The Rhythmo-melodic *Geste* as agent of Spiritual Communion and/or Affirmation of Identity: An Investigation into the Performance of selected Tamil and Zulu Marriage Rituals and Ceremonies in South Africa.

by

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DECLARATION

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Hereby declare that the thesis entitled:

The rhythmo-melodic *geste* as agent of spiritual communion and/or affirmation of identity: An investigation into the performance of selected Tamil and Zulu marriage rituals and ceremonies in South Africa.

is the result of my own investigation and research and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree or to any other University.

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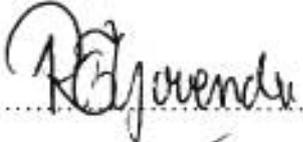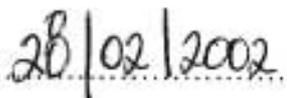
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the similarities and differences between the historical background and the current performance of Tamil and traditional Zulu marriages.

After presenting an account of the historical development of Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies, a chronological account of the performance of each of these marriage ceremonies is presented. This account includes a detailed description of the rituals performed during the pre-marriage ceremonies, the actual marriage ceremonies and the post-marriage ceremonies. The incidence and significance of The Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm in each of these ceremonies are demonstrated. Selected Tamil and Zulu Marriage songs are then analysed and interpreted rhythmo-stylistically to demonstrate the incidence of the mnemonic laws of Bilateralism, Rhythmism and Formulism, which account for the transmission of traditions over generations, and which demonstrate the anthropological and psycho-biological nature of memory, understanding and expression as evident in the performance of Tamil and Zulu marriages in KwaZulu-Natal.

Abbreviated title: An analysis of Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies and rituals.

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the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the National Research Foundation.

12. And most important of all, God Almighty, who provided me with the spiritual, intellectual and physical support to complete this project.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memory of my late parents, Thangavelu and Patchiamma

Govender, who brought me up in an Oral family milieu, that have informed my choice of

marriage partner, my chosen career and the focus and direction of this research.

May their souls rest in peace.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION A

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

SECTION B - ZULU MARRIAGE CEREMONY

SECTION C - TAMIL MARRIAGE CEREMONY

SECTION D - RHYTHMO-STYLISTIC ANALYSIS

SECTION E

SECTION A

CHAPTER 1

1.1   Introduction

> If we wish to see in the world, something more than our own image; to learn from the life ways of others, to be stimulated by another's aesthetic thought, then we need to find ways of understanding what it means to turn a pot or sing a song in another's culture...(Source unknown)

The above quotation best describes the reason why I have chosen to investigate the performance of selected Tamil and Zulu Marriage rituals and ceremonies in South Africa, with the focus on the rituals, songs and symbols as agents of Spiritual Communion and/or Affirmation of Identity.

South Africa is blessed with a unique composition of cultural groups each one of them having their own distinctive cultural identity. Together they form part of a powerful and colourful tapestry, demonstrating how different communities can co-exist side-by-side in a panoramic South African Society. In this way, ethno-centricity in the treatment of any cultural complex can be avoided. Similarly, value judgements, which were the order of the day in the not too distant past, and which exist even today, can also be avoided. It is very important for people to learn to understand the cultural practices of different communities. This will assist in healing the wounds of the past and contribute towards nation building. The White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage has this to say,

> Arts and Culture may play a healing role through promoting reconciliation. Our approach to culture is premised on international standards in which culture is understood as an important component of national life, which enhances freedom. Culture should not be used as a mechanism of exclusion, a barrier between people, nor should cultural practices be reduced to ethnic or religious chauvinism. (DACST 1996:13)

Another factor, that prompted me to undertake this study, is the fact that there are limited existing formal structures for "living culture" in South Africa. Museum anthropologists have recorded oral histories and information on living culture and customs for many years by university researchers and by some archivists, which include sound and videotapes as well as documents. While their work is important, it is still necessary to have an 'insider' perspective in order to have a deep understanding of indigenous languages and cultures. As a result, some information has become distorted in translation and the recording process. Following the pioneering work of Vansina (1965), it has become an accepted convention that oral sources can be regarded as adequate material for history in much the same way as written sources, subject to such constraints as caution against literal interpretation, and the matching of divergent versions and validation from findings from other disciplines such as archaeology and linguistics. South Africa's Cultural Policy as presented in the White Paper on Art's, Culture and Heritage states that,

> Attention to living heritage is of paramount importance for the reconstruction and development in South Africa. Means must be found to enable song, dance, story telling and oral history to be permanently recorded and conserved in the formal heritage sector. (DACST 1996:22)

The performance of marriage rituals and ceremonies worldwide, is variously related to the determination of personal, group and cultural identity, and to the

establishment and/or development of spiritual awareness and communion between marriage partners. This statement is supported by Marcel Jousse (2000:200) who identifies the mnemonic effect of rhythmo-melodic geste on cultural identity and spiritual awareness. This study will focus on the performance of selected Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies currently performed in South Africa to establish to what extent the incidence of rhythmo-melodic geste in the performance of the ceremonies contributes to the cultural identity and spiritual awareness of the participants.

The analysis and interpretation of performed gestual-visual/oral-aural texts are problematic in that they demand simultaneous interdisciplinary analysis of a variety of modes of expression that extend beyond the analytical/ interpretative capacity of mono-disciplinary theoretical frameworks. In this research project I have recorded the gestual-visual/ oral-aural texts of selected Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies for the purpose of analysis and interpretation.

The ceremonies and rituals of the Tamil and Zulu community are not only colourful and glamorous but have strong links to a rich oral tradition.

The historical, mythological, intellectual and philosophical origins of many aspects of the Tamil and Zulu marriage systems as they are being presently performed in South Africa, in selected instances remain unresearched and unexplained. It is not clear which and to what extent the traditional ritual practices that were brought into South Africa in 1860, are being followed with

respect to the Indian community and the impact of colonialism on the traditional indigenous Zulu society. Comparisons and clarification of the basic tenets of the Tamil and Zulu marriage rituals and practices are very limited. In lieu of this vacuum, this research will provide valuable insights for the respective communities.

At present, South Africa is developing afresh in many spheres. There has been improvement in all sectors of society. Since that great miracle in 1994, people are free to participate freely in their cultural, religious and linguistic endeavours. The Bill of Rights of the Constitution Of South Africa states;

Everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of his or her choice …(paragraph 30)

Degenaar (1993: 55) argues that although a democratic culture protects cultural diversity it simultaneously promotes the crossing of boundaries. In order to accommodate this in our thinking it is important that we do not view cultures in a static way as "self-enclosed wholes" but in a dynamic way as resources of values, which can enrich a society.

Notwithstanding the regular performance of the Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremony within the respective communities, there is a greater need for the understanding of the significance of the rituals and their implications, because of the threat of the disappearance of the oral tradition in the face of growing literacy and other pressures within the relevant community. This can also be attributed to the attitudes towards Oral tradition. According to Jousse,

The original and capital sin of our Written-style civilisation is that it considers itself

singularly superior and unique, and believes, moreover, that everything not recorded

in writing, does not exist. Because of this, anthropological facts are neglected, and,

for the most part, misunderstood. From this it follows that the human sciences have

not studied, in any depth, which aspects of ethnography and anthropological, and

instead they skim the surface of *bookish* ethnicity. (Jousse 2000:24)

The investigation also provided the researcher with an opportunity to investigate the extent to which the disappearance of oral tradition has led to the fossilisation of the meaning of the performance of the rituals, and a loss of identity and sense of spiritual communion within marriage among the participants. This is far from what was prescribed by religious and other texts where marriage was considered as a foundation for the spiritual union between a man and a woman

1.2   Aim of the study

The study seeks to examine several objects. The primary object of the study is to:

- to examine Tamil and Zulu marriage rituals and ceremonies in order to establish the extent to which the mnemonic structural laws discovered by Marcel Jousse can be identified and demonstrated.

- to adopt a formalistic and thematic analysis of traditional Tamil and Zulu marriage rituals and ceremonies currently practised to determine to what extent it employs oral traditional forms.

- to investigate and analyse the performance of the pre-marital ceremony, the marriage ceremony *per se*, and the post-marital ceremony in selected Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies. This will be investigated in terms of their gestual, rhythmo-melodic and verbal expression.

- to identify the incidence and degree of fossilisation of meaning in the performance of selected Tamil and Zulu marriage rituals. This is to assist all participants to a better understanding of the rituals and ceremonies associated with Tamil and Zulu marriages.

- to determine in what way and to what extent the gestual, rhythmo-melodic and linguistic features in the performance of the selected marriage rituals and ceremonies contribute to an understanding of the meaning and implications of the rituals and ceremonies

- to determine what gestual, rhythmo- melodic and linguistic features are evident in the Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies and rituals performed at selected ceremonies.

- to determine the similarities and differences in the gestual, rhythmo-melodic and linguistic features in the performance of selected Tamil and Zulu marriage rituals and ceremonies and how these can be accounted for traditionally and historically.

- to demonstrate what evidence there is of each of Jousse's mnemotechnical devices in an Oral-style analysis of selected Tamil and Zulu marriage songs, and how these devices can be applied so as to improve the recitation and understanding of written texts.

The researcher also wishes to contribute to the documentation and understanding of his religio-cultural identity, and an understanding of the spiritual significance of the rituals performed during a Tamil marriage ceremony. Furthermore, as an Arts and Culture Administrator in the Province of KwaZulu- Natal, responsible for organising and developing cultural activities for all communities, it is of paramount importance for the researcher of this study to develop an understanding of the traditional Zulu culture, which is the most dominant culture in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal in order to foster a greater spirit of cultural tolerance and simultaneously contributing towards nation building.

1.3   Assumption

This study assumes that the Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies investigated are still to this day characterised by oral tradition and are likely to remain so for many more decades.

Being detached from their motherland, in the Asian sub-continent and living in a different society have affected the Tamil community of South Africa to a certain degree. Despite this they continue to practice their customs and traditions, which they have imported from Tamil Nadu in South India. Mahatma Gandhi once stated that just like a child clings to its mother's breast for nourishment, the Indians living outside India depend on India for spiritual and cultural nourishment. Govender (1995:5) argues that it would appear from prevailing circumstances and pronouncements concerning the rights of ethnic

groups, that there is no real apprehension that the culture of the Tamils would be completely absorbed, but there is confidence that the Tamils will continue to promote and nurture their culture.

Although some changes have occurred to the performance of Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies, which can be attributed to regional and other differences, the impact of Christianity has not had a great influence on traditional rituals and practices of the Tamil and Zulu. Magwaza (1993:3) believes that changes in people's material, political, educational and spiritual life must result in some corresponding change in their oral tradition. Every attempt is made for the survival of cultural practices in spite of language loss.

1.4 Scope and limitations of the study

The focus of my investigation will be to tackle the consequence of "PUTTING PERFORMANCE ON THE PAGE". This study takes into account the fact that it is extremely difficult to capture the three dimensional effect of dynamic performance and record it on the page as there is no one way of performing any human ceremony. Jousse maintained that 'dead' written texts are only used as a means of discovering the 'living gestualisers'. Chamberlain (1998:12) remarks that by "putting performance on a page", societies are able to "affirm their identity, establish their history, and demonstrate the intellectual and emotional integrity of their critical and creative practices". As societies change, their institutions also change. This is also true of the Tamils and Zulus. Manqele (2000:3) feels that Zulu marriages "have assumed a new

dimension in contemporary contexts and the songs and other performative acts reveal this innovation".

The researcher has undertaken to demonstrate how the Mnemonic Laws and Mnemotechnical devices discovered by Marcel Jousse can be applied to the rhythmo-melodic gestual-visual/oral-aural performance of selected Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies and songs by 'putting performance on the page'. I have also described the practices and processes involved in Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies, based on the theories of Marcel Jousse in the Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm.

The following processes were used to carry out the investigation:

- Observations of Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies

- Observation and analysis of video recordings

- Rhythmo-stylistic workshops

- Interviews.

Observation of marriage ceremonies

Over the past few years the researcher has attended a number of Tamil marriage ceremonies locally, nationally and internationally either as an observer or as a speaker. However, due to the constraints of this study and in order to maintain focus he has restricted himself to the analysis and interpretation of three Tamil marriage ceremonies, which are conducted by the Merebank Tamil School Society (MTSS), Kharwastan Temple and the Stanger

Siva Sungum (SSS). (See schedule A) These organisations which follow *Vedic* Principles offer contract weddings which are popularly known as 'package weddings' They are chosen by many young couples because of the convenience, competitive prices and the effectiveness of service. The contract weddings have become a major source of revenue for the temple organisations.

In addition to the focussed observations of the above weddings, the researcher has also viewed the ceremonies on video recordings. These recordings were useful as they could be 'played' and 're-played' repeatedly until one has grasped all the details. Much of the actual performance, such as the rituals, the chanting of *mantras*, the songs, the audience participation etc. enabled him to analyse and interpret the marriage ceremonies more easily. In fact, without the video recordings, it would have been virtually impossible to get all the detail used in this study.

Several attempts have been made to observe a live performance of a traditional Zulu marriage ceremony without any success. Nevertheless the researcher was able to analyse and interpret three traditional Zulu marriage ceremonies by observing video recordings of these ceremonies. The case studies were from Durban, Maphumulo and St Faiths in the South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal. The information gathered does not claim to be universal for all the Zulu in South Africa.

Rhythmo- stylistic workshops

In order to analyse and interpret the information gathered through the observation of live performances and video recordings, three rhythmo-stylistics workshops were arranged as a data-gathering research exercise. The workshops, were designed and facilitated by Dr Joan Conolly in line with the 'Laboratory of Awareness' of Marcel Jousse, and were held at the Durban Cultural and Documentation Centre. The participants included academics, researchers, oral performers and religious and cultural authorities. The first workshop, which was held on 2 June 2001, was aimed at performing, recording and analysing Tamil and Zulu marriage songs rhythmo-stylistically. The second workshop was held on 13 October 2001 and involved the re-enactment of both a Tamil and Zulu marriage in order to create an ethnic and anthropological Laboratory of Awareness. The final workshop was held on 17 December 2001 in order to demonstrate the processes that can be used to detect the Oral-style Mnemonic structures of Tamil and Zulu marriage songs.

Interviews

The researcher supplemented observations with oral interviews with the following individuals and groups who provided valuable insider and implicated data:

- Three Brahmins (Tamil priests) and marriage officers

- Temple officials from three organisations and traditional leaders.

- A representative selection of marriage partners.

- Research scholars and academics. (Schedule B)

The interviews were conducted in *Durban, Stanger, Mahlabathini, Phoenix, Malvern, Kharwastan, Merebank* and *Gingindhlovu.*These interviews were essential to the research and analysis, for they provided insights into the meaning and metaphors used and explained the practice and procedures adopted in Tamil and Zulu marriages. Interviews were recorded with the aid of a battery-powered tape recorder.

This study is intended to describe the traditional Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies and rituals as are performed in South Africa, today. This study does not undertake to describe, investigate or analyse the Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies and songs in ethno-poetic, linguistic, grammatical, geographical or ethno-musicological terms.

Besides the changes over time, there are always regional differences in cultural practices and this study does not claim that the findings are universal for all Tamil and Zulu people. According to Magwaza (1993:4) the Zulu differ in their "practices from area to area, clan to clan, nuclear family to the next". However there are certain elements, which are common to all marriage ceremonies.

Similarly the South African Tamil community also differ in their rituals and practices. Some Tamils prefer to marry according to the Saivite religious customs, which do not subscribe to rituals while others have a preference for the Vedic marriage ceremony, which are characterised by many rituals. There

are a number of religious and cultural organisations that co-ordinate 'package weddings'. Although the ceremonies are arranged differently, they all adhere to the rituals and practices as prescribed by the *Vedas*. Therefore, one can obviously not expect everybody to perform and practice rituals and ceremonies in a similar way. Magwaza (1993:4) argues that oral records are never "uniform nor fixed" but change with "place, time, age, need, capability and circumstance". There are often recurrent patterns in different regions and ceremonies. This study focuses on the practices and processes, which are common to most of the marriage ceremonies performed in South Africa.

1.4 Glossary of terms used

Key

 # = Joussean term

$ = Tamil word

*** = Zulu word**

* Abakhongi	person entrusted with the business of arranging marriage with the girl's father, on behalf of the bridegroom.
# Algebrisation	expressing meaning in a fixed mode, simultaneously concretely Referred and intellectually abstracted.
# Algebrosation	expressing meaninglessly in a fixed or fluid mode, because the Expression has become divorced from its concrete referent, and is therefore a meaningless abstraction.

* **Amacansi**	mat made of reeds.
* **Amadlozi**	human spirit or soul. Ancestral spirits.
$ **Aradhanay**	also known as *arti*, is an act of worship in which a cotton wick or wicks, dipped in clarified butter are lit in front of an image of deity and moved in a circle to show reverence.
$ **Aum**	the sacred syllable (also spelt *Om*) – it is believed to contain the sound of all Reality.
* **Beka**	meat sent with bride for slaughter at her wedding.
$ **Bhajan**	devotional song or hymn, sometimes chanted to music.
$ **Brahman**	the Supreme spirit in Hinduism.
$ **Brahma**	the Creator aspect of *Brahman* in the Hindu *Trimurthi* (Trinity).
$ **Brahmin**	a member of the first group (priest class) in the Hindu social divisions called *varna* (a social category). The other three *varnas* are *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya* and *Sudra*
$ **Caste**	an occupational group within the larger *varna* divisions.
$ **Deity**	a name for a God or a Goddess
$ **Dowry**	money or goods given by the bride's father to the bridegroom on Marriage.
$ **Ganesha**	the elephant-headed god who is prayed to for success in new ventures. The son of *Shiva* and *Parvathi* and is considered the remover of obstacles.
# **Geste**	is the 'emotive-thoughts' and 'thought filled-feelings' of indivisible human thought and emotion. It transcends ethnic language, and is therefore anthropological.

* Giya	dance with body movements. Leap about as a warrior brandishing a spear.
\$ Gotra	the customs and practices of a clan or family
\$ Havan	a sacrifice where offerings are made to the sacred fire.
* Hlambezo	wash ceremonially
* Ihubo	ceremonial or tribal song.
* Ikheto	bridegroom's party at wedding.
* Icicephu	small sitting mat.
* Imbongi	professional praiser, who proclaims publicly his praises, on grand occasions.
* Impepho	is a species of a small everlasting plant with a sweet smell, used for burning as an offering to the spirits. It opens communication with the ancestors and makes the sacrifice acceptable to them.
* Induna	member of the King's personal bodyguard.
* Inyongo	is the gall bladder, which consists of the bile. It is used in traditional rituals.
* Isibizo	article claimed as part of *lobolo* or as compensation.
* Isicholo	high head-dress of a woman.
* Isidwaba	short skin petticoat worn from waist to knees. Indicates that the lady is already betrothed.
* Isigcawu	an open space where people meet for dancing during ceremonies.
# Intussuception	is the grasping of the external world (suscipere) and the Internalising, thereof (intus), i.e. the synchronising of all the

Gestes that flow from nature to man, so that he can express

them.

* Izithakazelo   praises attached to a particular descent group in which the

clan's forebears are also referred to.

* Izibizo   article claimed as part of lobolo or as compensation.

* Izithetho   judgement in favour

* Kikiza   utter shrill cries of pleasure (by women)

* Lobolo   a consideration involving the right over children: goods, cattle,

or money handed over by the bridegroom's people to the father

of the bride.

#Macroscopic Geste the visible outer gestes which are audible. Manifestations of

Human expression such as movement, dance, sound, speech,

Song, writing, sculpting and painting and so on.

$ Mantra   a sacred formula, word or prayer in Sanskrit, often composed of

apparently unmeaning cryptic symbols, for worship of a deity

or for use as a mental accompaniment during meditation.

* Mekezisa   deflower, consummation of marriage.

#Microscopic Geste the inner and hidden gestes which are the inner vibrations of

Rhythmic motor energy – man's thoughts and emotions.

 # Mimism   it is a complex multi layered process which operates

involuntarily, voluntarily and meditatively. It receives the

impressions of the balanced rhythmic formulaic universe,

which it then registers and 're-arranges' – and replays in

balanced rhythmic formulas.

$ Pandal	is a structure with four-posts which is colourfully decorated with banana trees or other decorations, to conduct a marriage ceremony. Also referred to as *Manavarai*.
# Rhythmism	one of the four Mnemonic Laws of the Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm, the others being Mimism, Bilateralism and Formulism. Comes into action simultaneously with Mimism. It is the life force which of necessity, distributes and sequences Mimism.
#Rhythmo-Stylistics	the use of the Oral-Style of Human expression that supports Human memory thus providing a reliable and trustworthy oral socio-cultural archive.
$ Samskara	a life-cycle ritual performed at important stages during a person's life, to purify the body and the spirit
$ Sanskrit	the ancient language in which Hindu Holy books are written.
$ Shakti	Power: name of God as the Divine Mother, connoting the apparent dynamic aspect of the Eternal Being as the **Supreme** Power of Creation, Preservation and Destruction of the Universe;the Divine Power of Becoming; Cosmic Energy.
$ Shiva	the God who rules life and death. The destroyer in the Hindu Trinity.
$ Trimurti	the trinity of Hinduism, consisting of *Brahma*, the creator, *Vishnu*, the preserver and *Shiva*, the destroyer.
* Ucansi	mat
* Udwendwe	bridal party, company conveying the bride to her wedding.
* Ukucimela	beg for wedding gifts (as a girl from her relatives)

* **Ukungena**	to enter a house
* **Umakoti**	bride, term used by husband's people of married women.
* **Umeke**	goat presented by bridegroom to bridal party and slaughtered on the day after the wedding immediately before the bridal party departs , thus permitting the consummation of the marriage.
* **Umbondo**	food or beer sent by an affianced girl to her fiancé's kraal as a gift of goodwill.
* **Umgoqo**	wooden bar used for closing an entrance.
* **Umkhongi**	bridegroom's man entrusted with the task of arranging on his behalf with the girl's father concerning the marriage.
* **Umkhwenyana**	brother-in-law, term applied by a collateral member of a wife's family to such a member of her husband's family.
* **Umndeni**	circle of relatives in the second order, not included in the immediate family.
* **Umthimba**	bridal party
$ **Vedas**	four Holy books, which are the oldest written statements on Hindu belief. The Vedas are compiled from Divine revelations received by the Rishis or sages. The *rig Veda* was compiled about 1000 BC
$ **Vishnu**	the Preserver in the Hindu Trinity.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm and the Oral Style theory of Marcel Jousse

Historical Background

Marcel Jousse was born in 1886 in the settlement of Beaumont-sur-Sarthe, West of Paris, a rural area that was populated by *paysan* (peasant) farmers. (Jousse 2000:16). Jousse was first and foremost a scholar of considerable merit in a number of fields: anthropology, psychology, ethnography, pedagogy, theology, linguistics, mathematics, oral traditions/oral studies…It is also significant that he was able to explore these disciplines in such a manner that the connections between them was easily demonstrated: he was a true interdisciplinarian. By the age of fifteen, in addition to his native French, he had learnt the following languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, Latin, and Greek, which he used to trace the roots of the Hebreo-Christian scriptures.

Jousse attributes much of his scientific discoveries to his mother whose behaviour he described as authentic, spontaneous and unintentional and which formed part of his "maternal laboratory" (Jousse 2000:15). Apart from his mother, his other primary caretakers and 'teachers' were his, Great-Grandmother and a number of other older people in the community. None of these people had much formal schooling, yet they had remarkable memories, and knew their animals and their needs, their crops and their

seasons, their trade relationships with one another, their catechism and gospels, the genealogies of their families, and the stories, songs and dances of the community 'by heart' and could recite, sing and dance them with great accuracy. Jousse talks about the effect of all this on his mind as a young child…He remarked:

> It is easy to understand how the impact of this contact with non-literate, yet highly intelligent, paysans could awaken the interest of a child who was just beginning to learn to read based on a good deal of memorisation. What struck me most forcibly was not only the demand for accuracy in the transmission of their tradition, but also the amazing number of items in such memorised repertoire. Memory! We no longer have any idea of its capabilities! When I strung together the series of texts that, in a simple bead-like string formation, make up the work on rhythmic and mnemonic Oral Style, the philologists cried out : "But it is impossible that human memory should have such powers!" (Jousse 2000:16)

Jousse read over 5000 works before selecting 500, on which he based the Oral Style. He read in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Aramaic, English, German, Spanish and Italian. Until Jousse all traditional language studies were ethnic, and examined their expression through the 'dead' entity of writing. Jousse was determined that the study of oral traditions and their expression should be 'living and dynamic', and that they should be seen as an anthropological phenomenon, that which reflected the commonalities of human expression. Jousse laid the foundations for the further studies in Orality by Parry and Lord (1972) and later by Walter Ong (1982) and other scholars.

Because of Jousse's early experience with the people of his 'oral' community, and their remarkable memories, he developed an abiding respect and understanding for human memory and its capacity to store information. He was most concerned that so many book-learned people disregarded the role of Memory in intelligence, learning and understanding…

> Had we all been brought up in milieux more open to memory, the problems would have been presented very differently. The great mistake we have made in education is to have adopted

only the teacher's point-of-view, so, the perspective of our psychology, is that of the teacher. The gravity of this error becomes very clear when one studies the work of Lévy-Bruhl. (Jousse 2000:16)

Jousse was very concerned that people considered 'writing' to be equivalent to 'intelligence' and 'civilisation'. In his opinion, 'intelligence' and 'civilisation' were measured in terms of knowledge and wisdom, where the latter was dependent on the former and neither was necessarily dependent on 'writing' as we know it. Instead, he believed and demonstrated all his life that 'algebrisation' or 'scribal writing' was merely another form of record, which was different from Memory in that it recorded knowledge and information 'outside people' instead of 'inside people'. For Jousse, the record 'inside people' – in the Memory – was as important, if not more important than the record 'outside people' – in books – for he argued, as have many other people, that information stored in a book is of limited practical use to the individual if it is not also recorded in the Memory. Jousse believed in the 'concrete' reality of real practical knowing – which in no way precluded the capacity to think in abstractions...

