern. The svatovstvo and the smotriny are not occasions for any bridal lamentation. That is initiated during the rukobit'e, the first ritual confrontation of bride and groom. Quite a number of laments are performed during the gatherings of the clan during the week of preparations. The last ritual of this period is a visit by the bride and her girl friends to a hill overlooking the home village (na ugor) and, with her father as well, to the place where the beer was brewed (na povarnju). The last three ritual divisions are the devičnik, the svadebnyj den' and, finally, the poezd k vencu.

The ritual includes a few somewhat unusual characteristics. The bath ritual takes place just before the start of the devičnik. There is comparatively little ceremony or lamentation, although it is preceded by lamentation on the arrival of the guests from the roof-top of

the house. The only lament directly connected with the bath is in the form of thanks to the bride's mother and sister for heating up the bath. The rest of the clan arrives soon afterward, and is greeted by lamentation. Yet neither the preceding nor the subsequent lamentation is directly related to the ritual of the bath. The krasota ritual takes place toward the end of the wedding day and shortly before the departure. Unlike the bath ritual, it is accompanied by a lengthy lament and a clearly defined ritual. Yet the positioning of this ritual so close to the departure somewhat alters its emphasis, and the lament echoes one sung by the bride during the devičnik. In the earlier of these laments, the bride searches for a sanctuary for herself, not for the krasota (as in the case in the later lament), and the motif is remarkable because the bride cannot find a sanctuary for herself; later she does find one for her krasota.

We have already discussed in general terms the concept of time as expressed in the Russian laments. The time theme occurs frequently in this recording. In the early days of the celebrations, time is used to explain the bride's sorrow. At first glance it would seem that the bride fears time is coming to an end:

...мне немножко то здись житья
Того поменьше красованья
[У батюшки, у матушки]
Не годок от годовати,
Да не зима-та зимовати,
Да не весна красоватися,
Не гулять лета теплово,
Да не топтать травы шелковы,
Да не сымать хлеба белово! (Edemskij, p. 27, ll. 4-5; 8-13)

There is a suggestion in this lament that the end of life "here" is the end of life itself, that not only the girl's growth in beauty will

come to an end, but the very change in the seasons, the predictable rotation of the yearly cycle, will cease when the bride marries. These things will only cease for her. The special characteristic of the life the girl will be leaving is the ever present renewal. Season follows season, year follows year; there is an abundance of good food and lush grass, and the beauty of the girl is continuously increasing. The image is a pastoral one. Time, with the connotation of inevitable decay, does not trouble the picture.

In three laments which are performed subsequently to the one quoted above, the time theme is expressed particularly forcefully. In the first of these, the setting sun (the lament is sung toward evening) is used to symbolize the setting of the bride's youth:

> [Мне здись житья]
> Одна нидилька-та времечка;
> Уж как эте денёчики
> покажутсе за часочики...
> Кому-то как кажитсе:
> Глядо, мне молодешеньке
> Сходит со(л)нцё низёхонько,
> Белое дни коротёхоньки,
> Идёт врéмё скорёхонько. (Edemskij, pp. 33-34, *ll.* 8-15)

The bride's awareness of isolation is expressed strongly here. It occurs at the end of a lengthy lament in which she addresses a married woman, asking her about the people and the life "on the further side." The addressee, weeping, describes to the bride the hardships which await her. There would seem to be an association, here, between the coming of night and the coming of death. We are told, not that night is coming, but that bright day is passing, that time is slipping by. The sun image occurs again when the bride bids her girl friends accompany her up the hill (<u>na ugor</u>):

А как не ранно-то на́ дворе
Да не высо́ко-то со́у́нышко, -
Дак отжила-то девицею,
Отслыла-то невестою!
Совнышко закатаитсе,
Белой день вечораитсе
Да дивей век коротаитсе! (Edemskij, p. 39, ll. 12-18)

Here, the approach of evening is suggested in the penultimate line. The ending of the day reflects the ending of an era ("divej vek") and of a life ("otžila-to deviceju"). The lament shows the sun sinking, but not its rising the next day. In other words, it is recurrence, renewal which is coming to an end for her. The constant cycle has been broken ("sovnyško zakataice"), although only for the bride, and a kind of eternally renewable time or timelessness is being replaced by a life in which time runs out (as evening turns into night) instead of constantly renewing itself.

In the third of these laments, the sun is not used as a symbol, but death is referred to specifically. During the devičnik, the bride prays to God, to the Holy Trinity and to the Virgin Mary, lamenting because heavy sorrow and early death are approaching her.[90] Again, it is to be noted that it is the passage of time which is lamentable.

In a lament on the wedding day, the ending cycle suggests the death of nature through winter. The isolation of the bride in her fate is poignantly clear in this rather simple lament:

...чула я молодешенка
Що по зиме-то студеною
Да по снежку-ту по белому
По насту́-ту по крепкому
Не растет трава шеукова,
Не цветут цветы алые:
После винца то злаченово
Уж как мне молодешеньке

Да не бывает-то девицею,
Не славиться-то невестою. (Edemskij, p. 118, ll. 2-11)

It is the bride's fervent farewell wish that the pastoral ideal not be broken for those she leaves behind. This wish is expressed first as the father tries to lead her to the table:

Ты прощай-ка, прекрасной рай,
Оставайсе, зеленой сад.
Боле не бывать да не гуливать
Да и во саду-ту не сежиать
Красною-ту девицею
Да честной-славной невестою! (Edemskij, p. 113, ll. 1-6)

There, the image depicts the departing bride, and her removal from the green garden. As the bride leaves for the wedding, she first asks her father for his blessing. She then laments, asking her father where she will find a dwelling place for herself, and expressing a wish on behalf of her girl friends:

Уж ты дай-ко мне, батюшко
Божью вольку-ту вольную
Без меня да после меня
Походить да погулети
Моим сизым-то голубушкам
Городочками-улочкам. (Edemskij, p. 126, ll. 3-8)

and, more extensively, in her last lament:

Прощайте да оставайтеся,
Все поля-те с припольками
Да луговья с пригородками
Все гульбища-те-игрыща.
Да все качульки-те круглые
Все годовы-честны празнички! (Edemskij, p. 127, ll. 9-14)

Does it not seem strange that even the calendar holidays should be included in this final farewell? The desire that the world should

remain unchanged seems to make sense so long as the girl friends are the subjects referred to. That the bride should wish for them a kinder fate is understandable, although it is not clear what form that fate should take. However, by fixing in a moment of eternal permanence the unmarried girls, the fields and meadows and those holidays which mark the pattern of the recurring years, the bride wishes that her memories and those girls who represent what she once was should remain outside of the laws of time and change. Like the idyllic vision of the fields in summer or at high noon, the picture of the eternally dancing maidens consoles the bride in her own loss.

But let us return to the now familiar ritual of the unbraiding and its accompanying lament. The bride searches for a sanctuary for the krasota first among her family, then among her friends. Having rejected these places, she places it upon the gold cupolas of a church, but the winds and rains dislodge it. Finally, it is entrusted to her sister, whose job it is to take it to a place where it will tell all good people of the bride's great beauty.

We have already noted that this lament is to some extent an echo of an earlier lament, in which the bride searches for a sanctuary for herself, which was performed when the bride had gone with her friends to visit the places they had frequented during the summer. Thus, through the lament and the ritual, the maiden life becomes crystallized into a moment of summer. She considers as a sanctuary both the aspen tree and the birch tree, but must reject both of them, the first because it was accursed by Mary in a legend, the second because the warriors from the "foreign side" could easily spot her and shoot her

down.

What is the difference between the two laments? The bride herself can find no sanctuary (she even complains to her father before the departure that she has no home, no dwelling place which is hers) because she has become part of time which is moving her onward into a new life, a "great change". The krasota can find a sanctuary by isolating itself from her and, consequently, from time. It, however, does not become a mere static symbol of past glory. On the contrary, the krasota receives a mission, which is to tell "good people" about her great beauty. Although it is not clear how the krasota will go about informing the people, its presence not only preserves the bride's youth in timelessness but also casts a certain shadow over the pastoral idyll. The threat of impermanence mars the beauty of the landscape.

Sorrow and lamentation are tightly fused with this awareness of time. The bride weeps while the girl friends do not:

Еще как не плакати,
Да горе пашной не тужити
Как плачут очи-те ясные
Да тужит сердце ретивое? (Edemskij, p. 31, ll. 3-6)

The recurrent refrain with which many of the laments open identifies the bride with her sorrow:

Ох ти мне да тошнёшенько
Да... (Edemskij, e.g. p. 32, l. 9)

The wedding has two meanings, one for her and one for everyone else:

К ним на пир да на братщинку
Да на весёлу-ту свадебку,
Ко мне кручинной-то девице
Да на горё да на кручину
Да на печаль-ту великую. (Edemskij, p. 29, ll. 16-20)

The mother is in places identified with the bride through the sorrow which is both their lots:

[у] слезливы-те матушку (Edemskij, e.g. p. 17, ll. 3-6)

In another place, the bride's sorrowful dream and waking tears contrast to the easy sleep and happy awakening of her parents. (Edemskij, p. 30, ll. 13-24). The veil which the bride must wear at all times is a symbol of her sorrow:

[Завязавала-то кумушка]
Да злу фату ту слезливую (Edemskij, e.g. p. 31, l. 20)

In her pleas to her family not to betray her, she construes marriage as a sentence to sorrow:

[Не оставьте меня]
Да в горюшке--во кручинушке
Да в печале великою! (Edemskij, p. 20, ll. 5-6)

By a curious juxtaposition of words, the act of lamentation would appear to be, in itself, a holy act:

[Благослови меня Господи]
Да на теперешный святый час
Поревить то поплакати! (Edemskij, p. 29, ll. 4-5)

One lament fragment, repeated on three occasions in only slightly altered form, is an invocation by the bride to her own lamenting voice:

Покатись-ко, зычёнь голо́с,
Во все чётрые та стороны,
Далеко по сырой земле
Да высоко по подне́бесью
По всей родне то сердечного. (Edemskij, p. 29, ll. 6-10)

The lament continues,[90] enumerating all the members of the family and the clan where they are celebrating the wedding. Thus, she sends the voice of her sorrow to trouble the joy of the festivities. On the second occasion, the lament is sung on a hill (na ugore), where the bride has gone with her friends to lament. It is sung for the final time early in the morning of the wedding day. The bride climbs with her friends to the summer roof of the hut. The lament is sung by the girls, in the bride's name, while the bride sighs ritually and occasionally laments. The greater ritualization and stylization of the performance would seem to enhance the solemnity of the occasion (just as the participation of the professional mourner had this effect in the more northerly wedding ritual). The girl is dressed in her holiday clothes (also, as we have seen, an important element in the ritualization of solemnity), and the lament is somewhat shorter on this occasion. Responding to the lament, the father brings money to the bride and blesses her with the wedding bread (k[redacted]aj).

This repeated lament is interesting in a number of ways. Just as the krasota had the mission to tell the world of the girl's former beauty, so the lamenting voice has the mission to tell the world about the great sorrow of the bride. Why should this be so? What purpose will this sort of lamentation serve? The krasota and the voice are animated. Their job is to trouble the tranquility of the pastoral scene. Can the "good people" and the merry wedding guests remain untouched and unperturbed by this testimony of betrayal and sorrow? The transience of the bride who can find no sanctuary for herself is a kind of prophecy to the world that the pastoral tranquility which is being

shaken for her will also be shaken for them. Thus, in the bride's departing wish to her girl friends there is also a note of prediction and a recognition of the inevitability of change. The isolation of the bride's fate is only temporary. It is human destiny that all must be subject to the laws of time and change.

This function of lamentation must be seen within the wider context of the ritual structure of the entire ceremony. A crucial moment in the proceedings occurs when the bride is offered a drink from the hated svat. Refusing the drink, the bride begs her family not to accept the drinks for themselves, for they would thereby be betraying her. Not only do they drink, however, but the father repeatedly enjoins the bride to accept the drink for herself. Finally, she complies, thus betraying herself:

Пропила, видно, мóлода
Да свою буйну-ту голову. (Edemskij, p. 71, ℓℓ. 1-2)

Likewise, the bride allows herself to be "tricked" (as she maintains in a lament on the subject)[91] into dressing up for the groom and his clan, and finally submits, after a show of rebellion, to being led to the awaiting groom, thus ritually handed over from father to husband. In each instance, she stood initially in opposition both to her family, who are in the process of abandoning her, and to the "other side" who have come to abduct her. Yet no one has expressed a wish to be rid of her or to capture her. Those to whom she is in opposition are executing the details of an arrangement which has become law. Thus they, too, are secondary to the law of the ritual itself, which is the law of destiny. By submitting, reluctantly or under coercion, the

bride yields not to the will of her family or of the outsiders but to ritual inevitability.

Lamentation is not to be seen as a kind of swan song of the "dying" girl, as the totally futile expression of despair when her short-lived resistance fails. The laments create the impression that the girl's fate is unique, and that it must warn the world of the great injustice which is being perpetrated. It is a working-out of patterns of despair and submission, which derives its force from the ritual in process and its meaning from its universal application. The same laments have been sung before and will be sung again, each time shattering the idyllic image of the timeless village as if it were for the first time. In the fusion of lament and ritual, the universality of human destiny and the individual in transition are kept in a balance which does not detract from the necessity of the one or the poignancy of the other. Thus, the bridal laments may be said to be both personal and traditional.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter Two

[1]Boris Pil'njak, Golyj god, introd. D. G. B. Piper (Letchworth, Hertfordshire: Bradda Books Ltd., 1966), pp. 224-29.

[2]M. D. Čulkov, Sobranie raznyx pesen (SPB, 1770-1774), Parts I-IV.

[3]M. I. Popov, Rossijskaja erata: Ili vybor najlučšix novejšix rossijskix pesen po nyne sočinennix ... (SPB, 1792), Vol. II, Nos. 224-42. (The full title will be found in the bibliography.)

[4]Izbrannij Pesennik: Ili sobranie najlučšix staryx i samyx novejšix ... rossijskix pesen (SPB, 1792), Nos. 146-66. (The full title will be found in the bibliography.)

[5]I. I. Dmitriev, Karmannyj pesennik: Ili sobranie lučšix svetskix i prostonarodnyx pesen ... (Moskva, 1796), Vol. III, Nos. 1-10. (The full title will be found in the bibliography.)

[6]S. M. Komisarov, Samoj novejšij obvornejšij moskovskoj i sankt peterburgskoj pesel'nik ... (Moskva, 1799), Nos. 1-23. (The full title will be found in the bibliography.)

[7]N. A. L'vov, Sobranie narodnyx russkix pesen s ix golosami: Na muzyku položil Ivan Prač (SPB, 1790), Part I; see also editions of 1806 and 1815, Parts I and II. For wedding songs, see the edition of 1815, Part I, Nos. 1-5, and Part II, Nos. 1-5.

[8]Op. cit.

[9]A. V. Tereščenko, Byt russkogo naroda (SPB, 1848), Vol. II, Part II, Chapters 1-22; the regional descriptions are found in Chapters 9-22.

[10]O. X. Agreneva-Slavjanskaja, Opisanie russkoj krest'janskoj svad'by s tekstom i pesnjami (Tver', 1887-1889). (The full title will be found in the bibliography.)

[11]Op. cit.

[12]Op. cit.

[13]L. Šternberg edited and was responsible for the collection of wedding descriptions under the heading Materialy po svad'be, and he wrote the prefatory chapter. I will have occasion later to discuss in some detail the article by Kolpakova, "Svadebnyj obrjad na r. Pinege."

[14]Čistov, Russkoe narodnoe tvorčestvo, p. 73: "mixture of tragic and joyful." The poetic implications of this contrast are discussed in Kruglov's unpublished dissertation "Russkie svadebnye pričitanija," and in T. F. Pirožkova, "Xudožestvennye osobennosti žanrov svadebnoj liriki" (diss. MGU 1972), where she lists "conflict structure" as one of the generic characteristics of the lament.

[15]Čistov, "Semejno-obrjadovaja poezija," p. 86. writes that the central figure in the wedding ritual is the bride, and it is her image, her fate and her emotions which form the basic content of the songs and laments.

[16]E.g.: P. G. Bogatyrev, "Tradicija i improvizacija v narodnom tvorčestvo," Voprosy teorii narodnogo iskusstva (Moskva: "Iskusstvo," 1971), pp. 393-400; V. E. Gusev, "Kollektivnost' tvorčeskogo processa; tradicija i improvizacija," Estetika fol'klora (Leningrad: "Nauka," 1967), pp. 164-213.

[17]N. M. Eliaš, Russkie svadebnye pesni: Istoriko-etnografičeskij analiz.

[18]Pesni, sobrannye Rybnikovym, Vol. III, No. 43, ll. 1-6. The location of subsequent quotations from Rybnikov will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[19]Such epithets are numerous. For examples, see N. P. Kolpakova, ed., Lirika russkogo svad'by, No. 428, ll. 2-4:

Отворочу я лицо белое
От ясного красна солнышка,
От светлого-то месяца, ...
От змия да семиглавого.

[20]This epithet is so common that any small collection of laments will provide several examples. E.g. Kolpakova, No. 424, ll. 1-2:

Уж я сяду, лебедь белая,
На брусчату белу лавочку.

[21]Kolpakova, No. 433, ll. 13-19. The location of subsequent quotations from Kolpakova's Lirika russkogo svad'by will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[22]E.g., in Kolpakova, No. 492. ll. 8-10:

Обернусь-то я да в черну ласточку,
Прилечу к кормилице, к родной маменьке
Под косящето окошечко.

[23]E.g., in Rybnikov, No. 40, ll. 94-99:

Осенью да бездорожьице,
А весною да безпольице.
Летомъ--летние работушки,
Зимой--зимушка студеная.
И не спустят меня, бедную,
На родимую сторонушку.

[24]E.g., in Rybnikov, No. 40, ll. 71-73:

Изживают меня, бедную,
Будто ворога из города,
Люта зверя из темна леся.

[25]E.g., in Kolpakova, No. 435, ll. 4-5:

Что пожалей ты меня, да пожалуйста,
Пожалей-ка да разумей-ка.

[26]E.g., in Čerdynskaja svad'ba, ed. I. Zyrjanov (Perm: Knižnoe izdat., 1969), p. 30:

На чужой на стороне
Солнышко не греет.

[27]The krasota theme will be discussed extensively in the second section of this chapter.

[28]All these motifs will be discussed in the body of the chapter.

[29]Kagarov, "O značenii."

[30]E.g. Kolpakova, No. 497.

[31]E.g. Kolpakova, Nos. 484 and 497.

[32]Kolpakova, "Nekotorye voprosy sravnitel'noj poetiki."

[33]V. G. Bazanov, "Obrjad i poezija," Istorija, fol'klor, iskusstvo slavjanskix narodov: Doklady sovetskoj delegacii v meždunarodnyj s"ezd slavistov, Sofija, sentjabr', 1963 (Moskva: ANSSSR, 1963), pp. 233-350; see also Čistov, "Russkaja pričet," p. 6: the pričet is an epic, improvised form used for a various occasions and themes, while the pričitanie arises in connection with sad, tragic domestic events.

[34]Roman Jakobson, "Slavic Epic Verse: Studies in Comparative Metrics," Slavic Epic Studies. Selected Writings, 4 (The Hague: Mouton, 1966), pp. 414-63.

[35]As recorded in L'vov, Veselaja erata, No. 47, ll. 17-23.

[36]Kolpakova, Lirika russkoj svad'by, pp. 205-36.

[37]For an example of an allegorical lament see Rybnikov, No. 41.

[38]Kolpakova, No. 431, ll. 13-19.

[39]M. Kuklin, "Svad'ba u velikorussov (Vologodskoj gub.), IV: svadebnye obyčai i pesni u krest'jan Strelickoj volosti Totemskogo uezda Vologodskoj gubernija," Etnografičeskoe obozrenie, No. 2 (1900), 81, ll. 10-11. The location of subsequent quotations from Kuklin will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[40]E.g., as recorded by P. Dilaktorskij, "Svadebnyj obrjady Vologodskoj gubernij," Etnografičeskoe obozrenie, No. 1 (1903), 41-42.

[41]Kolpakova, No. 439.

[42]Ibid., No. 474.

[43]E.g. Ibid., No. 475.

[44]Čerdynskaja svad'ba, facing p. 52.

[45]Balašov, p. 7.

[46]E.g. Kolpakova, No. 488, ll. 17-21.

[47]E.g., in Russkie narodnye pesni Karel'skogo Pomor'ja, ed. N. P. Kolpakova (Leningrad: "Nauka," 1971), No. 170.

[48]E.g. Kolpakova, No. 423.

[49]Such epithets are many and varied. For example, see Rybnikov, No. 40.

[50]See the discussion of the Plač žemčug of the Pinega ceremony recorded in Šejn, Velikoruss', this chapter.

[51]Rybnikov, No. 41.

[52]I. N. Šmakov, "Svadebnye obyčai i pričitanija naselenija Terskogo berega Belogo Morja," Etnografičeskoe obozrenie, No. 4 (1903), 40-41.

[53]As recorded by Baev and Maksimov in P. V. Šejn, Velikoruss', No. 1305, ll. 9-13.

[54]Igor Vahros, Zur Geschichte und Folklore der Grossrussischen Sauna. FF Communications, No. 197 (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemis, 1966), pp. 249-77.

[55]Kolpakova, No. 495.

[56]Kolpakova, "Svadebnyj obrjad na r. Pinege," p. 156.

[57]Šmakov.

[58]L'vov, Sobranie narodnyx russkix pesen, p. vii.

[59]"Svadebnyj obrjad na r. Pinege," p. 173.

[60]M. Edemskij, "Svad'ba v Koksen'ge Totemskogo uezda," Živaja starina, Nos. 1-4 (1910), 3.

[61]D. M. Balašov, p. 6.

[62]G. S. Vinogradov and A. N. Lozanova, "Plači i skazy," Fol'klor Karelo-Finskoj SSR, ed. A. N. P. Andreev (Leningrad: "Sovetskij pisatel'," 1941), pp. 127-31.

[63]Op. cit.

[64]"Starinnyj svadebnyj obrjad," p. 187.

[65]Ibid., p. 185.

[66]"Svadebnyj obrjad na r. Pinege."

[67]"Pričet i pesnja," p. 187:

> Невеста так или иначе постарается отразить специфику своего семейного положения;... песня же опоет совершенно одинаково "молодую княгиню," будь у нее родная мать или нет. Причит невесть-беднячки звучал в старой свадьбе иначе, чем причит богатой девушки; песня, опять-таки, этого различия не подчеркнет.

[68]"Starinnyj svadebnyj obrjad," p. 166.

[69]Ibid., p. 168.

[70]Ibid., p. 185. See also "Pričet i pesnja," p. 188:

> Никто не станет в колхозной деревне заклинать мифических богов урожая. . . . Поэтому найти сейчас в советской деревне какие бы то ни было следи аграрной магии и поэзии вряд ли возможно. Точно так же не станет деревня повторять и ненужные жалобы причиты: этот материал начисто ушел из быта.

[71]"Pričet i pesnja," p. 188.

[72]Ibid.

[73]Smakov, pp. 55-68.

[74]Ibid., p. 60.

[75]Ibid., p. 62.

[76]It is interesting in this regard to consider the account of a Scottish folklorist describing the effect of the professional mourner at Scottish funerals -- I. F. Grant, Highland Folkways (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961), p. 369:

> The custom of keening by professional mourning women lasted in the islands well into the second half of the nineteenth century. Someone who heard it spoke to me of its strangeness and sadness. Carmichael says that there used to be a midwife and a mourning woman (Bean-tuirim) in every township and that the people took it in turn to supply them with summer grass and winter fodder for their beasts. At the funeral the bean-tuirim walked behind the coffin intoning a lament and striking it from time to time.

Clearly, here, the presence of the outsider intensifies the ritual meaning. For a discussion of professional mourners at funerals, see also Vojislav M. Durič, Tužbalica u svetskoj književnosti (Beograd: "Privrednik," 1940).

[77]Kolpakova, "Pesennaja lirika Karelo-finskoj SSR," in Andreev, pp. 132-62.

[78]"Starinnyj svadebnyj obrjad," pp. 163-89.

[79]Ibid., p. 182.

[80]"Svadebnyj obrjad poberež'ja Belogo morja ot g. Onegi do Kemskogo Yezda," recorded by Vasilij Baev and S. V. Maksimovym (1868), in Šejn, Velikoruss', pp. 377-86. (The location of subsequent quotations from Šejn will be indicated in brackets following the quotation).

[81]Starinnyj svadebnyj obrjad," pp. 164-78.

[82]Ibid., p. 165.

[83]Ibid., p. 166.

[84]"Svadebnyj obrjad goroda Pinegi," recorded by Stepan' Prugavin (1850) in Šejn, Velikoruss', pp. 386-98. (The location of subsequent quotations from Šejn will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.)

[85]The ritual and poetic description appears in the aforementioned three-part article by M. Edemskij, "Svad'ba v Kokšen'ge."

[86]V. A. Aleksandrov, "Vologodskaja svad'ba," Biblioteka dlja čtenija, No. 5 (1863), pp. 1-44; No. 6, pp. 27-45.

[87]N. G. Ordin, "Svad'ba v podgorodnix volostjax Sol'vyčegodskogo uezda," Živaja starina, No. 1, Part 2 (1896), 51-121.

[88]N. A. Ivanickij, "Materialy po etnografii Vologodskoj gubernii," Sbornik svedenij dlja izučenija byta krest'janskogo naselenija Rossii, ed. N. Xaruzin (Moskva, 1890), No. 2, Part 1, pp. 1-234.

[89]G. Ivanickij, "Pričitan'e nevesty v Vologodskoj gubernii," Moskvitjanin, No. 12 (1841), 474-89.

[90]Edemskij, p. 57, ll. 31-33.

[91]See also Edemskij, pp. 40-41 and p. 92.

CHAPTER THREE:

The German Songs

The term "wedding lament" is, generally speaking, associated with the Russian wedding lament. There is not even such a term as deutsche Hochzeitsklage. The implication that wedding laments do not exist amongst other peoples would be reasonable if we were to accept the Soviet interpretation of the lament form. Where the lament is seen as a response to a given set of social conditions, there is no inducement to look for examples outside of those social boundaries. But I have rejected such an interpretation, [illegible] proposed that the lament is a ritual expression of passage, [illegible]lated directly to the conditions surrounding the marriage. By so [illegible], I have also lifted the geographical barriers and left open the possibility that wedding laments may exist in non-Russian cultures and in cultures not directly influenced by Russian customs, folk rituals and religious thought.

