

Scand 340: Kalevala
Keywords 10/21/10

Marriage: A social, legal, religious rite and/or contract tying two people together. Structures of marriage vary enormously historically and by culture. Some cultures allow for multiple marriages or partners, others do not; some cultures allow sex outside marriage, others do not; for some, marriage is an economic or social contract, tying kin groups together, controlling inheritance, and establishing or bolstering alliances; in others marriage is a romantic relationship in which love is foremost. Marriage is marked by a rite passage, which involves symbolic and material practices, such as dowries, ceremonies, instruction, and celebration. Two marriage predominated in pre-modern Finnish culture, village wedding and kinship weddings. Village weddings were typical in the West, and involved the entire village and were held in the open. In contrast, kinship weddings were secretive and aimed at forming social bonds. In the *Kalevala* we see a mix of the two practices.

Rite of Passage: A prescribed act or series of acts performed by an individual and/or a social group to mark a transition from one phase of life to another and other major life changes (adapted OED). A rite entails a ceremony or other orchestrated set of actions involving a group's cosmology, beliefs, traditions, and social structures. Typical rites of passage include naming ceremonies, entry into adulthood (puberty), betrothal (marriage), childbearing, burial. Some familiar rites of passage familiar from daily life in the US include naming ceremonies and baptisms, bar mitzvahs and confirmations, graduation ceremonies, weddings, certain birthday parties, retirement parties, and funerals. The structure of rites of passage typically includes: communal identification of the individual, separation and/or marking, instruction, reabsorption into the community in the transformed state, celebration. The many metaphors for the bride and the groom, instruction about being a husband or wife, and the celebrations depicted are all part of the wedding understood as a rites of passage. Lönnrot expanded the wedding songs significantly in the 1849 *Kalevala*, creating a document of the ancient practices and worldview of the Finns.