(…) we judge people too easily by the number and thickness of books they have written, when they should be evaluated on the basis of the quantity and quality of the reality they have comprehended. Those who have made genuine discoveries and have contributed to science are those who have put their books aside and started their study from reality. I will constantly reiterate that my first scientific training was this contact with the paysans of Beaumont-sur-Sarthe. (Jousse 2000:16-17)

Jousse was a product of a living oral culture, and was able to offer a theoretical perspective of the thinking and perceptions of an 'insider'. His holistic insights have made valuable contributions to the explanation of the origin and development of language, learning theory and practice, the role of culture and tradition, the nature of oral composition and performance and how these contributed to the complex fabric of ethnic and anthropological behaviour. In an attempt to account for the human physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual operations, Jousse introduced the perspective of the

Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm as a means of "understanding the human at a fundamental level that accounted for and transcended ethnic identity and individuality" (Connolly Vol.4, 2001: 26). Jousse remarks that the natural memorising capacity of man is related to the structure of the language employed in human expression, which reflects his own balanced, rhythmical and formulaic psycho-physiological structure and operation. He also identifies what the relationship is between memory, learning, understanding and expression in humans.

In *The Oral Style* (1925) and *The Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm* (2000) Jousse identified the characteristics of the anthropological phenomenon of expression in a wide range of cultural milieus throughout the ages. He identifies the Oral-style ethnic milieu as "essentially a milieu of teaching and learning'. Conolly describes 'Oral Tradition' as the socio-cultural archive that is passed down from generation to generation other than in scribal writing, and "Oral Style Tradition" as the mnemonic and mnemotechnically supportive mode of gestual-visual/oral-aural expression which is used in oral milieus for recording of the socio-cultural archive (Conolly Vol.4, 2001: 248).

Through his vast reading and numerous lectures, Jousse was able to understand better what was already known of the various African tribes and other societies globally. He found that these societies are characterised by a rich heritage of Oral Style Tradition. Jousse remarks that

> (...) it was that the explorers of Central Africa showed me that there were people who were extremely interesting from the point of view of oral tradition. And missionaries, too, from all parts of the world reported to me the facts of Corporeal-manual and Oral Style without knowing their underlying laws. (Jousse 2000:24)

From an anthropological point of view, Jousse subscribed to the notion that culture should be studied as a 'global' phenomenon in both senses of the word and that language was an integral part of a broader cultural strategy that included ritual, custom and social convention. He saw cultural expression as first and foremost, the expression of the whole being and that culture should be seen and understood as a global phenomenon.

During the course of his investigation, Jousse discovered the anthropological laws that underpin human expression; mnemonic laws of human expression and mnemotechnical devices that have helped to provide insights into the different forms of human expression.

Modes of Expression

According to Jousse (2000:23) there are three types of human expression:

• Corporeal-manual mode of expression - expression by means of the body, face and hands, revealed in movement, mime and dance.

• Laryngo – buccal mode of expression – expression by means of the larynx and the lips, revealed in sound, speech and song.

• Mimographic mode of expression – by means of mediated modes of expression, revealed in drawing, painting, beadwork, sculpting or other artefacts.

Jousse (2000:21) places the above modes of expression into different stages. He mentioned that:

> The first stage of Manual-Corporeal Style, living expressive geste or Mimodrama, which projects itself in mimic silhouettes, and which, given stable form on a surface, results in Mimograms. Later, the second stage transforms these gestes into laryngo-buccal gestes that develop to the point where they become a means of intercommunication, at which stage, we have Oral Style. After further use and development, all the concretism of the Oral Style reaches a point where it becomes algebrisation, and we get written style.

Jousse (2000:61) identified the corporeal-manual mode of expression as the most immediate and spontaneous of all modes of human expression as it engages immediate and total access to the visceral microscopic memory of the anthropos. Through his investigations he found that,

> What we have to investigate is something very much more profound than language, something much more primitive, more virginally anthropological: the corporeal- manual geste, which is not yet transported into the laryngo-buccal geste. True human expression is not language, reduced to the geste of the langue: it is the expression of the entire being....

Jousse describes man as 'an indivisible complexus of psycho-physiological gestes', both voluntary and involuntary. The inner gestes (microscopic) are not visible and constitute our thoughts and emotions. The outer gestes (macroscopic) are visible and audible and manifest themselves in human expression such as movement, dance and mime, sound, speech and song, writing, painting etc. According to Conolly (Vol.4, 2001:208) the "objective observation of these microscopic and macroscopic gestes" is part of the scientific study of the Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm.

Mnemonic laws of human expression

Jousse's theory of Oral-Style expression accounts simultaneously for the holistic and mnemonic use of the gestual-visual/oral-aural modes of expression. Jousse identified the following "four guiding principles" which he termed 'laws' which explain the

process of human expression and memory irrespective of "ethnic identity". (Conolly Vol.4, 2001:233)

Mimism

Mimism is the voluntary and involuntary play and replay of the cosmos by the anthropos. Jousse described the human as an "indivisible complexus of geste". This geste is absorbed by man through his senses 'im (n)-pressed'- which is re-arranged and then replayed. (Conolly Vol.4, 2001:233) Man has the capacity to receive, register and replay the balanced rhythmic formulas of the universe. According to Jousse (2000:70)

> Corporeal-manual Style man is a subtle observer and a supple 'receiver'. He faithfully reproduces within himself what is played out external to himself. He replays and gesticulates mimismologically and logically, like a living and conscious plastic mirror (...)

The Anthropology of Mimism provides a ready explanation to the many problems associated with Knowledge, which is experienced by many societies throughout the world. Man's knowledge is limited to what he 'receives' and 'replays' within himself. This is controlled by his capacity for 'intussusception' (suscipere = to amass, to gather. Intus = by an interior movement). The quality of the re-play will depend on the "richness of the intussusceptions" and man's personality, considering that man is not equal. (Jousse 2000:117)

For Jousse, the humans are unique 'mimismic' beings who are able to co-exist by constantly 'mimisming 'the world, i.e., replaying the perceived movements of the outside world through integrated body-mind expressions. Under 'mimism' he understands a spontaneous and subconscious process that precedes conscious imitation.

Mimism enables humans to continuously 'intussuscept' (internalise) information from their environment and express it with their whole bodies, structured as 'gestes'.

Rhythmism

Jousse described the environment in which man lives as that, which is characterised by a sense of order and logic, which is essentially rhythmic in nature. Rhythm plays an important role in dictating man's actions in terms of his intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical expression. "Without rhythm, there is no order/logic, and without order/logic there can be no meaning/sense" resulting in an illogical expression. (Conolly Vol.4, 2001:326)

Jousse observed the natural dependence on the principle of Rhythmism in a wide range of ethnic milieus and expressive human behaviours. Rhythmism also involves the use and release of energy. This is identified by Jousse as "Dynamogenesis" which not only constitute a momentary increase in energy, but also involves in the long run consumption thereof (Jousse1990: 19). This can be used to describe what happens during a performance of a song where energy is expended by the singer and played into the universe. The universe plays it back over and over again and, thus, the cycle continues. According to Jousse the universal law of Rhythmism can be analysed in its three principle manifestations, which are "Rhythmo-mimism, Rhythmo-energetism and Rhythmo-melodism" (Jousse 2000: 110). These manifestations include:

- Mimism: impression and expression of the intussusception

- Energetism: release of energy during replay of expression

• Melodism: song-like nature of sounds produced during laryngo-buccal mode of expression

Bilateralism

Jousse identifies that man is naturally balanced with a left and right side, and a front and back, a top and a bottom. He notes that the balance and the rhythm, work together to enable and re-enforce rhythmic performance of a wide range of daily tasks which require both physical strength and skill, and the capacity to understand, learn and remember. This combination becomes viscerally embedded with the rhythms of the body function, and then the whole body remembers. Jousse notes that children choose to learn rhythmically and sing out aloud in a balanced singsong way. This is evident in many societies throughout the world. According to Jousse (2000:215)

> (...)It is impossible for man to rid himself of this doubly bilateral globalism. A single visit to the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, to a school of the Qur'an, or even to one of our schools at the time children are reciting their lessons balancing from one foot to the other, provides us with enough experience to convince us of this.

The balancing or bilateralism is manifested in what Jousse (1997:341-354) called,

• The Yoke – balancing by moving from the left to the right side.

• The Burden – balancing by moving forward and backward.

• The Cradling – a combination of the Yoke and Burden (as in the rocking of a child in one's arms) which employs all four positions, that is to say, front, back, right and left as the baby-sitter cradles the baby.

Jousse identified three intertwined aspects of Bilateralism which inform the functions of understanding, recording in memory, and expression of knowledge in humans:

- Creating Bilateralism – accessing knowledge by "tri-phasic interaction with the balanced cosmos" for understanding

- Regulating Bilateralism – recording knowledge in "visceral memory as the oral socio-cultural archive".

- Reciting Bilateralism – expressing knowledge in "balanced rhythmic recitives to inform the tri-phasic interaction of the cosmos". (Conolly Vol.4, 2001:235)

Formulism

According to Jousse the "understanding of a rhythmo-catechetical style and the different levels of its structures" can only be achieved via the fundamental Law of Formulism. (Jousse 2000:328). Formulism operates at "all levels of cosmological interaction", from the macroscopic to the microscopic, and is a "product of the energies of Bilateralism and Rhythmism". As the 'balance' and 'rhythm' interact, "**formulas** of expression manifest becoming ever more refined through millennia of dynamic human corporeal-manual and laryngo-buccal repetition" (Conolly Vol.4, 2001:121)

Jousse demonstrates that formulas become structured through constant and repetitive use of phrases or discrete units of meaning in human expression, as for instance, in traditional texts such as proverbs, nursery rhymes, songs and stories. As the phrases of the Oral-Style traditional texts are repeated by generations of speakers, they become fixed in a pattern, which is balanced and rhythmical and therefore easy to remember.

Jousse observes that for man to register and replay impressions it needs to be properly structured for it to be easily understood, remembered and replayed, hence the need for formulas. The artistry of the Oral-style performer is measured to a large extent in terms of the creative arrangement of the formulaic phrases.

> A simple random collection of one or two improvisations in each Oral-style ethnic milieu would be enough to make us marvel at how men, women, young girls – mere children almost – can improvise oral rhythmic formulas of such grace, perfection and fullness that they command the admiration of people as highly sophisticated as we are. (Jousse 2000:38)

Mnemotechnical devices

Jousse asserts that because man has a certain degree of intelligence, he can be regarded as "mnemotechnical". He is able to successfully transmit to his descendants his past experiences, through structured frameworks, which act as memory aids. The success of memorising oral and written texts depends on the structure of the mnemonic Laws (Rhythmism, Bilateralism, Formulism and Mimism), and supported by Mnemotechnical Devices. These devices aid memory to 'clamp' things together into meaningful 'easy to carry' matter.

According to Conolly (Vol.4.2001: 337), Jousse advocated that the Oral-style recitatives be scripted in a specific way called 'rhythmography' or 'rhythmo-typography. "These included the presentation of the recitatives in rhythmic schemas, pitgâmâs and the indication of graphic abbreviations and mnemotechnical devices".

Mnemotechnical devices include the repetition of vowel sounds (avocalization), consonant sounds (aconsonantisation), vowel-consonants, syllables or words (annomination), phrases and onomatopoeic representation. These repetitions occur in stories, proverbs, prayers, praise-songs, wedding songs, slogans and other expressions. Regardless of ethnic origin, the repetition of structure acts as an mnemotechnical device operating on the anthropological principles of Mimism, Bilateralism, Formulism and Rhythmism. The use of mnemotechnical devices is demonstrated in the Rhythmo-stylistic analysis of the Tamil and Zulu wedding songs in chapter 13

Jousse identifies the repetition of recited elements as being memory-supportive. These are termed 'clamp elements'. The pattern of repeated sounds have a coherent effect on the text and on the memory of the reciter.

In Oral-Style millieux, two or three types of balancing occur in rhythmic schema resulting in binary and ternary schemas. The mnemotechnical devices are used to help the memory to store information for future replay. According to Jousse,

> If we encounter Rhythmic Schemas in them, it is because all these recitations have to be retained scrupulously by heart, and the rhythms, melodies, etc. are considerable aids to memorisation. (Jousse 2000:41)

According to Conolly (Vol.4, 2001; 238) and Gumede (2000:32) these mnemotechnical devices occur in the following forms:

- The balance and rhythm of proverbs and songs which make them easy to remember

- Alliteration and assonance create pairs or trios which can be balanced and which set up patterns or formulas of sounds.

- Onomatopoeia, in which the sound of the word mimismically imitates or echoes the sense of the word where the essence of the geste is mirrored in the expression of the geste.

- The coining of new catchy gestes, which effectively mirror dynamic events and incidents.

- Rhyme; which creates balanced repetition patterns of sounds.

- Stories, which are related in episodes using previous structures.

- Parallelisms, where the structure of an established balancing is repeated in the construction of further structures.

- Countdowns where the numerical sequence establish the order of the narration.

- Frames where the rhyming pitgâmâ (word) is repeated at the end of the first and last line only.

- Key words, which are frequently repeated or woven into other mnemotechnical devices.

- Calling and clamping pitgâmâ which are like key words but are used deliberately ambiguously to enrich the meaning of the performance.

These mnemotechnical devices are used to help memory to store information for future replay.

2.2 METHODOLOGY

The research into the gestual, rhythmo-melodic and linguistic features of the performance of selected Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies and rituals was conducted qualitatively by analysis, description and interpretation of the data collected.

The importance of a social context from which the text originates is emphasised in this research project. Magwaza (1993:1) correctly argues that no text can be studied without its context. Aspects of a cultural life of a society should be studied if one is to grasp the essence of any text.

The study of the Tamil and Zulu Marriage ceremonies and rituals was conceptualised according to the work of Marcel Jousse (1886-1961). Methodologically, Marcel Jousse distinguishes between different kinds of **'laboratories'** for the study of the Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm.

In order to create awareness the research data was collected and analysed through observation of marriage ceremonies, interviews, audio and video recordings, rhythmo-stylistic workshops, and a literature study.

2.2.1 Observation

Jousse regarded the world of the human race as an **anthropological laboratory**, and every individual is therefore a potential subject of research, regardless of temporal, geographical, social or cultural situation.

> It is imperative that we study the living in its living form, and exclude the study of dead books entirely: we must add an in-depth study of the living, expressive and rhythmic geste.

The Anthropology of Geste is synonymous with the Anthropology of Mimism, which is no longer an inert instrument for the analysis of man, and reveals, in effect, a whole experimental laboratory to us. Man becomes aware of man: the experimenter is simultaneously the experimented. Man is no longer 'this unknown': he becomes his own discoverer. The only person one can know well is oneself. But to know oneself well, one must observe oneself thoroughly. The true laboratory is an observation laboratory of the self, so called because it is difficult to learn to see one self. That is why it is necessary to create what could best be called 'Laboratories of awareness'. While we will never be able to step outside of ourselves, yet, thanks to Mimism, everything that is replayed through us is within us. All science is awareness. All objectivity is subjectivity.
The true Laboratory is therefore the Laboratory of the self. *To instruct oneself is to develop oneself.* Only the individual can know himself, whence today the ever-increasing awareness of the role of *living memory* and of its omnipresent adjuvant, *rhythm.* (Jousse 2000: 25-26)

Some of the material used for this research project draws directly on the researcher's own personal experience of participating in his own marriage ceremony and attending a number of traditional Tamil marriages as an invited guest or as a speaker. However, the researcher have undertaken a focussed observation of the live performance of three selected Tamil marriage ceremonies and associated rituals for the purpose of this research. The ceremonies were audio-, video-, and photographically recorded and later analysed.

Several attempts were made to observe a live performance of a traditional Zulu marriage ceremony without any success. Despite this the researcher was able to obtain video recordings of three Zulu marriage ceremonies, which enabled him to establish the mnemonic structure of the performances as an illustration and demonstration of the anthropological and biological nature of memory, learning, understanding and expression. Without the video recordings, it would have been virtually impossible to get all the details used in the study.

Jousse argued and demonstrated that performances of the *gestual*-visual/*oral*-aural mode were the proper subject of investigation of the Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm, and further, that it followed that the *gestual*-visual/*oral*-aural elements should

be scripted in such a way that they could be the matter of research investigation from the perspective of the Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm as opposed to philological approaches. According to Jousse (2000:26)

> The 'dead' written texts will be used only as a means, in the interim, of discovering the 'living' gestualisers. I will work within the mode of *gestual performance*, not within the space of the *written text*. I will thus unearth living facts the existence of which has never been suspected by those who tried, by assessing what was inert, to understand and explain the immense and complex anthropological and ethnic Mimodrama which makes up our 'Oral-style Tradition'.

2.2.2 Audio and video recordings

Recordings were made of the interviews, marriage ceremonies, and rhythmo-stylistic workshops, which were later used to examine the measurable performance of all participants. Reviewing and transcribing the audio and video tapes resulted in a detailed analysis. This method of recording oral texts enabled me to 'play' and 're-play' in order to arrive at an informed analysis.

Photographs were taken with a digital camera and stored in a computer. This new advanced system of storing photographic images on computer discs provides researchers with an easier and more cost effective way of storing information for later use. This method made it possible for me to make selections of visual images to compliment written data.

Problems were experienced with obtaining photographs of Zulu weddings, especially the traditional rituals and ceremonies. My sources were only able to obtain photographs of the westernised Christian marriage ceremonies.

2.2.3 Interviews

In the course of this research the researcher conducted interviews with different categories of people who were selected on the basis of their age, potential knowledge of the ceremonies, and on the basis of the areas in which they live and which the researcher considered to be of interest for the study of Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies.

All interviewees responded enthusiastically and welcomed the opportunity to share their knowledge and experiences on the subject of Tamil and Zulu marriages. Because these personal interviews were either tape or video recorded, useful and meaningful features such as *posture, gesture, facial expression, eye contact, rate of speech, pitch of voice, incidence of pause, hesitation* and *silence* were recorded and were very useful in the qualitative analysis of the raw data.

Interviews were conducted in neutral and comfortable surroundings and averaged less than one hour each. However, the interview with Prof. Khumalo lasted over two hours due to the nature of the information sought. The interviewees were encouraged to give an account of their experiences, insights and opinions spontaneously and in an unstructured way, as the researcher wanted to encourage honest and natural responses. This was supported by information drawn from books, articles, unpublished dissertations, and newspapers. The questions were intended to elicit responses with regard to their feelings, opinions and attitudes towards either Tamil or Zulu marriages.

The data obtained from the interviewees was analysed and compared to the data collected from other sources to establish the level of understanding of the Tamil and

Zulu marriage rituals and ceremonies, the cultural identity of the participants and their awareness of the spiritual union within marriage.

In Jousse's terms, the reliability, validity, authenticity and trustworthiness of data will be attained as long as it is "an expression of the microscopic geste, which is the 'Real', inner state thought, and emotion of the Interviewee". (Gumede 2000:59)

During the course of an interview, there are a number of expressions from both the interviewer and interviewee, which are "both *gestual*-visual/*oral*-aural in nature". "The emotions of the interviewee in particular, are vital to a research undertaking, but difficult to capture on paper". (Gumede 2000:59)

Since most interviews were conducted in English, the researcher did not experience any problems with translation. However lack of understanding of the Zulu vernacular disadvantaged the researcher when it came to Zulu concepts and terms. Researchers who have knowledge of the vernacular have an "advantage over an oral historian" that is dependent on a translator. Not only is there no need for interpreters, but also "both the historian and the informant are of the same culture linguistically". (Roth 1998:107)

For the purpose of this research , all the interviewees, that provided data , have been referred to as 'informants'. According to the Oxford dictionary, the term 'informant', means, " person who gives information", as opposed to 'informer', which means "a person who informs against someone".

2.2.4 Rhythmo-stylistic workshops

Three rhythmo-stylistic workshops were arranged (see appendices) as a data-gathering exercise for the Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies, rituals and songs. The term Rhythmo- Stylistics, which was developed by Sienaert and Conolly, refers to the use of the Oral Style of Human expression that supports Human memory thus providing a reliable and trustworthy oral socio-cultural archive.

The Rhythmo-stylistic workshops are a recreation of Jousse's practical methodology, and were based on Jousse's theory of ethnic and anthropological Laboratory of Awareness. He identifies the necessity to collect data in its living dynamic form expressed out of the 'memory-heart'. Jousse states that,

> I have accessed and received these formulas neither on dead recording apparatus, nor on photographic plates nor on cinemato-graphic films in the way astronomers of the modern observatories record the observations of their celestial Mechanics. I have accessed and received them through my entire living, acting and intelligent being: my deepest recesses retaining them 'by heart'; my pulsating throat reciting them 'by heart'; and my throbbing musculature re-playing them 'by heart'. (Jousse 2000:474)

The re-enactment of the marriage ceremonies by 'informed insiders' and the performance of wedding songs provided an opportunity to analyse a series of behaviours that was typical of two particular groups of people. The researcher was able to identify in the performance, elements of expression that were anthropological (similar) and ethnic (different). Each of the enacted marriage ceremonies was interrupted at significant points for explanation and discussion regarding the practice, and the theory underlying the practice.

The participants were made up of researchers, academics, religious authorities, students and ordinary members of society. They were all regarded as active participants and

were encouraged to ask questions and provide comments. These comments enabled the researcher to identify and analyse the different modes of expression as well as the elements that characterise the Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm.

The re-enactment of the Tamil marriage ceremony was led by Brahmin Nanda Moodley, and featured a Tamil bride and groom who were dressed in traditional garb and were led through the entire marriage process in an arena that was specially prepared for the event and included the symbols and other elements typical of this type of marriage ceremony. Every attempt was made to introduce an element of spirituality in order to allow the participants to experience the '*real*' thing. The participants became real actors. According to Jousse...

> Naturally the young anthropos has neither a *real* horseman, nor a real horsewhip, nor a *real* horse at his disposal. He has only the characteristic and transitory Mimemes, intussuscepted when faced with what is real. But these Mimemes are actually within him, and they are the *real* actors. Replayed microscopically or macroscopically, this little Mimodrama is initially, and for months thereafter, conscious. (Jousse 2000:84)

The re-enactment of the Zulu marriage ceremony was arranged and led by Nonhlanhla Khuzwayo and included participants from the *KwaMaphumulu* region. They were dressed in their traditional regalia and used the symbols and artefacts such as grass mats, spears, calabashes, blankets, umbrellas and other elements to demonstrate the rituals and practices of a traditional Zulu marriage ceremony.

In the following section of the thesis, I explain the significance of "The Rhythmo-melodic geste as Spiritual Union and Affirmation of Identity", and indicate some instances of application so that the reader can establish the extent to which these phenomena occur in the chronological accounts of the marriage ceremonies that follow later.

2.3 The Rhythmo-melodic geste as Spiritual Union and Affirmation of Identity

In this thesis I have attempted to follow Jousse's instruction:

> It is imperative that we study the living in its living form, and exclude the study of dead books entirely: we must add an in-depth study of the living, expressive and rhythmic geste. (Jousse 2000:25)

Jousse points out that the impression of geste by which we learn to understand the world is an imperative, which is inescapable...

> It is as if we are under a ten metre high wave. It overcomes us. We receive it all. And we do not receive superficially, but deep within ourselves. Because of the constraining law of Mimism, we receive within us the Mimemes, in other words the movements of things around us re-constructed in our receiving mechanisms. (Jousse 2000:121)

Consequently I have sought to find significance in the lived experience -in the 'geste' - of the participants in the traditional Zulu and Tamil marriage ceremonies, which form the focus of this study.

'Geste' ...

Of 'geste', Jousse says:

> What we have to study is something very much more profound than language, something much more primitive, more virginally anthropological: the corporeal-manual **geste**, which is not yet transposed into the laryngo-buccal **geste**. True human expression is not language, reduced to the **geste** of the langue: it is the expression of the entire being (...). In order to access these mechanisms, we have to become conscious of what primordial human expression is, and study it in its virginity, its genesis (...) 2000:574) That is why you often hear me using the phrase '**geste** of things' synonymously with '**geste** of men'. I do this because things are only known to us insofar as they are played, that is, '**gestualised**' within us." (Jousse 2000:121)

Jousse (2000:25) further defines the whole unit of meaning as the 'propositional geste':

> As an experimental anthropologist, I unified the **geste** and logic of all these erratic elements, resulting in the anthropological *Propositional Geste*, and the ethnic verbalisation of the

cosmological *Interactional Geste*. Instrumental analysis revealed human Globalism, which led to the immediate compilation of the Anthropology of **Geste** and, conjointly, of Rhythm.

The 'propositional geste' is further identified as 'interactional' ...(Jousse 2000:176)

> I have called this **Interactional** treble **Geste,** which intuitively and logically encodes what is Real, Rhythmo-phasism. When transposed into human mouths, this **Interactional Geste** becomes the **Propositional Geste,** in which once again, rhythm and logic coincide, which is why I could call it the rhythmo-logically **Propositional Geste.** The universe presents itself to the rhythmo-miming Anthropos as a wonderful interlacing of **interactional,** unconscious and rhythmically tri-phase **gestes,** which he will re-play and sequence consciously and logically in this rhythmical tri-phasism. The anthropos, like a sort of sequencing microcosm, receives and reflects, in his whole being, the innumerable and simultaneous Actions of the macrocosm. The world and its enduring drama become mutually defining.