German bridal songs are sufficiently unlike those of Russia that they would not seem to be an obvious target for comparison. And, unlike some Finnic tribes which boast a rich lament tradition, German and Russian peoples have rarely mixed without an intermediary language and culture such as Polish, Rumanian or Serbo-Croatian. German bridal songs are usually sung to the bride, rather than by her. They are generally didactic in tone, and they remind the bride of her duty, and of the hardships which are a part of her fate. Religious themes prevail. There are fewer songs than in Russian ceremonies, and many rituals are not accompanied by bridal songs. Both the rituals and the songs, however, when examined closely, abound in allusions to death, to

passage, and to time measurement. Symbols and dance dramatize these points of view, as do the rituals themselves. The songs add a depth of meaning which would otherwise be lacking and, more important still, create a tension between the personal and the universal, which we already found to be of importance in the Russian wedding ceremony. As in the Russian poems, the motif of the journey is prevalent, and the structure of parting and joining is basic to the wedding traditions of both cultures.

Historically, German wedding rituals have been subject to considerable state manipulation. Numerous police and church decrees were issued in virtually ever part of Germany in order to control as rigidly as possible every aspect of the pre-nuptial ceremonies and the post-nuptial celebrations. The number of guests allowed at meals, the dishes which might be served, and the amount of liquor which might be consumed were legislated with astonishing detail and austerity.[1] Some of the legislations would seem to have stemmed from the desire for a restraint on excessive frivolity, the need for which is apparent from the following account:

> Den meisten der sich beteiligten Gäste tat der Branntwein schon etwas zu leide, und nur daraus lässt sich die schreckliche Zudringlichkeit, Unbescheidenheit und das furchtbare Toben erklären, was mit einem Male entstand. Es ist dieses Gebaren zu vergleichen dem Drängen, Stossen, Schieben und Beissen einer Zucht Ferkeln, die über eine kleine Krippe herfallen. Tisch und Bänke seufzen unter dem allseitigen Drängen.[2]

Not all the controls, however, would seem to have been so easily justified. Pre-nuptial ceremonies, in particular those significant rituals which solemnize and celebrate the engagement, the transfer of the dowry,

and the Mädchenabend (in which the bride takes formal leave of her family and clan), were strictly opposed by the authorities. It would seem that the church tried to break down those traditions which the population as a whole tended to recognize as official declarations of marriage union. For similar reasons, the customary, lengthy engagements were shortened, so that the temptation would be reduced for the young people to regard the engagement as tantamount to marriage. Originally secular in nature, marriage first came to be solemnized by the church door and, later, in the church itself.

From about the sixteenth century onward, church influence became very pronounced. Marriage was viewed as a sacrament, and church teaching infiltrated some of the ritual and poetry. The bride's crown came to be identified with the crown of the Virgin Mary, and brides tended to dress in the manner of the local statue to the Virgin.[3] Biblical references abound in wedding poetry. Speeches delivered at the engagement ceremony and elsewhere refer to the Creation and to Adam and Eve.[4] It came to be common practice that both the bride and the groom undergo a marriage examination by the local priest. The young people had to demonstrate their knowledge of the scriptures and of their respective duties within the family.[5] Before the bride's departure for church, a male member of the wedding party would remind her of the seriousness of the step she was about to undertake.[6] The most popular and well-known of all wedding songs identifies God as the institutor of marriage, and describes marriage as a penance and a duty which must be suffered gladly until the Day of Judgement should arrive. I give the poem in full here because it helps to understand the general mood of

German weddings and wedding poetry, while not being in itself of any particular ritual importance. The following version is Alemannic in origin:

Hört alles, was ich euch erklär':
Wo kommt denn euer Ehstand her?
Merket auf mit Fleiss!
Er ist von keinem Menschen erdicht't,
Gott selber hat ihn eingericht't
Im Paradeis, im Paradeis.

Wie Gott den Adam hat erschaffen,
Lässt er ihn ganz freundlich schlafen,
Tut ihm nicht weh.
Er nahm ein Ripp aus Adams Leib
Und schafft ihm draus sein eignes Weib,
Setzt ein die Eh'.

Es soll sich niemand lassen dran,
Der dieses Band auflösen kann
Als Gott allein;
Er nimmt den Ehstand wohl in acht,
Weil er aus Wasser Wein gemacht,
Zu Kanaan.

Der Ehstand ist ein hartes Band,
Weil er muss durch des Priesters Hand
Gebunden sein.
Der Ehstand ist eine harte Pflicht;
Was man vor dem Altar verspricht
Muss gehalten sein.

Der Ehstand ist eine harte Buss',
Dieweil man so viel leiden muss;
Gibt Kreuz gar viel.
Man muss sich halt ergeben drein,
Muss willig und geduldig sein,
So lang Gott will.

Wie werden wir alsdann bestehn,
Wenn es zum End' der Welt wird gehn
Vorm Richterstuhl?
Da wird einst alles offenbar
Und vor dem Auge Gottes klar,
Sei's gut oder bös.

Jetzt bitt' ich euch, ihr Hochzeitsgäst,
Dass ihr die Brautleut' nicht vergesst.
Gedenkt an sie!
Verricht't für sie auch ein Gebet,
Dass sie den Ehstand recht antret'n,
Auch halten tun.

Nun also gratulier' ich euch;
Den Frieden wünsch' ich allezeit
Bis in den Tod!
Wir wünschen euch viel Glück und Segen
Und nach der Welt das ew'ge Leben!
Das geb euch Gott!

Folklorists have at times simplified the wedding rituals by regarding them as Christian perversions. In the period of the Third Reich, Gustav Jungbauer argued that the ritual history of the wedding was a two-part structure of Germanic (or pre-Christian) and Christian.[8] He viewed the Christian influence as a corrupting one, especially in regard to the position of women in society. The subservience of the wife to her husband, and the weighty responsibilities she acquires through marriage (the duty to love and to serve, the curse of bearing children in pain) were seen as a degradation of the more egalitarian Germanic society. I would argue that there is an integration of Christian and secular elements in the wedding ceremony and, furthermore, that the "didacticism" of much of the poetry is not as superficial as it may at first appear.

In fact, it is curious to note that there is less clearly definable religious influence in the German rituals than in the Russian ones. A consequence of the tight control of pre-nuptial celebrations was the postponement of rituals of parting until after or only just before the wedding had taken place. The dance plays a major role in German weddings, and the dance figures ritualize parting and joining in

one. I will be describing some of these dances in detail, although "dance" may be a misleading term, where we are speaking of a highly dynamic ritual complex.[9]

Karl Weinhold has indicated that choral music played a major role in weddings of the Middle Ages, but that it has largely been replaced by band music at such occasions as the processions to and from the church.[10] There is still evidence, however, of a general choral structure to the surviving wedding music.

In order to approach the question of the lament features in German ritual wedding songs, I will consider samples of wedding poetry in reference to their position and function within the ritual, as well as in reference to their thematic structure.[11] For this reason, I will organize my study in accordance with the ritual developments of the wedding ceremony, beginning with the courtship and betrothal, and ending with the final initiation of the bride into marriage.

Unlike the Russian wedding laments, which are to be found in a variety of journals, monographs and anthologies, German bridal songs are difficult to locate. The main reason for this difficulty lies in the lack of a general recognition of the importance of the genre. A further reason is that the German songs have been dying out over a longer period of time than have the Russian ones, and the major surviving sources are the folk traditions of isolated German enclaves, such as Siebenbürgen, Gottschee and the Banat. Often, the texts appear in dialects which are difficult to follow, and ritual annotation is not always extensive enough. More often, however, the ritual descriptions of wedding ceremonies do not include song material. Didactic songs, such as the Ehestandslied quoted above, have, at times, obscured

simpler, more ritualistic bridal songs, to the point where they would seem to have disappeared altogether in many regions. It is left to us to piece together, from the material that is still available, a tradition which may once have been of considerable significance.

Werbung

For the most part, marriages were arranged by the parents of the couple, or even by the entire clan. One or two highly respected members of the clan were chosen to represent the bridegroom's family in the choice of a spouse and in the negotiations with the girl's parents. Terms used to designate these people vary according to region. Rituals and ritual sayings applied to the Werbung as well as to other moments in the marriage ceremony, but had little to do with the bride, although a formal demonstration of her willingness was sometimes expected.[12]

There is one type of folk song which is related directly to courting procedures, although no particular ritual basis has been established. These songs are in dialogue form, and describe the visitation at night of a young girl by a suitor. The assumption made in the songs is that the rendezvous, which may leave the girl pregnant, will nonetheless end up at the church door. This type of song, known as the Kiltlied,[13] has some interesting features for the student of the lament. Firstly, it is related to a ritual connected with marriage (generally known as Fensterln or Nachtfreierei), in which a man visits the girl of his choosing during the night and knocks on her window to gain admittance. Secondly, it is in dialogue form, the bride addressing the groom directly in at least one stanza of the poem. And, thirdly, in many

instances it contains a certain lament motif, when the bride complains to her lover that she is pregnant and he must not leave her, or that she has lost her honour:

> Ich habe geschlafen in deinem Arm,
> Ich habe geschlafen, dass Gott erbarm,
> Mein' Ehr' hab ich verschlafen.[14]

Unfortunately, a study of these poems has no real place in the present dissertation. Not only is the ritual basis obscure, but the lament -- if such we may call it -- does not suggest the passage of the girl from one state to another. The promise of marriage, even when it concludes the folk song, has the effect of providing a happy ending, but is not important in itself.

Verlobung

Known by a variety of terms, such as Löfte in Lippish[15] and Handstroach (note the similarity to the Russian rukobit'je) in parts of the Tyrol,[16] the engagement ceremony was considered a solemn and irreversible promise of marriage. Old folk songs indicate the symbolic importance of the engagement, as in this example:

> Ich nahm den Kranz in meine Hand,
> Gab ihr mein Trau zu einem Pfand
> Von ihr wollt ich nit weichen:
> Weichstu von mir, rächt's Gott an dir,
> Man find noch wol Deinsgleichen.[17]

In a description from Magdeburg, we are told that the engagement ceremony traditionally involves the exchanging of vows, the free affirmation by both bride and groom, witnesses, and a dinner party afterwards. "Die jungen Leute würden durch dieselbe zu wirklichen Eheleuten, ob sie gleich noch nicht 'zur Kirchen und Strassen' gegangen

seien," we are further informed.[18] The finality of the engagement could prove a threat to church control of such matters and, in a very early decree (1380) of the area, secret engagements are forbidden.

According to Saxon law, the engagement was concluded by the payment of the bride-price, a practice which, according to Wegener,[19] had become merely symbolic by the seventeenth century, and had totally disappeared (except for a few vestigial sayings) by the nineteenth century. Yet folk songs would seem to have a longer memory, as witness this one from Silesia:

> 'Sind drei draussen, Frau Mutter!'
> "Frag, was sie woll'n, meine Tochter."
>
> 'Einer will mich haben, Frau Mutter!'
> "Frag', ob viel Thaler, meine Tochter."
>
> 'Dreihundert Thaler, Frau Mutter!'
> "Das ist zu wenig, meine Tochter." (Erk/Bohme, No. 865)

And so it goes, until the would-be bridegroom proffers five hundred talers, upon which the mother advises the daughter to accept him.

Das Brautgutfahren

Many terms are used to designate the ritual transportation of the bride's dowry to the new house. Kistenabend,[20] Sämerfieren,[21] and the accompanying rituals of Brautdiesse and Brautbesen[22] serve as examples. This is a ceremony of passage, perhaps a remnant of the original marriage ritual itself.[23] The wagon which carries the goods is usually gaily decorated, and some of the decorations may be symbolic of marriage (such as the spinning-wheel), fertility, wealth, and female labor.[24] The Lippish bride is aided by her girl friends in the winding of a flax bundle.[25] The girls hide various items, such as children's

toys and clothes, in the bundle, and it is placed at the back of the wagon. Meanwhile, the young men have decorated a broom with coloured ribbons and egg shells, and topped it with an apple, and this is placed at the front of the wagon. Furniture is piled in the middle, and the loaded and decorated wagon is driven to the new house on the day before the wedding. The journey is not unlike that of the wedding procession the next day. Food and drink are proffered at the new home,[26] and during the journey obstacles are placed to bar the passage of the wagon (Wegsperrungen) until a ransom has been paid. In some cases, the arrival of the wagon at the new home is followed by the preparation of the marriage bed. This could be the occasion for bawdy jokes and songs, or for a variety of practical jokes (such as making the bed so that it would be uncomfortable to lie in) or, as in the Lippish example, of shutting the seamstress and the carpenter (who, of course, made the dowry) into the nuptial chamber for a few minutes.[27] The custom of Wegsperrungen (also Spannen or Fürziehen), common as well to the post-nuptial procession, is described as part of the ritual driving of the dowry in many regions, as here in Laakirchen, Upper Austria:

> Die Fahrt musste aber Hindernisse überwinden, die Brautfuhre wurde "verzogen", d.h. es waren über die Strasse Schranken gemacht, vor denen der Wagen Halt machen musste. Die Burschen spannten einen Strick, oder hielten eine Stange querüber, an der war meist ein Bündel Heu für die Pferde in der Mitte befestigt, damit diese während der "Ablösung" ruhig blieben. Die Brautleute mussten Geld für einen Trunk als Schrankensteuer oder Ablösegebühr zahlen, dann konnte die Fuhre wieder bis zur nächsten Schranke, wo sich der Brauch wiederholte.[28]

The importance of the spinning-wheel as wedding symbol will be discussed later. The decoration of the new spinning-wheel figures

highly as pre-nuptial ritual in areas where the destruction of the old spinning-wheel constitutes the central ritual of parting and initiation at the end of the wedding celebrations. Two rhymes from Olvenstedt attest to the importance of the spinning-wheel in ritual matters:

> Spinne, Mêk'n, spinne schoen,
> Bald wirstu dän Fraier sên; (Wegener, p. 240)

> Mek'n spinnste fine,
> Denn sosste waer'n mine,
> Spinnst'e oaw'r growwe,
> Denn goah'ek dick vorôw'r. (Wegener, p. 241)

In some regions, a new spinning-wheel is the major gift to the bride, who discards her old spinning-wheel as part of the post-nuptial rituals of parting. When the new spinning-wheel is carried in the dowry wagon, it is brightly decorated. In one community of Magdeburg, Hötensleben, a strange ritual is recorded. In the middle of the dowry wagon, brightly decorated as usual and filled with laughing, joyful people, is the spinning-wheel, which the mistress of ceremonies holds up for all to see. Only the bride does not take part in the festivity:

> Die Braut selbst, von einigen Frauen begleitet, folgte etwas später zu Fusse still nach.... Sie trug in einem neuen, kreisrunden Handkorbe ihr Leichentuch (Likloak'n) und ihr Todtenhemd. Der Brtg. empfing sie vor der Hausthür.
> (Wegener, p. 251)

This strange ritual is not mentioned for other regions. The allusion to death is the most striking aspect of it, but the ritual message is not as melancholy as it may at first seem. The ritual is made up of a series of contrasts. The sorrow of the bride contrasts with the joy of the wedding cart; her drabness contrasts with its bright colours; likewise, slowness contrasts with speed, loneliness with companionship and, finally, death with life renewed. On the abstract level, a straight

line contrasts with a circle. Girlhood, represented by the bride, walks a straight line through life into death. The line is symbolic of human life without renewal or continuity. The "dying" girl is drab, sad, and accompanied by what she can expect to become --- an old woman, without beauty or youth, who is approaching the real grave. On the other hand, the round spinning-wheel depicts the cycle of life and death ever renewing itself; it is the unending cycle of woman's role in society. It is surrounded by gay, laughing women, is brightly coloured, and is decorated with fertility symbols. In this circle symbol, youth renews old age, and marriage triumphs over death. Although the symbol of the bride is black, she carries her winding-sheet in a round basket, and she is greeted at the end of her journey by the groom. Marriage is seen as the rejection or "death" of the individual, the dying of the personality, and as such, the portrayal is harsh. Yet, at the same time, marriage is the initiation of the young bride into the collective society of womanhood. The ritual completes itself symbolically as well as actually with the reception of the girl at her new home by her husband. It ends on a note of triumph.

Einladung

The person (or persons) whose job it is to invite the community at large to the wedding is a central figure in the wedding ceremony. He wears a traditional costume and goes from house to house, partaking of food or drink in each house and delivering his invitation, often in the form of a rhymed address, although terse invitations have to some extent replaced the elaborate sayings of a century ago. Often the invitation is pronounced in High German to make it more formal.

Following is an excerpt from one such Laderspruch recorded in Ostervesede:

> Hier komm ich hergeschritten,
> hätt' ich ein Pferd, so könnt ich ritten;
> nun hab ich mein Pferd im Stall beim Futter stehen
> lassen und muss ich zu Fusse gehen.
> Ich bin von ernstfestlichen Leuten ausgesandt,
> von Johann Hinrich Böschen und seiner Frau
> und der Tochter als Braut.
>
> Diese alle lassen Euch bitten zur Hochzeit
> als am Freitag und so lang als währet
> und helfen verzehren,
> was der liebe Gott hat bescheret
> an Speise und Trank,
> Dann sollt Ihr auch lustig sein
> etliche Tage lang. (Dreyer; p. 42)

Polterabend

In using the modern term Polterabend, I am aware that its authenticity and its venerableness are both in question. The origin of the practice of smashing glass and making noise outside the bride's house on the eve of her wedding is obscure. Traditional folklorists have long assumed that noise-making had its roots in the belief that evil spirits could be driven off thereby. Recently, the explanation has been proposed that noise was simply a means of making the forthcoming wedding known to as wide a population as possible.[29] On the matter of terminology, there are innumerable names which have been given to designate the eve of the wedding, among others Brautabend, Walgernacht, and Jungfern-Abend.[30] In one area, it is called Kistenabend, because on that day the dowry chest is driven to the new home.[31] Another term, Struiskerbinnen, indicates that on that evening the wedding wreaths and sprays are bound by the bride and her friends.[32]

Whatever the name or the activity, the evening is generally

associated with the farewell of the bride from her youthful friends. Thus, in Laakirchen, Upper Austria, the evening is known as the Kranzltanz, no doubt because the attending bridesmaids are known as KranzlbrÄute and KranzmÄdchen.[33] The evening party is a cheerful one but, it is interesting to note, in the Laakirchen wedding descriptions there is no ritual removal of the wreath after the wedding (an occasion referred to in other regions as the Kranzltanz).

In Siebenburgen, a farewell song is sung to the bride's friends, in the words of which the bride bequeaths to her friends the roses of youth which, for her, have already been plucked.[34] In this song, the bride's immediate family has an ambivalent relationship to the girl. They hold out their hands in farewell, yet withhold the plucked roses from the bride. The symbolism of the rose is poetically effective. The bride's family rejects the girl; they send her from them to her new life. The girl friends represent the bride as she has been, and they cannot be held responsible for the ensuing change. There is a secondary implication, as well, in the bequeathing of the roses. The girls will retain for a time the youth which the bride is losing, but they, too, will follow the inevitable road to marriage. Their roses will one day be plucked.

In Magdeburg, the term Walgernacht designates the same occasion. WÄlgern, we are told, is a derivative of wälzen, and refers specifically to the custom of dancing on the evening of the wedding. This practice, too, was combatted with some energy, avowedly for moral reasons, Spangenberg calling it a "schÄndliche Gewohnheit,"[35] without clarifying his position with any more detailed description. Can we find a clue to

the church's dislike of this occasion in another term used to describe it -- the Abendhochzeit?[36] Again, it would seem that the temptation to celebrate and consummate the wedding without the sanction of the church was at one time precariously great. Wegener, however, proffers the interesting theory that, in Magdeburg, the Walgernacht was combatted because of its association with the ritual bathing of the bride, which formerly occurred on that evening.[37]

This ritual bathing of the bride and sometimes of the bridegroom before the wedding (in some cases afterward) seems to have been in practice in earlier times in the Magdeburg area. By the sixteenth century, legislation was passed in various communities to abolish the practice, or at least to reduce the festivities which accompanied it (for example, Wegener writes that Spangenberg "nichts dagegen hat[te], wenn es nicht in ein unordentlich Gesoff ausartet"[38]). In one community (Havelberg), both ritual bathing and wreath-making were forbidden; elsewhere, the bathing was permitted so long as no one accompanied the bride or groom to the bath (in some cases, the number allowed to accompany him or her was restricted), and that no festivities took place afterward. In Braunschweig, for instance, a decree limited the bathing ritual to six women and their maids, with a total of twenty women to be invited for dinner afterwards. Besides acknowledging that a bathing ritual before or after the consummation of marriage had probably a religious significance of some sort,[39] Wegener does not speculate on the origin of this custom amongst the German population of the area. The nature of the decrees would indicate that the bath ceremony must originally have been a fairly significant ritual, which involved several people, and was followed by celebrations.

Kolb also notes that the ritual bathing of the bride was generally current in the sixteenth century in the Tyrol (Wipptal), and that it took place on the eve of the wedding.[40]

From Gottschee comes a song which is sung during the binding of the bridal wreaths. We are told that the girls sing the song teasingly, but with a certain melancholy:

's ist heunt a junkfrau wrölich gebannen,
wrölich bert sie niemermêr!
Wrôlich kàn sie noch sainen,
àber junkfrau bert sie niemermêr!

's hàt heunte a junkfrau pöschlain geroichet,
roichen bert sie niemermêr!
Roichen kàn sie noch ahòrtre,
aber junkfrau bert sie niemermer!

's hat heunt a junkfrau kranzlain gepunten,
pinten bert sie niemermêr!
pinten kàn sie noch a hôrtre,
aber junkfrau bert sie niemermêr.[41]

The song is built upon a structure of comparisons. Today is compared to tomorrow, the state of maidenhood to that of matronhood, ritual acts to the same acts without their ritual implications. In each stanza, the activities of the virgin, as expressed in the first line, are compared to the state of virginity, in the final line. The seeming contradictions in each stanza between the second and the third lines, and the structure of comparisons within each stanza, only make sense as developments of the idea of change. The bride as person, as virgin, as performer of certain ritual acts, stands out from the group of girl friends because she will soon cease to be. Although the woman she will become will still be joyful, and still make bouquets of flowers, she will have entered another state of being; she will have changed.

In Siebenbürgen, apart from the farewell ritual, the eve of the

wedding is celebrated in a variety of ways. Schuster tells us of the coming together of the village boys to waken, with a song (the so-called Morgengesang), the sleeping girls, who rise and prepare the wedding meal.[42] The Rockenlieder and their accompanying rituals also take place on this evening, and they would indicate a major ritual moment. Schuster describes the custom as follows:

> Am letzten Hochzeitabend bringen die Nachbarinnen und Freundinnen der jungen Frau einen Rocken, d.i. an einem ziemlich starken jungen Eichstamme (früher wohl nur recht starker Rocken) einen dicken "Hanfzocken" (koit), an dem an einigen Orten Eierschalen und Blumen, an andern Spindeln und Aepfel ... etc. sich befinden, (Schuster, p. 83)

The distaff can be associated with the spinning-wheel rituals known as well in German wedding ceremonies, and it carries the same connotations of death and destiny. The breaking of the distaff is more unusual since it finds parallels in the juridical breaking of a stick after someone has been condemned to death. According to tradition, the friends of the bride bring the distaff (Rocken) to the door of the room where the bridegroom and his friends are gathered. They must succeed in drawing it toward them against the efforts of those standing outside the room, and the groom must be able to break it with an axe or, as was the case earlier, to break it over his knee. After he has succeeded, the crowd sings a jubilant song, the couplet structure of which conveys the dual nature of life and death:

> Mer trauden af en bêszem,
> mer wîle gärn êszen!
> mer trauden af zwängken,
> mer wîle gärn drängken
> mer trauden of en uewen,
> mer wîle gärn brôden! (Schuster, p. 86)

As they proffer the distaff to the bridegroom, the women sing a song;

according to which the successful completion of the ritual is supposed to ensure abundance and fertility in marriage.[43] The song cautions the groom to cleave to his wife, and the bride to her husband, and to leave other women and men alone. In contrast to these blessings, should the bridegroom fail to break the distaff, the song says, his wife will die within a year.

Another version of this ritual is sung when the bride is marrying an outsider, and it takes place on the day she is to leave her home. Again, the distaff is brought into the room, this time where the bride and her guests are gathered for the farewell meal. The bride is expected to grasp the distaff, which is inclined toward her. The only struggle is that of the young bride, who does not want to take hold of it. In other words, she resists initiation.

That the basis of this ritual is magic is suggested by the incantatory structure of the song. While rituals and formulas intended to assure health and happiness for the newly married couple are prevalent in wedding customs everywhere, this ritual is of particular interest, because it is at the same time a ritual of parting and initiation, very similar to the Kampf um das alte Spinnrad, which occurs in some regions at the time of the wreath ritual; and, indeed, it is similar to the wreath ritual itself. The bride's reluctance to take hold of the distaff, in the second version, and the efforts of those outside to withhold it from the groom, in the first, suggest other rituals in which the bride and her friends attempt to withstand the initiation into married life. It is curious that, in Siebenbürgen, this ritual is performed before the marriage instead of afterwards. I will discuss the symbol of the distaff in connection with the spinning-wheel and

wreath symbols, as part of the post-nuptial ceremonies.

Another ritual which occurs on the day before the wedding, does not refer directly to the Polterabend. In some regions, the groom puts on his best clothes and goes to the market-place, where he stands for some time on the stone flagging, while the town musician plays a musical accompaniment.[44] The association of the Brautstein and the Ahnengrab was explored by J. Meier,[45] and the possibility has been expressed that the groom, in standing on the breiter Stein of the market, is paying unconscious tribute to a very old custom. The night which follows the Polterabend is invariably rather short. The bride could be awakened very early, as early as 3:00 A.M., by the youth of the village, and departure rituals of a more earnest nature begin.

Ehrentag: Abschied

From the time the bride is fetched by the groom's company, until her departure for church, the rituals become increasingly sober and tend toward a display of doctrinal didacticism. At least one such ritual, however, the presentation of the false bride, has no apparent connection with Christianity. In general terms, this ritual involves the choosing by the groom of his own bride, having been proffered another in her stead. This "false bride" may be a man, an old woman, a girl renowned for her ugliness, or perhaps just another village girl. The test can be merely hilarious or, as in the case where the groom is blindfolded or the girls disguised, truly difficult. Similar false bride rituals may occur after the wedding, in association with the other initiation rituals. This would certainly seem to be an initiation ritual, although it has variously been interpreted as a magic ruse

to "fool" evil spirits, as a game with no deeper significance, as a playful delay of initiation, and as a remnant of an ancient Indian Scheinehe.[46] The ritual would appear to be fairly widespread throughout much of Europe. The motif of the substituted bride is also common to folk tales and folk songs, and may have certain affiliations with the ritual presentation of the false bride. While this subject is much too complex to discuss here, it is perhaps worth noting that the structure of many folk tales is closely aligned to the ritual pattern of weddings. Not only do many motifs, such as the bride show, the substituted bride, or the quest, point to an alliance between the two genres, but ritual and motif may serve a very similar psychological purpose in the preparation of the participant (be it a bride or the listener to the tale) for maturity.[47] The overcoming of death figures largely in many folk tales of puberty and marriage. For an example of a folk tale which contains overt connections to the wedding ritual in motif, structure and fable, consider the "Goose Girl" in the Grimm collection.