The interactional nature of the 'propositional geste' renders it alive and dynamic

...(Jousse 2000:26)

> The 'dead', written texts will be used only as a means, in the interim, of discovering the 'living' **gestualisers.** I will work within the mode of *gestual performance,* not within the space of the *written text.* I will thus unearth living facts the existence of which has never been suspected by those who tried, by assessing what was inert, to understand and explain the immense and complex anthropological and ethnic Mimodrama which makes up our 'Oral-style Tradition'.

Conolly (2001: Vol 4:126) sums up that for Jousse, **'geste'**

1. is the mirror of the indivisible complexus of psycho-physiological Real

of the anthropos;

2. is the 'emotive-thoughts' and 'thoughtfilled-feelings' of indivisible

human thought and emotion;

3. is the unit of mimismologically concrete and intellectually abstract

meaning informing all impression and expression;

4. operates both microscopically and macroscopically as a complexus of

rhythmo-mimisms 'received, registered and replayed' in interaction with

the universe of the anthropos;

5. transcends ethnic language, and is therefore anthropological.

2.3.1.2 The rhythmo-melodic geste/ rhythmo-melodism

Rhythmo-melodism is a central operating feature of Jousse's Anthropology of Geste

and Rhythm - the 'missing piece' of the mnemonic puzzle as it were.

> From the outset, I need to emphasise that the question of **melody** and **rhythm** of the oral
>
> propositions is crucial." (Jousse 2000:33)

Conolly states:

> When Jousse identified the combined roles of **rhythm** and **melody** in the support of memory,
> he added the one missing piece of the puzzle - **rhythmo-melody** - and the Anthropology of
> Geste and Rhythm fell into place. **Rhythmo-melodism** operates in three ways
> 1. **Modeling rhythmo-melodism**: The **rhythmo-melody** is traditionally performed or
> modelled: a variety of **rhythmo-melodic** patterns are available, such as the structure of
> traditional rules and injunctions: 'single/double binary/ternary rhythmic schema (Rhythm)
> with circumflex inflection (melody)', e.g. proverbs in any language follow the same **rhythmo-
> melodic** pattern:
> 2. **Guiding rhythmo-melodism**: The traditionally preformed **rhythmo-melodism** provides a
> structure for the composition of new rhythmic schemas viz. 'the new wine in old bottles'.
> 3. **Rememorising rhythmo-melodism**: The traditionally performed **rhythmo-melodism**
> revivifies the forgotten rhythmic schemas: the **rhythmo-melody** provides a conduit for the
> memory of the words that accompany the **rhythmo-melody**. 'We hum a melody and the
> words come back to us.' (Conolly 2001: Vol 4:316)

Jousse identifies the role of rhythm and melody in his own early learning experience:

> I started to go to pre-primary school when I was between four and five years old. I
> had not yet learned to read and write, but I already knew a great many things by heart,
> which I had learned through **melody** and chant. These influences are evident in my
> pedagogic system. True psychology or anthropology consists of self-knowledge and
> self-development, in a more organised form than is evident in everyday life, but that
> does not alter the basic constituents ..." (Jousse 2000:18)

Jousse adds that ...

> The conservation and recall of verbal material through memorisation is facilitated
> enormously by **rhythm**, **melody**, and word and sound association: this phenomenon
> was noted long before it was proved scientifically by learned tests in our modern day
> experimental psychology laboratories. (Jousse 2000:38-39)

Jousse identifies the role of rhythm and melody as mnemonic supports ...

> If we encounter Rhythmic Schemas in them, it is because all these recitations have to be retained scrupulously by heart, and the **rhythms, melodies**, etc. are considerable aids to memorisation." (Jousse 2000:41)

... and therefore their role in the faithful transmission of oral traditions ...

> By degrees, the structures and **melodies** of the language will be developed and **modelled** by the mechanisms of traditional **Rhythmo**-pedagogic Oral Style. The original and authentic **melodies** of all languages surge from their own depths in this way.
>
> While language is a living and changing thing, **melody**, without being immutable, has greater **rhythmic** stability. The secular performance of **melodies** sometimes results in the imposition of fixed archaic **rhythms**, which ironically distort new propositional **rhythms**, which they should be reinforcing. For example, if we analyse the phonetics of our popular songs, those precious residues of our ancient Oral Style, we will find that the **Rhythm** of Intensity of the **melodies** rarely coincide with the **Rhythm** of Intensity of the words. The phonetic evolution of our language is the cause of this." (Jousse 2000:96-97)

Jousse identifies the "intellectual Rhythmo-melody of language"

> What we are encountering here is a virginal, a scientifically as yet untouched, world. I repeat: 'scientifically untouched', for I will have to defend myself repeatedly against superficial amateurs who will want to create art by reproducing artificially what is natural and true and therefore beautiful: the intellectual **Rhythmo-melody** of language.
>
> Man is only really man when he thinks and understands his speech. That is why, anthropologically, all kinds of human speech tend to be an indivisible complexity of *Verbo-rhythmo-melodism*. At first there is the potential for understanding through words. We become conscious through meaning. Once the realisation of consciousness has been properly achieved, the living and intelligent mechanism will play **rhythmically**: what blooms thereafter, as the scent from its flower, are both Semantico-**melodism** and **Rhythmo**-semantism." (Jousse 2000:91)

So it is that Jousse identifies the link between meaning and expression.

2.3.1.3 Spiritual Union

Where one identifies 'spirit' as 'breath', (the *prana* and *pranayama* in Hindu philosophy, and *moya* in Zulu and *rouhah* in Aramaic), one is identifying that which sustains life, and 'that which goes between' and therefore union at the level of the spirit/breath is union at the most primal and essential level of being. Union at the level of spirituality is therefore the ultimate outcome of the physical, intellectual, emotional and social union of the marriage of two people. The marriage ceremonies join people in marriage at all of these levels in order to reach the ultimate level of spiritual union. Access at the physical level is the most obvious and concrete, which access engenders access at all other levels: Jousse reminds us that the anthropos is an indivisible "complexus of geste" (Jousse 2000:171) and therefore what impresses at one level will be realised at all levels. All performance requires the geste of breath, therefore the performance of all the rituals and ceremonies engaged during the marriage process contribute to the spiritual union of the marriage partners.

2.3.1.4 Affirmation of Identity

The identity of the individual as individual, and the identity of the individual within the group both feature strongly in the performance of the ritual and ceremony of marriage. As the individual performs each of the rituals, and speaks or chants the words and melodies of the songs, these are simultaneously embedded in personal memory and contribute to the identity of the group. The marriage of two people contributes to the profile of the group to which they belong while simultaneously defining each of them as individuals.

Jousse identifies the development of communal agreement as to the significance of the interactional propositional geste and its contribution to 'identity'...(Jousse 2000:69)   .

> When, therefore, the occasion arises to re-play the **geste** or the characteristic attitude, to express it or to *Mime* it - **gestually** - the different Mimers will almost all agree - instinctively - to choose this 'characteristic Mimeme' and make of it a kind of **'Gestual** name' for the being in question. Here one sees how 'the name is the essence of the thing'; it is its 'Essential Action'.

> Thus, the baby will be mimed significantly by the **geste** of *suckling* and will be *'the suckling one'*; the old man will be significantly mimed by the **geste** of *shuffling* and will be *'the shuffling one'*. And so it is that each being will have its **'gestual** name', chosen, with delicacy and intuitive finesse from its most characteristic **gestes.**

> And so there develops in the *whole human composite* of the Mimer a vast mimismological terminology of Corporeal Style, a terminology as rich and differentiated as his need for expression demands: each of the *interesting* beings of the universe will be 'expressed' within the human composite by its Essential Action.

> But these 'expression-of-attitude-beings', if we may call them such, do not confine themselves to 'keep' to this or that characteristic position; these 'expression-of-attitude-beings' do not have only one essential **geste**, an action which could be called 'potential'. They also act on each other, in perpetual interaction, through multiple 'Transitory Actions', which are ceaselessly diversified. Each Action activates other Actions, specifically according to its own 'potentiality'.

2.3.2 Examples of instances of the elements, which constitute the "Rhythmo-melodic geste as Spiritual Union and Affirmation of Identity"

In this section I will identify instances of the application of the rhythmo-melodic geste, the geste as movement, rhythm and balance, formulas.

2.3.2.1 the rhythmo-melodic geste (rhythmo-melodism) For a detailed demonstration of the incidence of mnemonic rhythmo-melodism/ the rhythmo-melodic geste in the songs and chants performed in Zulu and Tamil marriages, See Section D.

2.3.2.2 Geste as Movement - 'the corporeal-manual mode of macroscopic expression of the inner microscopic geste - the Real' in propositional interactional geste

Examples of the incidence of significant geste in the Zulu marriage ritual include:

1. *Iphoyisa* (representative of the Chief) moves between the contracting parties energising the negotiations (See Section B Chapter 5)

2. The Bride sits silent and still while the negotiations are carried out. The cessation of movement, the very still removed nature of the Bride's geste in the midst of the energetic to-ing and fro-ing of the negotiators focuses on her importance in the ritual of marriage (See Section B Chapter5)

3. The frequent *giya*-ing of the men energises the process as the marriage negotiations progress (See Section B Chapter 5)

4. The motion of sweeping the floor with short-handled brooms conveys a sense of calm and harmony during all potentially conflictual periods of negotiation (See Section B Chapter 5)

5. The Bride hands over the special mat as an indication of her acceptance of the marriage proposal and her willingness to marry (See Section B Chapter 5)

6. At the point that the Bride communicates her willingness to marry him, the Bridegroom dances out of his home space into a neutral space which symbolises his leaving the family (See Section B Chapter5)

7. The acceptance of gifts includes the immediate token use of those gifts as an indication of acceptance and gratitude (What Jousse identifies as a concrete expression of the microscopic geste - the inner Real).

Examples of the incidence of significant geste in the Tamil marriage ritual include:

1. At the conclusion of rituals, the aradhanay is performed, whereby the *deepa kalsam* (lamp) is turned, three-times around the deity in an anti-clockwise direction (See Section C Chapters 8-10)

2. The circumambulation of the *havan* requires the couple to walk seven times around the havan. (See Section C Chapter 9)

3. While the couple chant the words, *potri, potri, potri*, they place ritual offerings in the *havan* (see Section C Chapter 9)

4. The turning of the *alum* (water mixed with lime), is performed by a senior lady, in order to ward off the evil eye (See Section C Chapter 9)

5. The parents of the bride and groom, together with the bridal couple participate in the *kanyadanam* - the giving away of the bride (See Section C Chapter 9)

Examples of the incidence of Rhythm and Balance in the Zulu marriage ritual include:

1. Balance characterises all stages of the marriage negotiations, which are typified by a process of trading, of taking and giving. Nothing can be taken without negotiated recompense: taking something of value must be recompensed with the giving of something of equal and negotiated value, if that which is taken is to be dignified by the process of exchange. The value of what is taken is mirrored in the value of what is given, e.g. the bride is dignified by the *lobola* which recompenses her loss to her own family; the taken life of the sacrificed cow is dignified by the money which covers the stab wounds. Nothing can be taken without something

being given in return, thus establishing an ongoing balance in the proceedings of the negotiations.

2. During negotiations, there are always two women sweeping: they move from opposite ends of the performance area, passing each other at a midpoint, thereby maintaining a balance at all times. This physical balancing of the space that they cover, mirrors the balance, which they desire will characterise the marriage negotiations.

3. All performance of *giya* is typified by a balanced call and response from the performers.

Examples of the incidence of Rhythm and Balance in the Tamil marriage ritual include:

1. Placement of the artefacts and participating parties in the marriage ritual on the stage creates a balance and sense of rhythm;(See Section C Chapter 9)

2. *Ammi* (grinding stone) and *khuzavi* (roller) represent the energies of Shiva and Shakti, who represent the interdependent balance of the capacities of the bride and groom; (see Section C Chapter 9)

3. *Aradhanay* is performed three times in a clockwise direction in a 'Yoke' balancing, three times in a an up-down motion in a 'Burden' balancing (See Section C Chapters 8-10).

4. The two halves of the broken coconut are placed on either side of the deities to represent balance. (See Section C Chapters 8-10)

5. Their female consorts balance male deities: Brahma-Sarasvati, Shiva-Parvathi, and Vishnu-Lakshmi. (See Section C Chapter 9)

Formulas

Formulas are balanced and rhythmic patterns, which shape identity and support memory. Jousse explains that the oral tradition of ancient patterns of behaviours and expression are 'crystallised Pearl-Lessons' which convey old practices faithfully through decades and centuries ...

> The whole of the science of Anthropology should be revised in terms of Life, and not in terms of what we are, or think, at present. We need to be alive enough and supple enough, dare I even say intelligent and humble enough, to allow ourselves to be schooled by these living traditional mechanisms. We will most assuredly not understand these peoples if we start by looking upon them as inferior. The vast *gestual equipment* necessary to transport the totality of the traditions of a human group has been developed over thousands of years and only an intelligent anthropological and ethnic sympathy can guarantee a fair assessment of its value. These traditions are passed on from generation to generation with such precision and vigilance that some ethnic milieux punish a mistake, an 'erring' (we would translate: a sin) of a Reciter-**gestualizer** by having him immediately 'put aside' and later 'put to death': such is the importance of keeping the testimony by **gestes** exact, faithful and true.
>
> The Anthropos has, in a manner of speaking, vitally crystallised in his own body what is fleetingly real in the shape of living *gestual* 'Pearl-Lessons' in order to conserve and carry the tradition of what is Real from generation to generation. That is why, in all the civilisations, which are truly alive – and therefore concrete – we have traditional 'strings' of Mimodramas, 'ordered and counted', which make up their history, which is not the same as art as we know it. And if we were to go to their religious ceremonies, or better, to their traditional ceremonies, which are nearly always inaccessible to us, we would see that the **Geste** and the **geste** of the ancestors – *le* **Geste** and *la* **geste**, their deeds and the tales of their deeds - are always carried in mimodramatical forms which are sometimes, but not always, oralised. **Gestual** traditions are also reliable historical documents."
> (Jousse 2000:138)

Examples of the incidence of Formulas in the Zulu marriage ritual include:

1. incidence and significance of numbers, 7 is taboo and even numbers are favoured (binary balancings).

2. Ancestors are invoked at the beginning and end of most interactions during the negotiation;

3. Formulaic operations are repeated for specific purposes, e.g. gall is used to cleanse and establish contact with the ancestors; grass mats are communication tools/signifiers; sweeping is formulaic and symbolic; umbrellas are formulaically symbolic of protection and shelter.

4. Items are grouped in patterns: Assegais and shields; sheets, blankets and pillows; pots with lids, inter alia.

Examples of the incidence of Formulas in the Tamil marriage ritual include:

1. 7's, and 9's and 5's (uneven numbers imply binary balancings with a pivot. These numbers, especially the number seven is repeated throughout the marriage ceremony. The number seven represents the seven holy rivers of India, while the number nine represents the nine planets. Astrology plays a very significant role in the daily lives of Hindus. (See Fig.)

2. The traditional *pandal* is constructed with four banana trees, which forms a square. The banana tree symbolises, fertility and prosperity. (See Fig.)

3. The *kolam*, is a painted geometric pattern, which is used for decorative purposes.

4. The thali pendant, which is tied around the bride's neck, is the most important marriage symbol, and completes the marriage ceremony. The pendant varies according to caste and *gotra* (family customs)

5. The placement of the participants on the stage forms a pattern. The bridal couple is seated in the centre, next to the *kalsam* (representation of God). On either side of the couple, their respective parents are seated. The sisters or family representatives stand at the back of the couple. The seven *Sopukudams* (vessels) are placed in front of the stage area. This entire arrangement forms a pattern of a face.

2.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

In this study, information about Tamil and Zulu marriages has been drawn from a variety of sources. However the researcher has commenced his research with what Marcel Jousse has pronounced and weighed it against what other authors say, in order to highlight the similarities or differences, which further exhibits the basis of Jousse's theories.

In this study, the researcher has taken into account the fact that authors may have different views in respect of:

- the manner in which marriages are performed and understood.

- The extent to which a performance that is orally transmitted, is reliable, accurate and valid.

- the differences and similarities, which exist between an oral and a written performance.

- the relationship, which exist between oral and written texts.

My review of literature covers the works of:

Jousse M (2000), Ong W.J. (1982), Conolly J (2001), Muthu M.S. (1974), Panday R (1969), Singh C and Nath P (1991), Kearns J.F. (1991), Chitty S. C. (1992), Apte U.M.

(1978), Krige E. J. (1936), Radcliff-Brown A.R. (1956), Krige E.J. et al (1981), Magwaza T (1993), Manqele Z.H. (2000), Gumede J.T. (2000)

Jousse M (2000), in *"The Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm"* provided the oral technical terms and definitions which the researcher's study is based on. Most of the concepts used by Jousse were used in this work to back up the assumption that the Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies studied are indeed based on oral tradition.

The book is divided into theoretical and practical sections. In the first part, which deals with the theoretical aspect of his research, the psycho-physiological laws of human expression are explored. He demonstrates the critical importance of cultural identity as a feature of socio-psychological balance, and identifies the indivisible psycho-physiological nature of the human being, long before technology was sufficiently advanced, to provide him with such insights. The second part shows how these laws are applied to the Galilean (gospel) tradition. In the same way, this work has helped the researcher to show how the laws of human expression described by Jousse could be applied to Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies. This work has also provided the researcher with an opportunity to examine the function of human thought and expression.

Ong W. J (1982) in *"Orality and Literacy – the Technologising of the Word"* gives the characteristics and nature of the oral culture, which the researcher finds, reflected in the Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies. He surveys and interprets the extensive work

done during the last few decades by him and others on the difference between orality and literacy.

Ong's assessment of the intellectual, literary and social effects of writing on oral tradition and his reviews of the exciting new discoveries that have revised our understanding of the Homeric poems of African epics, have helped the researcher in the analysis and interpretation of the Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies, which form part of an oral culture.

Conolly J (2001) provides a comprehensive insight into the work of Jousse, the father of oral studies. The value of this research undertaking is greatly enhanced by the addition of a glossary, which assisted the researcher greatly in finding direction and focus in his study. The definitions and explanations of terms associated with the different laws of human expression and the Mnemotechnical devices have helped him to analyse and interpret the Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies more effectively. The method of defining the terms and providing examples of usage contributed to an easier and better understanding of complex Joussean terminology. Putting performance on a page is not an easy undertaking. Conolly's glossary provided a window to the understanding of the theories of Marcel Jousse.

Muthu M S (1974) in "*The Tamilian System Of Marriage*" outlines the indispensable wedding rites consistent with the culture of Tamilians. It further explains the procedures to be adopted in performing the various rituals and gives in Tamil, with English translation the songs from the *Thevaram* and *Thiruvasagam* (Divine verses of Tamil Saints), which are to be sung during the chanting of *mantras* on appropriate occasions.

It provides an excellent account of the pre-marriage ceremony; marriage ceremony *per se* and the post-marriage ceremony with detailed explanations of the associated symbols of Tamil marriages.

The book was produced after many prominent Tamil scholars gathered together in a series of conferences and evolved a Tamilian system of marriage. The book was intended to impart to the bridal couple the significance of the rituals associated with Tamil marriage ceremonies and to explain the different *mantras*, chanted during a typical Tamil marriage ceremony

The author who was one of the scholars that attended these conferences founded the *Manavar Manram* in Madras, a reform movement, which initiated *The Tamilian System of Marriage*. The book was first published in Tamil and was later translated by Thiru Vallai Balasubramaniam into an easy, readable and excellent English to satisfy the needs of the Tamils living in various parts of the world.

Pandey R (1969), in *"Hindu Samskaras – Socio-religious Study of the Hindu Sacraments"* traces the Hindu *Samskaras* through their origin and development. He outlines the changes and modifications that they have undergone. Through very detailed explanations, an endeavour has been made to link and piece together the scattered materials of the *Vedas*, a few *Brahmanas*, the *Grhyasutras*, the *Dharmasutras*, the *Smrtis* and other treatises, into a comprehensive whole and to supply a historical perspective for their proper understanding.

The author explains how many social elements entered into the precincts of religious ceremonies and many cultural devices were introduced to mould the *Samskaras* in order to produce the desired effects in many ceremonies including marriages. The religious beliefs of the Hindus are analysed and their knowledge of arts and culture are shown.

The book is divided into two parts. In the first part, sources of enquiry, the meaning and the number of the *Samskaras*, the purpose of the *Samskaras* and the constituents of the *Samskaras* are discussed in their historical growth. In the second part, the entire *Samskaras* are grouped into the different rites, ceremonies and customs and are explained in great detail. The description of the *Vivaha Samskara* (marriage ceremony) provided valuable information for this study. It included many essential preliminary considerations and ceremonies relating to social rules, taboos, and restraints. The marriage rituals practiced according to the *Vedas* are described with excellent interpretations of the symbols and processes

Singh C and Nath P (1999), in *"Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies"* provide a brief description of the customs and ceremonies of the Hindus. The details were very useful for my study as they threw some light on the philosophical texts and the performance of the *Samskaras*. The author also provided some valuable insights into the *Vedas*, the fountainhead of Indian glory, which are divine revelations. An attempt was made to provide the reader with details of man's religious duties, the rites and rituals he should perform and how to satisfy his religious and social commitments. Spiritual exercises, chants and hymns and methods of devotion were given with explanations. This helped the researcher with his analysis of the different modes of expression found in traditional Tamil marriage ceremonies.

Kearns J F (1991), in *"Kalyan'a Shat'anku – Marriage Ceremonies of the Hindus of South India"*, provides a detailed account of the marriage ceremonies of the Hindus of Southern India, which helped the researcher to trace the historical development of Tamil marriages. Most of the information was derived from oral accounts by Tamils of different castes (*Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas* and the *Sudras*) living in various parts of Tamil Nadu. The accounts were than compared in order to highlight any similarities or differences. The accumulated information was submitted to prominent Tamil scholars for their opinions. After much deliberation, corrections were made to the texts; paving the way for the compilation of this book. This work provided some valuable insights into the historical development of Tamil Marriages in South India. The author also gives a detailed account of the spiritual laws that govern Hindu marriages. This is complimented by a very descriptive account of the binding circumstances essential to the completion of a Tamil marriage e.g. the *Saptapathi* (seven steps) and the tying of the *thali* (nuptial knot).

Chitty S C (1992), in *"The Castes, Customs, Manners and Literature of the Tamils"*, presents a simple but informative account of the Tamils in South India and their movement to other parts of the world. The sections on the origin of the Tamils and their division into various castes assisted in the historical development of the Tamils, while the sections based on the physical and moral characteristics of the Tamils as well as their customs rites and ceremonies provided some very good insights to enable the researcher to describe the different modes of expression.

Apte U M (1978), in *"The Sacrament of Marriage in Hindu Society"* provides a detailed analysis of the religious and social aspect of Hindu marriages. The author has conducted a detailed investigation using information from different sources to explain why marriage ceremonies which have entered the ritual of marriage as a concession to popular practices, local and social customs and psychological needs, did not have any connection with the original ritual.

In this work the author brings together all the data connected with the sacrament of marriage from the Vedic period, through the *Veda Samhitas, Brahmanas* and *Upanishads,* to the *Dharmasutras* and *Dharmashastras.* According to Bhat, a prominent researcher from Research Institute of Poona, in his foreword to the book, states that the author presents data with textual authority, correct interpretation and sound deductions. One heartening feature of the presentation is that it is not a compilation of data; nor is it an accumulation of material. He adds that the writer has a perspective, which is apparent in the deductions at the end of every section, and particularly in the suggestions for restoring the marriage ritual to its essential and economic purity to suit the changing times. (1978:viii)

A significant feature of this study is the collection of all the mantras used in the marriage ceremony of the *Grhya- Sutras,* which are traced to their sources. Although they are Sanskrit- based, they have helped the researcher with the rhythmo- stylistic analysis of the Tamil songs.

10. Krige E. J. (1936). in her compilation of *"The social systems of the Zulu people"*, gives the readers a thorough understanding of the Zulu people. She commences by

tracing the Zulu history and its influence on the tribes of Southern Africa. The information helped the researcher to trace the historical development of the Zulu. Most of the other chapters embrace the social structure and organisation of the Zulu people, some of which are still applicable today and still influence the thinking and behaviour of the Zulu people.

Although the author has experienced many difficulties in collecting and co-ordinating material which was largely due to the differences of custom, in different regions, she was able to produce a very extensive and colourful account of the social customs and traditional ceremonies which she obtained from informants belonging to an oral society who knew the social conditions of their people. The author used questionnaires to determine the approaches to customs and ceremonies on doubtful points. The information gathered from this book was of great assistance in the researcher's analysis of the different modes of expression found in Zulu marriage ceremonies, which are performed. However, it must be noted that some of the findings of the author are disputed by modern Zulu academics.

Radcliff- Brown A.R. [Ed] (1956), in *"African Systems of Kinship and Marriage"*, provides a detailed account of the different types of marriage systems that prevail in African societies. Despite regional and cultural differences, there seems to be a common thread that links the different groups together. This has given me an excellent perspective into the different marriage ceremonies that are performed within the Zulu society where regional and clan differences occur. The contribution by Max Gluckman is of special importance to the researcher. He analyses a distinctive pattern of kinship organisation and marriage custom as expressed in the Zulu Society. The study is of

great importance to scientific sociology, and also, has a direct bearing on those urgent practical problems which arise when people who have lived in a largely kinship bound society are reacting to pressures and incentives from the western society.

Krige E.J. et al (1981), "Essays on African Marriage in Southern Africa", which is a compilation of essays on African Marriages in Southern Africa, was written by a number of distinguished Africans. A comparative analysis was made of the character of the marriage systems, in relation to the social structure of the major groupings into which the African peoples of Southern Africa are divided. This added a new dimension to my understanding of African marriages.

The outstanding features of the *Nguni* social structure especially those that deal with traditional marriages, provided a window for the researcher's study of Zulu Marriages.

While the book illuminates a number of theoretical problems in marriage ceremonies, it gives the reader an opportunity to have a perspective of the role of oral tradition and its transmission of group identity and family values.

Magwaza T (1993), in her unpublished thesis *"Orality and its Cultural Expression in some Zulu traditional ceremonies"*, deals with a number of traditional Zulu ceremonies, and emphasises the role of oral tradition in Zulu society. Magwaza highlights the cultural importance of the ceremonies, which forms an integral part of society's culture. They depend on the power of the spoken word and its artistic devices. In her presentation, the author shows how expressive devices that are oral and those that involve material aspects complement each other as people's means of communication.

This assisted the researcher in his analysis of the different modes of expression found in traditional Zulu marriages.

Manqele Z. H. (2000), in her unpublished thesis,"*Zulu Marriage Values and Attitudes Revealed in Song; An Oral-style Analysis of Umakoti Ungowethu as performed in the Mnambithi Region in Kwahlathi"* has demonstrated how Zulu marriage values and attitudes observed in the analysis of a song in its context reveal that the Zulu song, constitutes a form of oral communication, which has its relevance in the social system of the Zulu people. Manqele has undertaken to demonstrate how the Mnemonic Laws and Mnemotechnical devices discovered by Marcel Jousse can be applied to the gestual-visual/oral-aural performance of the song, thus identifying the manner in which custom is embedded in human memory. This work provided a valuable insight for my rhythmo-stylistic analysis of the Zulu wedding song.

15. Gumede J. T. (2000) in his research project, "*The Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm in Modern Zulu Roman Catholicism: A Brief Historical Critique and a Microscopic and Macroscopic Oral Style Analysis of Selected Liturgical and Biblical texts"* has employed an Oral-style analysis to interpret a number of Zulu Liturgical texts using Marcel Jousse's theory of Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm. This helped the researcher a great deal as he has used the same theory to analyse and interpret the Zulu and Tamil wedding songs. In his presentation Gumede has shown that human expression has universal anthropological features that embrace language and expression at the ethnic level equally and without prejudice. The study also showed how fossilization of the written text can be challenged, thereby suggesting means of re-

energising the printed word. He also tackled the consequence of "putting performance on the page"; showing to what extent the Mnemonic Laws and Mnemotechnical devices of Marcel Jousse are embedded in the printed text.

SECTION B

ZULU MARRIAGE CEREMONY

CHAPTER 3

Historical development of Zulu marriages

During the period 4th century A.D. and 1000 A.D there were about 450 sites of archaeological findings that showed the presence of Bantu speaking populations in the Eastern part of South Africa as far as the Kei River. Artefacts, pottery, and the shapes of villages' bear testimony to the presence of Bantu in this region.

Before the rise of Shaka, the history of the small Zulu clan is linked with that of other northern Nguni groups. The Zulu people are the descendants of a very ancient population, which about 6 000 years ago, lived north-west of the equatorial rain forest and started migrating towards the south about 2 000 years ago. The Nguni population in the East Coast comprised of a small clan, of approximately 20 000. The Zulu reality was there but in a different form. The Zulu recognise themselves as *Amazulu*, who claim some form of origin from original Zulu ancestors. According to Canonici (1996:1), the most ancient ancestor was thought to be *Malandela* (1597-1691), whose kingdom was split between his two sons; *Qwabe* and Zulu (1627-1709), who was succeeded by *Phunga* (1657-1727) and *Mageba* (1667-1745). *Mageba* was succeeded by *Ndaba* (1697-1745), then by *Jama* (1727-1781), the father of *Senzangakhona* (1757-1816), of *Mmama* and *Mnkabayi*. *Senzangakhona* was succeeded in turn by his three sons: *Shaka* (1757-1828), who ruled from (1816 to 1828); *Dingane* (ruled 1828-1840); *Mpande* (ruled 1840-1872).

The rise of Shaka was the beginning of a revolution in the history of Southern Africa that affected the lives of many communities, from the Eastern Frontier of the Cape to as far north as Lake Tanganyika.

According to Canonici (1996:1) the Zulu is a rather recent historical reality. He claims that only at the beginning of the 15th century, through the military genius and power of King Shaka, that a great nation was forged out of the many Nguni-speaking clans living in KwaZulu-Natal. Shaka was able to amalgamate the Nguni clans into tribes because of the following:

- His military strategy was based on attacking the enemy in a buffalo-horns formation. The soldiers walked bare-foot and were taught to use the short stabbing assegai instead of the traditional long throwing spear. This forced them to combat at close quarters, where there was no salvation for the weak or coward.

- He amalgamated the clans into a Zulu national system by creating military regiments, based on age groups, which cut across the various clans.

- He imposed the Zulu language from his own dialect, *Mtungwa*, which has become the main form of spoken Zulu.

- Because of his many successes, he was able to attract a large following. Everybody likes to identify with a successful leader. There was loyalty to the regiment, loyalty to the king and loyalty to the nation.

The main purpose of Shaka's reforms was to bring together the numerous tribes of the Nguni into a single Zulu nation, which he named after his own forefather, Zulu. All

power was concentrated in his person as King and Chief Commander. All his subordinates were automatically regarded as members of the Zulu nation, and were required to adopt the Zulu language and customs.

While unity was taking place under the leadership of Shaka, there was evidence of splinter groups in the fringes. This has resulted in differences in dialects, sounds, local traditions, dress, beadwork and a choice of colours. Evidence of this is found today in the daily practice of the Zulu. While there are some ceremonies that are the same at national level, there are customs that are different at local level because of previous traditions. Therefore it is not surprising to find that the marriage ceremonies that take place in the North Coast of KwaZulu-Natal may differ from the ceremonies that are performed in the South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal or in Northern KwaZulu-Natal. In the application of religious and social ceremonies there may be different types of manifestations, but they all have the same meaning.

Beginning around 1815, the Zulu kingdom displaced the Mtehethwa kingdom and conquered dozens of other nearby small kingdoms, which gradually took on Zulu identity on top of older local identities. Culturally these communities already had much in common. Similarities of culture and mutually intelligible language extended south to the Xhosa, Mpondo, Thembu, Xesibe and Bhaca kingdom. The expansion of political powers, such as the Zulu and Swazi kingdoms, created new identities for many people in the 19th century.

White colonization began in the 1830s, when the Zulu kingdom was still quite new. White conquest took decades. Many chiefdoms remained in the independent Zulu

kingdom while others came under the British colony of Natal. Many people and chiefs only recently conquered by the Zulu kingdom fled into Natal, rejecting political Zulu identity, although retaining cultural affinity. But as all Zulu-speaking people came under white South African rule, and as white rule became more oppressive, evolving into apartheid, the Zulu identity and memories of the powerful independent kingdom became a unifying focus of cultural resistance.

The Zulu who constitute about six million are the single largest ethnic group in South Africa today. It has a relative linguistic and cultural homogeneity and a proud military past, centred around the monarchy. It would nonetheless be wrong to relate the pervasive cultural nationalism of KwaZulu-Natal simply to the historical existence of the Zulu Kingdom, the most powerful and cohesive state in Southern Africa, in the nineteenth century. According to Marks (1989:216), "twentieth century ethnic consciousness is not an unmediated transmission of innate and immutable past values and culture". Barrington Moore (1967:485-6) reminds us that:

> Culture or tradition.... is not something that exists outside of or independently of individual human beings living together in society.... The assumption of inertia, that cultural and social continuity do not explain, obliterates the fact that both have to be recreated anew in each generation, often with great pain and suffering.... To speak of cultural inertia is to overlook the concrete interests and privileges that are served by indoctrination, education and the entire complicated process of transmitting culture from one generation to the next.

The customs, traditions and language of a society provide an excellent window into the social fabric of that society. This contributes to a better understanding of the needs and aspirations of groups and individuals, which makes it easy for transmission of cultural values. Marks argues that by using the building blocks of past history, language and 'custom', the black intelligentsia of Natal were able to introduce a twentieth century ethnic consciousness through intense ideological labour. This had a

tremendous influence on the white ideologies of South Africa, which were designed to confront new and dangerous social conditions. The paradoxes in this situation are apparent when it is appreciated that it was the Christian African Community – the *amakholwa* ('the converted'), many of whose forbears had fled the Zulu kingdom in the nineteenth century, who forged the cultural ethnic organisations in the twentieth. Thus, Solomon KaDinizulu, the son and heir of the last Zulu king founded the first Inkatha movement. (1989:217). Marks (1978: 190-3), found that the origin of the Inkatha in 1922-4 owed as much to the deliberate reconstruction by the Zulu royal family and the intelligentsia of 'traditional' institutions as to any spontaneous reaction of the Zulu people.

In 1937 Albert Luthuli, later to become President of the ANC, founded the Zulu Cultural Society. In its origins, it shared Inkatha's objective of fighting for state recognition of the Zulu Royal house as paramount and added to it a concern for the preservation of Zulu tradition and custom at a time when these seemed to be disintegrating in the face of the pressures of proletarianization and urbanization, according to Marks (1978:217). He added that with the Zulu Regent, Mshiyeni KaDinizulu, and the South African Minister of Native Affairs as patrons, the society was par excellence, an instrument of the Zulu Christian intelligentsia.

The social disintegration of the Zulus attained a degree of urgency in the 1930's. In Natal, from the beginning of the twentieth century, white missionaries and administrators had deplored the disintegration of 'tribal discipline' as Africans were increasingly proletarianized and in contact with whites in town.

Marks quoting from the (Blue Book on Native Affairs, 1904) revealed that as early as 1904, James Stuart, then Assistant Magistrate in Durban, and to become one of the foremost recorders of African oral tradition, outlined what he saw as a 'crisis' resulting from the 'multifarious commercial tendencies' which were acting to transform African 'ancient habits and customs, their beliefs and modes of being'. (1989:219)

The complexities of the traditionalism, which imbued the ethnic ideologies, should not be underestimated. While proclaiming the virtues of their past and the wholesomeness of traditions, the 'new African' was too much a product of the mission station and western culture to give unreserved approval to an unconditional; return to 'tribal' life.

Rev. John Dube, on being pressed by one of the Commissioners at the Native Economic Commission in 1930 whether he could 'reconcile the tribal system with progress', replied

> Well, it is the only thing we have and I think that if it were properly regulated, it would be the best. The tribal system has many advantages and I cannot get away from it. It is under the tribal system that our Natives hold the land and, if I want land, I must associate the occupation of the land with the tribal system...(1930-32 Native Economic Commission, Evidence, 6268), quoted by Marks (1989:221)

Despite Dube's adherence to the Zulu Monarchy and his key role in the Zulu society, he did not have unconditional support for the 'tradition'. This can be attributed to the influence of Christianity on the social system of the Zulu. As late as 1925, he

categorically denounced the practice of *lobola* (bride wealth), which was by this time

gaining acceptance by white missionaries and administrators as a protection for

woman:

> The women who respond more quickly to the preaching of the gospel are confronted with the
> difficulties of *lobola*. This custom is a great hindrance to the spread of the Gospel. So long as
> our woman are looked upon as an asset of commercial value, so long will the native be
> retarded. An unprejudiced diagnosis of the custom will show it is the root of many things that
> hamper the progress of the Native people.... Why is that the natives who have worked on the
> farms of Europeans since boyhood.... So soon as they return to home revert to their old
> sluggish habits, saying I bought my wife to do all my work? Those who have learnt to cook
> for the best white families, when back in their homes do not even make an attempt to improve
> old time methods. All this can be traced to the evil of *lobola*. (Report of the Sixth General
> Missionary Conference of South Africa held in Johannesburg June30- July 3), quoted by
> Marks (1989: 222)

An appendix to the Charter of the Zulu Society published in 1939 as quoted by Marks

(1989: 224) captures the flavour of the thinking related to Zulu tradition, asserting that

'Not all customs are suitable in modern times, but instead of thoughtless elimination,

there should be "the substitution of something better".' One of its enumerated

principles saw the Divine Hand in the separate existence of the Zulu people:

55.) It is plain that responsible opinion is unanimously in favour of the Zulus being

established always, retaining what is of good repute in the Heritage that was given to

them by the other Great Owner of Nations to distinguish the Zulus from other nations

in giving them their individuality severally. Thus the Zulus may appear with their own

traditional sacred anthem, not an anthem borrowed from other peoples. (Natal

Archives, Acc.No.302, Charter of the Zulu Society)

In addressing the disintegration of the fabric of Zulu life under the impact of

proleterianization and urbanization during the 1930's, Marks reveals that there was

great concern. In particular, as the Charter of Zulu Society makes clear, there was the

fear that the 'departure from wholesome Zulu traditions' meant a lack of discipline in

the home. Particularly 'alarming' was the loss of control over women, as 'mothers' of

'our leading men, chiefs and counsellors, and over the young, who' by force of circumstances, leave their homes at an early age to work in towns and to attend schools.' (1989:225)

The fear that the Zulu would be regarded as primitive, the desire to appear 'respectable', and sensitivity to racist stereotypes of African culture were dominant also in the words of K.G. Msimang extracted from the Natal Native Teacher's Journal, January 1949. And quoted by Marks (1989:231)

> .... the African people must be careful not to keep on with customs and beliefs of ancestors, which will make them laughing stock. It is no secret that many people of the other nationalities like to see some of the dances because, as they say, they like to see a bunch of baboons performing, or because they want to see something 'wild' or 'primitive'. No matter to which race we belong, we must remember that all things are not necessarily good because they have come down from our ancestors....

However Percy Ndhlovu had a different opinion on psychological colonisation as reported in the Natal Native Teacher's Journal, April 1949 and quoted by Marks (1989:232)

> ... That there are those among educated and civilized Africans who have such an inferiority complex that they imagine their own fellow men are looked upon as monkeys or baboons when they indulge in primitive dancing is lamentable. The civilized and educated African should see no shame or disgrace in trying to uplift his wild fellow men by selecting what is good and rejecting what is bad. When these dances were in full swing morals were far better than they at present...

In the same way that isiZulu has grown out of an original African language, Zulu culture has grown from a common African culture through a double process of selection and assimilation of what is originally African and of elements adopted and adapted from the various populations with which the people have come in contact during their long migration journeys to the south.

The ideas of kinship and the family play an important part in traditional Zulu society and influence almost every aspect of their culture. The description of the Zulu kinship system and the principles underlying it is a useful starting-point in any study of Zulu life. The bonds of kinship, which is prevalent amongst the Zulu, are very extensive and serve to bring together and knit into a group, different people. This is done by means of the classificatory system of relationship and the sib or clan, which is outstanding feature of the Zulu social structure. Within the context of the umndeni (localised segment) and extended family, the house-property complex provides the means by which marriage, property relations, social affiliation, rank and status are organised.

Marriage, in bringing two families together, is responsible for widening the circle of relatives. According to Krige (1981:3), Zulu marriage is a contract involving the two houses between which bride wealth has passed. All members of the two units are drawn into the rights and obligations created by the union.

The above background has helped in the description of the rituals and practices associated with a traditional Zulu marriage ceremony, outlined in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 4

UMGCAGCO (THE TRADITIONAL ZULU MARRIAGE)

PRE-MARITAL CEREMONY

The traditional Zulu marriage is a long process, which takes place over a number of days. During this time a number of rituals and social events take place, in order to unite the bride and the groom. According to Khumalo (pc:2001), most Zulu marriages are still conducted in the traditional way, but there are regional differences in some of the ceremonies. These can be attributed to the influences of other groups, for example; in the South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal, there is evidence of the influence of the *amaXhosa* and *amaMpondo* people. The abe*Sothos* have had a tremendous influence in Western KwaZulu-Natal whereas in the North Coast of KwaZulu-Natal it is the *amaSwati, amaThonga* and *amaShangane* who have influenced the way of life of the Zulu people. Notwithstanding these regional differences, the basic structure of the marriage ceremony remains the same. Khumalo (pc:2001) adds that there are also noted differences with regard to the wedding songs, which differ from clan to clan.

Khumalo (pc:2001) explains that the importance of the traditional marriage ceremony in the Zulu community is to introduce the couple to the ancestral world so that they obtain their blessings and protection. Currently, there is a great tendency for couples to get married in a church, which is motivated by religious and economic reasons. Both traditional and church wedding ceremonies are very expensive. Couples, however, usually afford a church wedding and later as the years go by and the

economic conditions of the couple improve, a traditional wedding ceremony known as *Umabo* is conducted.

Magwaza (pc:2001) describes the experiences of her own traditional marriage ceremony as "overwhelming". The richness and excitement derived from her own experiences during the traditional marriage prompted her to undertake research into traditional cultural practices. She remarked that it was an eye-opener, which assisted in her chosen career path. She has also vowed not to send her children to boarding schools, as this is where she was cut off from her culture and tradition, and she did not have an opportunity to observe many Zulu traditional ceremonies at home. It was only when she participated in her own marriage ceremony that she understood what she had missed. She also states that from her observation, there is a cultural revival, especially among the younger generation. Many Africans are determined to go back to their roots. The new democratic government of South Africa is supporting this by promoting an African Renaissance through a variety of programmes. In addition the National Research Foundation (NRF) has identified Indigenous Knowledge as a research focus area in the academic arena.

Magwaza (pc:2001) is of the view that there are many pro-traditionalists. She supports this viewpoint by explaining that many people conduct their weddings according to Zulu tradition, but in different ways, depending on their belief systems. The Zulu people can be classified as follows:

- 100 percent Pro-traditionalists.
- 50 percent traditionalist and 50 percent Christian, Muslim or other.

- 30 percent traditionalist and 70 percent Christian, Muslim or other.

- 100 percent Christians, Muslim or other.

Khuzwayo (pc:2001) supports the importance of traditional marriage ceremonies, and she states that the ancestors will only recognise a traditional Zulu marriage rather than a Christian marriage. In a Zulu community, the bride married by any ceremony other than the traditional Zulu, will be regarded as a girl and will not be accorded the respect that a married woman deserves and the groom on the other hand, may experience certain misfortunes such as losing his job. Therefore, it is absolutely imperative for couples to complete their traditional marriage ceremony even if they choose to be married in a Christian ceremony as well.

Types of Marriage Negotiations

Krige (1950:124-126), outlines a number of forms of marriage negotiations in traditional Zulu society:

- *Ukucela or Ukukhonga* - This is the most popular form of marriage negotiation. This is when the groom's people open negotiations and formally ask for the hand of the girl.

- *Ukuganisela* - This is when the girl's people open negotiations, a custom that is usual when the girl's people are of high standing. The researcher has, however, observed that people also open negotiations with people who are not

of high standing. In other words, all Zulus observe the custom of *Ukuganiselana*.

- *Ukubaleka* – This form has attracted the attention of most people who have recorded Zulu customs. This is when the girl runs away to her lover, an action which forces his people to open marriage negotiations.

- *Ukuthwala* - This is a form of forced marriage. This takes place when an engaged girl breaks her contract. The boy together with a number of his friends arranges to carry off the girl secretly to his kraal. Here, they dress her in an '*isidwaba*' as though she was a married woman. By virtue of this, she is morally bound to marry the man.

Preparatory discussions

When the bridegroom finds a suitable partner, he reports the matter to his mother, that is, that he has found someone that will be appropriate to be part of his family. Traditionally, he cannot report to his father. The mother in turn, will refer the matter to the father in a diplomatic way. When the matter is in the hands of the father, he cannot handle it all by himself. He then consults the extended family and the neighbours as it is believed that the son is the child of the whole family and of the community as a whole and not only of the parents.

The extended family and the neighbours become part of the marriage process from the beginning to the end so that ultimately, when the wedding day is set, they all become

witnesses of the marriage ceremony. Magwaza (pc:2001) states that even when the marriage is finalised, there is no need to invite people formally to the marriage ceremony. According to Zulu culture, if people are aware that something is happening at a certain place, they will attend automatically without being invited. However, the family meets as a unit to discuss the internal affairs before the neighbours get involved. The bridegroom has to reveal at this stage whether he is in a position to engage in the marriage process and more especially whether he is ready to pay the traditional *ilobolo* (cows). The family normally assists in some way or the other. There must be an indication that he is ready and prepared to do his best. He has to prove to be a man of independence in order to engage in such an important undertaking.

Important discussions and decisions about the forthcoming marriage are finalised in an *indlu yakwa gogo* (special kraal or house), which is found in a Zulu homestead. The *isigcawu* (cattle kraal) or house is considered to be a sacred place and has the same status as a church or temple, and has the blessing of the *amadlozi* (ancestors). The discussions that take place here are of a serious nature. The commitment and co-operation of all the parties concerned is expected. According to Magwaza (1993:68), all discussions are only considered authentic if they have been negotiated in this hut. She further states that the cattle kraal is usually surrounded by a fence of agaves (plant with spiny leaves, flowering only once), under which the family's dead rest in their graves. The spirit of the ancestors having seen how the *lobolo* cattle left the kraal are now reconciled to the loss by the sight of the *umalokazana* (the bride arriving in the cattle's homestead). According to Khumalo (pc:2001) this hut can be compared to a church or temple in other societies. Currently, due to the unavailability of cattle kraals

and urbanisation where most people live in a single dwelling, a small part of the house has been identified as a sacred space. It is in this area that these important discussions take place.

The role of the abakhongi (negotiators)

At this stage, the family identifies the *Abakhongi* (marriage negotiators). They choose two or three people who will act as representatives or negotiators mandated to start discussions with the prospective bride's family. Krige (1950: 126) states that approaching a girl's family is a delicate matter and requires very tactful handling. Thus, a go-between is chosen to act as an ambassador. The *abakhongi* are normally wise community members but the family makes sure that family members are also involved. Krige (1950:126) states that in traditional Zulu society, a woman is never chosen as a go-between, for no Zulu man will discuss anything of importance with a woman. This custom is however changing. Women are now highly involved in marriage negotiations of their sons and daughters. For instance, a grandmother usually participates in all the meetings of *lobolo*. Women claim that men, especially outsiders sometime spoil the proceedings by charging exorbitant and unaffordable rates. The boy gets discouraged and the couple starts living together and starting a family out of wedlock. Sometimes the boy abandons the girl completely and goes for another lover whose parents will charge less. The criteria for the selection of the *abakhongi* are as follows:

- ❑ They must be respected members of society.

- ❑ They must be very old, as they will be dealing with the bride's father as well as the forefathers. However, nowadays it is very rare to find "very old" men in a particular village. Most women are widows.

- ❑ They must have certain degree of maturity.

- ❑ They must be married with children of their own.

- ❑ They must be the Godfathers of the groom.

- ❑ It is common practice to engage the services of two *abakhongi*. However in some cases, a third *umkhongi* is used. This is normally a young person who is in the process of being trained for this delicate operation.

After consultations with the family members the next step is to involve the neighbours, who are invited to the 'big hut'. They will now participate in making decisions about the boy who is regarded as a child that belongs to society. The selection of *abakhongi* will be revealed, and preparations will start. The girl also reports to her mother about the arrival of *abakhongi*. The mother, in turn, conveys the message to her husband. The father of the girl notifies his brothers and one or two wise neighbours to be present when *abakhongi* arrive.

Visit to bride's house (proposal)

On the eve of going to the bride's house, the negotiators will sleep in the groom's house. This is to provide an opportunity for them to connect with the groom's ancestors. It makes the entire negotiations authentic as *abakhongi* have now been given the mandate to negotiate on behalf of the family.

On a chosen date, the *abakhongi* will go to the bride's house to start with the negotiations. They usually arrive very early, at dawn, to the girl's place. This is linked to the belief system that *abaphansi* (the ancestors) usually visit their homestead at night and leave for underground in the early hours of the morning. They arrive early so that they can hear them when they are shouting the clan praises outside the gate. The members of the homestead are usually awakened by the shouting of the *abakhongi* as they say, *"Thina bakwa so and so ka so and so"*. We have come to ask for good relationship to you.

They shout that they have come to negotiate the relationship between the families. They will shout until they are chased away. This is sometimes repeated about three times until the bride's father accepts them into his home. This type of behaviour on the part of the father is to convey to the groom's party that he has a lot of pride as he has brought up his daughter in a honourable way, and she is still a virgin. He is giving her grandmothers the opportunity to give the authenticity of saying that she is still a virgin. They will have an opportunity to verify this at a later stage. By chasing away the negotiators, the father is also buying time to report to his family and neighbours. They then prepare to come to the bride's house to make contributions and make important decisions.

The *abakhongi* start reciting the *izithakazelo,* (clan praises) of the bride. They shout the colours and sex of the cattle that are in their possession and also mention that the rest of the cows are *"amaphuphu ezikhova"* (monetary equivalent) They keep on repeating their mission until an old lady from the homestead scolds the males who then let them inside. After this, the father sends for the neighbours or brothers to give

him an ear and to assist him during the debate about the prices of *lobolo* cattle. When they enter the *"indlu enkulu'* they again repeat their intention. According to Krige (1950: 127) the errand is a delicate matter and must be handled carefully. The *abakhongi* will answer, "We have been sent here by so-and-so to come to do homage on his behalf. He is offering himself as a servant (*khonza*) and asks that you will build him a house." The kraal head will then know the nature of the errand and will inquire whether they have come about one of his daughters.

After the negotiators are accepted into the house they are given the opportunity to start their mandate. This takes place in the ' big hut', which is referred to as the sacred place. This is where important sacred ceremonies take place, involving the elders as well as the ancestors.

On that particular day, the bride's father or representatives of the family will speak on behalf of the bride. In most instances, the platform is given to an elder who is regarded as the chairperson of the whole family. This person also reports to the forefathers a task only reserved for certain individuals. Through discussion and negotiation the *abakhongi* will be given the whole situation. The number of cows required will also be discussed. Sometimes the monetary equivalent known as *"amaphuphu ezikhova"*(the young ones of an owl) will be proposed, instead of cows. The preparations for marriage, the dates and various other issues will be discussed as part of the negotiation process.