The departure is accomplished in a series of stages, beginning with the bride's farewell to her parents, and her thanks to them for raising her. This Danksagung is often said for the bride by the Brautführer, or another designated male, and may be in High German. The use of an outsider to speak for the bride, and the use of High German enhance the solemnity of the ritual. The Danksagung is usually followed by the Brautrede, an address to the bride, and often to the bridegroom as well, in which they are reminded of the duties they undertake through marriage, of the seriousness of the step, and of its

irreversibility. These addresses are doctrinal, in a Christian sense, and very didactic, as is this exerpt from a Brautrede from Ostböhmen:

> Ich übergebe ... Ihnen die Jungfer Braut im Namen ihres hier stehenden Vaters mit dem Bemerken, dass Sie diesselbe wie Ihren eigenen Leib lieben, nähren und schützen wollen; aber auch, liebe Braut, dass Ihr auch diesen Euren Bräutigam für Eueren künftigen Herrn erkennen, ihm untertänig und in billigen Sachen Gehorsam leisten wollet, dass Ihr miteinander friedsam und christlich leben möget. (Oehl, p. 80)

Among the duties ascribed to the wife are those of fostering homeless children, and raising them with kindness and firmness to be good Christians.[48]

Following these speeches is the Übergabe. This may be performed by a cleric or by a designated member of the wedding party, and it is followed by expressions of congratulations to the young pair and, most often, by some sort of meal. In one region, this meal is known as the Krängelhochzeit, and the guests are all those who are not invited to the wedding banquet (presumably for lack of space).[49] The departure for the church (Aufbruch) follows after that. The already quoted Ehestandslied may be sung at this point. Other Abschiedslieder are also known, and they give rise to tears and lamentation on the part of the bride. I will quote two. In the first, the song is sung in the first person, but is not sung exclusively by the bride. In the second, the song is actually a poem delivered in a sing-song voice by the Brautführer, and is directed to the bride (in some case, also to the groom):

A.

> Das ist wohl, das ist wohl, ein harter Schluss,
> wenn ich allein, wenn ich allein wandern muss
> in die weite Welt hinaus.

Lebewohl ja Vaterhaus, ja Vaterhaus!
Vater und Mutter, Grosseltern, b'hüt euch Gott!
Bleibt mir getreu bis in den Tod!
Meine Gedanken zu euch immer zieh'n,
über fremde Häuser hin, ja Häuser hin,
und da muss geschieden sein.
Ihr Geschwister, ihr Geschwister, gross und klein!
Ich kann nicht länger, nicht länger bei euch sein.
Das ist einmal so der Schluss,
weil ich wandern und scheid'n muss,
ja scheiden muss![50]

B.

I soll a weng singa,
Mei Singa hat a Kunst,
Mir is ja heut gar net
A so als wia sunst.

Ja mei liabi Braut,
Tua di pfiatn,
Du muasst ja vom Vaterhaus
Aussi schriattn.

Meine liabm Eltern,
I dank enk fur d' Müah,
Wa's in meina Jugendzeit
G'habt habts mit mir.

Meini liabm Eltern,
Es derf enk net verdriassn,
Weils a so a sauberes Dirndl
Habts verhausen müassn,

Denn in Bräutigam, den N.,
Den kenn i schon lang,
Dass da der Braut net schlecht geht,
Da is ma gar nit bang.

Hiazt geh ma in Godsnam
Furt va dahoam,
Und grüden ma uns selber
A pagenes Hoam.

Geh ma aufi aufs Bergal,
Schau ma abi ins Tal,
Da warten die lustigen
Hochzeiter all.

(i)

Ba da geh ma weg
Und für d' Häuser vorbei,
Nach N.N. abi (oder aussi),
Da bleib ma a Weil.

Dö Braut, dö tuat wandern,
Sie wandert net weit,
Sie tuat halt grad heiraten,
Weil sie's grad g'freit.

Pfiat die Gott, Vaterhaus,
Geh hiazt von dir hinaus,
Geh hiazt in a neues Lebm,
In Mann seins entgegen.[51]

It should be apparent that these songs differ in tone from the popular Ehestandlied. In both of the above, the motif of wandering (lines 2 and 13 in the first example, the first two lines of stanza ix in the second example) symbolizes the passage. Both see the bride's marriage as an unavoidable step (note the recurrence of "muss" and "müssen"). Farewell and regret are central to both songs, but in neither is there an indication as to why the bride must depart, must get married. Neither Christian nor non-Christian reasons are given. The bride must marry because it is natural that she should do so. In the first example, the theme of departure into the unknown is particularly strong. The familiar must be exchanged for the unfamiliar; the journey must be undertaken. Two other ideas merge with that of the journey into the unknown. Firstly, the bride is alone in her fate. This is expressed, simply, in line 2 ("allein"), as well as through the opposition of the singular "ich" with the plural "ihr." Secondly, the departure is seen as an ending, and a bitter one ("ein harter Schluss"), with an intimation of death ("Bleibt mir getreu bis in den Tod!"). In the second example, the expressions of sorrow or darkness are less strong, because they are offset by a parallel theme of new life

beginning. In stanza ix, we are told that the bride will be wandering, but that the journey will not be long.

The obligatory tears at the moment of parting are apparent in this couplet, recorded from Gottschee:

> Şeu ist aufgeşassen, şeu hàt geşnupfaizet!
> Şeu işt ahin geritten, şeu hàt gejuchaizet! (Schröer, p. 278)

Prillinger relates, as well, that the bride "bis zur nächsten Biegung ... unter Tränen der Mutter zurück [winkt]. (Prillinger, p. 179)

The musical accompaniment of the bride on her way to church may be in the form of religious melodies,[52] or, in some cases, is based on older wedding songs with a certain lament motif, as in this example:

> Junge Brut, nu musst du rut.
> Din besten Dage hest du hadd,
> nu musst du zappeln bet ins Grab. (Dreyer, p. 48)

Despite the tears of the bride, and, at times, the sombre note of the musical accompaniment, the drive or procession to church is a festive one. The wedding party and the guests have their specified order in the procession, all are dressed in traditional garb, and even the horses are decorated with ribbons or wreaths. The jubilation is even greater when the procession leaves the church, and the music is triumphant, without any hint of sorrow.

In Siebenburgen, the departure and farewell rituals are recorded with detail by Schuster,[53] and have a more traditional quality than is found in many regions. The ritual is initiated by the ringing of the church bells, at which point the groom's retinue sets out for the bride's house, the Brautknecht in the lead. The bride, meanwhile, is surrounded by her clan, and the bell ringing provokes the singing of a

wedding song in which no mention of Christian marriage is discernible. Quite simply, marriage means the cleaving to her husband and the leaving of her family:

> Nėm urlef, nėm urlef fun dėinjem fôter dėinj!
> nėm urlef, nėm urlef fun dėinjer motter dėinj!
> [nėm urlef, nėm urlef fun dėinjem brâder dėinj!
> nėm urlef, nėm urlef fun dėinjer sästzter dėinj!]
> (Schuster, p. 76)

Upon the arrival of the groom's party, the Brautknecht delivers a lengthy address. He greets the assembled company, claiming to be a messenger sent by his master from a strange country:

> Ech bän e bäden ausz frėmdem lûnt,
> mėinj här huot mėch zâ och gesûnt. (Schuster, p. 78)

He describes the rich attire and the wealth of his lord in great detail:

> Hie äsz geklojt mät brömem unt blôem gewoûnt,
> sė rok äs äm esi hîes unt lûnk,
> unt rocht äm nor bäs af de knä,
> und äsz gefeâtert mät gangem lämerfêl;
> ---
> Hî hôd ůg en bojdel wol,
> mät fuofhanjdert galde wirt e fôl. (Schuster, p. 79)

He asks the bride to come to him and to give him her right hand, that he might lead her to the bridegroom. According to tradition, this initiation is held up by either the presentation of a false bride or the proffering of the bride's left hand. The lengthy speech which he delivers describes, in terms of a journey from her father's house, through the village to the groom's house, the ritual movement of the bride away from her childhood to her married state. The Christian interpretation of marriage is incorporated into the speech, and this

incorporated Ehestandlied is notable through a change in stanza structure and rhythm:

> Ädermon hôt sîl unt laif
> e jêt îstount mân unt waif,
> unt sä wieszle mät de jôren
> deser wält ze lojter pôren. (Schuster, p. 82)

The speech ends with a final, successful plea to the bride to stand up and give him her right hand. The bride then takes her leave of her parents, thanking them for her upbringing as tradition demands, and the procession leaves for church.

With the exception of the incorporated Ehestandslied, the structure of the Brautrede is a compilation of couplets, divided loosely into sections, each of which is built up of parallel statements. The imagery, for the most part, is descriptive of dress and domestic detail, more or less closely related to the wedding ritual (hyperbole being used as a poetic device). It is in the form of an address, and is closely connected with the rituals of parting and joining.

Eugen Fehrle quotes the final couplet of a wedding song which, addressed to the bride, reminds her of death, sin and damnation.[54] In comparing that song to a song of praise from the fourteenth century, Fehrle comments that the one-time joy and resoluteness of the bride had been transformed into sorrow and even fear of the after life. How justified is this assessment of the farewell songs to the bride? We have seen the prevalence of Christian allusion and dogma in the Danksagungen and the Brautrede as well as in the Ehestandslieder. But it is wrong to equate didacticism as such, expressions of sorrow, and allusions to death, exclusively with Christian teaching. As we have seen in connection with the Russian songs, the lament affirms the

marriage of the bride as a passage, and death symbolizes change. The Christian dogma of the sanctity of marriage, and the marital duties to love one another embellish, but do not create, the lament theme, which is basic to the ritual of parting.[55] While the didactic Brautrede and its corresponding poetic motifs are permeated with Christian allusions, we must remember that the ritual situation compels some form of didactic response. The bride, through marriage, is being initiated into the community of married women, and she carries with her symbols of this new life (such as the new spinning-wheel, the decorated distaff, and the bridal crown decorated for the purpose of its removal). There is, thus, no contradiction between the didactic intent or the death allusions in the darker songs and the songs in praise of the virgin bride:

> Hiefür! hiefür!
> für einer erbarn junkfraw tür!
> Ein lieblen lachen
> kan freude machen,
> es war ir roter mund
> der tut uns freuden kund. (Fehrle, p. 21)

In fact, the moral, didactic songs make little sense outside the context of the song of praise. In both, poetic exaggeration creates poles of feeling which complement each other in apposition. In a Lower Austrian song, the natural coordination of lament and praise motifs makes perfect poetic sense, while the alternation between two distinct metres affirms the alternating predominance of a mood of praise and a mood of sorrow:

> Schöne Braut!
>
> Die Myrten im Haar, wie schmücken sie dich,
> Die Augen, sie leuchten so wonniglich!

Es spielet der Schleier dir kosend im Haar.
Ja alles, es dünkt dich so wunderbar.

'Wie ist es gekommen, wie kann es denn sein?
Ein Glück ohne Ende, o Liebster mein!'

So tönt's dir im Herzen, o liebliche Braut.
Wir füllen die Gläser und rufen es laut:

Ein Gsund, Glück und Freude, du bist es ja wert,
Sie seien im vollen Masse dir bis ans End beschert.

Verehrte Braut, jetzt musst dich fassen,
Jetzt musst das Elternhaus verlassen.

Musst fahren mit uns zur Kirche fort,
Zu sprechen das wichtige 'Ja-Wort.'

Denn gehüllt bist du schon in dein Ehrenkleid,
Auch deine Eltern und Gäste sind bereit. (Hurdes, p. 34)

By no means all or even most of the Abschieds- and Kehrauslieder are strikingly Christian in theme, although they all express, through poetic structure, theme and ritual connection, an acute awareness of passage. In order to illustrate this point, I will examine four such songs, and compare them according to structure and ritual association:

A.

Komm heraus, komm heraus, du schöne, schöne Braut,
Deine gute Tage sind alle alle aus.
O weiele weh! O weiele weh!
Was weinet die schöne Braut so sehr!
Musst die Jungfern lassen stehn,
Zu den Weibern musst du gehn.

Lege an, lege an, auf kurze, kurze Zeit
Darfst du ja wohl tragen das schöne Hochzeitskleid.
O....sehr!
Musst dein Härlein schliessen ein
In dem weissen Häubelein.

Lache nicht, lache nicht, deine rote, rote Schuh
Werden dich wohl drücken, sind eng genug dazu.
O....sehr!
Wenn die andern tanzen gehn,
Wirst du bei der Wiege stehn.

Winke nur, winke nicht, sind gar leichte, leichte Wink,
Bis du an dem Finger einen goldnen Hochzeitring,
O....sehr!
Goldne Ketten legst du an,
Musst in ein Gefängnis gahn.

Springe heut, springe heut deinen letzten, letzten Tanz,
Morgen kannst du weinen auf den schönen Hochzeitkranz.
O....sehr!
Musst die Blumen lassen stehn,
Auf den Acker musst du gehn.56

B.

Komm heraus, komm heraus, du traurige Braut
Wir stehen hier vor dem Hochzeitshaus.
O weh, o weh, wie weinet diese Braut so sehr.

Dieses Jahr trägt sie einen Kranz auf dem Kopf,
Uebers Jahr werden ihr die Haare ausgeroppt.
O weh, etc.

Dieses Jahr trägt sie einen Siffel um den Hals,
Uebers Jahr hat sie weder Salz noch Schmalz. O weh, etc.

Dieses Jahr trägt sie ein Ringlein an der Hand,
Uebers Jahr führt sie ein Kindlein an der Hand. O weh, etc.

Dieses Jahr trägt sie noch Zwickel-Zwickelstrümpf,
Uebers Jahr hat sie weder Schuh noch Strümpt. O weh, etc.

Dieses Jahr trägt sie noch schön gewichste Schuh,
Uebers Jahr läuft sie noch barfuss dazu. O weh, etc.

Dieses Jahr trägt sie einen kattunen Rock,
Uebers Jahr wird ihr der Buckel ausgeklopft. O weh, etc.
(Erk/Böhme, No. 870)

C.

No wai^{n}, no wai^{n}, no wai^{n}, traut's Bräutrl wai^{n}!
Mai^{n}st du, mia^{r} pfeifm dia^{r} bis Uwa d'Bruck?
Bis heint Uwa's Gaua wulst wieda z'ruck!
No wai^{n}, no wai^{n}, no wai^{n}, traut's Bräutrl wai^{n},
Owa wai^{n}, wa-wa-wa-wa-wai^{n}! (Dudelsack.)

No wai^{n} u.s.w.
Mai^{n}st du, mia^{r} pfeifm dia^{r} bis Uwa'n Grobm?
'S wia^{r}d dia^{r} da Bugl brav wula g'schlogn!
No wai^{n} u.s.w.

Mai^{n}st du, mia^{r} pfeifm dia^{r} Göld u Braut?
Mia^{r} pfeifm da neks als Angst u Nauth!

Mai^{n}st du, mia^{r} pfeifm dia^{r} Waiz u Koa^{r}n?
Mia^{r} pfeifm dia^{r} neks als Distln u Doa^{r}n!

Mai^{n}st du, mia^{r} pfeifm dia^{r} Schauf u Rind?
Mia^{r} pfeifm dia^{r} all zwaa Gaua-r-a Kind!

Mai^{n}st du, mia^{r} pfeifm di bis Üwa'n Stegh?
Mia^{r} pfeifm dia^{r} neks als Wöign in Wegh!

Mia^{r} hobm dia^{r} pfiffm va graussn Leid--
Badenk dü wol, 's is Bitza nu Zeit!
U wal döi Thua^{r}n all offn stäih^{n},
Sa wölln ma^{n} a all einchigäih^{n} --
In Züchtn und in Ehren.[57]

D.

So pehüet eu gott, muetar liebeu main,
Ih ŝich eu heunt unt niemermêr!
Won eu bil ih schéan urlop nâm.

So lât mih, mueter, in kàrŝte gêan
ih hàn wergassen maine piswàabn scheuch!
"In main dan kàrsten berŝt du niemermêr!"
So lât mih, mueter, in kàrŝten gêan
ih hàn wergassen maine strumpfpantlain!
heuer hent ŝeu maine strumpfpantlain,
in's jûr bernt ŝeu maine biegenpantlain!
"In main den kàrsten berŝt du niemermêr! (Schröer, p. 278)

The example from Des Knaben Wunderhorn, (A), serves to some extent as a reference, but the authenticity of the form cannot be taken entirely for granted. The relative antiquity, however, of the collection makes this example a useful one. Of the four songs, the last one is the most distinct in its form.

All four songs include some form of refrain. In A, the refrain divides the stanzas in the middle, very roughly coinciding with an alternation between present (lines 1 and 2) and future (lines 5 and 6), although there are intimations of future loss in the first two lines as

well. In B and C, the refrain frames the stanzas, and the alternations are expressed in rhyming couplets built in a parallel structure. In D, the refrain is composed of one line and occurs only twice. The major distinguishing feature of the refrain lines in D is the change in narrator (the mother is speaking) and in the structural difference between repetition (in these lines), parallelism (in lines 5 and 8), and repetition as the opening portion of parallel lines (lines 4 and 7). In this poem, the alternation between present and future occurs specifically only in lines 8 and 9, but the refrain lines have the function of dramatizing verbally the change in relationship which occurs between mother and daughter. As such, it creates a mood of irrevocable change, and of the rejection and isolation of the bride through that change, which does not occur in the other three examples. In D, the refrain functions organically within the poem. The bride, having bidden her mother farewell, nonetheless tries to return to the past under pretext of retrieving some of her colourful girlhood clothes. Only through the relentless denial of her mother do the sentiments expressed in lines 1 - 3 become dramatic truth. In all four examples, to a greater or lesser poetic degree, the refrain emphasizes the alternations of present (and the past which is coming to an end) with the future.

We have already seen that in D the lines repeated by the mother have a very striking effect on the poem as a whole. The parallel structure of the couplets in B and C is apparent, while in A, repetition is used to such a degree that the motif of change is slightly obscured.

We are told that B was sung in front of the bride's house on her wedding day and that D was sung when the groom comes to fetch the bride to church. We are not given a ritual connection for A and C, although

a nearly identical version of C is found in Hofmann's dramatization of Egerland weddings and is sung before the departure ceremonies on the day of the wedding. A, B and D are all clearly connected to the dressing of the bride, and A and B both indicate, by their opening lines, that the bride was hidden from view and is being bidden to present herself. The detailing of the wedding clothes evokes the motif of change. The journey motif as symbolic of change is emphasized in C with the allusion to the bridge which divides past from future, as well as one end of the village from the other. The ritual connection in D is stated in the third line and affirmed through the dialogue between mother and daughter.

Poems A, B and C contrast the present with the future and describe the bleakness which awaits the bride. Not only are frivolity and joy replaced by hard work and care, but death itself is alluded to in A in the double meaning of Acker as field and as graveyard, and in the possible allusion to the dance of death in the phrase "letzter Tanz." In D, hard work or misery as the gift of the future is only alluded to once, in the suggestion of childbirth in line 9. Instead, the poem dramatizes the break with the past which is realized in the accompanying ritual of farewell. Only in C does an explicit didactic function intrude on the poem, in stanza 7.

The poems differ from each other primarily in the degree to which ritual connection and the bride's point of view determine the structure. A, as it stands in the collection, is more folk song than ritual poem. B and C are more closely and explicitly related to ritual than is A. In C, the repetition of "mainst du" creates the illusion of dialogue, and, consequently, the song reflects more strongly than B

the feelings of the bride. This emotive effect is, however, somewhat offset by the intrusion of the warning in the final stanza, which creates the illusion of choice (line 32), of decorum and duty (line 35). D is an excellent example of ritual poetry. As we have seen, the ritual of parting is dramatized through the structure of the dialogue. The direct address with which the poem opens is both poetry and an actual farewell, while, in the other poems, the direct address is used to interpret and stimulate feeling. Unlike the other three, D is highly compressed with a beginning and an ending which are determined by the poem itself and by the ritual. A, B and C all make sense outside of the context of their performance, although this is less true of C than of B, and more true of A. D is at best obscure without at least an editor's notation on its association with ritual, and makes most sense as part of a ritual.

Let us return to the original question posed by the opponents of the Ehestandslieder. While the point of view expressed in them is particular to Christian teaching, the songs are modelled on a structure of passage not radically different from the non-Christian Abschiedslieder. Because of the timing of the particular ritual connection of all these songs, motifs of parting predominate over those of initiation, the future being seen either in the context of hard work and poverty (the non-Christian songs) or of religious duty (the Christian songs). Allusions to death are not peculiar to the religious context, the death motif being closely integrated with the idea of passage and of the journey into the unknown in the Abschiedslieder. While concentration on the bride's duties marks one of the differences between the Russian and the German laments, the less personal structure of

the German songs in comparison to the Russian ones supports such an approach with or without a Christian connotation. While, in the Russian songs, the "farther side" of marriage is seen more in terms of different people and a different environment, in the German songs, more attention is directed to a different social coherence.

Post-Nuptial Rituals

The festive Hochzeitsmahl, which follows directly after the wedding, can last for more than one day in some regions. An abundance of food and drink often leads, as we have already seen, to excessive drunkenness and rowdiness. The placing of the guests and the wedding party at the banquet, the dishes served, the music played and the various collections for the poor or for paying the servers, cooks and musicians are all details determined by tradition. They need not interest us much here. Far more important, however, are the many ritual dances which mark the process of the bride's initiation.

The first dances are usually known as Braut- or Ehrentänze. The ordering of these dances varies with the community. In Laakirchen, where there is no wreath ritual (or else the wreath ritual was abandoned at some point), the bride is expected to dance with whichever of the male guests invites her, but not with the bridegroom.[58] He must wait until midnight and the very last dance. Their dance together is accompanied by lusty music and is the occasion of cheering and singing by the wedding guests. This is known as Einkranzeln, clearly a ritual derivative of a wreath ceremony. Furthermore, while there is no struggle on the part of the bride at the moment of the Einkranzeln, the bride is usually "stolen" at one or more times during the evening

and only returned to the groom after he has paid a ransom.

Elsewhere, the function of the dance as an initiation ritual is more explicit, as is the distinction between the Ehrentänze and the unwreathing. In some regions, the groom may be the last person who is allowed to dance with the bride, while in others he is the first. Other dances in the series are in specific combinations of partners, such as the Brautführer with the Kranzjungfrau, or the bride with her Brautvater. In some cases, the payment of a ransom is demanded from each male partner of the bride.[59] In one region these dances are performed before the wedding banquet and may [illegible] the removal of the wreath (in which case they are known as Kränzltänze).[60] These dances ritualize the passage from girlhood to womanhood, from father's clan to husband's clan:

> Der Brautführer [tanzt] den "Ehrentanz", das sind drei Ehrenrunden, die oft auch die "drei christlichen Ehrentänze" genannt werden. Dann übergibt der Brautführer die Braut dem Bräutigam "wieder in seinen ehrlichen Stand, in seine eigene Hand." Jetzt erst sind beide, Bräutigam und Braut -- Mann und Frau. (Hurdes, p. 13).

Hurdes claims for this ritual a basis in Germanic law. The groom was expected to release the bride from her protection within her own clan through the payment of a ransom, thereby placing her under his own protection.

Following the performance of the Ehrentänze is general dancing, which may continue well into the night. The climax of the celebrations, the removal of the wreath, usually occurs around midnight, but a number of other dances and rituals precede it in many areas. In Gottschee, at one point, the "staraschiner" (note the Slovenian term used to designate the master of ceremonies) takes a hollowed-out bread loaf or

cake, sticks a bouquet into it, and declaims:

> Einen Baum will ich pflanzen, dazu brauche ich: Erde, Lünger, einen Pfahl, etc. (Schröer, p. 280)

The guests stick money into the bread in place of the articles named. At this, the following song is sung:

> Zue har, nar zuehar,
> praitigàns wûter!,
> sanisani sani deu
>
> ber nisch hàt der wleuh!
> ar bert sih et werdriessen,
> ar bert a tuolar schiessen
> Sani etc.
>
> Bie mêr ar birt gâben
> bie lieber bàber schâgen!
> Sani etc.
>
> ar hat ja noch a pucklats negle,
> bir gaben mon ze trinkhen!
> Sani etc.
>
> zuehar, zuehar praitigàns mueme
> sie pringet a scheaneu plueme;
> Sani, etc.
>
> zuehar, zuehar, liebeu tauben!
> sie pringent der praut a scheaneu hauben!
> Sani etc.
>
> Benn zait und bail bert kamen
> bir berden bider kearen!
> Sani etc. (Schröer, pp. 281-82)

While overtly the song, with its accompanying ritual, is another appeal for money, its connection to the capping gives it an additional significance. The planting of the tree suggests fertility, and there is phallic symbolism in the pole, virginity symbolism in the bouquet. Within the text of the song the bride is represented by the flower and the women by the doves. The bride is brought forward while the women place the Haube on her head. That this ritual should be referred to

allegorically as the planting of a tree indicates that the symbolic importance of the capping is not overlooked, even if the ritual, itself, is not observed.