The family members of the bride will remain silent until such time that *isehla emthini* (as if the father is staying in a tree) has been paid. He will be brought down from an

imaginary tree when the sum of money has been settled. This is done on the 'small mat', in the middle of the hut where the ancestors are believed to be residing. The discussions and settlements will be rendered invalid if it is done anywhere else. After the father is paid and "brought down", they now have to open his mouth with *imvulamlomo* (a mouth opener). Thereafter, the father can participate in negotiations and air his views. All the cows are determined taking special note of the different colours and other characteristics. *Imvulamlomo* and *isehlamthini* are usually small amounts of money as compared to money for the cows; that is to say, these are between R100 and R400 in total.

In traditional Zulu marriage ceremonies like in many other traditional ceremonial speeches, chants and songs play an important role as a medium of expression. These are underpinned by appropriate gestures, which are performed to give meaning to the different rituals. Magwaza (1993: 84) explains that most songs that are sung are carefully selected for the occasion.

> Visits of each family to the other during marriage negotiations help each other to note the idiosyncrasies of each family, general routine of the home, social precedence observed by the people and the habits of each other. The fine details incidentally find their way into the songs and chants that are chosen and/or composed for the wedding. It is interesting to note that the songs sung carry certain messages either directed to the boy's people or to the girl herself.

In most traditional Zulu functions, including marriage ceremonies, the senior members of the family have an important oratory function to perform. At an assembled area, which is known as *isigcawu*, the father or elder addresses the guests and the ancestors telling them what the occasion is all about. If not told formally, the ancestors will be offended and may possibly cast some misfortune on the bride. Magwaza (1993:38) explains that one vital function of the *ukuthethelela* (oratory) is

to inform the ancestors, inviting them to be part of the celebration and seek their blessings. She also adds (1993: 89) that the speeches are made in dignified language as much care and thought is given to the choice of words used. The speakers use poetic and extremely beautiful Zulu, demonstrating that they are speaking to the ancestors. The ceremony is very solemn. *Giya*-ing takes place only after the main speeches are delivered. Berglund (1976: 235) maintains that the dance is meant to awaken the ancestors. According to Magwaza (1993: 89) the ancestors are aroused so as to do something (bless, protect, give fortune) to their descendants. Most people are not aware that perfect silence should be observed when an *imbongi* (*bard*) is reciting *izibongo*, or when a family member is reciting *izithakazelo* (genealogy recitation)

The speech also includes *izithakazelo*. This tells other people of the origin of the boy or girl. This is an important aspect as society depends on knowing the origins of one another. The dead also need to know and be made known by their descendants. During the recitation of the genealogy, old women move up and down in silence,ritually sweeping the floor with hand brooms. This is to ward away all evil or obstacles in the marriage.

The recitation of the *izithakazelo* is an important vocal rendition in Zulu marriage ceremonies. This is normally complimented by personal praises of the living and the ancestors. A senior member of the family or any respectable elder, who is talented in *ukhuthetha* (praises), performs the recitation. Magwaza (1993:39) makes reference to Berglund who says that importance is given to the officiant's ability to address the shades. Ancestors must be approached in a convincing manner that will not make

them cause trouble; hence, eloquence in the address to the ancestors is of great importance in order to achieve the desired responses.

Most of the recitatives that are performed at traditional Zulu weddings are a form of traditional recitation, which is still widely practiced and performed orally. According to Magwaza (1993:59) this form of recitative does not rely on written text at all. Although today, *izithakazelo* are written, people reciting them do not refer to such written sources and most reciters are not even aware nor care that there are such sources.

Fixing of lobolo

The system of *lobolo* (bride price) has been practiced since time immemorial. *Lobolo* was originally paid in mats and baskets, pumpkins and hoes (an agricultural implement), which later changed to oxen and livestock. The possession of cattle by the Zulus is comparitively recent i.e. during the period of *amakhosi*, through conquering other nations and tribes. Wars contributed to the scarcity of oxen. According to Junod (1962:277) there are two kinds of *lobolo*:

1. The *lobolo* which a boy obtains from his sister's marriage, and which he employs, with the consent of the family, to buy a wife for himself.

2. The acquired *lobolo* won by a boy who has worked for it, and who has started a herd for himself. A boy who used to herd cattle for other people would be paid a cow after the course of time. This is how herd boys accumulated their own herds of cattle. They also accumulated cows from the chief or *Induna* through rewards of bravery.

In explaining the significance and consequences of *lobolo*, Junod (1962: 280) emphasises that the *lobolo* is by no means a purchase made by the husband or a present given to the bride's parents. Rather, it constitutes compensation given by one group to another group, in order to restore equilibrium between the two parties. Junod goes on to explain that the bride is not in any way a slave, but she is nevertheless owned. She is not the individual property of one man, but the collective property of a group, who is the family of the husband. He outlines the following facts to substantiate this argument:

1. The bride's whole family takes part in the marriage ceremonies, especially on the day when the bridegroom brings the *lobolo*. Every male member of the group has his say in the matter.

2. Brothers will always be ready to help a poor relative with *lobolo*: they work for their group.

3. The acquired wife is their presumptive spouse. Though they cannot have sexual relations with her, they can inherit her when the husband dies.

4. Children will belong to the father, live with him, bear his *isibongo* (family name), and owe him obedience. (1962:278-9)

Junod (1962: 279-280) provides some advantages and disadvantages of the *lobolo* system:

Advantages

1. It strengthens the patriarchal family and rights of the father.

2. It marks the difference between the legitimate and an illegitimate marriage and, in this sense, takes the place of an official marriage register.

3. It puts hindrances in the way of dissolving the matrimonial union, as a wife cannot leave her husband without her group returning the *lobolo*.

Disadvantages

1. The woman is undoubtedly reduced to an inferior position by the fact that she has been *lobolo.*

2. There are strained relations between the two contracting groups.

The above statement is, however, disputed by a number of Zulu people. They claim that married woman who was not lobola'd, has zero status in the community.

The number of cows and their colours are of great importance in traditional Zulu marriage negotiations. According to Khumalo (pc:2001), there is one specific cow, which is very important. This is called *isithole,* the cow that has never given birth to a calf. This cow is specified by the family and is the first cow that is called for. The *abakhongi* will also ask for all the other cows according to the different colours. Following the selection of cows according to colours, the number of cows will be negotiated.

If the selected bride is still a virgin, the groom is expected to give eleven cows. One cow is specifically for the bride's mother, *Inkomo yohlanga* or *yengquthu* (cow of the vagina). This cow is given as a mark of respect for the mother for giving birth to her daughter and for taking care of her all these years. Krige (1950:131) states that the mother of the bride must always be given the *ingquthu* beast, for looking after her daughter and for overseeing her virginity. According to Krige (1950: 132) this beast is the personal property of the mother of the girl and is usually slaughtered and eaten by the women of the bride's kraal. She adds that this is not part of the *lobolo* and can be

handed over at any time normally before the marriage when the *lobolo* cattle are brought. If the bride is not a virgin, the eleventh cow *ingquthu* (vagina cow) need not be paid. According to Maphalala (2000:32) the reason for not providing *ingquthu* for such woman was based on the argument that their mother's lessons on sexual behaviour have been a failure. The bride's father is then required to slaughter a cow, ' *imvuma*', which means he is buying into the relationship. The number of cows decreases even further if the bride has already given birth to children. A cow is subtracted for each child. This means that, if a girl has three children, her *lobolo* will be reduced by three cows, hence, seven cows and the mother will also forfeit her cow. Previously, cows were the only medium used for the payment of *lobolo*. Currently, a combination of cows and money are given as *lobolo*. This is done through negotiations.

The number seven is avoided by all means. The seventh finger is used as a pointer. Thus stopping at seven cows suggests that the negotiators are undermining the girl's father. It is like pointing a finger at him. Thus, seven is never used in marriage negotiations. If this is done then the groom is expected to give *shlowula* (cows given as a means of punishment). Krige (1950: 132) states that,

> It is considered an insult if seven head of cattle are paid as lobolo for a girl. If this is done, it is a reflection on the chastity of the girl, and it would immediately rouse up a quarrel. This number is only paid for divorced women, and in very exceptional cases for girls who have borne illegitimate children.

The number nine is also avoided, as this indicates that the bride has already given birth, and is also considered to be an insult. An odd number is not used in the number of *lobolo* cows. Odd numbers have a bad omen that the bride will soon be a widow or divorced and then again remain single.

According to Khumalo (pc:2001), most of the even numbers such as six, eight, and ten are acceptable in Zulu culture. However, the final number is determined after intensive negotiations.

Further to the settlement of the *lobolo,* other issues are finalised. This includes preparing a list of items to be given as gifts to the father and other male members of the bride's family. At this stage, only the male members of the groom's family and neighbours are present in the discussions. After they have concluded the negotiations, the mothers and grandmothers arrive at the main house with their lists of desired gifts. At this stage, there is no finality of the discussions. The negotiators from the groom's side are given gifts on their departure. They also take along with them *ucansi* (sleeping mat) to show it to the groom's family. The negotiators will report the decisions to the groom's family.

Payment of *lobola*

A day is set to make the actual payment of the *lobolo,* that is, if the lobolo is in the form of cattle. The payment is not done at the bride's homestead but at the groom's homestead if it is in the form of cattle. There is a day, which is called, *ukubonwa kwezinkomo* (seeing of the cattle) where the bride's relatives go to the groom's place to view the cows for lobolo. A cow is slaughtered in honour of their visit. After socialising, they inspect the cows and drive them to the bride's homestead. The onus is left with the father of the bride to make arrangements that they are brought to his place. Some fathers arrange that they be sold because they do not have cattle kraals to

keep them. It is essential that a great many witnesses should be present when *lobolo* is handed over in case there is any dispute later on.

According to Magwaza (pc:2001) there are a number of visits and a great deal of negotiation before finality is reached. It is considered an insult for the deal to be finalised on the first day. The bride's family considers the negotiation for a marriage an important activity and not just a commercial transaction. There are three to four ceremonies before the actual marriage. Magwaza (pc:2001) further explains that the *lobolo* proceedings can take many years to be finalised. She uses her sister's case, as an example whereby negotiations started seven years ago and are still not finalised. In fact, this throws a new light on the *lobolo* process as it provides an opportunity for the couple to strengthen their relationship.

The wedding day can only be discussed after paying at least four cows and after the bringing of *izibizo* (gifts) to the bride's homestead. There are *izibizo* for the males and *izibizo* for the females. The list of people to receive *izibizo* is usually very long. The bride's people also include names of the deceased in the list of presents. In Zulu religion, people do not die. The living-dead are aware of everything that their families do here on earth and they participate in all the rituals.

About three to four months prior to the marriage ceremony, the marriage is announced throughout the village. This announcement takes the form of preparing for the marriage.

Umbondo (bringing of gifts)

After the settlement of a number of issues, the bride will have to visit the groom's

homestead accompanied by her friends for the purpose of brewing the traditional beer.

According to Krige,

> Not only do the people of the bridegroom's kraal come to the bride's kraal with lobolo at different times in the period between the betrothal and the marriage, but also there are also visits from, and gifts passing from, the bride's people to those of the boy. We have thus, attempts at establishing good feeling between the two groups by means of gifts, of cattle on the part of the boy's people, of beer on that of the girls. (1950: 132)

The bringing of gifts to the groom's home is called *'umbondo'*. By participating in

this activity, the bride is initiating what is known as, *"imvulamasango"*, whereby she

is opening the gates of the kraal to enable the cows to move freely from the groom's

house to her parents' house. The *umbondo* is a big social occasion. The bride is also

anointed with *inyongo* (gall) from a goat, prepared by her in-laws. At this point in

time, the bride is accepted as the child of the groom's family. The ladies than return to

the bride's home.

The father accompanied by other male members of the bride's family, visits the

groom's house to inspect the cows. This is known as *ukuyobona izinkomo* A cow is

slaughtered in honour of their visit. After socialising, they inspect the cows and drive

them to the bride's home.

Immediately after this, the bride has an obligation to brew a second round of beer,

'umbondo', for the groom. This is seen as a closure of the footsteps of the cows called

"ingqibamasondo", so that the cows will not go back to the groom's house. The beer

is brewed at the bride's house and the same ladies that went with her the first time

round, accompany her again. After the cows have arrived at her house, she locks up her house and departs for the groom's house.

Acceptance ceremony

The process of acceptance then commences. The groom accompanies the negotiators to the bride's house. Two cows are slaughtered, one for the negotiators – *Imvuma*, and the other for the groom – *ukuchola umkhwenyane*. The gall of the cow or goat is poured on certain parts of the groom's body, that is, hands, feet, and forehead. This is symbolic of establishing a link with the ancestors of the bride's family. Magwaza (1993:38) explains that gall is very precious and delicate, as it is associated with the ancestors who are believed to shape the fate of people who belong to them. Therefore, the Zulus treat the gall very dearly and carefully lest the ancestors turn their backs on them and dispense misfortune. Magwaza (pc:2001) also believes that when the gall is smeared on the groom's forehead, it symbolises that he is now part of the girl's family.

The marriage ceremony is officially announced with the brewing of *utshwala* (traditional beer). According to Khumalo (pc:2001), the respective families are saying that as we put the maize and the yeast in the water to start brewing, likewise, we are expecting the new relationship between the bride and groom to start fermenting in order to produce a new beginning for themselves and their respective families. The grinding of the maize precedes the brewing of the beer. The symbolism of both the maize and yeast is very significant in a marriage ceremony. Maize is the staple diet of the Zulu and is considered to be very important for fertility, nourishment and growth,

while the yeast is an important element in production. A successful marriage is largely dependent on these elements.

The importance of maize is also seen during the second *umbondo* ceremony, which is called *obokubika ubuhlobo*. This is when beer is brewed for announcing the relationship. Krige (1950:133) explains that on this occasion, beside the beer, a basketful of iqoma *lommbila omusha* (new mielies), as well as the other crops, such as *imfe* (sweet cane) and pumpkin, are taken along to the bridegroom, in accordance with the traditional view that whatever is planted by the bride belongs to the kraal into which she is to marry

This heralds the start of the marriage process.

CHAPTER 5

THE ZULU MARRIAGE CEREMONY

The rituals and activities associated with a traditional Zulu wedding take place at the homes of the bride and groom. This process starts on Wednesday and goes on until Sunday. Both Khuzwayo (pc: 2001) and Magwaza (pc: 2001) explain that while the actual marriage ceremony takes place between two or four days, the actual preparation starts approximately three months prior to the wedding day. This is when the bride visits all her accessible relatives to solicit presents. This process is called *ukucimela*, which means 'request'. Khuzwayo (pc: 2001) states that unlike other cultural groups where a priest is responsible for conducting the marriage ceremony, in a traditional Zulu marriage, the elders of the community guide the couple through the marriage process.

Brides house

Wednesday

A goat is slaughtered to inform the ancestors of the coming marriage ceremony. This is a small and intimate ceremony, which involves the close members of the families. In traditional Zulu society, animals play an important role as a medium of communication to the ancestors. Although many types of beasts are used for this purpose, goats and cows are the preferred animals to communicate with the ancestors. Magwaza (pc: 2001) explains that the significance of slaughtering a goat is to communicate with the ancestors. It preambles whatever you want to do. She adds that

for the ancestors to be satisfied, blood has to be spilled. The negotiations that lead up to the marriage of two persons are considered to be very delicate, hence it is absolutely imperative to involve the ancestors from the initial stages.

Both Magwaza (pc: 2001) and Khuzwayo (pc: 2001) believe that communication with the ancestors is also achieved through the burning of *impepho* (incense). The smoke and odour emanating from the incense are always present during most of the rituals indicating that the ancestors are present when important decisions are being taken. Magwaza (pc: 2001) states that in the past, the ancestors were invited to provide assistance and support for various undertakings.

It is believed that whatever you have is not because of your own achievement. You are what you are because of somebody else's contribution. Usually it is people who have passed on and they need to be acknowledged. (Magwaza: pc)

Fig. 1

Burning of *Impepho* (incense)

Thursday

During the various stages of negotiations as well as the actual marriage ceremony,
cows are slaughtered as a symbol of acceptance. A cow is slaughtered in a ceremony
known as *umngcamo*. This is a feast that is arranged for the bride as part of a farewell
celebration. There is much merrymaking and this involves the drinking of traditional
beer. The ancestors are also invited through the goat, which was slaughtered the
previous day. Krige (1950: 135) explains that when the bride is about to leave home, a
beast, known as *ukuncamisa* is slaughtered for her by her father. This is one of the
lobolo cattle. The gall of this beast will be poured over the face, arms and legs of the
girl and the stomach contents used to cleanse her. She further explains that the
pouring of the gall over the bride in this manner is a means of informing the ancestors
of the change that is about to take place with regard to her status. According to Krige
(1950: 135) the gall of a beast is also symbolic of cleansing.

> The gall of this beast will be poured over the face, arms and legs of the girl and the stomach
> contents used to cleanse her. The bride may also be washed in black and white *ubuLawu*. The
> pouring of the gall over the bride in this manner is a means of informing the ancestors of the
> change that is about to take place, and very often, if there is eloquent man present, he will tell
> the spirits (*amadlozi*) about the forthcoming marriage, stating what the *lobolo* is and invoking
> the blessings on the girl, begging them not to be hard on her for leaving them.

According to Khumalo (pc: 2001) if the bride is anointed with the gall of the cow, it
symbolises that the bride has been formally accepted into the family of the groom.
This signifies a cementing of the whole relationship. Furthermore, it is believed that
the cow has died for the bride: the death of the cow results in the emergence of the
bride in a new role.

Krige (1950: 136) describes the *ukuncamisa* as a very sad occasion, and the meat is cooked and eaten midst great mourning on the part of the mother of the bride. The ladies also take the opportunity to provide guidance and advice to the girl on her expected behaviour at the other kraal (*ukuyala*).

Friday

Another celebration is arranged for Friday to bid farewell to the bride. The groom together with his negotiators also attends the celebration at the bride's home. The aim is to prepare the bride for her departure. The negotiators open the way for the groom to carry the '*kist*'. They also have an obligation to encourage the people from the bride's party to start preparing to leave by midnight to move towards the groom's house.

Fig.2

The groom and the *abakhongi* (negotiators)

Fig. 3

The traditional *Kist*

Maphalala (2000:28) describes the events that take place at the bride's house prior to her departure to the bridegroom's house. The *umsindo*, are the people that accompany the bride to the bridegroom's house. Before they depart, however, the *indlalifa* or *inhloko yomndeni*, (the chairman of the extended family), or the bride's father, proceeds to the cattle kraal. He talks to the ancestral spirits pleading with them to look after their daughter who is departing to create a relationship with another family. The cattle kraal is a place where the ancestors of the family are buried.

Umhlwehlwe (the fat layer covering the stomach content of a goat) is worn by the bride as she proceeds to the groom's house. According to Maphalala (2000:12) the *umhlwehlwe* is associated with *amadlozi* (the ancestral spirits) and is used as a form of protection.

Khuzwayo (pc: 2001) explains that before the bride departs to the groom's house, her father pins paper money on top of his daughter's head. Other members of the family follow. According to her, this is a way of indicating to the ancestors that the young girl is about to get married and to indicate that her status has been elevated. One informant, Mr Mkhize, stated that this procedure is done in order to attach some value to the bride who is about to embark on the most important role in her life i.e. marriage

Fig.4

The brides father pinning money on top of his daughters head (*Umemolu*)

At the groom's house

Friday

A goat is slaughtered as part of a sacred ceremony to report to the ancestors about the forthcoming marriage ceremony. A cow can also be slaughtered to provide for a feast for the many families and friends that are expected to converge at the groom's house.

This ceremony takes place in the evening at about the same time as the celebrations at the bride's home. At about midnight, the groom's negotiators start prompting the bride and her entourage to start moving towards the groom's house. They start singing the family *izithakazelo* (clan geneology) as a motivating factor. The bride's father and his eldest son will assist the bride to put on the *isidwaba* (married woman's regalia). They then commence with the family *ihubo* (a traditional family song). The father and eldest brother share the platform. If the father is deceased, the son will represent him in matters of importance, including communicating with the ancestors.

Fig.5

The bridal party departing from the bride's home

Mzolo (1977:72) says that *izithakazelo* are held in high esteem by the Zulu and demonstrate respect for a particular people. He further states (1977:112) that such praises are recited to make people feel good; people recite them if they want to be pleasant to a particular person or group. It was observed that when praises are made,

the whole group responds with an emotional outburst of shrill cries known as *kikiza*. In all traditional ceremonies, there are *izithakazelo* at the beginning and at the end of the speeches. Magwaza (1993:43) remarks that this is where people make themselves known to the public, informing them that they are a people with a proper lineage, which is authentic because they do have ancestors.

I have observed this even at the Rhythmo stylistic workshops as well as the video recordings of Zulu weddings.

Observation of the speeches has shown a recognisable oral patterning characterised by the elements identified by Marcel Jousse as Oral Style viz. Mimism, Rhythmism, Bilateralism and Formulism. The speech made by the bride's father when he introduced her to the groom's party and the speech made by the groom's party was accompanied by gestures in a very effective way. This performance was done while walking up and down in order to grip the attention of all observers. Jousse (1988:39) says the role of the voiced language has an important function of expressing and communicating ideas, but contends that corporeal-manual gesticulation contributes in making people understand more easily what a person is saying. A person is understood better if we see his gestures. Jousse (1988: 41) refers to the actions described above as the visible, more expressive corporeal-manual gesticulations that have survived and prevailed even in literate societies because of their primacy and superiority as a means of communication.

While the family *ihubo* (song) is being sung, the father holds the bride's hand and leads her from her house to the sacred kraal. They encircle the kraal in a clockwise direction. As they perform this task, the head of the family reports to the ancestors, "We are now moving away. Your daughter is now going to extend her relationship with (name of the groom). We are going to accompany her on this mission."

This ritual is performed at midnight, as it is believed that traditionally, the ancestors visit the homes at midnight. When the father leads the bride, she begins to cry, whereupon the women of the kraal and the neighbours, who are present, wail out loud. Krige (1950: 136) describes this occasion as very heart-rending and that many people do not like to witness it.

Khuzwayo (pc: 2001) states that throughout the journey en route to the groom's house the bride's party will be communicating with the ancestors giving them a status report on the developments as they unfold. Also throughout the journey, the bride covers herself with a blanket as if in mourning. She carries her own provision because she is not allowed to eat food from the groom's place until she has been given it in the form of a cow.

The *umThimba* or bridal party which consists, largely of the bride's age group, women who are friends of the family including those who are relatives and neighbours, and a number of older men, then depart for the groom's house, hoping to reach there before dawn. Krige (1950:137) states that the bride never goes empty-handed to her new home. One or more *ukwendisa* cattle accompany her, which is a gift to the groom's kraal. One of these will be killed for the wedding feast, while one, the *beka* beast, represents the girl and her ancestors in the new kraal and will not be

killed. According to Khuzwayo (pc: 2001) the bridal party will be communicating with the ancestors throughout the journey.

Fig. 6

The bride supported by her fiends

The biological mother of the bride will not accompany her daughter to the groom's house for the marriage ceremony. Her mother will now occupy the space where the bride sat until midnight for the entire weekend until the marriage ceremony is over. The other senior members of the family represent her at the marriage ceremony.

For the week before the wedding, the bride is kept indoors most of the time, but more especially on Thursday and Friday. During this time, her mother and grandmothers, who use the opportunity to give her advice on her new role function, surround her. One of the things that are mentioned is that she must not look back when she leaves her home at midnight. She will also not drink water from any river that she passes or

crosses. This is because she might be tempted to come back either temporarily or permanently e.g. in a divorce. The bride is then led to the groom's house.

Groom's house

When the bride's party reaches the groom's house between 2.00 to 4 00 am, they will find the gates closed. People from the groom's house will block the entrance. Krige (1950: 138) states that sometimes on the arrival of the bride a log is laid across the entrance, barring the way. According to Khuzwayo (pc: 2001) this is called *umgoqo*. The bride's party is expected to pay a small amount of money to the *umkhongi* in order to be granted permission to cross over. She adds that this is not a ritual but a social game, which is aimed at bringing the two parties closer. Chunks of meat are thrown over the fence, as an inducement to the bridegroom's party (*iKhetho*), to open the gate. Khuzwayo (pc: 2001) states that money is paid to the *umkhongi* for permission to enter. Magwaza (pc: 2001) on the other hand believes that this is a social game, which is part of the bonding process conducted in a genial way.

Both the groom's party and the bride's party *qhubushela* (sing insulting or provocative songs). This singing is very symbolic as it is a form of introducing the ancestors to the respective families.

On the arrival of the bride, at the bridegroom's kraal, the marriage celebrations begin. Krige (1950: 138) describes that in most instances, there is a noticeable rivalry between the two parties, which culminates in the wedding dances the following day.

Each group tries to show the other its superiority, and the bride and bridegroom each have the support of their whole kraal. Yet underlying the rivalry there is a real effort on the part of both groups to gain the friendship and goodwill of the other

The bride in the meantime will make every attempt to gain entry into the house that is reserved for her. Negotiations will take place between the two parties, at the blocked gate, until permission is granted to enter. The bride's party will make it a point of gaining entrance. There will be no sleeping. The groom's party will be dancing all night long with the bride's family alongside them.

A number of goats are slaughtered for the bridal party by the father of the groom, not only in recognition of the *ukwendisa* cattle, but also as a sign of welcome and goodwill. The number killed will depend very largely on the wealth of the family of the groom.

The bride is not allowed to eat any meat slaughtered at the groom's house before getting married. Therefore, in order to satisfy her hunger, some meat portions have been reserved for her from the cow that was slaughtered at her house.

Krige (1950:140) describes the events preceding the marriage ceremony as,

> At the time of the arrival of the *umThimba*, the bridegroom's party have gathered together inside the kraal, and while the *umThimba* advances up the right side, the *iKhetho* remains on the left, also singing. Immediately the visitors have been shown the huts, the *iKhetho* may begin to *qhubushela*. The bridal party will now turn back and walk on the right side back towards the gate, and at the entrance settle itself for *qhubushela*-ing...This is remarkable for its obscene character and for its insulting references to the other party. Things that could not possibly be said at ordinary times are now shouted out and not resented... While they are singing and shouting, big pot drums *(ingungu)* are beaten, or the girls clap hands with hollowed palms.

With the drumming and singing and the women of both parties yelling at the top of their voices, this *qhubushela*-ing continues throughout the night.

Just before daybreak, the bride's female entourage will proceed to the river, where the bride is expected to wash herself, prior to anybody else using the flowing water. This is a form of cleansing, as it is believed that the ancestors reside at the rivers. The cleansing process also signifies that the bride will be entering the marriage process on a clean sheet. Being a virgin, she will now focus her energies on producing children for the nation. On the day before the girl's departure from her home, elderly women are invited in order to *hlola* the girl (conduct virginity testing). This is to be doubly sure that they are sending a virgin to the groom's homestead.

The transformation of the bride from a single person to a married woman is evident in the type of dress used. In preparation for her wedding, the bride is dressed in the traditional *isidwaba* (black skin). Khumalo (pc: 2001) states that this is an indication that the *lobolo* has already been paid and her family has accepted the groom.

Fig 7 The bride dressed in the traditional Isidwaba (blackskin) (2001)

Krige (1950: 141) describes the bride as well greased and perfumed and wearing beautiful head ornaments.

> Round her arms and legs are *amashoba*, white ox-tails, which distinguishes her from the others; but the most noticeable distinguishing mark is her veil (*imvakazi*) of cloth decorated with beads or consisting of a fringe of beads which conceal her face while allowing her to see. Formally, this was made of *ubendle* leaves; it is fastened round the head and covers her face as far as the mouth. On her head she may wear *isakabuli* feathers. In her hand she carries a short assegai or knife, which she points at her husband –to-be in dancing. It signifies that she is a virgin. The rest of the party is also beautifully dressed, the girls of the *intanga* of the bride also wearing *isidwaba* like the bride, and carrying bunches of short sticks to make a rattling noise in the dance. A peculiar feature of the dress of all is that the legs, arms, and even faces are painted with red ochre and white and blue soil (*umcako nebomvu*). (1950: 141)

Khumalo (pc: 2001) states that the veil of the bride is made of beads and a special kind of wheat called *ubendle*. The bride is supposed to cover her eyes and not make eye contact with the groom's family. If this is done, or if someone sees her eyes this could cause trouble in the wedding ceremony. This is associated with that of the evil eye.

The head-ring worn by the groom and the *isicholo* (top-knot) worn by the bride is a symbol of full maturity and is only worn by those who are married or about to marry, according to Krige (1950:118). When the consent from the girl's father to the marriage has been officially obtained, preparations for the marriage begin. The girl's father orders her to *khehla*, i.e., put up her hair and he will get beads and ornaments for her. Khuzwayo (pc: 2001) states that there are many regional differences in the dress code of brides. However, in many cases, the brides are expected to wear animal skins and not beads.

Fig.8

The groom wearing the head-ring (2001)

Fig. 9

Bride wearing *Isicholo* (top knot)

Manqele (2000:15) sketches how Zulu women cope with living in two worlds as urbanisation and globalisation have contributed to the shift from a traditional life to a modern way of life. She records;

> When I am in rural areas, I do not behave like a visitor, but I adjust to the local custom. I wear the traditional 'uniform' of a *makoti*, viz. *iphinifo* (pinafore), *ukuhlonipha* (a cloth scarf worn around the neck to indicate the married status of a woman) and an *iduku* (a scarf worn around the head) and perform all the traditional duties of a *makoti*. When I am in the rural areas, my behaviour must suit the local people and be accepted. I do not stand aside and pretend that I know nothing about rural life, but I involve myself in everything that is taking place in the homestead.

The groom will bring a cow down to the river where it is slaughtered and cooked and eaten by all the people. According to Maphalala (2000:28) this is known as *inkomo yasemfuleni*. This will be complimented by the drinking of traditional beer. The bride will still not eat any meat cooked by the groom's family. She still has her own supply of meat.

The bride and her family are now ready to enter the stage area (*esigcawini*) to commence with the marriage proceedings. *Ikhetho* (groom's party) sits on the upper part of *esigcawini* while the *umsindo* (bride's party) occupies the lower part according to Maphalala (2000:26).

Fig. 10

The bride and members of her family entering the *esigcawini* (stage area) (2001)

The brothers of the bride will first go to the groom's house. They will sing and dance and encircle the **kraal.** According to Maphalala (2000:29) it is the *umsindo*, which dances first with the *umakoti* (bride) wearing isidwaba, *imvakazi* (the veil almost covering her face), and carrying the *isinqindi* (assegai), which symbolises victory.

Thereafter, the senior female members of the bride will move from the river towards the groom's house armed with *umshanelo* (brooms) uttering prayers for their 'daughter'. They are reporting that they are accompanying her to participate in an important ceremony and pray for good support and encouragement. The brooms are a symbol of peace. The women pray for peace and for the success of the ceremony. Their prayers assist in warding off any evil. The brooms are used at homes with the knowledge that the ancestors are present. As a mark of respect brooms without handles are used so that the users will have to bend, when they sweep which is a sign of respect.

Fig.11

Brooms are used to ward off evil

The bride's whole party now moves towards the stage area in a procession.

The negotiators occupy the front position, carrying the *kist*. The bride's father and her brothers follow them. The bride is in the centre with people on either side of her so that she can be protected from any form of evil. The rest of the group follow the procession towards the groom's house. There are instances where some of the ladies move ahead of the procession, using the brooms to clear the way.
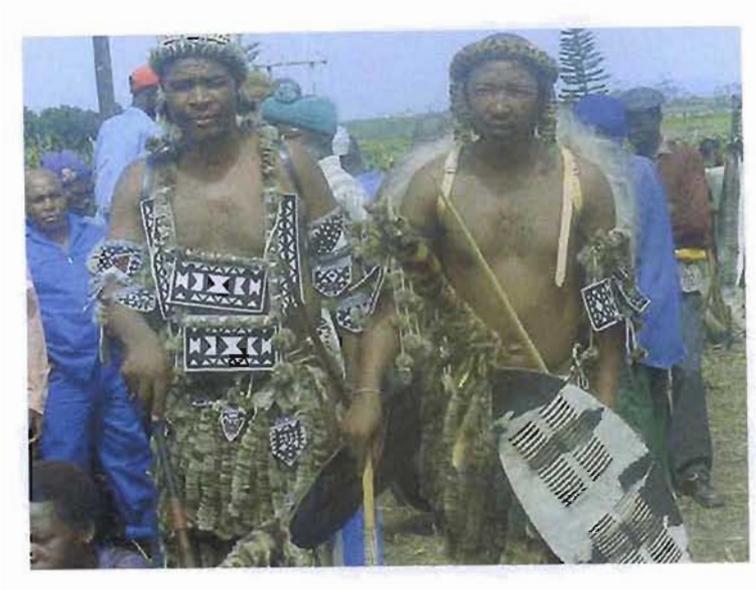
Fig.12

Family members of the bride are dressed in traditional wear

The marriage stage

The bride's party is given the opportunity to occupy the stage while the groom's party sit down as spectators.

When the bridal party enters the *isigcawu* (open area), where the marriage ceremony is to take place, the bride's father presents his speech informing the groom's people of his mission i.e. to bring his daughter to 'build ' the kraal. He further praises his own group by reciting his *izithakazelo*. He then touches on the *lobolo*, where he publicly announces at *esigcawini* (open space in public) that he had been paid in full with no outstanding balance. He will still announce the number of cattle even if his daughter was not paid in full The father then speaks about the good qualities of his daughter. He also informs the groom's party that his daughter has been given the necessary

training to be a good housewife. He also pleads with the in-laws to treat his daughter like their own child.

Krige describes the bride's father's role in the formal opening ceremony,

> The father of the bride walks in between the two parties and begins to khuleka (pray). While he does so there must be silence, and the leader in charge of the various groups will strictly enforce this if necessary. The father of the girl cries out, "There she is, child of so-and-so," naming all the great ancestors of the bride and their praise names. Addressing the groom's party he asks them to "keep" her well. He will say, "Here is my child, treat her well for me. If she takes ill, let me know; if she troubles you, rebuke her as you would your own child; if she errs, report her to me...Her only ailments that I know of are these (naming them all, e.g. headaches, etc.). He will make a public announcement with regard to the lobolo – how much has been paid and how much is still due. Addressing the bridegroom's party, he prays for an ibomvu (child), that the bride may be a mother. In the end, he giya's (runs out a short distance fighting an imaginary foe) and then all the male members of his part giya, one at a time. (1 950: 142-143)

The bride's party will continue performing in a series of songs until the Iphoyisa (policeman) requests them to stop. Khuzwayo (pc: 2001) states that the bride is given an opportunity to dance freely, with her legs kicked high up, for the last time. After her marriage, she cannot dance with her feet kicked up as this shows disrespect to the ancestors. The Iphoyisa is a representative of the local Chief or the 'King' of the place. He is present at the request of the groom's family to ensure the marriage ceremony takes place without any hitches. As the marriage officer, he provides for the legal entity of the traditional marriage ceremony. Khuzwayo states that in a traditional Zulu marriage, there is no priest, but there is an induna (headman) who stands in place of the Chief to confirm that the marriage has taken place. He must qualify in, at least some of the following:

- He must have fought in tribal wars.

- He must own a sizable number of cattle, which determine status in Zulu society

- He must be a respected member of society.

Fig.13

The bride given an opportunity to dance feely

At this stage, the *iphoyisa* takes control of the marriage ceremony. The *ukuvumisa* ceremony is undertaken. This is the 'tying of the marriage knot'. The bridal couple is called to the centre of the stage. The following question is put to the bride:

Uyamthanda na?   *Do you like him?*

The bride will remain quiet for a while. The question will be repeated until the bride responds, not verbally but by means of handing a small mat, to the *iphoyisa*. This is called *isicephu*. The handing over of *isicephu* is a signal of acceptance. The groom then shoots forward while reciting his *izihasho* (his personal praises), moving energetically and vigorously and beating his shield to emphasise his status and his joy.
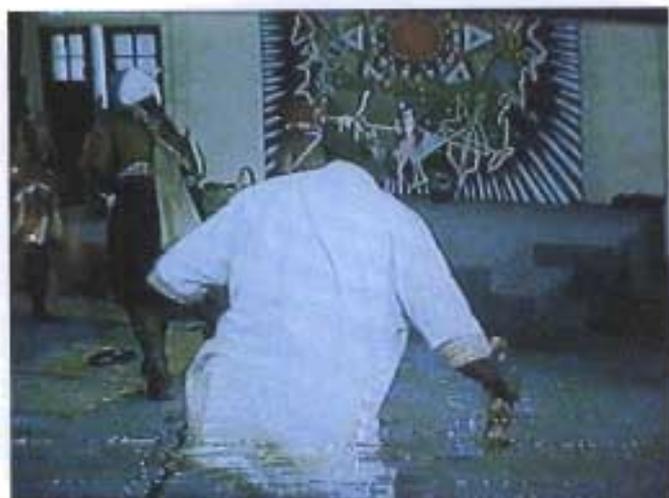
Fig.14

The *iphoyisa* (representative of the chief) takes control of the marriage ceremony

Fig.15

The groom engage in a dance routine (2001)

The bridal couple than engage in a dance sequence, which is a symbol of happiness and acceptance. This forms part of tying the marital knot.

The women belonging to the bride's family will then sing a number of traditional family songs. The bride will sing the *inkondlo*, a song especially composed for the marriage. It is a song of acceptance and it is sung for the first and last time. She uses a spear, which symbolises victory over all the girl friends of the groom. She uses the spear during this song sequence to show everyone that she has won, and that she is in the process of bidding farewell to her girlhood. The other song that is sung by the bride is called, *Umpindo*. It is a lively song, which expresses some of the truthful characteristics of the bride. It also provides an opportunity for the bride to tease the groom. According to Krige (1950:143), the bride's party sing the *umulolozelo* (lullaby), which the bride's mother composed, for her when she was a baby, and this is then also sung for the last time, symbolically bidding farewell to her babyhood.

Fig. 16

The bride performing the *Umpindo* (lively song)

The bride's family is then given an opportunity to report on behalf of their ancestors. The group is divided into sub-groups. The head of the family will *thethelela*: He walks up and down touching the ground with a stick. The purpose of this action is to communicate with the ancestors. He names the ancestors, showering praises on them and informing them of what is presently happening. He also praises the living members of the family. He thus introduces the bride's family to both the living and dead members of the groom's family. While the head of the family is singing the praises, the other members of the group will also be walking up and down, giving momentum to this activity. Some of the senior ladies will wave the brooms in a sweeping motion. When the speech is over, the ladies begin to *kikiza* (ululate).

The person who is responsible for calling the ancestors will then begin to dance. All other friends and family members are given an opportunity to participate. This is a way of bidding farewell to the bride.

After the bride's party has completed the dancing, the groom's party begins to do the very same thing. Apart from calling and singing, the praises of the ancestors, they also verbally express their willingness to accept the bride into their family. They will also sing their *isigekle* (family song), and the groom will sing his *inkondlo* (personal song), which bids farewell to the stage of bachelorhood and welcomes marriage as a new milestone in his life. The performance of the marriage songs, is accompanied by a lot of dancing and movement from the left and right of the stage area. This is done in order to communicate with the respective role-players and to emphasise certain details. the front and the back, the top and the bottom, - and noted that we also acknowledge the importance of balance even in our emotions.

Fig. 17

The grooms party dancing

When the dancing is over the, *imbeka* beast is driven between the two parties. This is a gift from the bride's father to the groom. According to Krige (1950:145) it is given so that the ancestral spirits of the young man will receive her with an open heart because, though he has deprived them of cattle, he now brings to them, this beast and also the bride.

At this stage, the family and friends of both parties partake in the celebrations, which involve feasting, drinking of traditional beer, dancing and singing. Immediately after the wedding dances, the rivalry, which marked all celebrations up to this point ceases and the parties begin to be friendly, though they still remain separate. According to Krige (1950:147) there is also courting and meeting of lovers between the younger members of both sides.
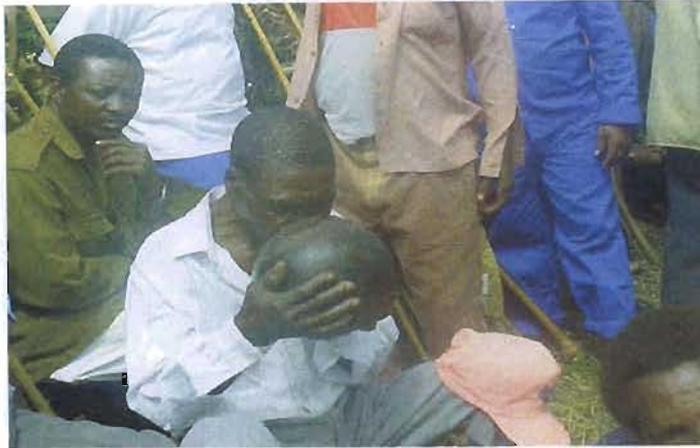
Fig.18

Drinking of Traditional beer (2001)

The bride is still secluded after the wedding dances, for though, she has left her maidenhood behind her and has danced at the wedding in a woman's skirt, she has not yet become a member of the family nor had been incorporated into the kraal of her husband. However from now on, the bride undergoes a series of aggregation rites as she is gradually incorporated into the new kraal, according to Krige, (1950:147)

The marriage ceremony is now completed. The bridal couple prepares for a number of post-marital ceremonies.

CHAPTER 6

POST- MARITAL CEREMONY

The killing of the *umqholiso*

The day after the marriage ceremony, a specific cow is slaughtered as a symbol of accepting the bride, as well as in honour of the bride's visit. According to Krige (1950:148) this is the first step in the aggregation of the bride and the fixing point in the wedding ceremony especially in Zululand. The key negotiator or his representative is chosen to undertake this important task Magwaza (pc: 2001), Khuzwayo (pc: 2001) and Khumalo (pc: 2001) were of the opinion that when a cow is slaughtered by the groom's party during the marriage ceremony, the person who undertakes this task is expected to kill the beast at one stab. If he fails to do so, the groom's party is expected to pay a penalty. Magwaza (pc: 2001) explains that this is part of a social game and has no bearing on the ritual. The extraction of the gall bladder is of significance, as it is believed that the ancestors like the smell of the gall.

While he performs this task, the ladies from the bride's side will start to sing a song, encouraging the cow not to die, so that they can benefit from the penalty. *Ungafi nkomo yomntakababa,* i.e., "Do not die, beast of my father's child," Krige (1950 148). It is also believed that the cow is representative of the bride, and if it dies quickly, the bride will also die easily at any time. The ladies from the groom's side, on the other hand, will retaliate urging the cow to die. Most of these actions are routine, and are performed from memory.

After the ritual slaughter of the cow, one of the girls of the bride's party places a string of white beads on the first stab wound indicating that the bride is still a virgin. These beads are then handed to the groom's sister as a gift. According to some informants, quoted by Krige (1950:149) the beads are placed on the first wound because the bride will be deflowered with one stab. The colour white, which symbolises purity, shows that the bride is still a virgin. Magwaza (1993:36) says that white is a sign of the shades and their agreement with what the girl does. It is further stated that white is a symbol of peace, purity and love.

Sometimes money is also used to cover the stab wounds of the cow, which has been selected for the gall ceremony. According to Krige (1950: 148), before the beast is skinned, the groom's father uses money to cover up all the wounds.

Once it has been announced that the cow is dead, the bride leaves the house, accompanied by some ladies to the area where the cow has been slaughtered. Using the same knife that she used the day before to announce her virginity, she uncovers the cow. This ritual is very important, as it is believed that if something is not properly done it will affect the future of the bridal couple and their offspring. The chief negotiator is present to see that everything is right. The negotiators then cut the cow into different pieces. The various parts of the cow are identified for the following:

❑ The *inyongo* (gall) is used to anoint the bride, thus linking her with the ancestors of the groom. The chief negotiator is responsible for anointing the bride. This ritual is considered to be the final cementing of the marriage

ceremony. The death of the cow symbolises the rise of the bride as a new member of the family. According to Krige (1950:148), by having gall poured over her in her husband's kraal, she is being changed into a woman.

☐ The front leg is for the bride's brothers. They should eat this when they return to their home, somewhere between the two homes. They should not reach their home with the meat, as it has been blessed by heaven, otherwise they will pay a *bayahlawuliswa* (fine). Participating in this ritual, allows their sister to consummate the marriage with her new groom.

☐ The hind leg is for the bride's mother. After the bride has been anointed with the gall, the bag is taken back to the bride's mother. She is responsible for burning this material. After two to three weeks, she has to brew traditional beer, using the hind leg of the cow. She then sends a delegation to the groom's house to report that she has completed her task.

☐ The bride's mother is also the recipient of the liver and one of the four stomachs of the cow. This is in acknowledgement of her giving away her daughter.

☐ The rest of the meat goes back to the bride's house for various other functions. According to Krige (1950:150) the head is eaten by the men; the chest and the ribs (*umhlubulo*) are the girl's portion; the kidneys are put on a small tray or mat (*isithebe*) and carried by the girls of the bride's party as a gift to the

umnumzane (headman) of the kraal. Nothing is set-aside for the ancestors on this occasion.

The body parts of cows are also exchanged between the two families. According to Magwaza (pc: 2001) this is a way of sealing the contract between the two parties. She adds that if this exchange is not undertaken, it will contribute either towards the couple's inability to produce children or will result in producing abnormal children or any other negative factors. Khuzwayo (pc: 2001) explains that this exchange is to forge a closer union between the two families.

Confirmation of virginity

In the evening after the gall ceremony, the bride and the groom come together to consummate their marriage. According to Maphalala (2000:29), there is a Zulu expression, *"babolala bebabili bavuke bebathathu"*, which means that they (man and wife) must sleep being two and wake up being three. The bride's first entry into her husband's hut is called *ukungenisa* and she remains there during the night. In this way, the groom is able to determine the validity of the bride's virginity. The outcome is communicated to the bride's family in the following way.

If the groom discovers that the bride was not a virgin prior to her getting married to him, he will wake up early in the morning and depart for the bride's house. He communicates his discovery in one of the following ways:

- He takes a spear and stabs it inside the family kraal. The bride's father in acknowledging his daughters situation, will return the eleventh cow. This cow is then taken back to the groom's house where it is slaughtered to communicate to the ancestors that they have made a mistake. Hence the importance of virginity testing prior to the wedding or first night with the groom.

- The groom removes the bottom of a grass basket and places it around his neck in the form of a necklace. He then goes to the bride's house. The entire neighbourhood will understand the significance of the basket around the groom's neck. The father than arranges for the return of the eleventh cow.

If the bride was a virgin, the groom will not go to the bride's house. Instead, he will remain to witness the exchange of gifts. The ladies who accompanied the bride will demand a goat from the groom for destroying their sister's virginity. This goat is known as *umeke,* which comes from the word *mekezisa* (deflower) that means that she has been opened for the first time. Krige (1950:150) explains that the goat is a payment for the deflowering of the bride and a forfeit to the girls who have lost a member of their group.

Exchange of gifts

The exchange of gifts plays an important role in a traditional Zulu marriage ceremony. The nature and extent of the number of gifts vary from wedding to

wedding. The families of the bride and groom prepare a list of the potential recipients of the gifts. The immediate families including uncles and aunts as well as family members who are deceased and who are eligible for gifts. In most cases, the lists are exhaustive. The distribution of gifts, which is the task of the ladies, commences from the most senior members of the family to junior members. Family members receive the gifts on behalf of the deceased.

Umembeso (gifts from the groom's family)

The allocation of gifts from the groom's family takes place when the payment of the lobolo was effected in a ceremony known as *umembeso*. It is performed after receiving the first four or more lobolo cows. This becomes a large ceremony, which is like a wedding party but which takes place at the bride's homestead. The father usually asks for a gift of a horse saddle, a sjambok (whip), a suit, a shirt, a towel, a bottle of brandy, an overcoat and sometimes a pair of shoes. The father also receives *imbuzi*, a goat known as *isikhwehlela* (phlegm or sputum). This symbolises the father's sperm that created the girl. The goat is a means of compensation for his daughter, who is now leaving him. The rest of the uncles are given shirts and towels. The eldest brother of the girl is also given a full suit, a shirt and a towel.

The mother of the girl receives a big three-legged pot full of groceries. The capacity of the three-legged pot is not less than fifteen kilograms. She also receives vegetables, a big basin with washing detergents, a huge thick blanket and bed linen (comforter with continental pillows), a tea set accompanied by tea ingredients i.e. sugar, tea, coffee, water set etc. All these items are accompanied by a goat dressed with a blanket and a scarf. The goat is known as *ubicibici* (something slimy). This represents the fluid that merged with the sperm (*isikhwehlela*) to create the baby girl. The goat is

given as compensation for the girl who is now leaving her mother. The rest of the family relatives who appear on the list of gifts are also called, one by one, to receive their *izibizo*. They are usually presented with scarves, pinafores, and blankets. The old ladies, in addition to receiving these presents have their own turn of asking for *ugwayi wezalukazi* (snuff for the old ladies) from the *abakhwenyane* (brother-in-law) or *abakhongi*. They are then given boxes of snuff or money equivalent, which is usually R50-R100. The girls also come in to meet the *abakhongi*. They request for their money for braiding the girl's hair, which made her attractive to the groom. They are also given a certain amount of money, usually R50 –R100. It is known as *imali yomqhini*. The girls further demand some compensation for losing their peer to marriage.

The highlight of the day is the gifts for the bride and the groom. The bride is called to *esigcawini* dressed in her own clothes. She receives new clothes from the sisters in-law and other married women in-laws. They accompany her to a secluded house/hut, where they dress her according to the manner in which they expect her to be dressed as a married woman. The skirt will hang to below the knees as a sign of respect. They will cover her shoulders with a shawl and she will wear a headscarf. Some clans cover the bride's shoulders with a small blanket. She comes back to the stage, accompanied by her peers who sing traditional songs. The father of the bride also hands over a goat to *umamezala* (mother-in-law), *umkhongi omkhulu* (big negotiator) and the eldest sister-in-law. They are also given pinafores and towels, as was the case with the bride's relatives.

Umkhwenyane (brother-in-law) is the last person to appear on the stage from the groom's side. He is also presented with a goat to *cola* (hand) him with its *inyongo*. He

is also given some presents. The girls pretend that they are shaving him; combing him and making himself look in the mirror. They also present him with a shirt and towels, one to cover the bride's head and another one for the shoulders. He is regarded as a member of the family after being *cola'd* with an *inyongo* and is expected to participate in all activities that take place at the bride's homestead. From henceforth, he is regarded as an additional son or member of the family who is also recognised by the ancestors. There is a lot of jubilation as people acquire items, which they have not anticipated e.g. pinafores and expensive durable blankets etc.

The bride is expected to wear a scarf and a shawl whenever she goes to places where she will meet her in-laws. This could be at the church, town, shopping centre, cemetery, and parties or wherever there are social gatherings.