In some areas, a series of masked dances are performed during the evening. Meier-Böke describes a number of such dances known at Lippish weddings. The bear dance is executed by a man wound around with straw and by his "master" (who leads the "bear" by a chain), who clatters together two pot lids until the music begins, whereupon bear and master whirl about in a kind of mock and humorous dance.[61] Another dance from the same area is known as the Putzetanz or the Barbiertanz, and is described as follows:

> Gegen Mitternacht treten zwei Maskierte peitschenknallend in den Saal, hinter ihnen, akrobatisch gelenkig, ein Radschläger. Es folgen Männer mit Schuten, Forken und Harken. Einer meckert wie ein Ziegenbock. Ein anderer Verkleideter, genannt Barbier, schiebt auf seiner Graskarre den "Juden," einen Alten mit langem Flachsbart, herein, begleitet von einer Frau in guter Hoffnung, die ein Bursche darstellt. Auf einem zweiten Schiebkarren liegt ein Schleifstein, und als Rasiermesser dient eine Sense, als Pinsel ein Besen. Die beiden Peitschenknaller gehen, einer rechts, einer links herum, Platz schaffend für die Rundfahrt. Die Musik setzt ein. Alle singen mit:
>
> "Wui witt den Jiuden den Bort affschnoin,
> Heu schall' er sümst met boi soin.
> De eune schall'n haulen, de anner schall'n schnoin.
> De drütte schall de Muskanten soin."
>
> Beim zweiten Satz (Trio ohne Gesang) streicht der Barbier sein Messer, der Flachsbart wird "geputzt," d.h. rasiert, wobei der "Jude" schreit und tot hinfällt. Nun erscheint der Doktor mit dem Arzneikasten, horcht das Herz des "Toten" mit einem Ofenrohr ab und pumpt ihm mit gewaltiger Klystierspeitze Luft in den After. Beim Adagio springt der Tote plötzlich auf, ergreift eins der kreischenden Mädchen, tanzt einen Schottschen damit. Das ist der Anfang eines allgemeinen Rundtanzes, der zur Tür hinausgeht. Die Pantomimen werden hinterher vom Bräutigam in einem Gasthaus freigehalten. (Meier-Boke, pp. 235-36)

This dance is explained as an initiation dance, with its origins in

spring rituals, the ritual destruction of winter and resurrection of spring.[62] One can go much further, however, and see the entire wedding ritual as an integration of birth and death motifs.[63]

From Lower Austria masked dances have also been recorded,[64] while Neuner describes the performance of a sword dance:

> Bei grossen Hochzeitsfesten ... trugen zwei Burschen, und zwar der Brautführer und der Gespielführer, blanke Schwerter, die mit seidenen Bändern geschmückt waren....Beim Hochzeitsmahl wurden die Schwerter kreuzweise in die Decke gestossen. Während des Tanzes nahmen jedoch die beiden Schwertträger die blanken Waffen wieder zur Hand und tanzten damit.[65]

References to death occur in other regions as well. Dance of death performances in the Hungarian heathland were recorded in the nineteenth century by Remigius Stachowics.[66] The participants in the dance are four costumed boys, one representing youth, one death, one the devil and one the angel. The theme of the dance, according to our observer, is that there is no defence against death. In Gottschee, a choir traditionally sings an exchange between a departed soul and the company of the dead. The song is executed with sad voices, while outbreaks of weeping and wailing arise spontaneously from the participants and the crowd:

1. Die ageschidne ṣéale ṣinget:

Ih hàn dörṭ gelassen main wûter und mueter!
ih hàn dörṭ gelassen mein ṣbeṣter und prueder;
ṣeu gedenkhent et an mih! --
Ih hàn dörṭ gelassen maine junktschellen und tschellinnen:
seu gedenkhent et an mih! --
Niemànt boiss es, niemànt denkhet
bàs deu armen ṣéalen laiden muessent!!!

2. Deu agesturben şingent.

Main deu âgen tuent werwinştern,
ih kàn et mêr die barlt anschâgen. --
Benn ih junc bin und geşund
hàn ih wreunte überall genuc;
benn ich àlt pin ader krankh,
dà hàn ih koine wreunde mêr!
Benn ih oinmàl in krankhempette lig,
da kimet der prieşter zu mainem pette.
Da perichet er mih ze den êbigen güetern,
Benn ih oinmàl gestuorben pin,
da machent şeu mir oin neues haus.
Dà trugent şeu mih zu dem kîrchle boiss,
dà trugent şeu mih auf das wraithof grüen.
Dört machent şeu mir oine grâble tief.
drin birt ih şlafen aho şüess! --
Benn ih oinmàl in grabe lig:
da kimet der prieşter ze mainem grabe.
dar smaisst a stückhle ert auf maine pruşt.
Benn ih oinmal begraben pin,
dà wàngt der messner zu läuten an.
Da géant deu leute alle won mir:
lai: "rue dư in der küelen erte
wo du hin gedienet hàst!" (Schroer, pp. 282-84)

This song is more than a reminder of death, in the midst of wedding joy, as our compiler labels it. Instead, the death of the body in old age is used as an analogy for the marriage of the young girl and the death of her youth. The first section of the song (ll. 1 - 6) follows the traditional sequence of the bridal farewell -- she leaves first her father, then her mother, her siblings and, finally her friends. "Dört" refers not only to the land of the living, but also to the home of her youth. The expression of grief in lines 5 - 6 (nobody knows or imagines what the poor souls must suffer) is an acknowledgement of the isolation of the girl in her fate. Russian brides, too, accuse their parents of rejection, of neither knowing nor caring about the sufferings of their daughter. The next part of the song is sung by the gathering of the dead, although there is no apparent change in point of

view. Like the first section, the poetic theme would seem to be the isolation and loneliness of marriage (and, as such, its analogy to death). When one is young and healthy, the song tells us, one has friends; when old and sick, one's friends are gone (ll. 9 - 12). The ritual of marriage involves the farewell from one's friends, as well as from youth and youthful health. Matrimony is associated with hard work instead of gaiety, with sickness in place of the vigour of youth, and, finally, since marriage is inviolable, matrimony accompanies one to one's death. As with death, marriage means a new dwelling (l.17), a church ritual, the priest, the ringing of bells and, ultimately, abandonment by one's friends to the strangeness and coldness of a new life, the sorrows of which are "no more than what I've deserved." The poem has a chant-like quality which produces the mood of a terrible inexorability.

Candles may be symbols of time and time passage.[67] In Magdeburg, bridal lights are associated with a midnight dance. These lights are usually some sort of wax candle fastened to a garlanded pole, and are traditionally carried before the bride in the wedding procession, as she enters the church, and as she enters the bridal chamber (Bettleite). According to a decree of 1570, these torches were forbidden except in the first instance, where they were still known in the nineteenth century and, indeed, were used as part of the wedding dance:

> Während des ganzen Brauttanzes tanzen auch die Lichte tragenden Brautjungfern und schwingen beim Tanze die brennenden Fackeln oft kunstvoll im Kreise. Sie wählen sich ihre Tänzer selbst aus. Ist eine ermüdet, so giebt sie ihre Fackel und die Pflicht des Tanzes an eine andere Brautjungfer ab.
> (Wegener, pp. 203-204)

The climax of the dance and of the rituals is the removal of the wreath and the placing of the Haube. Often known as Kranztanzen, this term has a variety of connotations, some of which we have already seen. Neuner tells us that the dance thus designated occurs on the afternoon of the last Sunday before the wedding. The dance is open by the bride and groom, and it represents the departure of the bride from her parents' home.[68] Erichsen tells us of a ritual Kranztanzen, however, which was performed on the first Sunday after the Feast of St. John, and which has no connection with marriage customs whatsoever.[69] The wreath symbol has a multiplicity of meanings, many totally unconnected with weddings.[70]

In general, however, the Kranztanzen implies the ritual removal of the wreath or bridal crown, and is a dance or some form of ritual complex or "game." It often involves the formation of a sort of circle which must be broken through or opened up. Consider this description from Magdeburg:

> Bald nach Mitternacht erschienen ... die Frauen im Tanzlokale der Jugend, schlossen plötzlich einen dichten Kreis um die Braut, nahmen ihr die Bänder und die bräutliche mit Bändern geschmückte Krone vom Kopf und setzten ihr statt dessen eine aus schwarzem Bande gefertigte Mütze auf. Damit war sie unter die verheiratheten Frauen aufgenommen, nahm jedoch die Nacht über noch am Tanz der Unverheiratheten Theil:
> (Wegener, p. 201)

In one community, the final initiation is symbolized by the dancing together of bride and groom, while the following couplet is sung repeatedly:

> De brût hat'n kranz vorlòrn,
> Hat se doch noch hoare. (Wegener, p. 201)

After the dance, the girl's eyes are covered, and the men dance around her in a circle. The bride has to choose her husband from the crowd of men. This occurs three times, after which the following ditty is sung:

> Soll diese Braut ne Jumfer sein?
> Soll mich ewig wundern,
> Wird wohl eine gewesen sein,
> Aber nicht jetzunder. (Wegener, p. 202)

There is no great display of emotion, and the emphasis is mainly on initiation. Yet the termination of something is recognized in the words "verlôrn," "gewesen sein," and "nicht jetzunder." Doris Stockmann records the singing of Weber's wreath song while the Haube ceremony is being performed.[71] In another wreath song, the trembling of the wreath suggests its imminent removal, as well as, figuratively, the position of the bride "trembling" on the brink of passage:

> Brautkranz, brautkranz!
> Wie wackelt der Brautkranz,
> Wie schön wirst du gewackelt!
> Hast du unser Frau ihre Haube nicht gesehn,
> Hast du sie nicht gesehn, hab ich sie nicht gesehen,
> Haben wir sie beide nicht gesehn? (Wegener, p. 202)

The decorated spinning-wheel figures largely in some of these rituals. In some areas, it is hung with little shirts and caps, perhaps as a suggestion of fertility. As the guests dance around the spinning-wheel, the bride runs away and is chased by the groom, who removes her wreath against the opposition of the bridesmaids.[72] This complex of symbols dramatically emphasizes the ritual significance of the wreath. The fleeing bride is typical of a number of rituals in which the reluctance of the bride to part from her youth and her youthful friends is enacted. It demonstrates that the ritual is one of parting as well as of joining. Wegener reports that only now the bride is considered a

wife.[73] The dance around the spinning-wheel is contrasted to the fleeing of the bride in a manner not dissimilar to the contrast in Hötensleben between the lonely bride and the gay company of wedding guests driving the dowry to the bridegroom's house. The girl is reluctant to join the colourful and festive community, yet her escape must be thwarted in order to ensure her initiation into a new life.

In a Plattdeutsch description, the spinning-wheel is called the Brûtroat, and it is decorated with flax as well as with children's clothes. It is decorated by the bride's girl friends in a ritual which, the recorder tells us, is performed on the day before the Polterabend and the bridal bath, and it is held high as display on that occasion.[74] After the wedding, the spinning-wheel becomes the centre of another ritual which takes place about five or six o'clock in the morning, after the wedding guests have danced the entire night through, the flax being "danced off," one twist at each dance.[75]

In some communities, the old spinning-wheel must be destroyed. In Etingen,[76] for instance, the dancers try to remove the strands of flax while the married women attempt to spin on the wheel. After the wheel is broken, the flax is carefully preserved as a remedy for various illnesses. Elsewhere, the bride dances with the men, the groom with the women, until the wheel is broken. Even where no unwreathing takes place, it is common that the bride runs away from the groom at this point, and he must chase and catch her. In general, the bride is helped by the girls, the groom by the married women. The men also take part in this ritual in some places. In one description, the young girls and young men, while dancing, try to bring the old spinning-wheel into the bridegroom's house, while both the married men and the married

women attempt to break through the protective circle and destroy the wheel. It is considered a disgrace if they should fail. Again, there is no ritual connection to the wreath and Haube, yet it clearly has a similar function. Should the old wheel enter the marriage house in one piece, the initiation of the bride is not complete -- she has failed to break with her past, and the unmarried have triumphed over the married. In this instance, clan would seem to have little importance, and it is the state of being married or unmarried, old or young, which is significant in the ritual of initiation. There are numerous variations, too, of the ritual chasing, catching and winning of the bride by the bridegroom. Often these are connected with the subsequent removal of the wreath. In one case, the women dance around the bride, and the bridegroom must fight his way through. The figure formed is not unlike that of the dance around the spinning-wheel mentioned above. In another instance, unmarried men aid the bride, while the groom is helped by the married men.[77] There is in these cases a symbolic connection between the bride and the spinning-wheel.

The circle formation (note that the spinning-wheel, too, is round) is suggested in the term Ringeltanz, used in the Riesengebirge.[78] This is performed at sunrise. The unmarried girls form a ring around the bride and execute a dance. After a few dances, the Sprecher comes and demands that the bride be given up to the groom. The girls resist, but the married women come and force the bride out of the circle. She is taken into another room, and the Haube is placed on her head. She is led back to the circle of girls, and when the Sprecher once more requests that the bride be given to the groom, the unmarried girls no longer resist. Thereupon, bride and groom dance together for the first

time.

The ritual of Haube-placing is, thus, both parting and initiation. While the spirit of good fun reigns throughout much of the proceedings, an awareness of solemnity makes this moment crucial to the ceremony. While the most effusive expressions of sorrow occur at the departure from the parents' house, the same emotions are ritualized in the reluctance of the bride to leave the community of maidens, and in the efforts on the part of the unmarried girls to retain the bride for themselves. The roundness of the wreath and of the spinning-wheel, the circular movements associated with spinning and with the winding of the distaff, find a ritual parallel in the wedding dances and, particularly, in the highly symbolic "dances" pertaining to the removal of the wreath.

The image of the circle is a complex one, which requires a closer look, here, because of its close connection with the structure of the Kranzlieder and the lament motif.

The Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens informs us that the importance of the wreath lies in its circular shape, as well as in its material, and that the wearing of the wreath is closely connected with the virginity of the bride. There is also a possible association of the wreath with the sun and the moon, and with the annual cycle of the calendar and calendar customs. The wearing of the wreath is not limited to customs concerning marriage or its cognate death, but occurs as well on other occasions, such as spring festivals and confirmations.[79]

The distaff and the spinning-wheel are both symbols of female labour or, by extension, of womanhood. J. E. Cirlot tells us that the distaff, like the spindle and the shuttle, is a time symbol, represent-

ing as well the cycle of the moon.[80] Like the wreath and the spinning-wheel, this may be an integral part of the circularity and mobility of the symbol. In the Handwörterbuch, we are told that the distaff is considered a symbol of the German woman, and that it is associated with gatherings of young people (segregated according to their sex) for singing, work and general amusement (Rockenstube).[81] Both the spinning-wheel and the distaff are major symbols in the wedding rituals. Wegener has this to say of the spinning-wheel:

> Am Spinnrad wird ... dem Menschen auch das Schicksal gesponnen von den heiligen Schicksalsfrauen, den Nornen. Diese uralten Frauen sind es, die auf dem Mädchenspinnrad nach der Etinger Sitte den Lebensfaden noch weiter zu spinnen suchen. Doch die Braut muss brechen mit der Vergangenheit, sie stirbt gleichsam ihrem heimathlichen Hause und ihrem heimathlichen Heerde ab. Der von den Schicksalsfrauen gesponnene Faden wird daher zerrissen, das Rad zertrümmert, hinter der Braut der Eimer mit Wasser hergossen. (Wegener, p. 209)

Of interest in this interpretation is the association of the destruction of the spinning-wheel with the image of death, and the emphasis on the break with the past.

The three symbols have a number of characteristics in common. All three, of course, are round.[82] While this may seem trivial, it is actually of the utmost importance. The circular structure implies unendingness, but with this, a lack of progression. Only through breaking the circle is progression possible. We have seen a similar circle motif in the Russian laments of the early, post-betrothal stage. There, the bride regretted the breaking of the circle, because it implied the ending of a pastoral existence. Let us remember that that pastoral existence was equated poetically with the immaturity, in physical, mental and moral terms, of the bride, as well as with a static timelessness.

In the German circle symbols there is a subtle difference. The breaking of the circle is implicit within the symbol. Regret is expressed ritually, but is complemented by ritual initiation. It is the new spinning-wheel which is decorated, the old one which is broken up. There is, thus, no time lag between parting and joining, both acts occurring more or less simultaneously. The wreath symbolizes virginity but is not, as is the case with the Russian krasota, specifically representative of maidenly coiffure. The distaff, too, is new, or is newly wound and adorned for the ritual about to be performed, or is carried proudly as a centre of attraction (along with the broom) in the Brautgutfahren. More important than the round shape of these symbols is the circular or serpentine design which they express in movement. Thus, they cannot be seen merely as symbols of labour (the wreath does not anyway fit into this category), but primarily of motion. This is vital to the bridal theme, because marriage is essentially a rite of passage and can only be properly dramatized through symbols of movement. Let us return to the assumption that the spinning-wheel and the distaff are tokens of female labour. The mistake lies in an easy confusion of function and utility. The utility of these objects lies in their ability to contribute to the manufacture of cloth. But they have a more basic function in the measurement of time. The movements of spinning-wheel and distaff measure the hours and, by extension, the years, of the women using them, while the wreath, in its circular form, represents the movement of the sun and the moon.[83] Time measurement, as we know, is fundamental to the lament, the breaking of the time cycle expressing the trauma of passage.

Now let us examine these circular symbols within the context of the

wedding rituals. The symbols do not appear as external embellishment, but are within ritual complexes of which they form a crucial part. Most important, these ritual complexes are generally circular in formation, and exist only while in motion. The breaking of the circular formation is essential to the act of initiation. Likewise, in the Ehrentänze, the dancing couples form a more or less contained and controlled circular, moving shape. Following the completion of these dances, the circle is broken in the turmoil of general dancing. This process is aped in one of the masked dances, in which three weirdly disguised figures dance with each other, then choose a partner from the crowd, and their final disappearance gives rise to general dancing.[84]

There is a further implication to the symbols, which relates them to the rituals and dances. One might be tempted to see the spinning-wheel and the distaff primarily as instruments of labour, because they represent the work which the bride will do as a wife and has done as a girl. We have seen, however, that Rockenstube implies a gathering of people according to age and sex for the purpose of amusement. Work is a minor element in this coming together. Holidays, such as Christmas and Easter, are occasions for particularly festive gatherings. The distaff represents primarily the community of young girls or married women, and only secondarily the work they may perform. The symbol is social rather than utilitarian. Similarily, the gaily decorated spinning-wheel suggests something pleasant rather than merely utilitarian. The emphasis is on community. The circular wreath suggests, by its multiplicity of uses, a festive adornment. The circular shape formed by the girls who wish to retain the bride encloses, includes and protects the girl inside it. The women who take the bride up into

their community also form a circular figure. Thus, the participation of a crowd of people at the rituals does more than provide witnesses to the ceremony or ward off evil spirits; it dramatizes the social meaning of the initiation.

In poetic terms, the social integration of the bride, the intricate balance of parting and joining, and the implications of motion and the arrest of motion are all basic to the structure of the Kranzlieder. The following song is from the Banat:

> Bringt herein, bringt den Stuhl herein,
> Die Braut muss abgebunden sein.
> Jetzt binden wir der Braut das Kränzlein ab,
> Ihren Mann muss sie lieben bis ins Grab.
> Jetzt binden wir der Braut das Tüchlein auf,
> Sie muss es tragen ihr Lebenslauf.
> Sie muss es tragen schwarz und rot,
> Deinen Mann musst lieben bis in den Tod.
> Schwör' du es deinem Vater und Mutter ab,
> Deinen Mann musst du lieben bis ins Grab.
> Schwör' es deiner Schwester und Bruder ab,
> Deinen Mann musst du lieben bis ins Grab.
> Schwör' du es deiner ganzen Freundschaft ab,
> Deinen Mann musst du lieben bis ins Grab.
> Weichet ab, ihr jungen Mädchen mein,
> Mit euch kann ich nicht mehr lustig sein.
> Kommet her, ihr jungen Weibchen mein,
> Schliesst mich in eure Gesellschaft ein.
> Kommet her, ihr jungen Mädchen mein,
> Mit euch will ich heut noch lustig sein.
> Schwör' du es deiner ganzen Verwandtschaft ab,
> Deinen Mann musst du lieben bis ins Grab.[85]

The poem can be loosely divided into four sections. Lines 1 - 6 contain the ritual descriptions. The rhymed line of each couplet is an interpretation of the ritual moment and refers directly to the ritual being enacted. Lines 7 - 14 have a broader ritual basis, since the farewell to the bride's family and friends is ritually connected with the removal of the wreath, and may even reflect other rituals performed earlier in the ceremony (such as the departure for church). The

parallel structure of lines 6 and 7 has the effect of marking the change in poetic pace -- the two lines differ from each other in essence only so far as line 6 rhymes backwards to the preceding line, and line 7 rhymes forward to the following one. The [illegible] from whom the bride must part are listed in order of importance, and according to tradition, the father coming first as head of the clan. The repetition of the line: "Deinen Mann musst du lieben bis ins Grab," creates a mood of extreme solemnity and finality. The tone produced is also somewhat morose -- marriage is the inexorable process by which a whole clan must be replaced by only one man. Furthermore, the verb "musst" conveys the message that it is the bride's duty, not necessarily her personal pleasure, to love this man who is now her husband. The finality of this fate, the duty to love, and the somberness of the mood are emphasized in the conclusion of the repeated lines: "bis ins Grab" (or, as in line 9, "bis in den Tod"). Obviously, there is a literal meaning to this phrase, since marriage was considered inviolable. But the phrase has, as well, a much stronger, symbolic meaning similar to that of the death references in Hötensleben and Siebenbürgen, which we have already examined. Just as the bride must walk in the procession alone until she is greeted by her husband, so, here, the bride must submit to the removal of her wreath and the end of her maidenhood. She must become a bride and leave her home and family. She must love her husband. In this line, the death of her will becomes a kind of chant which adds a note of harshness to the proceedings without detracting from the festivities. The poem is about getting married, not about death or even the death of love. Lines 15 - 20 clearly compose a section of their own, if only rhythmically, since the first, third and fifth lines

of the section all end with "mein," and, indeed, are parallel to each other, structurally, while the other three lines rhyme with "mein" and are also parallel to each other. The most noticeable difference in this section is that the "narrator" has changed from that of the wedding party who will perform the ceremony to that of the bride herself. Through this change in person, the ritual focus also shifts from that of admonishment to that of personal control. In the three [redacted] of this section, the bride's attitude moves from lamentation ("Mit euch kann ich nicht mehr lustig sein) to initiation ("Schliesst mich in eure Gesellschaft ein") to, the initiation completed, a return to the festivities of the moment ("Mit euch will ich heut noch lustig sein"). The concluding couplet reiterates the significance of the ritual just completed, but has no longer the power of a chant. All the bride's family and friends from whom she must part are now condensed into a single collective noun, and the exchange of clan for husband becomes a more equitable exchange of one for one. The ritual is complete, and the time for lamentation is past. Thus, in this song, the parallel structure of the lines and the images creates two parallel and mobile centers of activity. The first, represented by the circular Kranz, is removed and is replaced by the larger concept of life ("ihr Lebenslauf," line 6). In the first part of the song, the expressions of parting are negative, and marriage is equated with death. The opening line, too, includes movement, in the ritual bringing in of the chair. In the final couplet, the two centers stand opposite each other, married life dominating by its ultimate position. The constant repetition of "ab" hammers home the idea of disruption, and implies a parallel association with the natural termination of human (and married) life through death.

We have already seen many instances of death references within wedding rituals, and of the metaphor of death as part of wedding songs. These explicit references to death are often obscured by the superimposition of Christian teaching, so that they may at first appear to be morbid reminders of the Last Judgement or heavy-handed references to Christian marriage laws. The time factor as expressed in the death references provides a clue to their real meaning. "Dein Mann musst du lieben bis ins Grab" is a statement of the present, not one of the future. We do not know how long the couple will live, which of them will die first, or whether "bis ins Grab" implies that their love will terminate with death, or that they will be united in love even within the coffin, a macabre thought which evokes ballad images of entwining roses and briars. The "grave" is, in fact, the darker side of life, the absence of the known and trusted. This alternation of dark and light may be expressed in other Brautlieder through the dichotomy of present and future:

> Hait hout de Braut en schien Montl imm.
> Bo hait uibrm Juorh hots a Kindla drin.
> Hait ho dö Braut a schien Firtich imm.
> Bo hait uibra Juohr hots a Drackla drin. (Oehl, p. 145)

The present, rather than the future, reality of death is made particularly clear in one song ritualization of the unwreathing.[86] In this instance, dance and song and ritual are carefully integrated. The bride dances with the Brautfuhrer while he sings. During one of these quatrains, he removes the wreath, and wears it on his arm while he sings and dances the remaining verses. The completion of the dance symbolizes the union of the couple. In some versions of this song ritual, the bride's reluctance to part with the wreath is implied:

Meine liebe Jungfrau Braut,
Muasst di net verdriassn,
Dein wunderschönes Kranzerl
Wird herunter mlass'n! (Hurdes, p. 134)

and S'Kranzerl muass aba
Und 's Hauberl muass her,
A Jungfrau bist g'wesn,
Aba heut nimmermehr. (Hurdes, p. 135)

The wreath becomes a symbol of the marriage vows, and is preserved as such in heaven:

Der Kranz, der wird aufbewahrt,
Dort drobn am Himmelsort,
Den ihr als bräutlichs Paar
Habt's bracht zum Altar. (Hurdes, p. 132)

It no longer represents specifically the virginity of the bride, nor does its sanctity depend on the continuing love and loyalty of the couple after marriage. It is consecrated through the act of marriage, through initiation itself. In the rather light-hearted allusion to death in the concluding verse of one version of this song ritual, the point of reference is not life after death, but the eternal meaning of the symbol and the ritual act:

Und wann ma amal in Himml fahrn,
Da hab ma a langi Bahn,
Und da werdn ma unsa Kranzl
Ja wieder anschaun. (Hurdes, p. 136)

Thus, immortality and death, like past and future, dark and light, happiness and sadness, are poles within the ritual conglomerate of parting and joining. They are truly expressions of passage. The sacred nature of the wreath as relic (ritually, in this case, it is fastened to the bridegroom's hat) has a certain parallel to the belief in the curative powers of the broken bits of the old spinning-wheel.

Conclusion

German Brautlieder are not nearly as accessible to the casual reader as are the Russian bridal laments. Descriptions of wedding traditions do not necessarily recognize ritual poetry as an essential part of the ceremony. In central Germany, such ritual songs have often disappeared, and we must look to older descriptions or to the wedding poetry of isolated regions in order to find them. Yet, a search of this kind yields a sufficient number of examples, from sufficiently diverse locations, that it is possible to make the tentative assumption that ritual Brautlieder constituted at one time an important part of most German marriage ceremonies.

These Brautlieder have certain generic similarities with the Russian wedding laments. Firstly, they focus on the bride, and present her point of view, or attempt to define the act of getting married as it affects primarily the bride. Secondly, these songs are ritualistic. They are sung at clearly defined moments in the marriage ritual; they refer to the rituals in the words of the songs; they enact or interpret the rituals which they accompany. The rituals of parting and joining, in a broad sense, affect the structure of many of these songs, such as in the contrasts between past and future, between isolation and community, or between gaiety and solemnity. Thirdly, these songs express the passage of the bride from youth to matrimony, and from father's clan to husband's clan. This passage may be depicted through overt references to the ritual passage of the bride from her father's house, through the village, to the church, and to the husband's house. Metaphorically, the passage is seen as a sort of journey, and movement is an essential feature both of the poetic depictions, and of such ritual

formations as the Brautlauf dances. The change of the bride's state, and her breaking irrevocably with the past are also ritually enacted by the breaking of the distaff or the spinning-wheel and, poetically, by the bequeathing of the roses to her girl friends. The isolation of the girl, her fear of the unknown, and a sense of foreboding, even a presage of death, are all characteristics of the passage theme in these songs. Time imagery is prevalent both in the songs and in the rituals. Finally, the traditional nature of these songs, their solemnity, and their didactic quality are appropriate to the important role they play in preparing the bride psychologically and socially for marriage.

There are, on the other hand, many superficial differences between the German and the Russian songs. The German Brautlieder are less numerous than their Russian counterparts, or would seem to be, and are sung during fewer ritual moments. They are not usually sung by the bride, but are addressed to her or are sung by others, but in her name. A large number of these songs are sung after the nuptial ceremony, rather than before it, and rituals of parting and joining are often performed together. There may be an historical reason for this, to be found in the state control of the pre-nuptial rituals. As a result, joy and sorrow mingle more closely in the German songs and rituals than in the Russian ones. In the German tradition, there would seem to be more emphasis on community than is apparent from the Russian examples studied. The German bride leaves the community of unmarried girls and joins the community of married women. She is isolated only in the moment of passage. Finally, the German Brautlieder are more didactic than are the Russian pričitanie. This may be the result of the strong influence of church teachings on German marriage rituals and beliefs,

as well as of the emphasis on duty which is found in much of the German wedding material. Whatever the reason, however, this didactic note is not in conflict with the lament theme, since it incorporates the basic idea of marriage as a change in state, as inevitable, inviolable, and frightening.

In our study of the Russian wedding traditions, we argued that the term igra does not imply frivolity, and that ritual and lament are fused together and have an almost sacred function. In the German examples, it can be seen that the state and the Christian church combatted the traditional marriage rituals because they, too, were solemn and sacred enough to pose a genuine threat to the authority of the church. From internal evidence of the structure of the accompanying songs, it would seem that the passage theme and the solemn, didactic tone of the Brautlieder contribute to the sacred function of the rituals. Christian themes have changed the perspective of a number of these songs, but have not created their didactic function, which is inherent in the non-Christian songs as well, and may well be older than the time of the first church intrusion into matrimonial matters. In conclusion, one can only say that there would seem to be evidence that ritual wedding laments were at one time fairly wide-spread in German-speaking regions, and that these songs and their rituals played an important role in the solemnizing of marriage, and in the initiation of the bride into the married state.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter Three

[1]There are numerous testimonials to these legislations. See, for example, Gerhard J. Neumann, "Hochzeitsbrauchtum in Westfalen vom 14. bis 18. Jahrhundert unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Städte," Westfalen 33 (1955), 212-23.

[2]August Meier-Böke, "Liebe und Ehe im lippischen Volksbrauch," Lippische Mitteilungen aus Geschichte und Landeskunde, 3 (1958), 233. The location of subsequent quotations from Meier-Böke will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[3]For a brief discussion of the Biblical influence on German weddings, and of the possible connection between the Virgin Mary and bridal attire (including the bridal crown), see Bernward Deneke, Hochzeit. See, especially, pp. 42-43 (the speech of the Hochzeitslader), pp. 88-89 (concerning the bridal crown), and p. 97 (which describes the marriage portals of local churches).

[4]For an example, see Wilhelm Oehl, Deutsche Hochzeitsbräuche in Ostböhmen, Beiträge zur deutsch-böhmischen Volkskunde, No. 15 (Prag: Kraus, 1922), p. 60. The location of quotations from Oehl will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[5]For a description and sample of this wedding examination, see Christian Rubi, Hochzeit in Bernerland (Wabern: Büchler, 1971), p. 22.

[6]Oehl, p. 75.

[7]Eugen Fehrle, Deutsche Hochzeitsbräuche, Volksart und Brauch, No. 2 (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1937), pp. 18-19. The location of subsequent quotations from Fehrle will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[8]Gustav Jungbauer, "Deutsche und kirgisische Hochzeitsbrauche," Volkskundliche Gaben: John Meier zum 70-sten Geburtstage dargebracht (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1934), pp. 75-84.

[9]Much has been written concerning the place of dance in German weddings, as well as concerning the term Brautlauf, which would seem to imply some sort of dance or race. See: Karl Horak, "Der Tanz im Hochzeitsbrauchtum," Die Kärntner Landsmannschaft, No. 10 (1969), 15-17; Stephan Lüscher, "Hochzeitstänze und andere Volkstänze," Jahrbuch des österreichischen Volksliedwerkes, 14 (1965), 106-17; Marianne Panzer, Tanz und Recht (Frankfurt a.M.: Diesterweg, 1938); Edward Schröder, "Brautlauf und Tanz," Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur, 61 (1924), 17-34; Richard Wolfram, Die Volkstänze in Osterreich und verwandte Tänze in Europa (Salzburg: O. Miller, 1951).

[10]Karl Weinhold, Die Deutschen Frauen in dem Mittelalter (Wien: Carl Gerold's Sohn, 1882), I, 376.

[11]For a general discussion of wedding rituals, see the books by Deneke (Hochzeit) and Rubi (Hochzeit in Bernerland). For a traditional interpretation of the rituals, which is still valid, although in some cases the arguments may be out of date, see Paul Sartori, Sitte und Brauch (Leipzig: Heims, 1910), I, 48-122, and Ernst Samter, Geburt, Hochzeit und Tod: Beiträge zur vergleichenden Volkskunde (Leipzig: Teubner, 1911).

[12]Philip Wegener, "Hochzeitsgebräuche des Magdeburger Landes," Geschichtsblätter für Stadt und Land Magdeburg, 13 (1878), 230. The location of subsequent quotations from this article by Wegener, as well as from his continuation to this article, which appeared in the same journal, vol. 14 (1879), 184-222, will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[13]See Gisela Rösch, "Kiltlied und Tagelied," Handbuch des Volksliedes Die Gattungen des Volksliedes, Vol. I, ed. Rolf Wilhelm Brednich, Lutz Röhrich and Wolfgang Suppan (München: Fink, 1973), I, 483-550; see also Helmut Glagla, "Fenstern und Nachtreiten auf Fehmarn um 1800," Beiträge zur deutschen Volks-und Altertumskunde, 14 (1970), 125-30.

[14]Rösch, p. 520.

[15]Meier-Böke, p. 215.

[16]Franz Kolb, "Heirat und Ehe in der Wipptaler Bauernfamilie nach den Gerichtsbüchern des 16. Jahrhunderts," Tiroler Heimat, 19 (1955), 108.

[17]Ludwig Erk and Franz W. Böhme, eds., Deutscher Liederhort: Auswahl der vorzüglicheren deutschen Volkslieder, nach Wort und Weise aus der Vorzeit und Gegenwart (1893; rpt. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1963), II, No. 866. The location of subsequent quotations from Erk/Böhme will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[18]Wegener, p. 232.

[19]Ibid., p. 234.

[20]Walter Dreyer, "Eine Hochzeit in Ostervesede vor 40 Jahren," Rotenburger Schriften, 16 (1962), 46. The location of quotations from Dreyer will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[21]Kolb, p. 112.

[22]Meier-Böke, p. 221.

[23]See Georg Neuner, "Seltene Bräuche aus der germanischen Zeit in Franken," Germanien, 7 (1935/6), 301: "Diese Art der Eheschliessung besitzt heidnischen Ursprung. Durch das Uberschreiten der Hausschwelle in Gegenwart von Zeugen schlossen die Germanen den Bund fürs Leben." The location of quotations from Neuner will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[24]Examples include egg shells, an apple, a broom, and a decorated whip.

[25]Meier-Böke, pp. 221-22.

[26]See also Dreyer, p. 46. The Kistenabend, as it was called, took place on the eve of the wedding, and was concluded by a gathering, this time at the bride's house, where the young people chatted and drank beer.

[27]Meier-Böke, pp. 222-23.

[28]Franz Prillinger, "Eine Laakirchener Bauernhochzeit in alter Zeit," Heimatgaue: Zeitschrift für oberösterreichische Geschichte, Landes- und Volkskunde, 5 (1924), 148-49. The location of subsequent quotations from Prillinger will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[29]The traditional approach can be found in Sartori, pp. 71-72; for a look at the opposing points of view, see Karl Frölich, "Rechtsgeschichte und Volkskunde im niederdeutschen Eheschliessungs-brauchtum," Nachrichten der Giessener Hochschulgesellschaft, 20 (1951), 122-23.

[30]Wegener, p. 254.

[31]See footnote 26, above.

[32]Meier-Böke, p. 224.

[33]Prillinger, p. 148.

[34]Fried. Wilhelm Schuster, ed., Siebenbürgisch-sächsische Volkslieder, Sprichwörter, Rätsel, Zauberformeln und Kinder-Dichtungen. (1865; rpt. Wiesbaden: Dr. Martin Sändig OHG, 1969), pp. 76-77. The location of quotations from Schuster will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[35]Wegener, p. 249-51.

[36]Ibid., p. 254.

[37]Ibid., p. 251.

[38]Wegener, p. 250.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Kolb, p. 118.

[41]K. J. Schröer, "Ein Ausflug nach Gottschee: Beitrag zur Erforschung der Gottscheewer Mundart," Sitzungsberichte der Philosophisch-Historischen Classe der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 60, Nos. 1-3 (1868), 277. A very recent study of the folk songs of Gottschee, Gottscheer Volkslieder, ed. Rolf Wilh. Brednich and Wolfgang Suppan (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1972), does not include wedding songs. The location of subsequent quotations from Schröer will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[42]Schuster, pp. 69-71.

[43]The egg shells, flowers, etc., which are attached to the distaff in some places (Ibid., p. 83) also symbolize fertility.

[44]Frölich, p. 122.

[45]John Meier, Ahnengrab und Brautstein, Untersuchungen zur deutschen Volkskunde und Rechtsgeschichte, No. 1 (Halle: Niemeyer, 1944).

[46]For a discussion of the various interpretations of the false bride ritual, see Helena Lozar-Podlogar, "Die Szene mit der 'falschen Braut' in den südslawischen Hochzeitsbräuchen," Ethnologia Slavica, 3 (1971), 203-10. Despite the title of the article, the discussion is not limited to Slavic examples.

[47]For a recent psychological study of the folk tale as therapeutic technique see Bruno Bettelheim's book, The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales (New York: Knopf, 1976). Concerning the psychological or therapeutic effect (anthropologically speaking) of certain rituals, see Edward Norbeck, "African Rituals of Conflict," Gods and Rituals: Reading in Religious Beliefs and Practices, ed. John Middleton (Garden City, N.Y.: Natural History Press, 1967), pp. 197-226.

[48]Oehl, p. 81.

[49]Meier-Böke, p. 225.

[50]Richard Zeisel, "Eine alte Bauernhochzeit in Zeche," Karpathenland, 4 (1931/32), 81.

[51]Franz Hurdes, Die niederösterreichische Bauernhochzeit in Vierzeilern, Liedern und Sprüchen (Wien: Carl Gerold's Sohn, 1949), p. 33. The location of subsequent quotations from Hurdes will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[52]See, for example, the musical accompaniments as described in Doris Stockmann, Der Volksgesang in der Altmark, von der Mitte des 19. bis zur Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1962), pp. 147-48.

[53]Schuster, see "Brautrede," pp. 78-83; also "Brautlieder," No. 3, pp. 74-78.

[54]Fehrle, p. 21.

[55]The sanctity of marriage is by no means a Christian invention. See Hans F. K. Günther, Formen und Urgeschichte der Ehe: Die Formen der Ehe, Familie und Verwandtschaft und die Fragen einer Urgeschichte der Ehe (München: Lehmanns, 1941), p. 97; the idea that the wedding ritual is mythical and religious, the bridesman acting as a kind of priest who sanctifies the union, has been argued quite recently by Ernst S. Dick, "The Bridesman in the Indo-European Tradition: Ritual and Myth in Marriage Ceremonies," Journal of American Folklore, No. 312 (1966), 338-47.

[56]von Arnim, L. Achim and Clemens Brentano, Des Knaben Wunderhorn: Alte deutsche Lieder, ed. Hans-Günther Thalheim and Gisela Fritzsche (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1966), II, 14-15.

[57]Deutsche Volkslieder aus Böhmen, ed. Alois Hruschka and Wendelin Toischer (Prag: Verlag des deutschen Vereins zur Verbreitung gemeinnütziger Kenntnisse, 1891), No. 205.

[58]Prillinger, pp. 151-52.

[59]For example, as described by Dreyer, p. 51.

[60]Hurdes, p. 12.

[61]Meier-Böke, p. 235.

[62]Meier-Böke takes as his authority Karl Wehrhan, "Germanische Verlobungsplätze in Lippe," Germanien (1937), 119-20.

[63]See both the aforementioned article by Ernst Dick and a large number of folk tales which contain within them the dynamics of the ritual structure of the wedding, and the integrating motifs of birth and death.

[64]Hurdes, p. 14.

[65]G. Neuner, p. 299. Neuner explains the use of the swords as a protection against evil spirits. Meier-Böke, pp. 236-37, sees in old sword dance the basis for the Pauktanz, in which masked figures fence with each other, the victim being brought back to life later on. Dick argues that the sword is an ancient religious symbol, as is the cross, and that it enforces the sacred nature of the ritual (p. 343).

[66]Remigius Sztachowics, Brautsprüche und Braut-Lieder auf dem Heideboden in Ungarn (Wien: Braumüller, 1867), pp. 255-61.

[67]For a discussion of the meaning and importance of the candle in German weddings, in particular for its function as a symbol of time measurement, see Leopold Schmidt, Volksglaube und Volksbrauch: Gestalten, Gebilde, Gebärden (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1966), pp. 48-51.

[68]Fr. Neuner, "Der Kranzeltanz," Heimatgaue, 5 (1923/24), 52-53.

[69]Ernst Erichsen, "Ein Stück Folklore sank ins Grab (1827/43): Brautschatz-Federsammeln, Kranztanzen," Jahrbuch für die schleswigsche Geest, 15 (1967), 137-42.

[70]See the entry for Kranz in Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens, ed. E. Hoffmann-Krayer and Hanns Bächtold-Stäubli u.a. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1932/33), V, 382-428.

[71]Stockmann, p. 148.

[72]Wegener, p. 205.

[73]Ibid., p. 204.

[74]Ibid., pp. 204-205.

[75]Ibid., p. 205.

[76]Ibid.

[77]Ibid., p. 206.

[78]Oehl, p. 152.

[79]Handwörterbuch, V, 381-413.

[80]J. E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols, trans. fr. the Spanish by Jack Sage; foreword by Herbert Read, 2nd. ed. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 84.

[81]Handwörterbuch, VII, 753-61.

[82]The roundness of the distaff may seem less striking than its length. It is round, however, in the molding of the stick and, even more, in the roundness of the yarn as it is wound around it. "Relatives of the spindle and distaff" refers to maternal lines of descent in Germanic law.

[83]Sigmund Freud, "Das Motiv der Kästchenwahl," Das Unheimliche: Aufsätze zur Literatur (London: Imago, 1948), p. 20; Freud argues that astrological meanings are projected onto the stars and arise out of purely human conditions.

[84]Hurdes, p. 14.

[85]Helene Wachner, "Aus dem Banat: No. 2, Lied Beim Kranzabnehmen," Das deutsche Volkslied, 26, Nos. 5-6 (1924), 11.

[86]Hurdes, pp. 132-36.

CHAPTER FOUR

WEDDING LAMENTS IN OTHER LANGUAGES

The Russian laments are outstanding in the abundance and wealth of their poetic motifs, in the depth of their emotional expression, and in their prominent position as part of the entire wedding ritual. The German Brautlieder control the social and personal focus of the wedding ritual by emphasizing the implications of separation and joining. But these traditions are by no means unique. The Baltic and Finnic peoples have a lament tradition which is remarkably similar in many respects to that of the Russian. South of the Russian-speaking regions, a somewhat different lament form has its place in the wedding ceremonies of the Ukrainians, the Bulgarians and the Macedonians. In Western and Central Europe, French, Czech, Sorbian, Rumanian and Hungarian laments are known, as well as those in many other languages and cultures. The Kirgiz bride laments. We know of laments from India, as well as from some of the peoples of Africa and Indonesia. In this chapter, we will look very briefly at the distribution and forms of these laments.

Of necessity, the survey will be incomplete. An exhaustive search for examples in every ethnic tradition would be a lengthy study in its own right, and it is unlikely that all the sources, or even a major part of them, would be unearthed by the most diligent scholar. The major obstacle is the dearth of material on the subject. It has fallen to anthropologists and ethnographers to record the customs and rituals of the so-called primitive peoples of the earth and they, for the most part, have failed to take much interest in primitive song.[1] Song collections of the "civilized" peoples (also known as "folk cultures") are much more numerous, but ritual song, especially ritual women's

songs, have all too often been ignored. The wedding lament qualifies on more than one ground for scholarly inattention -- it is ritualistic, it is performed by women, and it is often accompanied by weeping and moaning. This last attribute has tended to mask the poetic quality of the weeping for folklorists who may be so intrigued by and sympathetic to the bride-as-victim that they fail to note the poetry behind the sobs. Schroeder's comparative account of Indo-Germanic and Finno-Ugric marriage practices is an example of the failure of even competent folklorists to observe ritual poetry, because they have not been trained to take it into account. Having devoted an entire chapter to weeping brides, Schroeder does not mention a single instance of poetic lamentation, even amongst the Russians![2] In many cases, as well, the lament tradition has gradually disappeared, and the most one can do is to isolate lament motifs within wedding songs of another type.

There is every evidence that the wedding lament must be examined outside of the strictures of its linguistic setting, as well as within it. It has already been established by Crawley and Van Gennep,[3] that an expression of bridal regret is inherent in the ritualization of marriage as a passage.

While tears may be indicative of a lament tradition, obviously this is not always the case. We certainly cannot speak of ritual laments wherever an observer has described solemn, frightened or weeping brides, examples of which are extremely common. Crawley, who interprets weeping as one form of sexual bashfulness, gives examples of this phenomenon for practically all peoples he studies. Nor is chastity of the female (or male aggressiveness) a prerequisite for bridal reluctance; we have examples of excessively modest brides amongst the Nuer of

Africa, and of lamenting brides amongst the Mordvinians, although in both cases girls enjoyed considerable sexual license prior to their marriages.[4] The nature of the marriage rite implies its irreversibility, and the solemnity of the occasion may be underlined by reminders to the bride and groom of their onerous marital duties and responsibilities. In such cases, tears might be considered a natural reaction to the situation. Weeping may be, at one and the same time, both a natural, impulsive response, and a ritual expression. Consider this statement made by an anthropologist working among the Andaman Islanders:

> Friends and relatives weep loudly, while the bride and groom sit together self-consciously....Weeping seems to be a most frequest means of expressing sentiment, and tears can apparently be summoned at will.[5]

We have similar examples from Europe, as well. In France, the departure of the bride from her home was an emotional one:

> Moment décisif où les coeurs se serrent, où les larmes silencieuses tombent des yeux.[6]

Were these tears "natural" (as the observer would seem to imply), or required by convention? The rituals and songs which accompanied this display of emotion would suggest that nature was at least helped on by tradition. A song, performed in many districts of France during the wedding feast, reminds the bride that marital joy passes like a flower, while woman's labour will remain till the grave.[7]

The epithalamium tradition of Classical Greece and Rome emphasizes essentially the erotic and the beautiful aspects of marriage. In these poems, the trembling bride is a symbol of virgin modesty. While we cannot use such poems as examples of female sorrow of the type we are

writing about, they do suggest that bridal reticence was accepted as part of the marriage ritual.[8] Weeping also helped to solemnize marriage in Finland, where the grief of the bride was augmented by two wailing women:

> Als die Freiersleute erwartet wurden, setzten sich zwei alte Weiber einander gegenüber in eine Ecke, und indem sie in vorgebeugter Stellung die Arme auf die Knie gestützt den Kopf ab und zu warfen weinten sie bitterlich....Nachdem die Braut gründlich geweint hatte, waren die Ceremonien für den Abend aus, und man ergab sich den Freuden des Tanzes.[9]

Of the Votjaks we are told that the bride "would weep and complain and even attempt to escape."[10] The Mordvinians seem also to have been prone to such displays of grief, as we are told by a traveller to that region in the late eighteenth century:

> Und noch izt haben sie die Gewohnheit, dass wenn die Braut aus der russischen Kirche, wo die Trauung vor sich geht, zurück kommt, sie beständig wehklagen muss, ja einige meinen es so ernstlich, dass sie sich das Gesicht unbarmherzig zerkratzen.[11]

A description of a Lapp wedding is also very gloomy reading:

> Die Braut geht nicht zur Hochzeitsgesellschaft, sondern bleibt zurück in einer Ecke im väterlichen Hause und kauert nieder und weint so lange, wie jene dort das Trinken fortsetzten....Wenn der dritte Tag kommt....versammeln sich die Mädchen bei der Braut, um mit der Braut zu weinen.[12]

It will come as no surprise to learn that more tears are shed at the ceremony of farewell.

While I can find no indication that English or Celtic brides were given to tears, one must nonetheless speculate on the implications of Francis Collinson's account of the fate of the Scottish coronach, the traditional funeral lament which has now largely disappeared as a ritual melody; but, Collinson adds, "the air has also been used for the

Gaelic satirical song 'Banais am bail' Inbhir Aorc' (The Wedding at Inverary) and for the old song 'Why should I be sad on my Wedding Day.'"[13]

We may conclude that laments and weeping must be seen as separate rituals. To fail to do this would be to assume that grief is the sole creative force behind the lament. Even in Russia, where both rituals were observed almost to excess, the high point of weeping may not necessarily coincide with the high point of poetic lamentation. Indeed, it would be difficult for anyone to produce the control necessary for the recitation of poetry while having a case of hysterics, albeit a ritual one. Thus Pallas' failure to note lamentation amongst the Moksha may be due to the fact that it was not performed at the same time as the weeping which he witnessed. But while the phenomena are distinct, certain criteria are the same for both. We must in each case distinguish ritual from non-ritual occurrences. By this, of course, I do not imply that they lack personal sincerity, but rather that they must accompany ritual as a natural and necessary part of it. When a bride, or her friends, or relatives, or a professional mourner is obliged to cry or to lament at a certain moment, then we may call her actions ritualistic. Because of this distinction between weeping and lamenting, I shall not concern myself principally with external expressions of grief when I come to identify and analyze lament poetry.

Let us first turn to the comparatively few examples of laments recorded outside of the European tradition, and then examine the greater abundance of European laments.

From India, we have examples of wedding laments from Hindus as well as fron non-Hindu peoples. Archer's collection of wedding poems

and rituals among the Uraons of Southern India is very important to this study.[14] I have chosen three poems for particular attention. The first one is in the form of a dialogue between the bride and her mother, the interrogative structure of the dialogue and the parallel lines also being specific features of ritual poetry:

> Mother, for whom is the marriage bower?
> Mother, for whom is the weeping?
> For the son, mother, is the marriage bower
> For the daughter, mother, is the weeping.
> (Archer, No. 143, p. 130)

The first line of each couplet refers to a concrete object, and has a specific, ritual implication. That the marriage ritual implies sorrow is implicit in the final line of the couplets. The parallel structure of lines 1 and 2, and of lines 3 and 4, allows for movement from the concrete to the abstract, and from the impersonal to the personal. It also effectively underlines the contrast between joy, which pertains to the male, and sorrow, which characterizes the female. This is heightened in lines 3 and 4 by the identification of the bridegroom with the marriage bower, but the bride with the weeping. Through this, the nature of the song as a bridal song is determined, for it reflects the consciousness of the woman rather than that of the male.

In the next poem, however, this male/female dichotomy is not present:

> The grinding stone turns slowly
> Slowly the grinding stone turns
> Sister sister
> Slowly the tears fall
> Boy boy
> With the dhoti he wipes his tears
> With the scarf he wipes his tears. (Archer, No. 144, p. 131)

In this unusual poem, the ritual connection is expressed in the final lines rather than at the beginning, as is usually the case. The slow turning of the stone parallels the slowly falling tears. The poem is controlled by the metaphor of passing time, by the symbol of the grinding stone, and by the deep implication this has for both bride and groom.

The brother/sister relationship is an important one in the marriage rituals of many peoples, as well as in the social structure of family life. Amongst the Hindu, for example, only the brother could visit the bride once she was established in her new home. The elder brother has an important position in many Russian laments as would-be soliciter for his sister and as defender of the betrothed girl against attack and abduction. In Archer's collection, the sister/brother relationship plays an important role, too. The bride pleads with her elder brother, or reproaches him ("If you will pity me, you will take me out, elder brother," - No. 148, p. 132), and in the following example, the brother represents disruption and loss:

> So long as I am in your house, elder brother
> Your house will be like the feathers of the peacock
> But when you will have given me in marriage, elder brother,
> Your house will be so silent that no one can say whether it is lived in or not. (Archer, No. 149, p. 132)

The house is a symbol for the family and for the harmony and security of the family life before marriage. A consciousness of change and loss directs the imagery and structure of the poem. The poem is unusual in the equation of a death-like state with the childhood home; although the bride indicates that the house will "die" without her in it, it is really her own death which is implied. She in the house is metaphor-

ical of the soul in the body. The address form, too, is characteristic of a lament.

Amongst the Bhil of central India, the bride sings a dialogue with her brother as she is sent away to her new home:

> The She-Starling calls from the tree: Whither are you going so inopportunely?
> Tarry, o my sister, tarry but a few days.
> I will not tarry, o my brother, for my sister-in-law would torment me.
> O sister with children in your arms, to what house are you going?
> My father has sold me and eaten up the money,
> I go to his house between the hills, where the bamboo rustles
> Where the panther roars among the bamboo canes and the bears call from the foot of the mountains.[15]

The dialogue/direct address structure is an obvious lament feature. An interesting aspect of this song is the role played by the brother. In the Russian wedding laments, he usually refuses, or is unable, to protect the bride from her fate; here, he begs her to stay. It is the brother who may continue to visit and help her after marriage, while it is the sister-in-law who will dominate her. The motifs of selling the bride, of the long journey, and of the strange, foreign land are familiar ones. Of note is the device of time-measuring. The desire to delay time, or to reverse it, is expressed, usually metaphorically, in a number of Russian laments, and we will see other examples of it in this chapter. The bride's awareness that time cannot be turned back, and that the change is irreversible, is shown by the fact that it is the brother who expresses the wish. The wisdom of the bride is depicted as her fear of a scolding by her sister-in-law.

Amongst the Santals, the bridal laments, although expressed in the first person, are not sung by the bride. Her lack of participation is

not to be wondered at, as she is expected to remain perfectly silent behind her veil. One such song is of particular note. It is sung in the name of the bride as part of the ritual in which the bride's parents were presented with money and cloth as "payment" for their daughter:

> Mother took the fine cloth,
> Father took a handful heavy rupees
> Brother took the bullock.
>
> For one seer of rice
> They bought sindur
> For all my life I shall be bound.
>
> Soiled and torn will the fine cloth soon be,
> Spent or stolen will the handful rupees be,
> Gone and broken will the bullock be.
>
> For one seer of rice
> They bought sindur
> For all my life I shall be bound.[16]

The ritual demands of the lament are fulfilled in this poem. Firstly, it is sung in the first person, even though the bride herself remains silent. Furthermore, the poem begins with a ritual description which is transformed into a symbolic interpretation of what that ritual implies for the girl's life. The ritual payment is not to be confused with either an actual or an ancient, half-remembered commercial exchange. Similarly, the smearing of the sindur is not, and probably never was, the mark of bondage, the comparison being a poetical, a symbolic one. Both conventions -- the "selling" of the bride, and her enslavement -- are familiar ones to us from the Russian laments. In the third stanza, the full meaning of these poetic symbols becomes clear. Through marriage, the stanza implies, the bride will become as worn out as old cloth, as valueless as squandered money, and as spent

as an old bullock. The poem uses these symbols as a device for measuring time. Marriage, the poem is telling us, is the high point and the low point of life, it is the beginning of death. I have suggested that time and time measurement are the essential, symbolic and thematic forces behind the Russian and German wedding laments. Here, too, it would seem to be the prime motivation for the song.