Umabo (gifts from bride)

Traditionally the handing of gifts takes place in the sacred kraal, in the presence of the ancestors and the public. The presentation of gifts compensates the loss of cows. In their place gifts are received from the bride who promises to provide warmth, a continuous supply of traditional beer and to ensure cleanliness at all times. Nowadays, due to the lack of space, this ceremony is conducted in the open to accommodate the large number of spectators.

Magwaza (pc: 2001) believes that the provision of gifts is dictated by the economic situation of the couple. She says that given the circumstances and the economy, the nature of the gifts varies. Nevertheless, the basic idea is the same and is still practiced. Vilakazi (1958:177) contends that the Zulu give these gifts out of fear of the ancestors

who might punish the bride for failing to recognise the importance of this ceremony. He further states that *umabo* gifts have a ritual component as they have an effect of binding the bride personally to the different members of the lineage, even to the deceased. In many instances, the difficulties in securing gifts have delayed the marriage process. Magwaza (pc: 2001) also states that while the gifts vary from family to family, they cover the immediate nuclear family. According to Maphalala (2000:30) traditional items such as furniture, *amacansi* (grass mats), and clothes are given as gifts to all members of *umndeni* mentioned by *abakhongi* during the negotiations. The symbolism of sharing was the main reason for the exchange of gifts for the bride to bond with the new family. According to Krige (1950:138)

> The actual wedding ceremonies are thus characterised by a continuous exchange of presents between the two parties, and these play an important part in engendering a spirit of friendliness amidst the intense rivalry that is never absent from a Zulu wedding.

Magwaza (pc: 2001) describes the gift exchanging ceremony as an event that is characterised by a great deal of jubilation, where recipients respond with the singing of clan praises and a great deal of dancing. The ancestors are also praised during this process.

Fig. 19 *Umabo* (gifts from the bride)

The idea of the living-dead is clearly observed during *umabo* (presentation of gifts ceremony). The gifts comprise sleeping mats; blankets, pillows and clay pots. Oral performance is again observed here as the presenters call out the names of, firstly the deceased family members, who are also given gifts. Certain members of the family act on behalf of the deceased and they also lie down, pretending to be sleeping. When they get up, they *giya* (dance with body movements), sing or *kikiza*. Wives of the living usually join their husbands at *esigcawini* and assist them in collecting the presents and in *kikiza*-ing as the men *giya*.

When the different parties wish to express their joy and ecstasy, they do so in a vocal manner. For example, when gifts are exchanged, the receiving party, especially the women, *kikiza* (utter shrill cries of pleasure) thanking the responsible party for the gifts. Magwaza (1993: 56) states that people getting gifts may also recite chants, sing or recite *izibongo* (personal praises) in thanking the party responsible for giving the gifts.

Most of the gifts are considered to be traditional according to Zulu culture. They are practical and serve a specific need. However, there has been a change in the type of gifts given in more recent ceremonies. There is a tendency to request modern appliances such as televisions, microwave ovens and even washing machines. Magwaza (pc: 2001) states in recent marriages, modern gifts are given. The mother-in-law is given a huge basket with fancy goods such as linen for her bedroom, perfumes, chocolates and other food items. She further states that everyone helps in the providing of these gifts.

Magwaza (pc: 2001) explains that the exchange of gifts is very significant, because it:

- provides an opportunity for the couple and their respective families to get to know each other more intimately.

- helps to strengthen relationships – bonding occurs

- is a way of buying time.

- Gets other family members to meet each other so that relationships develop.

Magwaza (pc: 2001) further explains that if the gifts are not exchanged as per custom, there will always be conflict. Therefore, it is not uncommon for the exchange of gifts to take place many years after a marriage ceremony. She quotes an example of a friend who presented gifts to her in-laws many years after her marriage. This was prompted by a very troubled marriage, which saw her husband having countless extra-marital affairs that affected their marriage and her health. Her late mother-in-law came into her dreams and requested that she fulfils her obligations by giving the *umabo* gifts to her and other family members so that her spirit could be set free. She also explained that she was feeling cold and needed a blanket to warm her. After complying with this request this friend's problems were noticeably lessened. Magwaza (1993:53) states that it is clear from this example that failure to give gifts from the girl's party would incur the wrath of the husband's ancestral spirits; hence, gifts are also given to the deceased members of the lineage as if they were living.

The following are examples of gifts that have been exchanged traditionally:

UCANSI (traditional mats) – These mats, which are also known as *ukhukho*, are available in different sizes and are used for a variety of functions. If placed in the sacred hut, important negotiations are finalised while seated on these mats. The smaller mat, known as *isicephu* is used as a medium of communication e.g. when the bride was asked whether she loved the groom and whether she will marry him, she did not respond verbally, but responded by handing over a mat to the elder, which indicated her positive response and *isicephu* was also used as a tray for putting *amaphuphu ezikhova* (lobolo paper money)

BLANKETS/PILLOWS/BED SHEETS - these are practical gifts that are popular in most ceremonies. The recipients actually lie down on the sheets and cover themselves with the blankets as a sign of appreciation and respect and assuring the giver that it will be used for the purpose that it is meant for. The blankets also symbolise warmth.

After the marriage ceremony, the bridegroom's mother covers the bride with an expensive blanket, specially bought for the purpose. This action means that the bride may now cover or dress herself like any of the women of the kraal, and enjoy the privileges of the other members of the kraal.

IZINKAMBA/IZIMBENGE (clay pots and lids) - According to Khumalo (pc: 2001) the males especially the older members of the family are given mats and clay pots or *amaqhabanga* (walking stick with small head). Through these gifts, the bride and groom convey to the respective families that they are coming to the new home with warmth: 'By giving these gifts, we are saying with respect that we are here and that

we will always enjoy the hospitality with the knowledge that there will always be a supply of traditional African beer for all to enjoy'.

BROOMS - Grass brooms are popular gifts given to the female members of the family. When brooms are given to the groom's family it symbolises that the bride is willing to sweep for the whole household. She is promising that cleanliness will be maintained at all times.

Throughout the marriage ceremony brooms play an important role According to Khumalo (pc: 2001) brooms are a symbol of peace. When the homes are swept with the brooms, it is done with the knowledge that the ancestors are present. It is for this reason that brooms with long handles are not used. By using a broom with a short handle, one is expected to bend, which is a sign of respect. Khuzwayo (pc: 2001) explains that the broom is used to touch the earth, which is occupied by the ancestors. The sweeping action symbolises a means of communication with the ancestors asking them to keep the hearts of the people calm: there should be no conflict; rather there should be harmony throughout the negotiations.

ITSHE LOKUGAYA NAMABHODWE ESIZULU (**GRINDING STONE AND POTS**) - These gifts symbolise nourishment, and indicate that the bride pledges that there will always be food in her new home, because she is prepared to grind food for each member of the family. Khuzwayo (pc: 2001) states that the three-legged pot is a traditional utensil in the Zulu culture and the pride of every Zulu family.

PARAFFIN - Fire plays a very important role in Zulu culture. By giving paraffin as a gift, it sends a message that there will always be warmth in the new home. The bride is committing herself to keep the fires burning in her new home, not only for cooking but also to provide warmth and affection to all members of her new family.

UMBRELLAS – Umbrellas are also given as gifts. According to Khuzwayo (pc: 2001) the umbrellas are a sign of reunion and a symbol of protection. By giving these gifts the bride is symbolically saying that she is seeking protection in her new homestead.

After the distribution of presents, the bride will begin to *hlambisa*, i.e., give out to the members of the bridegroom's kraal all the articles she has made. Krige (1950: 152) states that *hlambisa* means cleansing, whereby every present given by the bride is supposed to have a drop of water spilled on it, as a mark of respect.

Water plays a very important role in the Zulu society like in many other traditional societies. The Zulus believe that the ancestors reside in the rivers. Therefore, by bathing in a flowing river, the bride undergoes a cleansing process, which is sanctioned by the ancestors.

After the marriage ceremony, the bride takes a basin with water and beads and spills it on the ground. According to Krige (1950:152), the water is a sign that the bride will ensure the cleanliness of the kraal at all times.

Anointing the bride

The bridal couple then enter the main house, which is considered a second temple. Here, the bride will meet the senior mothers and grandmothers of the family, who hand her one of the children (preferably male), an *imbeleko* (skin for tying the baby on the back) and a gourd of fat, according to Khumalo (pc: 2001) and Krige (1950: 153). The bride anoints the naked child with lubrication gel. She then carries the child from the main house, to the kraal. As she leaves the house her family meets her. The ladies pinch the baby to initiate some crying. This is a symbol of giving birth. The expectation is for her to produce children as part of the process of procreation. The preference is for a male child as the first born to carry the family name. If the bride satisfies this need, she is accepted as the mother of the whole family. Krige states that the women also anoint the bride with fat and fastens the child on to her back.

The bride carries the child to the kraal where the brothers of the groom and other members of the family await her arrival. The groom sits in the centre. She is obliged to kneel down in front of each brother while kissing the child. The brother then takes the child and kisses it. He then returns the child. This process continues until everyone has an opportunity to participate. The symbolism of this ritual is for the bride to swear in front of the living and the dead that she is willing to marry everyone within the family. It further signifies that if the groom cannot for some reason or the other, produce any children, permission is granted to his brothers to engage in a sexual encounter for the purpose of producing an heir to carry the family name. Furthermore, if the groom dies, his brothers are obliged to take care of his bride. This is called *ukungena*. This custom is however disappearing due to Christianity. The missionaries discouraged the custom of *ukungena* and felt that women were free to choose their

own partners. The eradication of this custom is further cemented by the Women's Rights, enshrined in the constitution.

The marriage ceremony is now officially over. The bride's family will depart (the fourth day after the wedding dances) leaving the bride to commence with her marital obligations.

Maphalala (2000:31states that up until this stage the bride does not eat meat, eggs and curd from the groom's house until the *indlakudla* has been slaughtered for her. *Indlakudla* is the name of a goat slaughtered by her in-laws. This is considered an educational lesson pertaining to building a home. The bride has to get used to abstaining from a number of things, which she enjoyed as a girl.

After two weeks, the bride's mother will visit the groom's family bringing with her, a quantity of traditional beer. The purpose of the visit is to assure the groom's family that she has taken care of the disposing of the gall bag and other elements which is customary.

The bride will not go back to her parents home until three months have passed. This is known as *impindamkhondo*. During this period, it gives her an opportunity to bond with her new family. It is believed that if she returns before the end of this period, it will disrupt the bonding process. It also relates to the ancestors who are still in the process of showering her with blessings. The marriage process is not considered complete until all the stages have been completed.

SECTION C

THE TAMIL SYSTEM OF MARRIAGE

CHAPTER 7

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Marriage is an important social institution. It evolved and developed with the socio-economic progress of mankind and outgrew the basic need of satisfying physical hunger. To the Hindu, marriage is not merely an arrangement for a man and a woman to live together, a kind of social contract, it is a sacrament. It is probably the most important of the sixteen *samskaras* that govern the life of a Hindu from his birth to his death. With marriage, man enters a particular stage of life, with religious sanction, and this bestows on him a certain status and also a set of obligations moulding and influencing his personal, family and social life. Marriage was not a licence for lust; instead it is the union of two souls spiritually, mentally and physically.

According to Muthu (1974:viii), marriage is the turning point in one's life. A wedding day is the commencement of a happy period in the married life of a young man and a woman, having "been drawn to each other mentally and physically by the force of love". *'Thiru Manam'* – the Tamil equivalent of 'matrimony'- is a beautiful word denoting coming together, that is, being united by love.

While marriage is a religious rite, it is also an occasion for social celebration; where two families come together in a closer relationship. Relatives and friends on both the sides, assemble to participate in the event and felicitate the couple.

There have been a number of changes over the years to the traditional marriage ritual as a concession to popular practices, local and social customs and psychological needs, which did not have any connection with the original ritual. The marriage rite has moved from a simple procedure to a complicated and clumsy ritual.

Religious law givers could not completely ignore the social customs that came to be associated with the marriage and had to tackle new problems like *niyoga,* widow-re marriage, age of consent, inter-caste marriage etc.

The marriage rite in the ancient Indian society in the Vedic period appears to have been a very simple affair, consisting of the *Saptapadi,* the *Agniparinayana,* the *Asma roha* and the *Lajahoma.* Later on, the other subordinate rites and details like the *Madhuparka,* the *Vahana,* the *Grhapravesaniya Homa* and the *Chaturthikarna* came to be added and the simple ritual became quite a complicated rite in the days of the *Dharmasutras* and *Dharmashastras.* Apte, (1978:IX) remarks " provincial and family customs, superstitions and conventions also played their part in the evolution of the ritual of this sacrament".

Apte (1999:25) further states that the sacrament of marriage is a "very important *samskara* from various points of view". It gives a "religious and legal sanction" to the matrimonial relations of the persons concerned. Socially, it is an announcement of the

new relationship. Marriage affects the personal life of every individual. The concept of marriage determines the "character of society". It has a great impact on social welfare. Furthermore, marriage is not merely a legal contract, but it is a sacrament.

Singh (1999:25) remarks that through marriage, a man can attain fullest development of life in all spheres like "*dharma* (religious upliftment), *atma* (wealth), *kama* (sexual pleasure) and *moksha* (liberation from earthly bondages)". Thus, in Hindu marriage, sex is secondary and *Dharma* primary. Hindu philosophy recognises the "spiritual ideal" of marriage. The Hindus regard the marriage relation as indissoluble.

The historical development of Tamil weddings

The civilization of a people is the product of its language, religion, and the socio-cultural archive of the indigenous knowledge system and can only be transmitted to a new generation by imitation or instruction.

The marks of civilization are found in the day-to-day activities of people. Although there are certain individual behaviour and customs, which are unique to different races, there are many commonalities, which lend a sort of permanency to the wedlock

Apte (1978:XI) elaborates that the procedure of the marriage ceremony prescribed by the Sutras is "too complicated and clumsy for the fast life of the twentieth century". Young men and women of today have started questioning the necessity of performing the marriage ritual itself while others believe differently and are determined to follow traditional practices.

The *sastra* texts represent a landmark in social history of India. The procedures and processes prescribed by lawgivers like Manu still continue to affect the social life of the Hindus.

The *Grhyasutras* mainly deal with the ritual of marriage while the *Dharmasastras* deal primarily with the social aspect of marriage, like polygamy, age of the bride and groom, remarriage etc.

During the Vedic times, life was not settled and peaceful. The people moved from place to place in search of new territory. So, a simple ritual suited the people. However, the present day life is fast .The complicated marriage ritual is becoming unimaginable and inconvenient. This demonstrates the need for understanding the logic of oral studies.

Joshi Kireet (1991:4) states that the *Vedas* has been regarded as the "highest source of knowledge" throughout the long history of Indian tradition, and the entire line of orthodox systems of philosophy refers to the *Vedas* as the "highest indisputable authority of knowledge and truth".

Jousse (2000:30) sought to explain how man, placed at the heart of all the immeasurable actions of the universe, managed to conserve the memory of these actions within him, and to transmit this memory faithfully to his descendants, from

generation to generation. This was achieved by using "psycho-physiological tools",

which conserve the great human Living Tradition. According to Jousse (2000:32),

I may carry my recording phonograph all over the world and into each and every 'Oral- style' milieu, which is to say, to all ethnic groups which do not know writing, or which do not use writing when composing. There will be numerous variations, attributable to the suppleness of life, to the mechanism of the various languages and also – I hasten to add – to man's free will which can break up a great many automatisms: the result, nonetheless, will be the same.

Analysis of data from the Vedas

The *Vivaha Sukta, which is taken from the Rg Veda* hereunder referred to as RV, is

regarded as the foundation of the Hindu marriage sacrament. It contains *mantras*

common to the different marriage rites performed in various parts of India. Apte

(1978:8) states that a religious ceremony was very simple and comprised only of two

items, "*Hastagrabha* (taking of the sacred vows) and *Pani-grahana* (grasping of the

bride's hand)" which was considered essential for the newly weds to "gain acceptance

in society and to announce the new relationship".

Apte (1978:14) goes on to say that the religious *Samskara* had all the "sanctity and

approval of the society". In the *RgVeda* there is no indication of the "evolution of the

marriage through human agency". In the marriage hymn we get the picture of the

"highest ideal of marriage and conjugal felicity". The *RgVeda* period reflects a

considerably advanced stage of human civilization.

Right from the beginning of the *RV*, the marriage sacrament had attained the status of

a social and religious institution. The giving away of a young girl in marriage to a boy

is considered highly meritorious. Actually, during this important milestone, the groom

is treated as *Maha Vishnu* (one of the members of the Holy Trinity). Ayer (1987:40) states that if duly performed, a marriage ceremony becomes so "meritorious that for twenty-one rebirths, it will continue to pay dividend for the girl's parents".

The custom of marriage is the most widespread institution of human society. Since the prehistoric period up to the present age, marriage has remained the backbone of human civilization. Therefore, the institution of marriage occupies a very important place in human society. It is an institution that admits men and women to family life. It is a stable relationship in which a man and a woman are socially permitted to have children implying the right to sexual relations. According to Singh et al (1999:23), in India, since ancient times, marriage has been regarded as a sacrament and is obligatory on all *Dwija* (twice born) except those who desire to adopt the life of a "*Brahmachari* of professed religious studentship or other asceticism".

According to Hindu Law, marriage is a civil contract, carrying with it serious obligations. Among Hindus, marriage as a religious duty is a holy union between a man and a woman, which results in salvation. According to Singh and Nath (1999:23) "marriage is so important and indispensable" among Hindus that a person, who does not marry is disdained. Mazumdar HT (Grammar of Sociology), quoted by Singh et al (1999:23) defines marriage as "a socially sanctioned union of male and female, or as a secondary institution devised by society to sanction the union and mating of male and female, for the purposes of (a) establishing household (b) entering into sex relations (c) procreating and (d) providing care for the offspring".

Marriage is a sacred duty among Hindus, a duty that every parent must perform for their children; otherwise they owe them a reverence. A family with an unmarried daughter after the age of puberty is considered to labour under the displeasure of the Gods. No member of the opposite sex considers himself respectable after the age of puberty till he is married. According to Manu, in Singh and Nath (1999:23),

"a man who does not marry, never receives worship after death. His happiness in the next world depends upon a continuous line of male descendants, who make periodical offerings for the peace of his soul".

According to Sivagami (1980:182), it is clear that Tamil culture has a "long antiquity". Many of the old Tamil customs are still in practice, even though some of them have changed or become extinct because of the changing times.

The Tamils originate from the south of India occupying a large territory known, as Tamil Nadu The origin of the Tamils is not very clear. However, a supposition has been advanced by the late Professor Rask *in* Chitty (1992:2)

… that the Tamils, together with the *Telegu, Malayalam and the Kannada* who were the other South Indian language groups, owe their descent to 'one great race of men which may be styled Scythian', and, it would appear, that their origins can be traced to the interaction of people from the North of India with the aboriginal tribes established in the Southern parts of India.

It should, however, be observed, that the Tamils, like the Egyptians of old, "consider themselves the most ancient of mankind, and own no other country as their primitive residence than that which they now inhabit".

Chitty (1992:3) further explains that the country assigned to the Tamils is one of "fifty-six *desas* (regions) of the Hindu Geographers, and is known as *Tiravidam*". This is divided into "thirteen *Nadu*" or districts. Each of these districts has its own unique character in terms of customs, mannerisms et cetera. The Tamils are divided into "four *Varnas*", or tribes. The first is called *Pirama*, the second *Sattriya*, the third *Vaisiya* and the fourth *Sutra*; corresponding with the Hindu divisions of *Brahmans* (Those who offer prayers and kindle the sacrificial fire), *Kshatriyas* (protectors of the earth, warriors), *Vaisiyas* (merchants), *and Sudras* (agriculturalists). Each of the tribes are further divided into several Jatis or castes. Each caste has some ceremony peculiarly to its own, and at the same time, there would be some similarities indicating a common origin.

According to Kearns (1991:1), there was a time when there were no "castes, orders, varieties of conditions, or mixtures of castes" at all. When, and under what circumstances, the people became divided into castes, we have no information sufficiently reliable to determine. Manu the great authority in all matters regarding the Hindu religion and its institutions believed that, there was no original race of men except the four castes of *"Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisiyas, and the Sudras."*

Laws relating to Tamil marriages

Kearns (1991:3) provides a detailed account of some of the laws that traditional Tamil marriages recognised. According to *Manu,*

- *"The time when a girl should be given in marriage is before she is eight years old (before puberty). Law censures any delays in marriage beyond the tenth year".* (ix: 88-94)

- *"If a husband were not provided for her, within three years after she has become marriageable, she may choose a husband for herself."* (Manu, ix, 90.)

- *"The parties must be of the same class and caste".* (Manu, iii, 4.)

- *The wife must not belong to the same Gotra or family. Among Brahmans, there are forty-nine Gotras. To marry a woman belonging to the same Gotra was considered incest* (Manu, iii, 5.)

According to Manu, in Kearns (1991:4), the following families are to be studiously avoided when seeking a wife:

- The family, which has omitted prescribed acts of religion, produced no male children or has not read the *Vedas* (religious text).
- Families that have thick hair on their bodies.

-          Families that are subjected to haemorrhoids, phthisis, dyspepsia, epilepsy, leprosy, and elephantiasis.

Forms of marriage

The celebrations of marriage (called *Vivaham* **or** *Kalyanam*) were considered by ancient Tamils as a matter of primary importance. There were formally eight different modes of conducting the marriage ceremony according to Kearns (1991:4), Chitty (1992:100) and Singh and Nath (1999:25-26)

1.   *Brahma* – the gift of a daughter to a man learned in the Vedas, who her father voluntarily invites and respectfully receives in a nuptial ceremony called Brahma.

2.   *Devas* **or** *Deivam* – the father gives his daughter along with ornaments to a priest, who duly officiated at a sacrifice (*Yajna*) during the course of its performance.

3.   *Arsha* **or** *Rishis* – the bridegroom offered a cow and a bull to the father of the bride, and the latter gave his daughter in marriage. The taking of a cow and the bull was a religious requirement as a token of gratitude to the man, who offered his daughter to the groom to enable him to fulfil the obligations of *Grihasthashram.*

4.   *Prajapatyam* -the joint performance of sacred duties by man and a woman .The father gives his daughter to the bridegroom, by addressing the couple with *mantras*.

5.   ***Gandarvam*** – mutual love and consent between the bride and the bridegroom are the only prerequisites to bring about such a marriage. The knowledge and consent of the parents are not required.

6.   ***Asuram*** – this is a kind of marriage where the bridegroom has to pay the price to the father or kinsmen of the bride. The bridegroom fixes the price according to the status of the bride's family. This form of marriage is more popular amongst low cast Hindus.

7.   ***Irakkadam*** or ***Rakshasa*** – the bride was seized by violence against her consent and that of her parents and relations. Primitive tribes regarded women as prizes of war, part of a plunder in a fair fight.

8.   ***Paisasham*** – this was the worst form of all marriages. In this, the bride was either forcibly taken away from her parents, without their consent, or violated while in a state of idiotism, asleep or intoxicated.

According to Singh and Nath (1999:28), of these eight forms of marriage, only the first four are "ancestral customs of old and are valid on their being approved by the father". The rest are determined by material means.

Kearns (1991:5) explains that the binding circumstances essential to the completion of a marriage are gift and acceptance of the girl, and the ceremony called *Sapthapathi*, or the seven steps (explained in chapter 10). The other ceremonies observed, including sacrifice by fire (*Homam*) are of minor significance. The tying of the *Thali*, or nuptial token, round the neck of the bride, is a practice sanctioned by usage, but not prescribed by the *Sastras*. Detailed explanations of these ceremonies are given in chapter 10.

Muthu (1974:viii) outlines that in the olden days, a teen-age boy and girl, who met each other by accident, would live together if they liked each other. This was called 'Kalavu Manam'. When the parents of this loving young couple came to know of their real attachment to each other, they would unite the boy and the girl in lawful wedlock, in the presence of relatives and people of the locality. This was called 'Karpu Manam'.

With the passage of time, 'Kalavu Manam' used to bristle with difficulties and hidden dangers, and therefore, it was given up. 'Karpu Manam' was accepted as the better of the two, and certain rites and rituals were prescribed as outlined below.

Studies of different types of marriage ceremonies conducted by different castes in South India reveal the following similarities, according to Kearns (1991:24), Muthu (1974:x) and Chitty (1992:104)

- The first thing which the bridegroom's relatives do is to go to the father of the intended bride, and get from him the *Sathagum* (horoscope) which they examine, and the bride's relations examine that of the bridegroom. If both the *Sathagums*' agree, the parties deliberate on the marriage and consult an astrologer for an auspicious day, upon which the bridegroom's nearest relatives and friends meet at the bride's house to arrange for the wedding.

- A prayer is conducted. The bride bathes and puts on the clothes brought by the bridegroom's relatives, and well adorned with flowers and ornaments. She is placed in an easterly direction (the direction which the sun rises). The bridegroom's sister

brings a basket containing three coconuts, three or more plantains (bananas), some *areca* nuts and saffron. These presents are divided into three parts, one of which is given to the bride, which she returns to the bridegroom's sister, and the other two, are given to the bride for her relatives and friends.

- On the determined day and time, a *Manavarei* (a square dais of earth erected in the centre of the *pandal*) is constructed. In the southwest corner of the yard, a *Muhurthakal* (marriage post) is placed.

- When the bridegroom arrives at the bride's house for the wedding, he is received with great pomp and celebration. When approaching the door, some maidens wave their *Alatthi* (lighted camphor) as a token of respect.

- The bridegroom sits to the east . A mango stick to which are tied mango leaves dipped in saffron water is placed in his hand which he takes to the south western corner of the pandal and there plants it.

- A Brahmin seats himself on a part of the *Manavarei*, facing to the north, and before him, a bright lamp burns. Beneath this, a *Pillaiyar* (a symbol of Lord Ganesha) is made of cow's dung and by the side of it are placed some rice, bananas and coconuts.