From Ahmadnagar district, we also have an interesting example of a wedding song, which is worthy of our notice even though it was recorded as a labour song, sung by women while they performed the arduous task of grinding the grain. This song expresses vividly the world view of the young bride, and is sung in the first person, in a long, drawn-out series of rhyming couplets. It is also full of powerful, metaphorical descriptions, such as this one (which has been given a rough prose translation):

> The father and the mother are strong and powerful and yet they cannot prevent the poor lowing cow being taken away by the butcher.[17]

And the poem concludes strikingly with a pitiful complaint:

> By some mistake God gave me the birth of a woman. Like a hired bullock which is hard driven by all, I am on the point of breaking.
>
> God Rama, I fall at your feet and fold my hands and pray to you, never again give me the birth of a woman.
>
> (Karve, p. 210, stanzas 42-43)

While Ms. Karve notes that "hundreds of folksongs bear witness to the agony of a girl at parting for ever from her parents' home,"[18] she does not tell us whether any of these songs were performed as part of the wedding ritual.

This, of course, is a very small sampling of the folklore of

Indian marriage rites. It would not be possible in this thesis to devote more space to the problem. We do, however, have enough evidence of ritual songs to indicate that the tradition existed, and that it had many features in common with Russian and German wedding laments.

A form of marriage lamentation is also known amongst the Kirgiz.[19] The ritual significance of this song form is very great indeed. The bride is surrounded by her girl friends inside a tent, the bridegroom and his friends gather outside the entrance to the tent. Their singing back and forth to each other takes place on two days, and constitutes a major part of the marriage ritual. The first day is the maidens' day. On the second, or women's day, the tent is broken into, and the singing is interrupted by the married women, who carry the bride (against the struggles of her friends) out of the tent and into the tent of the bridegroom, where the consummation soon follows. In the songs, the chorus of girls laments the departure from her parents' home:

1. The boys (outside the tent):
   Die Schäfte meiner grünen Stiefel sind eng,
   Ich kann sie nicht anziehen.
   Meine Hand erhebt sich nicht,
   Reichtümer kann ich nicht sammeln.

2. The girls (inside the tent):
   Wenn sich die Hand euch erhebt
   Und Reichtümer sammeln könnte;
   Mein herzliebstes Mütterlein verlassen,
   Das tut mir weh.

3. The boys, etc.

4. The girls:
   Du versprachst mir alles zu verkaufen und du hast mich
   verkauft, o Väterchen,
   Du wolltest viel nehmen für mich und ertrinkst jetzt in
   Herden, o Väterchen.
   Von dem, was Du für mich einnahmst, gabst Du mir nichts,
   o Väterchen.
   Was machtest Du mit dem Vieh, das Du für mich erhieltst,
   o Väterchen?....

8. The girls:
Ich ritt auf einem rabenschwarzen Pferde,
Mähne und Schweif waren durchgekämmt.
Wer soll denn weinen, wenn nicht ich?
Daheim bleibt mein älterer Bruder. (Jungbauer, p. 78)

And so the song continues, the bride lamenting each member of her family in turn. The reproaches of stanza 4 are familiar to us. Material wealth is compared to the spiritual riches of parental love and the security of one's childhood home, and the future is seen in terms of emptiness; the journey into this lonely future is signified through the prancing of the horse. The Kirgiz example is striking for the closeness of lament convention and ritual function.

While similarities between Indian and Russian or Kirgiz and Russian wedding laments could indicate a common influence, the possibility of cultural interchange dwindles sharply when we speak of African ritual poetry. Van Gennep notes bridal lamentation from the Chaga of Tanganyika.[20] From East Africa, three laments have been recorded as ritual components of the wedding ceremony. Sung in the form of a dialogue between the bride and a chorus of her friends, or with her mother, the laments are performed after the offer of marriage, after the wedding, and two weeks later, when the bride bids her last farewell to her relatives.[21]

In the first of these laments, the bride stubbornly refuses to "go to the mountains" and wear the strange clothes of the other tribe. "No one gets used to unhappiness," she declares. The friends reenforce her apprehensions by warning her of a deception; rather than being married, she is being carried off "beyond the forest, where there are no more people." Doubt, and the transience of youth and life are expressed in

a kind of middle point or climax to the lament:

> Oh, child, you don't know if the sown seed will flower,
> You don't know if it will flower or die. (Trask, I. 99)

In the final section of the song, the violence of the earlier part is repudiated, and marriage as a creative bond is proposed:

> Sit down, make a compact of friendship in blood
> So that love will not wither from their hearts.
> (Trask, I, 100)

After the marriage takes place, the bride's mother and her sister both give her advice. Apparently, the bride has been downcast, for the sister admonishes her to "stop your grieving [since you are only] going where others (have gone before you)." The mother, more practically, advises her daughter to be as strong as the tiger in the night,[22] as she, herself, has been:

> Your mother has behaved like the tiger,
> She has behaved like the tiger in the moonlight.
> (Trask, I, 100)

The final lament is the most powerful. Its short, strong, rhythmic phrases are interspersed with exclamations of grief:

> Hush, first-born
> Hush, only child,
> Hush, you are being deceived, oh!
> Being carried off, oh!
> Hush, darling, oh!
> Into a strange land, oh! (Trask, I, 100)

The poem catalogues the torments which await the bride -- she will be beaten and scolded, and she will perform various tasks. The ending of the poem is interesting. There, the mood changes sharply from a kind of grieving hopelessness to a fantasy of return:

We'll take her in our arms
And bring her back to her father,
Her father who begot her. (Trask, I, 101)

We have seen this fantasy motif before. In a Russian lament we have studied, the bride declares that she will turn herself into a bird and return to her mother through the opened window.[23] A simple version of this was found in the Bhil poem, where the brother urges the girl to "tarry but a few days." In the well-known Chinese lyric narrative of Lui Hsi-chun, in which she describes her marriage to a Tartar Khan, a similar motif occurs. Although this is not in itself an uncommon motif, could there possibly be echoes here of a ritual, folk tradition?:

My family married me to the other end of the world
Far far away in the alien land to the Prince of Sinkiang
With a Mongol hut as my house and felt as my walls
With meat as a constant diet and koumiss as my drink
Thinking of my homeland often my heart is torn
May I fly back as a yellow crane to visit my home![24]

The motif of return implies the journey. This is brought out strongly in the Chinese narrative, and is also evident in each of the other examples. We must take this purely figuratively, as a projection of longing, since the impossibility of return must have been as abundantly clear to the African mother as to the Chinese bride. What we are dealing with, once again, is a time formula. Change through marriage is inevitable, as inevitable as life itself. Time cannot be turned back in the case of marriage, any more than it can in the case of death. Through such motifs, the ritual and symbolic implications of the <u>rite of passage</u> become clear. The fantasy of return functions both to reduce grief (by pretending to oneself that the loss is not irretrievable), and to underline the finality of the rite (by consciously indulging in

a dream of the impossible.)

Besides basic generic similarities, the African poems must be conceded to be poetically quite different from the Russian and the Indian examples. The occurrence, here, too, of the journey motif only enhances my argument that it is an essentially metaphoric expression of time, with a greater or lesser degree of social reality, and not an example of influence.

Amongst Arab families of Fez, Morocco, an interesting custom is observed in the procession of the couple to the groom's house.[25] As elsewhere in Morocco, the procession is a rowdy one, marked by music and shouting and the firing of guns. The bride, however, is borne to her new home in a box which is shaped and decorated like a saint's tomb, and which is carried by pallbearers. While such an overt reference to death is not known elsewhere in Morocco, in most areas the bride weeps considerably during the preparations for marriage and the departure from her home.[26] She is everywhere accompanied by her girl friends (her wazâra), very much like the Russian bride. The two major rituals of the pre-nuptial period are the bath and the application of henna to her body, this latter sometimes taking place two or three times. Westermarck sees both these as purification rituals, as well as rituals to ward off evil spirits.[27] The bride's weeping, which accompanies the rituals as well as the departure, is in places supported by the weeping of her mother, or of the girl friends, by the other women who are making what Westermarck describes as a "quivering noise" (oddly enough, he consideres this noise to be a means of warding off evil spirits, rather than a ritual expression of grief)[28] or, by contrast, in some cases the bride weeps alone while the others make merry, dance

and sing. The ritual demands of the moment determine whether her grief is expressed by herself alone, or is supported and, if so, by whom. In some places, the bride weeps as she is being dressed, and while Westermarck mentions no songs which accompany this weeping, there is certainly a suggestion of some form of speech or song in the following description:

> In the evening there is a feast in the girl's house, with only women as guests. Sitting on her bed, the bride weeps and wails, mentioning by name every member of her family whom she is now going to leave. Then the wâzara dance.... This occasion is called l-lila s-sgêra del-arûsa, "the bride's little night." (Westermarck, p. 169)

It is unfortunate that Westermarck provides us with no examples of songs. In Fez, a ritual is performed which has distinct lament features. The bride is led to the door of her room, her face is uncovered, and her attendents take hold of her shoulders, swaying them back and forth, and singing a song of praise to her maiden beauty. Westermarck continues:

> When this singing is finished the girl, who has all the time kept her eyes closed "out of shame," has her face covered again. The ngâgef sing:
>
> Ha hîya mărhôna,
> Here is she who is pawned. (Westermarck, p. 138)

Perhaps the explanation for Westermarck's failure to note laments in his otherwise lengthy description of Moroccan marriage customs lies in his own interpretation of bridal weeping. "The crying which is expected from her (the bride) during the preparations for her departure," he writes, is a "ceremonial expression of her bashfulness or pretended reluctance to marrying."[29] In such an interpretation, Westermarck has come about as far from the Soviet understanding of the deeply unhappy

bride as one could possibly imagine. Surely, in his evaluation of ritual expressions of modesty and reluctance, Crawley does not suggest that the crying is a pretence. It is true that the tears are expected from the bride, but this does not contradict the feelings of grief. Any ritual theory which cannot encompass the two poles of natural feeling and tradition is woefully inadequate to deal with ritual poetry of the complexity of the wedding lament.

Moving, now, to another part of the world, we have one example of a bridal lament from the Niassan peoples of Indonesia. The poem consists of two parts, in which the bride addresses first her brothers and then her mother. There are definite similarities in the motifs to those of laments already studied, yet the total impression is quite different:

1) The bride to her brothers:
O brothers, how have I wronged you
That you are in such haste to bury me,
That gold, O brothers, is more precious to you than I am?
This cannot bring you good fortune, brothers,
Nor bring food for the pigs.
So long as I was among you, brother,
I willingly did as you said
Whenever you gave me a command
And I have satisfied you in all things.
Why do you give me away to serve strangers?

2) Bride and Mother:
"The words began as if a cannon had been fired.
The people are hurrying by as if driven by the devil.
Countless people are coming, Mother, O Mother?"
Where are you sending your child, Mother?"
"You are going into poverty,
Under the house of the rich man is your place,
Be content with your lot,

Do not fear, do not draw back --
The word is spoken as if a cannon had been fired."[30]

We are familiar with the reproach form, with the bride's accusations

of ingratitude to her family for her uncomplaining labours on their behalf, and the motif of selling the bride for a handful of gold. Marriage as bondage is hinted at in the last line of the first part, and the depiction, in the last part, of the mother as sympathetic (she has been through this, too) but unable or unwilling to help, all find echoes in the Russian laments. The tone of the dialogues, however, is unusually harsh. Both deal primarily with the time theme. In the first part, this is brought out by the irony implicit in the suggestion that the brothers pursue their own fortunes through the murder (line 2) and enslavement (line 10) of their sister; marriage, in other words, implies the death of youth, but money and pigs are subject to the laws of time, as well (lines 4 + 5). In the second part, money, too, is used metaphorically to enhance the cruelty of the situation. The girl's poverty is placed in ironic contrast to the opulence of her husband's home. The implication is a double one: the girl is impoverished spiritually through the loss of her youth and of her home, and she is impoverished practically through the humble position she will hold in her new family. The mother's advice contains none of the spirited energy of the African mother's admonishment to "behave like the tiger in the moonlight;/When it is dark, he bites."[31] The stoicism and submission enjoined upon the Niassan bride is a reflection of the poem's general tone of despair. Quite simply, there is no alternative. Lacking either the fantasy of return or the emotional explosion of rhythmic grief, this lament is unrelenting in its message of human sadness:

"The word is spoken as if a cannon had been fired."

As we have already noted, lament forms amongst the peoples of Europe have been recorded with comparative frequency. Let us begin in the far west, with the marriage songs of France. Sylvain Trébucq, editor of La Chanson populaire et la vie rurale des Pyrénées à la Vendée,[32] devotes a lengthy chapter to marriage customs and songs. Blade has also gathered a large number of wedding songs from Gascony.[33] While there is a certain coincidence of material in the two collections, both deserve our attention, the first for the ritual details which accompany the texts, the second for the quality of the examples. Nearly every major ritual moment would seem to have its accompanying song, although not all of them come under the classification of lament.

The first lament songs are performed on the eve of the wedding, at a time when all the ritual preparations become more intense. The bringing of the dowry, and in particular the various parts of the nuptial bed, to the new house is a major ritual event in many parts of Europe, and possibly the survival of the original marriage ritual (quite simply, the removal of the bride from her father's home to that of her husband.) On the whole, the ritual is a cheerful one, and the return procession, in particular, would seem to be entirely joyful. In some areas, however, the journey to the new home is a sad one for the bride. In Bazas,[34] the cart is covered with a white cloth, decorated with laurel leaves, the cloth which is customarily used in funeral processions of that region. At the new home, the bed is assembled, and the mortuary cloth is given the place of honour. Trébucq tells us that the girls sing songs of regret all the way to the new home, in particular one which tells of the misfortunes of Fleurette, who was abandoned by her lover, Henri IV, and who drowned herself in despair. Despite the

reference to another woman, there is a certain ritual aspect to the song, which is an injunction to tears, and the regal allusion has its parallel in much wedding poetry (consider the Russian knjaginja of the laments, and certain implications of the bridal crown):

Bère courtine, bèt matelas,
Es bien doumatge qu'anguis oun las.
Bère perpunte, bèt matelas
Es bien doumatge, etc...

Lous linçous de Fleurette,
Lou tour dou leyt,
Nobi, tes amourettes
Perdes aneyt. (Trébucq, p. 217)

The dressing of the bride may also be an occassion for sorrow. Blade provides an example of a song sung while the bride is being dressed. This is clearly a ritual song, each verse referring to a different article of clothing, beginning, according to tradition, with the undergarments, and ending with the placing of the bridal crown. At this point, a lament tone enters the poem:

--Boutatz-lou la courouno (bis),
La que sa mai lou douno,
Lou bo douna.
O! jàmes plus courouno
Nou pourtera. (Bladé, p. 256)

Before departing from her parents, the young bride first asks for their benediction:

Nobio, que te cau ajuilla.
Benedictioun te ben bailla.
Diu te la baille, Diu te la doun,
Noubieto, la benedictioun. (Bladé, p. 258)

A choir of girls sings these songs, which, like many German laments, are directed at the bride, not reflecting her feelings (as is the case with the Russian choral laments), but telling her how she

ought to feel, poetically "rubbing it in," as it were:

> Nobi, abets aqués matin
> Dit adichats aous bos besins.
>
> Lous que dechats que counéchats
> Mes ne sabets lous que prenets. (Trébucq, p. 223)

The girls thus chant at the bride throughout the performance of the departure rituals. The passing of time is a central theme:

> Jeunesse, où donc as-tu fui? (Trébucq, p. 224)

These songs are not only didactic (in that they remind the bride of her duties and of the appropriate emotions), they can be chillingly aggressive in tone. The bride, they seem to say, has chosen her fate, and may thus be accused of unfeelingness toward her parents. One farewell song entreats the bride to weep, as her parents are doing, and suggests that if she does not weep, she is ungrateful. The song goes on:

> -Nobio, te hè pas mau lou cò,
> Quita toun mounde coume acò?
> Quitos ta mai per un jamès,
> Per ana serbi un estrangè. (Bladé, p. 260)

The song ends with a description of the bride passing in front of her family as she goes out the door, and obviously coincides ritually with the same act of farewell.

While the removal of the bridal crown is a solemn occasion, remindful of the finality of the act, it is also joyful, as it is seen in connection with the preparation for bed. (In Germany, the unwreathing and the preparations for bed, or <u>das Niedersingen</u>, are separate rituals, thus allowing for a greater tonal difference.) In Gascony and in other parts of France, as well, a solemn ritual occurs during the banquet, and it is accompanied by a song which may be called a lament,

although it is more didactic than ritual, more like a folk song than a standard lament. In the midst of the celebrations, a group of girls brings the bride a bunch of wild flowers and a cake. The former is a symbol of the fading of marital bliss, the latter a symbol of female labour, which will endure:

Nous somm' venues vous voir,
Ma très chèr camarade,
Pour vous marquer la joie
De votre mariage.

L'époux que vous prenez,
Sera souvent le maître,
Mais pour le radoucir,
Faudra lui obéir!

Adieu le sans-souci,
La liberté jolie!
Adieu le temps chéri
De votr' bachèlerie.

Vous n'irez plus au bal,
Madam' la mariée,
Vous aurez l'air sérieux
Devant les compagnies.

Le bouquet que voilà,
Qu'i vous prions de prendre,
C'est un bouquet de fleurs
Pour vous faire comprendre
Que les plus grands honneurs
Passent comme les fleurs.

Le gâteau que voilà,
Que ma main vous présente,
Prenez-en un morceau,
Car il vous fait comprendre
Qu'il faut, pour se nourrir,
Travailler et souffrir.

Nous vous sou'aitons le bonjour,
Madame la mariée. (Trébucq, pp. 231-32)

It may well be that this ritual was once connected with the removal of the bridal wreath. The contrast between early love (the flowers) and woman's labour (presumably, cooking) would appear to be a relatively

modern interpretation of what is really a more complex symbolic contrast. The flowers are time symbols, representing the death of youth, the vanity of human wishes, beauty, etc. They suggest a pastoral image of an ideal age in which the forever young and beautiful dance perpetually among the flowers. But flowers wilt just as the spring of life must pass forever. The cake has a magical significance in Ukrainian and Balkan weddings. Böckel cites a rather similar song, also from Gascony, in which it is made explicit that the roses of the wreath are replaced by sorrow, the garden of youth with the cares of domestic duty;[35] it is sung by the wedding guests while they remove the bridal wreath. In its simplest form, the substitution of the cake for the flowers implies parting and initiation. The former is invariably sorrowful, while the latter is in this case somewhat neutral, in many cases actually positive and joyous. The lament theme is here implicit in the flower rather than the cake symbol.

Czech, Slovakian and Sorbian weddings display many similarities to the German. Dances such as the čepeni and the kotek ritualize the initiation of the bride in Czechoslovakia. As in Germany, the central ritual moments are the farewell to the parents, and the removal of the wreath (or placing of the cap). The farewell songs are often highly formalized, each stanza referring to a different member of the family or clan, and are accompanied by ritual gestures of farewell. One Sorbic song (though it has more a folksong than a ritual structure) is reminiscent of some Russian examples. It consists of a series of questions and answers in which 1) the strangers are identified, 2) the bride's beauty and her flowing hair are mentioned, 3) the daughter begs her mother not to admit the strangers, 4) the mother admits the

strangers and tells her weeping daughter:

Nelč 'šak a neplakaj, holečo!
To džjen je 'šitko podarmo: (2)

Twoje to 'lóski plećenje,
Twoje to črije, štrympy wobuwanje, (2)

Twoje to šórc a pelc woblekanje,
Twoje to wjenc, bortu stajenje:' (2)[36]

In Czechoslovakia, the farewell and the wreath/capping rituals are the most important. The departing bride thanks each member of the clan in turn. In one song collected by Böckel, the bride depicts her departure in terms of a long journey, the howling of the wind serving as the messenger of her mother's voice.[37] One Slovakian collection offers two examples of ritual songs performed at the removal of the wreath, one sung in the first person, and one in the second:

Stratila som partu, zelený veniec,
našiel mi ju družba, svarny mládenec.
Hej, družba, hej, družba, pekne ta prosím,
dajže mi tú partu, rada ju nosím!
Keby si ty partu rada nosila,
veru by si druzbu krajšie prosila.

and,

Tie lupčianske zvony velmi pekne zvonia,
už tebe, Aničká, tvoju partu zronia.
Zronia ti ju, zronia deviatimi zvoncí,
abys nechodila s cudzími mládencí.
Abys nechodila, muža si lúbila,
Janíčka švárnyho, tebe oddanýho.[38]

In both cases, the opening of the song introduces the theme of time -- in the one, the irretrievable loss of the garden of youth and of maidenhood, in the other the ringing of the bells tolling the death of maidenhood. In the second song, the ritual context is vividly apparent through the synchronization of the ringing of the bells with the actual removal of the wreath, the significance of the latter being explained

on one level of the poetic text, while the identification of the bells with death explains the significance of the ritual on a deeper level.

The Hungarian lament tradition is somewhat different.[39] Like the German and Czech and French songs, the Hungarian songs were performed by a chorus. Yet, there would seem to be a deeper emotional identification of the songs with the bride's personal fate than is the case in the other languages. The major ritual occasion for lament is the departure. While in this it is similar to the German tradition, the capping ritual is less important. Farewell songs, however, are numerous, and the first ones are sung on the eve of the wedding, while the wedding wreaths and sprays are being made. In some areas, this evening ceremony played much the same role as the Russian devičnik. Many of these departure songs are in the bride's name, although they are performed by a chorus. One such song is performed while the girls and women place the wreath on the bride. The girl pictures herself as being driven from her home, and the image suggests a loss of a sense of belonging:

> Heimatlos war ich nicht, heimatlos wurde ich,
> Gott strafe ihn, der daran schuld ist! (Manga, p. 256)

The song continues as an invective against the guilty one. Another song performed at the same occasion warns that marriage is irreversible:

> Es ist kein spreuiger Weizen, um gereitert zu werden,
> Noch geliehenes Brot, um zurückgegeben zu werden.
> (Manga, p. 257)

A lament motif occurs at the end of a song performed during the procession to church, in which the bride is depicted as the loveliest

shoot from her mother's rose bush:

> Doch ein Bursche hat mich gepflückt,
> Ich muss an seinem Hut verwelken
> Ich muss an seinem Hut verwelken. (Manga, p. 261)

Another song is sung as the bride is led to the groom's house. Here the bride compares the sweet milk of the mother to the bitter bread of the stranger; in fact, she adds, the bread is not only bitter, it is full of lamentation. She regrets the many times she failed to obey the beautiful words of her mother.[40]

The moment of actual farewell would seem to be the high point of the ritual lamentation for the Hungarian bride. A formal, and ritual injunction to the bride to bid farewell to her family and friends is not unlike those found in other languages, such as German, Slovakian or Czech. One song, which is now sung only by the older generation, compares the home of youth with the home of the parents-in-law, and is sung on the way to the new house:

> Vogel, Vogel kleiner Vogel, was du dich unterstehst?
> Auch gestern hast du noch zu dieser Zeit Körner geklaubt,
> In Schlingen sind nun deine Füsse, dein Frohsinn ist dahin,
> Gefesselt sind nun deine Flügel, deine Freiheit ist dahin.
>
> Liebe Volgelgefährten, von euch bin ich geschieden,
> Auch gestern ging ich noch zu dieser Zeit mit euch spazieren.
> Für ein Leben lang bin ich der tückischen Welt verfallen.
> Singen muss ich ständig den bösen Vögeln.
>
> Mit Speise und Getränk bin ich versorgt,
> Doch die Wohnung gefällt mir nicht, mein Nest kommt mir in den Sinn,
> Doch die Wohnung gefällt mir nicht, mein Nest kommt mir in den Sinn,
> Doch es reut mich das Futter im Wald.

Man füttert mich mit Zucker, doch nicht im Walde,
Man tränkt mich aus grünem Trog, doch nicht im Gefilde.
Die Zweige des Holunders waren süsser,
Die Wässer der Bäche flossen dort auch schöner.
(Manga, p. 273)

This song is a true lament, although the ritual context is not clearly defined in the words. Sung in the first person singular, the lament expresses deep regret for the past, which is idealized as a kind of paradise. As an inhabitant of the forest, the girl was in tune with nature. The contrast is unusual here, the bride depicting her youth as that of a bird in its nest, and married life quite simply as life itself. Rather than journey to a strange land, the bride, as bird, leaves the wild state to become a caged and captive bird. The world of men, which she enters, is strange. While bird and nature motifs are frequent in lament songs, particularly in the Russian songs, the lack of any direct invective against the particular world of marriage (as opposed to the world of the maiden) is unusual. Not the new family, but people, not the new home, but houses, not the different food, but human food, appear strange to the captured bird. Despite this difference in imagery, the concept of time still underlies the song. The life in the forest as a bird was essentially outside of the realms of time, change or death. The daily "walks" of the birds (line 6) are, through their repetitiveness, without beginning or ending. The forest is also endless in the sense that it is composed of an unnumbered cluster of branches (line 15) and watered by eternally flowing streams (line 16). There is no volition in that life, where the brooks flow of their own accord, and the birds go for walks for no particular purpose. In the world of men, however, all actions take on a certain purpose or deliberateness. One is given food to eat and water to

drink, and one's wings are fettered that one may not fly at will (lines 3/4, and 13/14). Finally, the world is hers for a limited period of time only, unlike the forest life, which would seem to be endless, and there is a hint of death in line 7: "Für ein Leben lang bin ich der tückischen Welt verfallen." Thus, the lament depicts life as a fallen state with childhood seen as a golden age. We already noted a Biblical parallel to the myth of the Fall from Garden of Eden in the Russian laments, and a similar allusion is implicit here. There is a striking difference between the tone of the Hungarian laments and that of the other Western European laments already examined. The departure has a much broader, metaphorical connotation, and is more personal than in the German examples. The association of lamentation with the winding of the wreath, rather than with its removal, brings us closer to the Russian tradition. The transition is more personal than social.

Like the Hungarian weddings, at Rumanian ceremonies the major ritual moment for sorrow is the bride's departure from her parents. A farewell evening the day before the wedding is known, as is a capping ritual after the marriage ceremony, but it is the actual departure and blessing which form the central ritual. The uncertainty of the new life is the theme of a departure song recorded by Böckel from the Aromunens ("Ich weiss, aus welchem Haus ich herausgehe, aber nicht, in welches Haus ich eintrete").[41] Other departure songs, recorded by Marianu and by more recent collectors, are sung by a chorus, and are exhortations to the bride to take her leave not only of her family, but of her entire former life:

Frunză verde de alună,
le-ţi, mireasă, ziua abună
Dela mamă, dela tată,

Dela fântâna de piatră,
Dela fraţi, dela surori,
Dela fete şi feciori,
Dela grădina cu flori,
Dela flăcăi, dela joc.
Dela strat cu busuioc,
Dela prietini şi iubiti,
Dela pomii infloriţi,
Dela prietini şi vecini,
Dela lunca cu sulcini.[42]

The song is descriptive of village life, with its flowering trees and its folk dances. In its alternations of human and natural images, the lament appears more lyrical than ritualistic, but the ritual context is established in the second line and continued throughout by the repetition of "dela." The girl takes her leave of her siblings, her friends, her dancing mates and her lovers. By this, she is taking leave, in a broader sense, of family, clan, youth, fun and even love, since love is considered to be an attribute of youth rather than of marriage. A second departure lament is more emotional and more personal, and the grief at parting more poignant. Not only does the bride weep, but so do her parents. In the last two lines, a paradox is presented in the lamenting of the parents for their own act of sending their child away. Such a paradox can only be understood if we accept the inevitability of marriage and the passage of the young girl into womanhood. "Lăcramioare," in line 9, has a double connotation of tears and of lily-of-the-valley:

Trandafir în cornul mesii
Frumos plîng ochii miresii,
Las să plîngă cît de mult,
Binele car' l-a avut,
Las să plînga cît de tare,
Binele măicuţii sale.

Ia-ţi, mireasă, ziua bună
De la tată, de la mumă,
Car'te plîng cu lăcramioare,
Că te mînă călătoare.[43]

As in the German tradition, references to Adam and Eve and to other Biblical passages have a definite place in the marriage address.[44] The songs are, for the most part, sung by a chorus and addressed to the bride.

South Slavic wedding songs are of extreme importance and, like the Finnic tradition which will be noted at the end of this chapter, deserve a separate study of their own. Due in part to the limitations of my linguistic competence, and in particular to the unavailability of sources outside of local archives and libraries, I have not attempted here more than a brief acknowledgement and description of this important area.

If we consider the ritual and the poetry in very general terms, we may, to some extent, regard Southern Europe jointly. Certain common elements unite the traditions amongst the Greeks, Macedonians, Croatians, Bulgarians, and Ukrainians. Such an approach is superficial, as it is the exceptions which make a study interesting and valuable. Nonetheless, we are not here concerned specifically with the poetry of these peoples, and, for the sake of a brief summary, the similarities within the group are sufficiently numerous to allow for an approach of this sort.

The German influence has been noted amongst the Croatians, most notably in the dance and ritual at midnight which celebrate the removal of the bridal wreath.[45] Dobrovich[46] gives an example of a song for this occasion sung by the Croatians of Burgenland (Gradišće, in the

region of Stajerska; German Steiern):

> Ljublena zaručna,
> ča cé ti se stati,
> tvoj zeleni vjenac
> cé ti se požgati.
>
> Rozmarije šilji
> su se nakloniki,
> za zelenim vjencem
> su se turobili. (Dobrovich, p. 82)

The Bulgarian bride is advised by her girl friends not to give up her wreath without a struggle: "Ne davajse, devojko,/da ti snemat venjoko." And, further:

> Vurljaj, mjatej maramata,
> Maramata e grižovna.[47]

One common feature which has been described for the Southern tradition is the theatrical nature of the weddings,[48] seen as an intricate fusion of music, dance and song:

> Hochzeit und, bis zu einem gewissen Grad, auch Verlobung sind eigentlich nur ein mit Musik, Tanz und Gesang angefülltes Spiel, in dem ein glücklicher Ausgang der Hochzeit herbeigeschworen, und die Leiden der Braut (bzw. der Verlobten) wegen der Trennung vom Elternhaus beklagt werden.
> (Vakarelski, p. 299)

This point must remain debatable. As we have seen, Russian weddings are also described as theatrical, and Russians themselves call the wedding an <u>igra</u>. Much the same could be said of all of the more elaborate wedding ceremonies, including those outside of the European tradition. La Fontaine's definition of ritual as a performance in which there is "a preponderance of symbolic over technical action,"[49] would indicate that any elaborate wedding ritual is to some extent theatrical. The theatrical aspect of the Southern weddings is enhanced by

the important role played by the chorus, who not only sing most of the songs, but direct the proceedings and set the tone of the ritual moment, from frivolous to serious, from religious to profane.

In keeping with a strongly religious and rather less personal conceptualization of the marriage rite in the South is the importance placed on the ritual baking of the wedding cake and its presentation after the wedding. Fervently religious and solemn songs accompany these rituals, but they are songs of joy, nonetheless, not of sorrow. Before the wedding, sometimes on the eve of the wedding, the bride celebrates her departure from home. On this occasion, too, her hair is combed and braided, her head-dress is placed on her head, or her hair may be dyed with henna. One Macedonian lament is known both at the occasion of the henna dying (performed sometime before the marriage) and at the actual departure from the bride's home:

> Youth comes but once,
> We are young only once.
> The fair ones and all the brave lads are jealous of me.
> My own mother also envies me and seeks to turn me out.
> Turn me out, my mother, send me far away to foreign parts.
> That I may make my sisters of strange women, and foster-
> mothers of foreigners,
> That foreign women may wash my linen, and my best clothes.
> O my mother, tend my dear plants well.
> 'Tis but to-day, to-morrow, and on Saturday that I am here,
> On Sunday I bid thee farewell with a sugar-sweet apple.
>
> I leave a 'farewell' to the village, a 'farewell' to the
> brave lads,
> And to my mother I leave three phials of poison:
> One of which to drink at morn, the other at mid-day,
> The third one of which to sup at eve, and lay her down to
> sleep.[50]

While the "poison" which is bequeathed to the mother implies bereavement, the idea of death is intentional. The daughter "dies" through marriage, and the mother shares her fate through her love for her,

because she is also a woman and, on the darker side, because she has caused her daughter's death and is being meted out a suitable punishment.

In a Bulgarian lament, a simple construction underlines the irreversibility of the change the bride will undergo:

> Sal tazi večer, Ganke le mome,
> Pri tvojta majka, pri tvoja bačko,
> Ruk utre večer v čuždite chora...
> Na čužda majka 'majko' šte rečeš
> Na čuždi bačko 'bačo' šte rečeš. (Vakarelski, p. 293)

Finally, a word must be said concerning a special group of laments, those sung by the orphan bride, usually at the grave of her dead parent.[51] Dobrovich gives us an example of one such lament amongst the Croatians, sung by the bride and groom together after the marriage ceremony.[52] The format of the lament is familiar from similar laments in Russian -- the absence of the beloved parent is noted, the darkness of the grave is described, and the attempt to make contact (this time in the form of a letter) with the father forms the centre of the poem. The bride is bidden not to weep, "for there are sadder orphans." This song is actually sung by the bridal couple (rather than by a chorus), and is in the first person of the groom, the bride being addressed in the second person. Stojan Gen̆čev classifies this as one of the five Bulgarian lament types.[53] They are, however, by no means unique amongst the Southern Slavs. We have already noted their importance in the Russian tradition. Amongst the Lithuanians and Latvians, the orphan motif has strongly influenced the regular wedding laments.[54] It would appear that orphan laments should not be confused with other bridal laments, which are of a different type.

Stscherbakiwskyj sees the position and the function of the chorus as one of the distinguishing features in the division between Russian and Ukrainian weddings.[55] Unlike the Russians, he argues, the Ukrainians are matriarchal (I use the term because he does), and women control and direct the marriage ceremony.[56] The songs are performed by a chorus of unmarried girls and another of young married women (the družky and the svašky), who direct the activities, tell the people what to do, and provide moral precepts. This choral function, he adds, is much the same in Polish and Greek weddings.[57]

Another aspect of the Southern wedding, in contrast to that of the Russian, is the position and meaning of the wreath. The strict association of the wreath with virginity, he asserts, is unknown amongst the Russians, while it is an essential feature of South Slavic weddings.[58] The Russian motifs of krasota, vol'ja and molodost' are considerably more complex in their implications than a symbol of chastity would be. Stscherbakiwsky asserts that, unlike the Russian wedding songs, which are songs of mourning, the Ukrainian wedding songs contain "not even a hint of such things."[59] The author's own words belie to some extent this statement. Consider, for example, the detail that the ritual loosening of the bride's hair "is accompanied by lyrical songs about the bride's taking leave of her plait," and that during the placing of the matron's cap (očipok), the bride "must weep and struggle. Three times she tears her očipok from her head." On an earlier occasion "the chorus reminds the bride in a song that she will wear this wreath, a symbol of virginity, till the evening, and in the evening she has to return it to the družkas."[60] In Russian songs, the loss of youth, like the loss of the wreath, has deeply psychological and personal

overtones. The laments attack the problem of the death of the individual through marriage, and the rendition of these ideas through a highly personal lament, sung often by the bride herself, emphasizes the metaphorical nature of the complaint. The choral performance in the Ukraine is less individual in its perception and less dark (because it is more social) in its vision. The departure is the time for the receipt of the parental blessing, and the bride asks her parents for thanks as well as forgiveness, as in the following song from the Ukraine:

Благослови, боже!
Благослови, боже, і отець, і мати.
Своєму дитяті низенько кланятись:
І другій раз у божий час благослови, боже!
І третій раз у божий час...і т.д.
Благослови, боже і отець, і мати,
Своєму дитяті низенько кланятись.
А стань, Ганнусю, на терем,
Махни биндою наперед:
Нехай одступить чужина,
Нехай приступить родина.
У городі та руточка зеленька,
Кланяється та Ганнуся молоденька.
Уклонися ти, Ганнусю, свій родині,
Нехай тебе благословлять, як дитинь;
Уклонися ти, Ганнусю, і чужому--
Нехай тобі благословять так, як свому.[61]

We have seen that Stscherbakiwskyj argues in favour of a distinction between Russian and Ukranian wedding traditions. As the Ukrainian weddings are part of a much larger, Southern group, can we find evidence that the Russian tradition belongs to a larger, Northern group? Besides the Russian laments, we would have to look for evidence amongst the Baltic and the Finno-Ugric peoples.

Esthonian wedding customs are accompanied by quite a lot of singing, at least some of which is performed by the bride herself. A

ritual farewell is described thusly:

> Unter lauten Klagen nimmt sie Abschied, nicht nur von Eltern, Geschwistern, Gesinde und Vieh, sondern auch von Tischen und Bänken, besonders kläglich aber von dem Ofen.[62]

Songs are sung which express regret for the lost maiden hair, and the following song is performed by the girls at the capping ceremony:

> Jungfraustands, verschmähten Standes,
> Kranz, er wird hinweggeworfen,
> Wird verachtet als geringe!
> Möglichst wär's dass du beweintest
> Einst den frühern Stand als Jungfrau.
> (Rundschau, pp. 210-11)

The Lithuanians and Latvians both know the wedding lament, but only the Lithuanians (and the Latvians of one region) have preserved it as a distinct genre.[63] There are many parallels to the Russian laments both in the motifs of the songs and in the rituals which accompany them. For both peoples, the laments of orphan brides are highly developed, and there is a similarity of motif between those songs and the actual wedding laments, as in this example of a song performed during the final combing of the bride's hair on the morning of her wedding:

> Сиротинушка, моя сестричка,
> Головка твоя не причесана:
> На волосах твоих
> Три дня уже роса,
> Не туман то, не роса,
> Это были горьки слезоньки. (Drizule, p. 90)

Life before the wedding was outside of nature and the limitations of time. With marriage comes hardship, sorrow and mortality:

> Ну, Верочка, сестричка,
> Проси отца, мать,
> Чтобы благословили,
> Чтобы благословили
> На всю жизнь.

Нет дня без работы,
Нет жизни без горя. (Drizule, p. 92)

Again, the myth of the Fall from the Garden of Eden is suggested in this lament. Married life is seen as the whole life, the blessing being asked is for the bride's entrance of "birth" into life. The new life she is entering is one of sorrow and labour, even as Eve was condemned to a life of pain. We have seen a number of examples of laments in which the bride begs forgiveness for acts of disobedience she may have committed and, indeed, the final blessing is often equated with just such a plea for forgiveness. Here, too, is the suggestion at least that the parental blessing would be an act of mercy toward the girl who has been cast out. Sin is part of the human condition, and the girl aquires guilt through the act of birth (or rebirth).

The northern region also includes a large and diverse population of peoples speaking a variety of languages belonging to the Finnic group (besides the Ugric speaking Mansi [Vogul] and Khanti [Ostyak]). Belonging to this group are the Finns and Esthonians and Laplanders, as well as the Karelians, the Komis (Zyryans), the Maris (Cheremissians), the Udmurts (Votjaks), and the Mordvinians. As these peoples have lived near and mingled to some extent with the Russians for centuries, it is not surprising that certain parallels can be found between the lament traditions of the Russians and the Finnic peoples. Because of the linguistic barrier, I will limit myself to a very few examples, all of which are available in translation.

In Yrjö Wichmann's collection of Komi (Zyryan) folk songs,[64] we find examples of wedding laments from two dialectal areas, sung both by the bride and, to her, by a girl friend. In both types, the theme

of change and the journey into the unknown are important. The river becomes a symbol of the journey in one of the laments, and is ritually connected with the bride's sitting down during part of the ceremony:

> Ich setzte mich wie am ufer der Dvina hin,
> die eben ins meer stürzen will.
> Aber wenn mich [der strom] ins meer zieht,
> Wenn das glück mir nicht reicht,
> dann muss ich mein ganzes leben
> mitten auf dem meere treiben,
> von welle zu welle, von woge zu woge
> mich werfen lassen und treiben:
> von einem ufer werde ich fortgedrängt,
> und das andere ufer erreiche ich nicht. (Wichmann, p. 259)

The water symbol has an important function in this lament, as it suggests death and the realm of the subconscious, the bank being the firm ground of childish awareness and perception which is disintegrating. In no other lament studied is the implication of the journey as transition so forcefully depicted, although we have seen some Russian laments which also make use of the image of the bride afloat on a sea. The other bank, although very similar to the Russian čužaja/drugaja storona, is here seen as something positive, a regaining of consciousness, clearly a rebirth, although the uncertainty of attainment is poignantly underlined. Numerous parallels in folk tales to the reawakening of the sleeping hero(ine), the completion of a journey, the crossing of a sea can be found. In either form, the landing on the other side, the reawakening, or the arrival suggest the attainment of maturity, of a new state and a new consciousness. Reproach to the father, the mother, the brothers, and other clan members, for their betrayal forms an important theme in these laments:

> Warum wolltest du denn
> diese tat tun

Dass du es über dich gewannst mich dahin zu lassen,
um geworfen und gestossen zu werden;
Du verstandest ja mich zu erziehen,
meiner knochen länge zu strecken,
meines fleisches festigkeit zu stärken.
Aber verstanden hast du es nicht, mir
[einen mann] nach meinem eignen herzen zu erwählen!
(Wichmann, pp. 263-64)

In the same vein, the bride asks her parents, who will now work for them as well as she has done, and she begs them for mercy. In another lament, the bride asks God for [illegible] that he should give her as much luck as there are fir trees in the forest, as fish in the water and stars in the sky. She ends her song on the same water motif which we have already quoted. The lament which is sung by the girl friends to the bride is a reminder to her of the implications of her forthcoming marriage:

Um [alles] zu verlassen setzte sich das mädchenleben in
bewegung,
es fällt, ja es fällt auf den erdboden,
es wird getreten, ja es wird unter die füsse getreten,
unter die füsse, in eine schmutzgrube!
Es fällt, ja es fällt vom scheitel,
vom scheitel das stirnband [der jungfrau]!
Fort flattern, ja flattern vom flechtenende,
vom flechtenende die flechtenbänder!
Es bleibt, ja es bleibt deine schönheit
bei deinem vater auf der schlafpritsche,
bei deiner mutter in der ecke vor dem ofen!
Das erste mal schied sie von der süssen mutter-brust,
Das zweite mal schied sie von [der mutter] knie,
das dritte mal schied sie, um [ganz] sich zu trennen,
ging um sich zu trennen, ging um fortzuziehen
für das ganze leben, für die ewigkeit,
nicht fur eine stunde, [sondern] für ihr langes leben.
(Wichmann, pp. 288-89)

This last lament is of particular interest. The ritual removal of the maiden coiffeur evokes the lament motifs of parting, of irreversible change ("für das ganze leben, für die ewigkeit"), of a fall into a

dismal life, or of death ("in eine Schmutzgrube"). Furthermore, the idea that the "beauty" has a separate existence from the girl, that it is blown away by the wind and comes to rest in a kind of sanctuary (here it returns to the father's house), is a common one in the Russian laments, although apparently unknown in the other European examples studied.

As the "beauty" of the Komi bride is handled poetically in a similar fashion to that of the Russian bride, so, too, is the Karelian "free will" reminiscent of the Russian vol'ja:[65]

Там находятся нивские церквушки,
Там находятся два дерева-дуба.
Под этими деревьями укрой ты
Мою белую волюшку
На шесть недель. (Evseev, p. 46)

It is further reminiscent of the Russian laments that the ritual bathing of the bride is perceived as the washing off of the vol'ja:

Через красный платок
Процедите дорогую воду,
Чтобы смыть мою волю,
Волю, вольную волю. (Evseev, p. 46)

Aside from the Russian, the wedding lament tradition which has been most fully recorded would seem to be that of the Mordvinians, thanks to the exhaustive efforts of the Finnish folklorist H. Paasonen.[66] His collection of laments, complete with ritual description, runs to several hundred pages, and covers a number of villages of the Erza dialectic group. Like the Russian, the Mordvinian laments encompass most, if not all of the pre-nuptial period, beginning with the initial visit of the groom's family and the svax to the bride's house. The ritual sauna, which takes place two days before the

wedding, and the hair ritual and blessing which follow, are all accompanied by lamentation. Lamentation marks the eve of the wedding, and the dressing of the bride on the morning of the wedding day. There are laments at parting, as well as laments sung at the reception of the bride in her new home (for instance, she sings a lament at the oven of the new home). Besides these ritual moments, all of which bear certain similarities to rituals and laments in the Russian tradition, the bride sings a lament early in the morning after the betrothal, the so-called lament to the dawn (zoŕa-uŕńima), and she repeats this lament every morning of the wedding "week." The power of the lamenting voice, which we noted as a motif in the Tot'ma laments, is elaborated on more fully in this opening section of a sunrise lament, addressed to the mother:

> Lass deine Mütze über deine Augen,
> Lass deine Locken über deine Ohren (fallen)!
> Hör nicht, sieh nicht,
> Erschrecke nicht!
> Erschrecke nicht vor meiner Totenklage-Stimme,
> Entsetze dich nicht über meine Totenklage-Laute!
> Nicht dir zum Schlimmen erhebe ich diese Stimme.
> (Paasonen, p. 179)

The connotations of death and of laments for the dead are drawn distinctly in these laments. As the bride is led to the sauna, she laments that her heart and her breath have turned to stone, and that grass has spread over the tip of her tongue, so that she cannot speak -- clearly a reference to burial. The bride becomes even more explicit; she goes to the sauna "zum letzten Mal," and she asks her parents to summon up her grandfathers and grandmothers (who, presumably, are themselves in the grave) to build her a coffin and sew her a winding sheet. The brothers of the clan are asked to dig the grave, and the sisters to prepare themselves for the lamentation.[67] The motifs of purification

merge with those of death ("rein habe ich mein Bojarinnentum gewaschen" p. 192), but even after the sauna the bride reminds her parents of the tasks she had set them and, strangely enough, she compares herself, now steamed, washed, dried, cooled off and annointed with oil, to newly hulled grain.[68] The braiding of the hair gives rise, as it does in Russian laments, to expressions of regret for the demise of beauty and her free personality:

> Schau, meine Ernährerin,
> wie man mein Haar, das wie schöner Silberzwirn ist, beleidigt hat,
> wie man meinen brustkettengleichen Zopf gekränkt hat!
> Er passte für meinen Leib nicht, er sagte nicht meinem Herzen zu,
> er hat meinen Leib, der einem niedrigen Hain gleicht, gekrümmt,
> er hat mein unschön geformtes Gesicht bleich gemacht.
> (Paasonen, p. 199)

Orphan bride laments are also known amongst these people, in one example of which the bride asks her dead mother to turn into a bird as a sign that she knows of her daughter's great sorrow and has pity for her.[69] The arrival of the bridegroom and his train to fetch the bride inspires laments in which the bride pleads with her brother to save her from the onslaught of the Turks, and rebukes him for spurning his helpmate. At last, as she must leave for the church, she sings a farewell lament in which motifs of death, sickness and fear flirt with the assertion, only half uttered, that the ordeal can be survived if there is, in fact, no escape:

> Meine Herzlieben, meine Brüder.
> in Christi Namen, um Gottes willen,
> lade, mein Herzlieber,
> die, die mir ein lebendes Grab graben werden,
> die, die mir ein lebendes Grabmal bauen werden.
> Wie kann ich zu den Brüdern gehen,

so angetan, als ob ich in den Wald ginge,
so, als ob ich Engelwurz sammeln ginge?
Mein Körper ist (wie) in einen Sarg gelegt,
meine Füsse sind (wie) in kaltes Eisen gelegt,
meine Hände sind (wie) mit Draht umwickelt.
mein Gesicht ist (wie) mit Wachs überzogen,
meine Locken sind (wie) mit Leim geleimt.
Aber, falls ich gehen will,
schüttele ich meinen jungen Körper,
ich lasse den Sarg von mir abfallen,
ich stampfe mit meinen zwei Füssen,
ich lasse das kalte Eisen von meinen Füssen abfallen,
ich schüttele meine zwei Finger,
neben meinem Körper ist eine Körperkrankheit stehen geblieben,
meine Hand hat eine Handkrankheit ergriffen,
meinen Finger hat eine Fingerkrankheit ergriffen.
Wenn ich die vielstufige Treppe hinaufsteige,
wenn ich über die allgemeine Schwelle trete,
wenn ich in Gottes Kirche eintrete,
wenn ich mitten in der Kirche stehen bleibe,
wenn ich unter das Mass trete,
möchte mein Leib zusammenbrechen,
mochte meine junge Seele entfliehen.
(Paasonen, pp. 402-404)

In no other wedding lament which we have studied thus far has the theme of passage been expressed so forcibly. But while one is tempted to compare the Russian and the Mordvinian wedding laments in detail, it would be unwise to attempt such a thing here. Not only does space prohibit a lengthy study of these laments, but it would be foolish to intimate comparisons without even limited knowledge of the Mordvinian linguistic and folklore traditions. A brief look will have to suffice.

This survey raises two points of particular interest. Firstly, it asks the question of the distribution of wedding laments. The lament tradition, it appears, is not limited to any one geographical, cultural or ethnic area. Yet, neither is it universal, since many peoples do not know a lament ritual at weddings. There are too many non-European lament traditions to allow for a theory of the origin of the genre within Europe, and the existence of laments in parts of

Africa and Indonesia and in many parts of India makes it doubtful that a line of development could be found to trace all lament traditions to a common source. We have seen that all these laments have common generic features. By the same token, all have certain external differences of symbolism, ritual association, and manner of performance. Why do some ethnic groups have a lament tradition, while others, with similar marriage practices, do not? Have some lament traditions died out, and others gone unrecorded? And, even if that is so, does it account for many, or only a few, ethnic groups? Can we classify lament types, by which the laments of Black Sea region would be related to each other but separate from the laments of Northern Europe; or the laments of Europe would be classified together, but separate from those of Africa? Can Moslem lament traditions be separated from Christian traditions?

The second question which this study raises regards the Christian influence on the European wedding laments. We have seen that the laments, as we know them today, are not very old, possibly are not much older than the seventeenth century. While there are some internal traces of pagan beliefs and of pre-Christian legal systems, it is not clear to what extent these indicate an earlier lament form, or if they arise out of a much more indirect connection to pre-Christian social structures and beliefs. It is curious to note that there is a highly developed Hungarian lament tradition, but no evidence of wedding laments amongst the non-Christian Ob-Ugrians, with whom the Hungarians are historically and linguistically related. We have seen, moreover, that there is no incongruity between the thematically Christian laments and the non-Christian laments of German folklore, and between

Christian and non-Christian imagery in the Russian laments. Could it be that the European lament tradition, at least as it is known to us today, is essentially a Christian one? Is the symbolism of the Fall, which we have discovered in more than one European language, a clue to the basic Christian structure of the lament theme? And, this being the case, would this Christian basis be the classifying criterion which distinguishes the European laments from those non-European examples studied? These are points which should be considered carefully in an evaluation of the lament genre in terms of its international occurrences.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter Four

[1]W. G. Archer, "Introduction," The Blue Grove: The Poetry of the Uraons, ed. and trans. W. G. Archer (New York: Grove, 1953), p. 7.

[2]Leopold von Schroeder, Die Hochzeitsbräuche der Esten, pp. 86-88.

[3]Arnold van Gennep, Les rites de passage; Crawley, The Mystic Rose.

[4]E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Kinship and Marriage among the Nuer, and Max Buch, Die Wotjäken, pp. 49-67.

[5]Elman, R. Service, Profiles in Ethnology: A Revision of 'A Profile of Primitive Culture' (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), pp. 55-56.

[6]Sylvain Trebucq, La Chanson populaire, p. 223. The location of subsequent quotations from Trebucq will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[7]There are many versions of this song. See this chapter, p.

[8]For a collection of these poems see High Wedlock Then be Honoured: Wedding Poems from Nineteen Countries and Twenty-five Centuries, ed. Virginia Tufte (New York: Viking, 1970), especially the Greek and Roman examples in Part I, 5-43. For a discussion of the genre, see the introduction to the collection, pp. xxi-xxix, and pp. 1-36 in Ms. Tufte's book The Poetry of Marriage: The Epithalamium in Europe and its Development in England, University of Southern California Studies in Comparative Literature, No. 2 (Los Angeles: Tinnon-Brown, 1970).

[9]A. O. Heikel, "Sitten bei den Anhängern des griechisch-katholischen Glaubens in Ostfinnland," trans. B. Pipinen, in Hochzeitsbräuche der Esten, pp. 246-47.

[10]Albert Hämäläinen, Mordvalaisten, tseremissien ja votjakkien kosinta -- ja häätavoista (Helsinki, 1913), rpt. in part in Toivo Vuorele, The Finno-Ugric Peoples, trans. John Atkinson, Uralic and Altaic Series, No. 39 (Bloomington: Indiana U.P., 1964), p. 273.

[11]Peter Simon Pallas, Reise durch verschiedene Provinzen des russischen Reichs, 2nd/ed. (St. Petersburg: Kayserliche Akad. der Wissenschaften, 1801), I, 71.

[12]J. Friis, "Lappiske Sprogpröver," trans. G. Sauerwein (Christiania, 1856), in Hochzeitsbräuche der Esten, p. 258.

[13]Francis Collinson, The Traditional and National Music of Scotland (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 118; for a discussion of the similarities between Celtic and Brahmin marriage laws, see Myles Dillon and Nora Chadwick, The Celtic Realms (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967), pp. 11-12.

[14]Archer, The Blue Grove. The location of quotations from Archer will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[15]The Unwritten Song: Poetry of the Primitive and Traditional Peoples of the World, ed. Willard R. Trask (New York: Macmillan, 1967), II, 139-40; the poem was taken from Wilhelm Koppers and Leonhard Jungblut, "Wedding Rites Among the Bhil of North-Western Central India," Anthropos, 46 (1951), 131-32. The location of subsequent quotations from Trask, I (1966) and II (1967) will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[16]L. O. Skefsrud, Traditions and Institutions of the Santals: Horkoren Mare Hapramko Reak' Katha, trans. P. O. Bodding, ed. Sten Konow (Oslo: Etnografiske Museum, 1942), Bulletin No. 6, p. 53.

[17]Irawati Karve, Kinship Organization in India (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1965), p. 206, stanza 42. The location of subsequent quotations from Karve will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[18]Ibid., p. 131.

[19]Gustav Jungbauer, "Deutsche und Kirgisische Hochzeitsbräuche," pp. 75-84.

[20]Arnold van Gennep, p. 136.

[21]Trask, I, 99-101; taken from Felix Dufays, "Lied und Gesang bei Brautwerbung und Hochzeit in Mulera-Ruanda," Anthropos, 4 (1909), 855-57, 869-70, 877.

[22]The function of the tiger symbol deserves a separate study, as tigers do not inhabit Africa.

[23]Kolpakova, No. 492, ll. 8-15.

[24]Trans. David Rafael Wang, and published in Tufte, High Wedlock Then Be Honoured, p. 53.

[25]Edward Westermarck, Marriage Ceremonies in Morocco, (London: Curzon, 1972), pp. 166-67.

[26]Ibid., Chapters iv and v, passim.

[27]Ibid., p. 160.

[28]Edward Westermarck, Marriage Ceremonies in Morocco, (London: Curzon, 1972), p. 136.

[29]Ibid., p. 163.

[30]Trask, I, 161; taken from F. M. Schnitger, "Lieder von Nias," Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, 73 (1941), 36-37.

[31]Trask, I, 100.

[32]See especially Chapter vi, "Le Mariage," pp. 207-62.

[33]Jean-François Bladé, Poésies populaires de la Gascogne, pp. 235-327. The location of quotations from Bladé will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[34]Trébucq, p. 217.

[35]Otto Böckel, Psychologie der Volksdichtung, 2nd. ed. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1913), p. 384. Böckel also cites the poem quoted above ("Nous somm' venues vous voir") in a version found in eastern France, p. 384.

[36]Volkslieder der Sorben in der Ober-und Nieder-Lausitz, ed. Leopold Haupt and Johann Ernst Schmaler, Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Volkskunde, No. 3 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1953); I, 243-44; for Sorbian wedding songs in this collection, see I, 241-66 and II, 125-44.

[37]Böckel, p. 375.

[38]Andrej Melicherčík, Slovenský Folklór: Chrestomatia (Bratislava: Vydatel'stvo slovenskej akademie vied, 1959), p. 163.

[39]János Manga, "Varianten der Hochzeitlieder eines Dorfes," pp. 247-79. The location of quotations from Manga will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[40]Ibid., p. 262.

[41]Böckel, p. 376.

[42]This poem, collected by S. Fl. Marianu, Nunta la Români: Studiu istoricoetnograficŭ comparativŭ: Etiţiunea academiei (Bucareşti: Tip. C. Göbl, 1890), is quoted in Else Krohn, Die Eheschliessung bei den Rumänen (Hamburg: Adolf Helm, 1926), p. 85.

[43]Barbu Theodorescu and Ostav Paun, Folclor Literar Românesc: Curs pentru Institutele pedagogice de 3 Ani (Bucareşti: Editura didactică şi pedagogica, 1964), p. 120; see the sections on "Obiceiurile la nuntă," pp. 113-15, and "Nunta," pp. 115-120.

[44]Krohn, p. 71.

[45]Edmund Schneeweis, Serbokroatische Volkskunde: Volksglaube und Volksbrauch, Grundriss der slavischen Philosophie und Kulturgeschichte (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1969).

[46]Jakob Dobrovich, "Hochzeitsbräuche und Lieder der burgenländischen Kroaten," Jahrbuch des österreichischen Volksliedwerkes, 10 (1961), 65-83. The location of quotations from Dobrovich will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[47]Christo Vakarelski, Bulgarische Volkskunde, pp. 298-99. The location of subsequent quotations from Vakarelski will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[48]Ivanička Georgieva, "Etnografsko edinstvo na svatbata u bulgarite," pp. 103-109.

[49]J. S. La Fontaine, "Ritualization of Women's Life-Crises in Bugisu," p. 161.

[50]G. F. Abbott, Macedonian Folklore (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1903), p. 160. A similar lament is known in Greek folklore; see: Rennell Rodd, The Customs and Lore of Modern Greece (Chicago: Argonaut, 1968), p. 93.

[51]Vojislav M. Durič, Tužbalica u svetskoj književnosti (Beograd: "Privrednik," 1940), pp. 86-89.

[52]Dobrovich, p. 81.

[53]Stojan Genčev, "Oplakvanstvo v četiri sela ot smoljansko," Izvestija na etnografskija institut i muzej, 14 (1972), 261-77.

[54]P. Drizule, "Sxodnye obrazy i motivy sirotskix svadebnyx pesen (v latyšskom i litovskom fol'klore)," in Fol'klor baltskix narodov, ed. O. Ambajnis, A. Ionnis and E. Koxare (Riga: "Zinatne," 1968), pp. 69-104.

[55]Stscherbakiwskyj, "The Early Ukrainian Social Order as Reflected in Ukrainian Wedding Customs," p. 331.

[56]Ibid., p. 325 and passim.

[57]Ibid., p. 343.

[58]Ibid., pp. 333-44.

[59]Ibid., p. 332.

[60]Ibid., pp. 334, 339 and 333, respectively.

[61]For a good and extensive collection of Ukrainian wedding descriptions, including many songs, see: Vesillja u dvox knigax, ed. M. M. Šubrav'skoj and O. A. Pravdjuk (Kiev: Naukova dumka, 1970); this song is found in I, 161.

[62]"Aus dem esthnischen Volksleben (Schluss)," Deutsche Rundschau, 30 (1882), 211. The location of subsequent quotations from the Rundschau will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[63]See Drizule; for a classification of Lithuanian wedding songs, see B. Kazlauskiene, "Vestuviniu lietuviu liaudies dainu klasifikavimas," Lietuvos TSR Mokslu akademijos darbai, series A, I, 23 (1967), 135-49.

[64]Syrjänische Volksdichtung, ed. Yrjö Wichmann, SUST, No. 38 (Helsinki: Société Finno-Ougrienne, 1916), pp. 287-89. The location of quotations from Wichmann will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[65]V. Ja. Evseev, Karel'skij fol'klor v istoričeskom osveščenii (Leningrad: Nauka, 1968), pp. 36-47. The location of quotations from Evseev will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[66]Mordwinische Volksdichtung, coll. H. Paasonen, ed. and trans. Paavo Ravila, SUST, No. 81 (Helsinki: Suomalais-Ugrilainen Seura, 1939), Vol. II. The location of quotations from Paasonen will be indicated in brackets following the quotation.

[67]Ibid., pp. 186-88.

[68]Ibid., p. 194.

[69]Ibid., p. 411.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

In the present study, I have examined the wedding [illegible] as a ritual-poetic genre. I have discarded some basic assumptions which folklorists have made concerning the occurrence and distribution of the genre and its function, and I have offered a new interpretation of the function, based on a close, textual interpretation of the laments and a study of their rituals.

It has been assumed that the wedding lament is primarily a genre of Russian folk poetry. Collecting and study have mainly been limited to Russian examples. Finnic wedding laments have been collected, but are not widely known. South Slavic wedding songs are different from the Russian laments in a number of details, and folklorists have concentrated on the differences rather than the generic similarities. The paucity of material for wedding laments in other languages has created the entirely false impression that laments are not known to them. In German folklore, for instance, the solemn nature of the ritual Brautlieder has been attributed to the infiltration of church dogma rather than to a ritual lament tradition.

The function of the wedding laments has generally been interpreted in terms of the social and economic conditions of pre-Communist Russia. The lament is seen as a primitive form of rebellion on the part of women in a society where men played the dominant role. The bride did not choose her husband, may not have loved him, and yet was expected to serve and obey him. Women are thought to have vented their frustrated resentment in a ritual of

lamentation. The laments, therefore, are assumed to be an indictment of the status quo, a criticism of the "patriarchal" family structure. By the dearth of overt Christian dogma, it is assumed that the laments also reflect a rejection of Christian wedding practices which had been imposed on pre-Christian beliefs.

A corollary to this interpretation is the assumption that the wedding laments are now in decline, and have actually disappeared in many areas. Given the social and economic explanation of their function, there would seem to be no need for lamentation since the emancipation of women and the development of a collective and atheistic society. Folklorists have traced what they see as an increasing triviality in the social function of the wedding lament. They see the term igra as implying a lack of seriousness, a frolic or idle pastime. They have viewed the presence of the professional mourner as an indication of decadence, for they assume that a bride who cannot sing her own laments cannot care very deeply about the ritual she is performing.

I have found evidence to reject these assumptions. The distribution of the wedding lament is much more extensive than has been thought. It is widespread in much of Europe, and has even been found in a number of regions outside of Europe. There is a complete lack of internal evidence to support the socio-economic interpretation of the lament tradition. A close study of the texts and rituals, on the other hand, does reveal a very startlingly consistent pattern of image and thematic development which mirrors the ritual events between betrothal and marriage. The pattern begins with a complete rejection of marriage, and grows into a gradual acceptance of its

inevitability. The laments would seem to be a form of social control (the bride learns through the enactment of the ritual and laments to accept the wisdom of the social order), rather than of social rebellion or protest. We must separate the lamenting bride from the persona of the bride as expressed in the laments. The former learns from the latter. The bride is led to view marriage as a dying of the self, but finally to realize that the journey into death is also a journey into a new life, and that the cycle of life can only continue through marriage.

The question of the possible decline of the wedding lament is a difficult one to tackle, since ethnographic evidence is often missing where it would be most useful. While folk traditions are disappearing quickly in many regions of the world, there is no reason why wedding laments should disappear any faster than other genres, if one does not accept a particular socio-economic interpretation of the lament. There is frankly no internal evidence that the "play" structure of wedding ceremonies, or the highly ritualized laments performed by professional mourners, should indicate a weakening of the form. Just the opposite would seem to be the case, since both the playing out of the bride's change, and its ritualization, intensify the social and personal implications. L'vov has even indicated that the laments may have an importance bordering on the sacred.

From internal evidence, therefore, I have rejected the usual assumptions concerning the wedding lament, and have replaced them with an interpretation of the lament as a poetical expression of a rite of passage. This interpretation can be supported by the poetic

symbolism of the laments, by the pattern of lamentation, and by its ritual structure. Furthermore, the distribution of the lament would suggest that its function does not rest on a specific set of social and economic conditions. Of the non-Russian lament forms, the one I have chosen to examine in detail is the German. The Christian didacticism of many of the German songs is not incompatible with the generic specifics of a possibly pre-Christian poetic rite of passage. The ritual aspect of the German laments is quite different from that of the Russian tradition, and dance plays an important role in the enactment of parting and initiation. The songs emphasize very strongly the change from the community of girls to that of married women, and both good and bad features of the married state are expressed. Again, as in the Russian laments, the necessity of marriage in order to continue the cycle of life and female culture is recognized.

Having gone this far, it is intriguing to see the direction such a study could take from here. The geographical and linguistic studies of the wedding lament take on a deeper meaning when viewed from the focal point of the rite of passage. There is room, of course, for many more geographical and linguistic studies, especially now that we know how wide-spread is the occurrence of the lament. While previous studies of this type have not been used to their fullest potential, this is even more true of previous studies of the poetics of the wedding laments. Much valuable analysis has been obscured by the restrictive interpretation which has been imposed upon it. With a new focal point, the implications of the genre have been greatly extended. It would be valuable, therefore,

to investigate the occurrence of wedding laments in Europe, as well as outside of the European borders. The connection between the wedding laments and Christianity is an immense area of study which has been hitherto all but ignored. The generic implications of the wedding lament as a poetic rite of passage should make an intensive study of the South Slavic and Finnic examples particularly rewarding. Finally, the study of the Russian wedding lament has been by no means exhausted, and I trust that my study will give new direction and depth to work in that area.

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TRANSLATIONS

The following passages are translations of quotations, which appeared in the text in non-standardized German, Russian or French, or in any language other than standardized German, Russian, French or English. Where not otherwise indicated, the translations are my own.

p. 128 mne nemnožko to zdis' žitja ...

There is little time for me to live here
Still less to be beautiful
[At my father's, at my mother's.]
Not a year left,
Not a winter to winter,
Not a spring to be beautiful,
No frolics of warm summer,
And no treading on the silky grass,
And no eating of the white bread!

p. 129 mne zdis' žit'ja ...

For me to live here
There is only about one short week;
Oh how these little days
Seem like short hours ...
To each his own:
To me, young one, it seems
Like the setting of the sun,
The white days are growing short,
Time is going quickly.

p. 130 A kak ne ranno-to na dvore ...

No matter how early it is outside
Nor how high the sun is,
Still the girl has outlived her time,
The bride has outlived her fame!
The sun sets,
The white day turns to evening
The girl's time grows short!

p. 130 čula ja molodešen'ka ...

I, young girl, heard
That in the cold winters
At the time of the white snow
When the hard snow crusts
The silky grass does not grow
The red flowers do not blossom:

After the wearing of the golden wreath
So for me, young girl,
Girlhood will be no more,
The bride's fame will no longer be heard.

p. 131 Ty prosčaj-ka, prekrasnoj raj, ...

Good-bye, splendid paradise,
Farewell, green garden.
No longer will the beautiful girl,
The honourable and famous bride,
Be there or frolic about
Or sit around in the garden!

p. 155 Spinne, Mêk'n, spinne schoen, ...

Spin, maiden, spin well,
Soon you will see your betrothed.

p. 155 Mêk'n, spinnste fine, ...

Maiden, if you spin finely,
Then you shall be mine,
But if you spin roughly,
Then I will pass you by, etc.

p. 160 's ist heunt a junkfrau wröllich gebannen,
trans. into standardized German by Schröer.

Es ist heute eine Jungfrau fröhlich gewesen,
fröhlich wird sie nimmermehr!
Fröhlich kann sie wohl noch werden,
aber Jungfrau nimmermehr!

Es hat heute eine Jungfrau Sträusslein gereichet,
reichen wird sie nimmermehr!
Reichen kann sie noch einmal,
aber Jungfrau wird sie nimmermehr.

Es hat heute eine Jungfrau Kränzlein gebunden,
binden wird sie nicht mehr!
Binden kann sie noch einmal,
aber Jungfrau wird sie nimmer mehr,(sein).

p. 161 Mer trauden af en bêszem, ...

We tread on a broom,
We would like to eat!
We tread on branches,
We would like to drink.
We tread on an oven,
We would like bread!

pp. 166-67 I soll a weng singa, ...

I should sing a little,
My singing has an art,
Today I do not feel at all
As I usually do.

Yes, my dear bride,
Fare thee well,
For you must leave
Your father's house.

My dear parents,
I thank you for the trouble
Which you took for me
In my childhood.

My dear parents,
You must not be sad,
That you have to send from home
Such a pretty girl.

For the groom, N.-
I've known him a long time,
I am not at all afraid
That the bride will be unhappy.

Now let us go in God's name
Away from home,
And let's make for ourselves
Our own home.

Let's go up the mountain,
And look down into the valley,
There all the merry wedding guests
Are waiting.

Soon let us go away
And go past the houses,
Down (or up) to N.N.,
There we will stay awhile.

The bride, she will roam,
She does not roam far,
She is just getting married,
Because she wants to.

God keep you, father's house,
Now I go outside,
Go to a new life,
To that of my husband.

p. 168 Şeu ist aufgeşassen, ...
trans. into standardized German by Schröer.

Sie ist aufgesessen, sie hat geschluchzt!
Sie ist hingeritten, sie hat gejauchzt!--

p. 168 Junge Braut, nu musst du rut ...

Young bride, now you must go out.
You have had your best days,
Now you must struggle until the grave.

p. 169 Nėm urlef, nėm urlef ...

Take leave, take leave from your father!
Take leave, take leave from your mother!
Take leave, take leave from your brother!
Take leave, take leave from your sister!

p. 169 Ech bän e bäden ausz fremdem lûnt, ...

I am a messenger from a foreign land,
my master has sent me to you.

p. 169 Hie äsz geklojt mät brömem unt bloem gewôunt, ...

He is dressed in cloths of brown and blue,
His cloak is so warm and long,
And reaches down to his knee,
And is lined with young lamb's skin;
.....
He also has a purse,
Which is filled with five hundred guilders.

p. 170 Ädermôn hôt sîl unt laif ...

Everyone has soul and body
and every marriage man and wife,
and so with the years
the world has been made up of couples.

p. 171 Hiefür! hiefür! ...

Come here! Come here!
Before the door of a worthy maiden!
A pleasant laugh
can bring joy
it was her red mouth
which tells us of the joy.

pp. 173-74 No wai^{n}, no wai^{n} ...

Now weep, weep, weep, dear bride, weep!
Do you think we are piping you across the bridge?
Before you are across the meadow you will wish to be back!

Now weep, weep, weep, dear bride, weep,
Just weep, we-we-we-we-weep! (bagpipes)

Now weep, etc.
Do you think we are piping you across the ditch?
You will get a good beating across your back!
Now weep, etc.

Do you think we are piping you gold and bread?
We are piping you nothing but fear and need!

Do you think we are piping you wheat and corn?
We are piping you nothing but thistles and thorns!

Do you think we are piping you sheep and cows?
We are piping you every two years a child!

Do you think we are piping you over the footbridge?
We are piping you nothing but cradles in the way!

We have piped you full of great sorrow,--
Consider well, there is still time!
And since the doors are all standing open,
We all want to go inside--
With decorum and propriety.

p. 174 So pehüet eu gott, muetar lieben main, ...
trans. into standardized German by Schröer.

So behüte euch Gott, liebe Mutter mein!
Ich seh euch heute und nimmer mehr!
von Euch will ich schön Urlaub nehmen.
So lasst mich, Mutter, in Kasten gehn.
ich habe vergessen meine buntfarben Schuhe.
In meinen Kasten kömmst du nimmer!
So lasst mich, Mutter, in Kasten gehn,
ich habe vergessen meine Strumpfbänder.
heuer sind sie meine Strumpfbänder,
aufs Jahr werden sie meine Wiegenbänder.
In meinen Kasten kömmst du nicht mehr!

p. 180 zue har, nar zuehar, ...
trans. into standardized German by Schröer.

Heran, heran!
Brautigams Vater
Sani etc.

Wer nichts hat der fliehe!
Er wird sich nicht grämen
wird einen Thaler daran wenden.

Wie (d. i. je) mehr er wird geben
wie lieber werden wir schauen.

Er hat ja noch einen gekrümten Finger (hält etwas in der Hand)
wir geben ihm z. tr. [zu trinken]

Heran, Bräutigams Muhme,
sie bringet eine schöne Blume.

Heran, liebe Tauben,
sie bringen der Braut eine schöne Haube.

Wenn Zeit und Weile wird kommen
wir werden wieder kehren.

pp. 182-83 Die ageschidne seale singet ...
trans. into standardized German by Schröer.

Die abgeschiedne Seele singt:

Iche habe dort gelassen m. Vater und Mutter,
Ich h. d. gelassen Schwester und Bruder
sie gedenken nicht an mich.
Ich h. d. gelassen Freunde u. Freundinnen
[Sie gedenken nicht an mich.]
Niemand weiss, Niemand denkt
was die armen S. leiden müssen. [Seelen]

Die Verstorbenen singen:

Meine Augen verfinstern sich
ich kann nicht mehr die Welt anschaun.
Wenn ich jung bin und gesund.
hab ich Freunde überall genug.
wenn ich alt bin oder krank
da habe ich keine Freunde mehr!
Wenn ich einmal im Krankenbett liege,
da kömmt der Priester zu meinem Bett.
Da bereitet er mich zu den ewigen Gütern vor.
Wenn ich einmal [gestorben bin]
da machen sie mir ein neues Haus
da tragen sie mich zu dem Kirchlein weiss
da tragen sie mich auf den Friedhof grün
dort machen sie mir eine Grube tief,
drin werde ich schlafen so süss!
Wenn ich einmal im Grabe lieg:
da kömmt der Priester zu meinem Grabe,
wirft ein Stück Erde auf meine Brust.

Wenn ich einmal begraben bin
da fängt der Messner zu läuten an.
Da gehn die Leute alle von mir:
gleichsam: "ruh du in der kühlen Erde
wo du hin gedienet hast!"

p. 185 De brût hat'n kranz vorlôrn, ...

The bride has lost her wreath,
But she still has hair.

p. 186 Soll diese Braut ne Jumfer sein? ...

Is this bride a maiden?
That shall always puzzle me,
She certainly has been one,
But is one no longer.

p. 196 Hait hout de Braut ...

Today the bride has a pretty coat on.
But a year from today she will have a baby in it.
Today the bride has a pretty apron on.
But a year from today she will have dirt on it.

p. 197 Meine liebe Jungfrau Braut, ...

My dear maiden bride,
You must not be sad,
Your beautiful wreath
Must come off!

p. 197 S'Kranzerl muass aba ...

The wreath must come off
And the cap must come on,
You used to be a maiden,
But today you are no longer.

p. 197 Und wann ma amal in Himml fahrn, ...

And when we go up to heaven,
We will have a long journey,
And there we will once again
See our wreath.

p. 227 Bère courtine, bèt matelas, ...

Pretty curtain, pretty mattress,
It is a pity that you are going where you are going.
Pretty quilt, pretty mattress
It is a pity, etc...

The winding sheets of Fleurette,
Are around the bed,
Bride, your love affairs
You will lose today

p. 22[illegible] Boutatz-lou la courono, ...
trans. into standardized French by Bladé.

Mettez-lui la couronne
Celle que sa mère lui donne,
Lui veut donner.
Oh! jamais plus couronne
Elle ne portera.

p. 227 Nobio, que te cau ajuilla ....
trans. into standardized French by Bladé.

Mariée, il faut t'agenouiller.
Bénédiction on va te donner.
Dieu te la baille, Dieu te la donne,
Mariée, la bénédiction.

p. 228 Nobi, abets aqués matin ...

Bride, this morning you have
Said goodbye to your neighbours.

You know those whom you are leaving
But you do not know those whom you are receiving.

p. 228 Nobio, te hè pas mau lou cò, ...
trans. into standardized French by Bladé.

Mariée, ne te fait-il pas mal le coeur
De quitter ton monde comme cela?
Tu quittes ta mère pour jamais,
Pour aller servir un étranger.

p. 231 Melč 'šak neplakaj, holečo! ...
trans. into German by Haupt and Schmaler.

Schweige doch, weine nicht, Mädchen
Es ist nun alles, ja alles umsonst
Dass du dir flochtest die Haare dein,
Dass du dir anzogst die Strümpfe und Schuh,
Dass du dir anzogst den Pelz und den Rock
Dass du dir aufsetzt die Borta, den Kranz.

p. 231 Stratila som partu, zelený veniec,

I lost my wreath, my green wreath,
It was found by the bridesman, the strapping youth.
Heh, bridesman, heh, bridesman, I ask you nicely,
Give me my wreath, I want to wear it;
If you really wanted to wear your wreath,
You would ask the bridesman more nicely.

p. 231 Tie lupčianske zvony vel'mi pekne zvonia, ...

The bells of Lupkov are ringing sweetly,
They are taking your w[illegible] you, Anička,
They are taking it from yo[illegible]he ninth bell,
To go with strange youths.
To go, to love your husband,
The dark Jan, who was given to you.

pp. 235-36 Frunză verde de aluniă, ...
trans. into German by Krohn.

Grünes Laub vom Haselstrauch,
Nimm, o Braut, Abschied
Von der Mutter, von dem Vater,
Von dem steinernen Brunnen,
Von den Brüdern, von den Schwestern.
Von den Mädchen und den Burschen,
Von dem Garten mit Blumen;
Von den Burschen, von dem Spiel,
Von dem Beet mit Basilikenkraut,
Von den Freunden und Geliebten,
Von den blühenden Obstbäumen,
Von den Fremden und den Nachbarn,
Von der Wiese mit Steinklee.

pp. 236-37 Trandafir în cornul meşii ...

The rose at the corner of the table
The eyes of the bride are weeping prettily.
Let her weep as much as she can,
For the good things she has had,
Let her weep as hard as she can,
For the good things she has had from her mother.

Take, bride, your farewell
From your father, from your mother,
Who are weeping for you with lily-of-the-valley tears,
Because they are sending you into the unknown.

p. 238 Ljublena zaručna, ...
trans. into German by Dobrovich.

Geliebte Braut,
was dir geschehen wird,
dein grünes Kränzlein
wird jetzt verbrannt.

Die Spitzen des Rosmarin
haben sich geneigt,
sie trauern sehr
nach dem grünen Kranz.

p. 238 Ne davaj se, devojko, ...
trans. into German by Vakarelski.

Mädchen, lass nicht zu,
Dass man dir den Kranz abnimmt.

p. 238 Vurljaj, mjatej maramata,
trans. into German by Vakarelski.

Wirf das Kopftuch weg,
Das Kopftuch bedeutet Sorgen.

p. 240 Sal tazi večer, Ganke le mome, ...
trans. into German by Vakarelski.

Nur diesen Abend noch, [Mädchen Ganke],
Bist du bei Vater und Mutter,
Morgen abend schon bist du bei fremden Leuten,
Wirst einer fremden Mutter "Mutter" sagen
Einem fremden Vater "Vater" sagen.

p. 242 Blagoslovi, bože:

Bless, O Lord!
Lord bless, O father and mother,
Your child bowing low:
And a second time at the holy hour, bless me, Lord!
And a third time at the holy hour, ... etc.
Lord bless, O father and mother,
Your child bowing low.
And stand, Hannah, on the roof top,
Wave a ribbon to the front:
Let the foreigners go away,
Let the clan come forward.
As in the garden the green rue,
So young Hannah bows down.
Bow, Hannah, to the whole clan,
Let them bless you like a child;
And bow, Hannah, to the stranger --
Let him bless you, like one of his own.