- The adorned bridegroom receives sacred ashes from the Brahmin and takes his seat on the other side of the *Manavarei,* facing the east. The adorned bride is brought to the *Manavarei*, also facing an easterly direction.

- New clothes are brought to the *Manavarei* on two brass trays. The Brahmin and other elders bless the clothes and give them to the couple.

- Adorned in the new clothes and with jewellery, the bride and groom return to the *Manavarei.*

• The *Thali* (nuptial string) is brought before the Brahmin who blesses it himself and than seeks the blessings of the guests.

• The Brahmin pronounces some *Mantras* and gives the Thali to the bridegroom, who ties it loosely around the bride's neck, the bridegroom's sister however, ties it tightly. This is followed by the exchange of garlands. The tying of the *Thali* is normally accompanied with the sound of trumpets. The marriage is now complete. There was also a tradition of giving pieces of gold to the bride's father. This is called the "ceremony of confirmation".

According to Muthu (1974:ix), the books of *'Sangam'* literature delineate in detail the system of marriage adopted by the ancient Tamilians. A descriptive portrayal of the Tamilian system of marriage is given in two verses of *'Agananuru'*- a rare collection of poems of exquisite beauty. Muthu (1978:ix) describes the procedure as follows:

The house selected for the celebration of the marriage is cleansed and decorated with a pandal. Dirty sand is removed and fresh sand is spread. Five auspicious women *(Sumangalis* i.e. married women having living husbands) together, fill a vessel with fresh water, put paddy and flowers therein, and bathe the bride with that water. This alone was the important ritual of the marriage. Then there would be a feast. All the relatives and friends would partake of the feast, enjoy the occasion and bless the bridal couple.

Muthu (1978:ix) further outlines that with the passage of time, this system of marriage gradually expanded. The reason is not far to seek. This system involved "certain inextricable problems and impediments in the domestic life" of the husband and wife. Certain rituals were introduced in later days to ensure that a husband and wife who were united in wedlock, do not part company under any circumstances but live in unison.

According to Muthu (1978:x) the rituals associated with the tying of the *kanganam* (turmeric stick), raising the sacred fire, the tying of the *thali*, (nuptial string) the bridegroom taking hold of the hand of the bride and circumambulating the bridal chamber, treading on the *ammi* (grinding stone), pointing *Arundati* (north star) etc, are all reflected in literary works such as those of *Silappadikaram, Kamba Ramayanam, Tiruvilayadal Puranam.*

Muthu (1978:x) further reveals that, nowadays, *"wedding rites consist of superstitious customs"*, which do not appeal to reason, and the bridal couple does not understand the language employed in doing the rites. Some Tamil sarvants became intolerant of this sorry state of affairs and rose in revolt against them; they were determined to preserve the ancient *"Tamilian code of ethics in matters pertaining to marriage"*.

Eminent scholars gathered together in a series of conferences and evolved "a Tamil system of marriage", which, in essence, contained the following virtues:

- the wedding rites appealed to commonsense;

- the rituals directed the bridal couple towards conjugal life;

- the chanting recited during the performance of the rites was taken from the literary works of the *Thevaram, Thiruvasagam* etc.

Historical development of Tamil marriages in South Africa

When the first batch of Indian indentured labourers arrived in South Africa in 1860 as cheap labour, to work on the sugar cane fields of KwaZulu Natal, they brought with them India's ancient brand of culture and tradition.

The first Indians, arrived on board the *"SS Truro"* and stepped ashore into the British Colony of Natal on November 16, 1860. There were 342 men, women and children, who hailed from Madras. The *"SS Belvedere"* followed a few days later with 351 additional indentured labourers from Calcutta, in the north of India.

Between 1860 and 1911, 384 ships with 152184 passengers arrived in Durban, turning South Africa into the biggest concentration of the Indian Diaspora after Mauritius, Trinidad and Tobago.

About two-thirds of this labouring class, were either Tamil or Telegu speaking Hindus. The balance comprised of other religious denominations. These groupings came from different villages with their own unique characteristics and methods of doing things. They brought with them, their own brand of culture and heritage.

Padayachee (2001:4), focuses on the question of India's caste system, which rubbed onto local Indians stretching back to the arrival of the Indentured labourers in 1860. He states that "Historians and Indological researchers have espoused divergent views on this indigenous Indian social system". Records reflect that "colonialism was probably responsible for the caste system" in which the *British Raj* (royalty) was blamed for its international divide and rule politics.

He goes on to say that in South Africa, the apartheid system was blamed for the international propagation of the caste system. More than 140 years after the arrival of Indians, the caste system is subtle and covert in South Africa, which is home to about 1.3 million South Africans of Indian Origin.

Padayachee (2001: 4) reflects that from his early experience in the Indian diasporic situation, "the beats of the caste system drum, stuck out like a sore thumb, based on the many tales related by family elders and relatives". The "pioneers of the indentured labouring class" who were largely and unfairly categorised as the lower class, were the real founders of generations of Indian presence, prominence and prosperity in South Africa. All shades of Indian sub-groups, who were broken up into Tamil, Telegu, Hindi, Christian Indian, and Gujerati, practiced some form or another of the imported caste system. These were reflected in the varied activities of the people.

According to Muthu (1974:xv), South Africa is developing afresh in many spheres. There has been multi-sided improvement. There are many changes in the social life of the Tamils in South Africa. One such change is the current Tamil system of marriage. This system of marriage is not new to South Africa. This was the "system adopted by the ancient Tamilians" in their daily life. A conference of scholars has made some changes therein to "suit modern man's thinking".

Muthu (1974:xv) further elaborated on the need for reform in the marriages in South Africa. He explained the importance of *Manam* (coming together), which is the joining of two persons bound by love. In the olden days, a young man and a woman met each other by "Divine Dispensation", "courted and were mentally united". Only

thereafter their parents came into the picture and solemnized their wedding. This wedding was brief and economic. The wedding rites are mainly to convey the idea that two persons already united by the bond of love are about to enter family life.

An article in the Leader of 8 June1951, reported on a paper presented by Pandit Nardev Vedalankar at a Hindu Convention held in Durban. He declared that marriages were *'tamashas'* (unnecessary social get-togethers) that were conducted according to the whims and fancies of the officiating priest. He expressed the need for reform of the Hindu marriage ceremony by discarding the non-essentials and uniformity by adhering to the basic principles as outlined by ancient scriptures.

He went on to say that the ceremony is warped and full of out-grown traditional customs and conceptions, to such an extent that the real purpose and method of the ceremony is sidetracked, and it merely becomes a *tamasha*. On the one hand, the "din of conflicting sounds from all directions, made for a most intolerable situation" and, on the other, the bride and bridegroom, "failed to understand the significance of the ceremony" in which they were involved. The average Hindu marriage ceremony at that time failed to satisfy the real requirements of a true Hindu marriage ceremony and there was an earnest desire for change, he added.

Pandit Nardev called for the standardisation of the marriage ceremony so as to suit "modern Indian conditions". The performed ceremonies were diverse in method, chaotic, created totally erroneous notions to observers about Hindu religious practices, lowered Hindu culture and did not create the necessary atmosphere of solemnity

He also referred to the time aspect, which was often overly long because of the inclusion of non-essentials, and said a standardised ceremony would not put guests at the mercy of officiating priests.

Although there are different ways in which Tamil marriages are conducted in South Africa, the basic structure is the same. Most of the rituals and ceremonies have been imported from India and follow the principles outlined in the *Vedas* and the later *Dharmasutras* and *Grhyasutras*. Individuals and officiating priests *(Progithars)*, attached to organisations are responsible for conducting weddings. Most of the priests interviewed, obtained their training locally based on information which was transmitted orally, from generation to generation.

In South Africa, a number of local Tamil priests were able to perform traditional Tamil marriages by receiving their basic training from the elders in the community.

Karthigasen Chetty, a local priest, received his basic training from his uncle as well as from his Guru (teacher) in India, Swami Vedhachand, who was well versed in Tamil and *Sanskrit*. Karthigasen came to South Africa when he was 15 years old. During that time, there were a handful of priests who were able to conduct marriage ceremonies. The fact that many people, especially the youth, did not understand the basic differences between religion, tradition, ritual and customs, prompted him to become a priest in order to conduct religious ceremonies, including marriages.

The Late Mr T Vadivelu received his training in India. This training was not formal but consisted of discussions and observations with various learned people and elders

in India. This is where he learnt the structure, which forms the basis of a Tamil marriage, and the various *mantras* associated with marriages. He studied the old method, which included many orthodox ceremonies and rituals. Certain modifications, which differ from their counterparts in India, have been introduced to Tamil Marriages in South Africa in order to suit the needs of the communities living in South Africa. The Late Mr T Vadivelu performed a number of weddings in South Africa before emigrating to Australia where he continued to provide this service. Before leaving South Africa, he trained a number of local priests who still perform marriage ceremonies according to his style. The researcher has interviewed and observed marriages conducted by two of his students, Nanda Moodley and Perumal Raman, who in turn have trained a number of other priests.

Asogan Moodley, a free-lance priest officiates mostly at the Mount Edgecombe Temple, on the North Coast of KwaZulu-Natal. He comes from a family that is culturally sensitive and aware of the religious and cultural needs of the Tamil community of KwaZulu-Natal. His father was a priest for a long time and lived at the temple. He grew up at the temple where he used to help his father with various religious activities. In this way, he was able to learn the rituals and processes necessary for the performance of certain religious and cultural ceremonies. His belief in God and adherence to the Hindu religion were cultivated from a very young age.

Kuppusami (1981:33) explains that over the centuries, procedures for conducting marriages amongst Tamilians have undergone some changes in respect of preparation, performance of rituals and actual conduct of the ceremony. He attributed the changes

to a changing mixed cultural environment. However, rituals considered basically important are observed with little change.

Interviews with various individuals, priests, couples and cultural leaders, and observation of marriage ceremonies conducted by temples and organisations have shown that the basic structure of the marriage ceremony is the same with slight variations in some of the rituals.

CHAPTER 8

PRE-NUPTIAL CEREMONY

8.1 *Pen Katphatu* (asking for girl)

In ancient Tamil tradition, marriages were always arranged. If the boy's parents had identified a prospective bride for their son, arrangements would be made with senior members of the boy's family to formalise relations between the two families. While it is not usual, it can happen that marriages are still arranged by the parents. The following is the procedure.

The boy's parents consult an astrologer who uses an *almanac* to determine an auspicious time and date for the family to visit the home of the prospective bride. A senior member of the boy's family acts as spokesman and informs the girl's party of the purpose of their visit. If the girl's parents approve of the alliance, consent is then obtained from the prospective bride, who in the presence of both parties gives an answer.

If the girl agrees to the alliance, the spokesman from the boy's party ascertains from the girl's family if they desire to have a formal engagement long before the actual wedding day or to defer it to a day before the wedding when the bride receives her wedding trousseau (clothing and jewellery) from the boy's family. The parents of the girl must make this decision as it has financial implications for them. If the girl's parents do not choose to have a prior engagement, the alliance is concluded with an exchange of betel leaf and betel nut, which serves as a contract.

8.2 Procedure for an engagement the day before wedding

- At the home of the bride, a small reception is arranged for the family of the prospective groom. In the presence of family and friends, an offering of three kinds of fruit and milk, is made to *Lord Ganesha*. The breaking of a coconut follows this.

- *Santhanam* (sandal-wood paste) is smeared on the faces of both parents, in order to confirm arrangements.

- The wedding trousseau is handed over to the prospective bride.

- The family members of the prospective bride and groom then socialise, by partaking of a meal and enjoying the entertainment provided by the girl's party.

8.3 Engagement long before the wedding day

The girl's parents are responsible for hosting the engagement ceremony. The size and nature of the event is determined by the financial position of the girl's family. The engagement is either held at the girl's home or at a hall. Invitations are extended to family and friends of both the girl and the boy.

At the chosen venue, a table is prepared as a sanctified area to conduct the engagement ritual. The following items are required for the ritual;

- two *kuthu villaku* (lamps) and a *kamatchee villuku* (prayer lamp)

- a vase with flowers,

- *chembu* (vessel) with water,

- three kinds of fruit and a coconut placed on a tray,

- a tray comprising of *santhanam, kungum,* and rose-water,

- two sets of ritual items comprising of betel-leave, betel-nut, flower petals, and *munja* stick (turmeric stick)

- camphor and *agarbathy* (incense)

Fig. 20

Sanctified area to invoke Divine Blessings (19/10/2001)

Engagement ceremony (The role of the parents)

A Brahmin or an elder who has the necessary knowledge and expertise conducts the ceremony. The procedure is as follows:

- Both the parents and prospective bride and groom sit at the sanctified table.

- The groom's party places trays comprised of gifts such as fruit, sweetmeats and other simple items on the table.

- Guests are required to stand while the Ulagallaam, (opening prayer) is recited.

- Both parents are required to offer an invocation prayer to *Lord Ganesha*, using a *deepa kalsam*. A coconut is broken and placed on either side of the *Ganesha* deity. While this is performed, a set of *mantras* is chanted in honour of *Lord Ganesha*.

- A prayer is then offered to *Lord Vishnu* and Lord *Shiva*, while both parents turn the lit camphor.

- The betel leaf and betel nut is exchanged between both parents, to seal the union. This is called panigraganam. The prospective bride's father is required to repeat the following after the officiating priest/elder,

  "In the presence of all, I hereby consent to hand over my daughter for marriage."

According to Satyan (2001:35), in addition to promoting smooth social relationships, the offering of betel leaf and betel nut, is considered a sign of good culture and a cultivated accomplishment.

- The prospective groom's father on accepting the betel leaf and betel nut, repeats the following words,

  'In the presence of all, I hereby accept your daughter to marry my son".

The acceptance of the betel leaf and the betel nut from the respective parties implies a pledge of loyalty and friendship.

- The two fathers dot each other with *santhanam* (sandal-wood paste) and then sprinkle rosewater on each other to conclude the first part of the ceremony involving the parents. Both *santhanam* and rosewater are natural elements with a pleasant odour. The use of these elements symbolises the importance of the actions of the respective fathers.

Fig.21

The application of *santhanam* (sandal wood paste) by the respective fathers.(25/02/ 2001)

Engagement ceremony (involving prospective bride and groom)

- The boy hands over a set of bridal clothing to the prospective bride.

- After performing the *Aradhanay* (prayer) to *Lord Ganesha*, the engagement rings are exchanged.

- The prospective groom's sister places a *kungum* dot on the forehead of the prospective bride. Two *Sumangalis* (married women) do the same.

- The *alum aradhanay* (prayer) concludes the ceremony.

- After being congratulated by all guests, the couple partake in a meal with family and friends. This is complemented with cultural entertainment in the form of a live band or recorded music.

Fig. 22

Turning of the alum by an elder completing the engagement ceremony.(25/02/ 2001)

8.3 *Nalungu* (cleansing ceremony)

The nalungu is part of an ancient tradition. It is neither a religious ceremony nor a ritual, but a social gathering of friends and relatives, aimed at preparing the couple for the actual marriage ceremony to follow. The women who perform the nalungu have learnt the procedures through observation. This ceremony has been performed for a number of years in the same format, enabling the processes to be passed on from generation to generation

Fig. 23

Senior women performing a traditional folk song in honour of the prospective bride (24/03/2000)

There are 3 *nalungu* ceremonies that need to be completed. Two of the ceremonies are conducted at the respective homes of the couple and the third *nalungu* is conducted on the day of the marriage at the marriage venue.

Muthu (1974:55), states that the significance of the *Nalungu* prior to the commencement of the marriage ceremony is to purify the bridal couple from all past vice if any in their single life, and seat them in the pandal (Divine canopy) because they are going to be future creators in the divine aspect as *Meenakshi – Sundarasa* (the mother element of God), and in the material aspect as man and wife. They are to begin household activities in the material world and lead life as true householders.

The *nalungu* is characterised by much pomp and ceremony accompanied by much merrymaking. This social get-together is arranged for the benefit of families and friends, who have come to assist in the marriage arrangements. On the other hand the nalungu that is performed at the marriage venue is of a spiritual nature and is

performed in the presence of many guests, the priest and the deities. According to Kuppusami (1982: 34), the main aspects of *nalungu* are:

i.   *Physical: strengthening and beautifying the young couple*

ii. *Social: preparing for their future status and relationship by advice and suggestive remarks during the anointing.*

iii. *Pureficatory: bringing them in contact with ingredients, which can never be used during any period of ritual defilement.*

In the early days, marriages were by arrangement where the parents were responsible for the selection of marriage partners. Couples had very little or no physical contact with the opposite sex, hence, the need for a social function to prepare them for a new experience and a sense of self-consciousness. Although arranged marriages are still undertaken today, "love- marriages" are more popular among modern couples. However, this did not put a stop to the performance of the *nalungu*.

Kuppusami (1982: 33) and Vadivelu (pc:2000) describe the *nalungu* as a preparatory ceremony that takes place at the respective couples' homes about three days before the wedding day. Since most Tamil marriages in South Africa are conducted over weekends, the nalungu is normally performed either on the Friday or Saturday preceding the marriage ceremony.

Fig.24

A *pandal* (canopy), where the *nalungu* is performed (19/10/2001)

In order to add colour and glamour to the sanctified area at home during the *Nalungu* ceremony or the marriage hall, the floor is decorated with ornamental figures and geometrical designs, known as *Kolam.* According to Subramanian and Murugan (1980: 183) in the olden days, Tamils used rice flour for this purpose. Colours were added to the flour for decorative purposes. In Modern times, this practice still continues with modifications to the method. Instead of flour, mealie meal or coloured paints are used for this purpose. The designs have a bearing to oral tradition, as there is a sense of pattern and balance in the formations.

Fig. 25

A *kolam* (geometrical design) (24/03/2000)

The *nalungu* is usually performed by women, who anoint the couple with   *munja* (turmeric paste), *santhanam* (sandal-wood paste) and *gadampudi* (a sweet smelling powder). The pastes are rubbed on the cheek and the chin. A *kungum* dot, comprising of a red powder is placed on the forehead of the bride or groom. The procedure is completed with the sprinkling of rosewater on the heads of the couple. While the women smear these natural elements on the faces of the couple, they subject them to much teasing. This is part of breaking the ice, as the couple is under tremendous pressure. There are no rules governing how many women should perform the *nalungu*. This varies according to the size and the economic situation of the family. Each lady who performs the *nalungu* is rewarded with a gift, which is normally a brass ornament with some sweetmeats, a betel leaf and a betel nut.

Fig. 26

Anointing the prospective bride with *munja* (turmeric paste) (19/10/2001)

After anointing the couple with different types of pastes, the *alum* ritual would be performed by some married women who pick up the container and circle it around the bride or bridegroom. This ritual is called *Alum suthuthal* and is intended to ward off the evil eye. The significance of this is that the young couple are in their best dress, adorned with attractive jewellery and look very attractive. This may attract some evil eye, which need to be eliminated. The *alum* comprises of water that is mixed with *kungum*. A betel leaf is placed with lit camphor on the water.

Fig. 27

After the *nalungu* (cleansing process) (20/10/2001)

The completion of the nalungu in their respective homes, prepares the bridal couple for the traditional marriage ceremony.

CHAPTER 9

THE TAMIL MARRIAGE CEREMONY

9.1 Preparation for the marriage ceremony

A Tamil marriage ceremony is performed in a *Kalyana Mandappam* (marriage hall). On the stage a *pandal* (*Manavarai*) or shrine is constructed for the performance of the marriage rituals.

According to Vadivelu (pc: 2000) the Brahmin creates this shrine in which the marriage can be witnessed before God, represented by a variety of deities. Various objects are placed in the *pandal*, each of which symbolises a particular aspect of God as the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer. Other minor deities are also represented and witness the marriage.

N Moodley (pc: 2001) in explaining the use of various artefacts in a Tamil marriage ceremony, states that everything not only contributes to a beautiful environment, but it all has meaning. Everything that is done, including the reciting of mantras and the actual performances, has a bearing on tradition. Most of these activities have been passed orally and by observation from generation to generation. The participation of the bridal couple, the role of their parents and the guests who are the witnesses all contribute to a feeling of humanness. N Moodley (pc: 2001) feels that this is a connection: The actions performed by the participants constitute the meaning and the message. The *pandal* and all the deities and other symbolic elements act as a conduit between man and a divine reality. This is the indivisibility that Jousse speaks of. The

indivisibility of expression reflects the indivisibility of the individual human, the bride and groom in marriage, and the human and the cosmos.

N Moodley (pc: 2001) further states that the *kalyana mandappam* (marriage hall), not only serves as a venue for a social get together, but with the creation of a *pandal* on the stage, the hall, more especially the stage area, is transformed into a temple: A sacred space, *mandapa* is created in the *pandal*. It provides a unique opportunity for the bride and groom to feel that they are getting married. The *pandal* provides for two aspects viz. the joyous and the spiritual.

The traditional *pandal* is a canopy constructed with four posts and crossbars. Plantain or banana plants with their graceful palm-like leaves cover the four poles and bright marigold garlands festoon the canopy giving it a temple like appearance. This arrangement of greenery and flowers signifies fertility and growth – particularly the banana plant that bears fruit every ten months and is thus mimismically reminiscent of the birth of human children.

According to Venketraman (pc: 2001), a banana plant is very significant in Hindu marriages as it represents continuity. No matter how many times a banana tree is chopped down, it will always grow. Similarly, the life of an individual, in spite of adversity will also grow from an individual couple to include children, grandchildren etc. In modern ceremonies, with the introduction of elaborate theme décor and other paraphernalia, the construction of a *pandal* has somewhat changed.

The following items need to be prepared and placed in a pandal in order to conduct a Tamil marriage ceremony:

Kalsam

The *Kalsam* represents God, and the entire creation. Therefore, great care is taken in the preparation of the *Kalsam*, which is done in the following manner

1. White rice, which is a symbol of purity and nourishment, is placed on a banana leaf. The rice represents the world.

2. Eight stems of the *dharbar* grass are arranged to form nine squares. In each square, a betel leaf is placed which radiate outwards. On each betel leaf a banana, betel nut and a flower is placed. These represent the *Navagrahas* (nine planets).

3. Three stems of *dharbar* grass comprising three flowers with stems are tied together to form a cone. This also represents the Trimurthy viz. *BRAHMA, VISHNU* and *SHIVA*, with their consorts. This provides shelter for the presiding deity.

4. Cotton thread is used to bind a brass vessel (*chembu*). This represents the nerves and arteries, which give life to this object. A *santhanam* dot comprising of sandalwood paste and rosewater is placed in each segment. This is followed by *kungum* (red powder) dot made out of red paste. The *chembu* (brass water vessel) must be placed on the bed of rice on the centre betel leaf.

5. In the brass vessel, there will be five different types of natural elements such as milk, sour milk, rose water, honey, and ordinary water. These elements are

regarded as *satvic* (pure). Muthu (1974:56) states that these elements symbolise the essential elements required for living in the material world viz. Fire (sun), Moon, Water, Sky, and Air. Each one is dependent on the other. The absence of any one of these elements will result in an abnormal situation.

6. A coconut is prepared with two dots made out of *santhanam* (sandalwood) and *kungum* (red powder), which represents eyes. This coconut artefact, which represents the family deity, is placed on top of the brass vessel.

7. A bunch of mango leaves is placed on the *chembu* to act as a bed for the coconut.

8. Finally a piece of white material, which symbolises purity, is draped around the *dharbar* (grass) cone, or else the representation developed above will be considered to be naked. The dharbar grass is considered to have amplification qualities.

Fig.28

The *kalsam*, symbolising the Divine Element.

According to Raman (pc: 2001) the *kalsam,* with the coconut is a medium of communicating with the Divine Master. During the assembling of the *kalsam,* the officiating priest recites the appropriate *mantras,* to consecrate the *pandal.*

He adds that, after the preparation of the *kalsam* it becomes the most important artefact in a *pandal.* The *kalsam* acts as a medium of connection between the bridal couple and God. Therefore the *kalsam* can only be assembled during an auspicious time or else it will have no relevance.

According to A Moodley (pc: 2001) there is a belief that the brass vessel of the *kalsam* should be full, so that it represents the fullness of life. It is said that when the *mantras* are being uttered, the full vessel will enable the *mantras* to settle at the bottom and not go astray. If the *mantras* settle at the bottom, all the rituals, activities and marital vows, will have the desired effect and will benefit all the parties concerned.

A Moodley (pc: 2001) further explains that the three strands of *dharbar* play a very important role. The three strands are placed around the coconut to form a pinnacle with a pointed edge on the top. It is then tied with a piece of cotton. The *dharbar* acts as a means of amplification for the *mantras.* It is believed that God's blessings will come through the pinnacle and settle in the kalsam. The *dharbar* serves the same purpose of a *gopuram* (tower) of a temple, whereby the *bakthi* (light), and the prana (blessings) will come through the gopuram and settle in the *murthies* (deities), which are housed in the temple. The *kalsam then* acts as a temple.

Vinayaga (Ganesha)

A *Pillaiyar*, a cone-shaped model symbolising *Lord Vinayaga* or *Ganesha* is made out of *munja* (turmeric paste). On top of the cone, a sprig of turf grass is placed to signify everlasting freshness. A small quantity of *gadampudi* and *kungum* is sprinkled on the cone to complete the representation. In some instances, a deity or murthie of *Lord Ganesha* is used instead of the turmeric cone.

Around the turmeric cone, the following items are placed as an offering to *Lord Ganesha*. Raman (pc: 2001) explains this as follows:

- The Flowers, enhance the beauty of *Lord Ganesha*
- Three kinds of fruit represent the *Trimurthy* (creator, preserver and destroyer). In Joussean terms this is a ternary rhythmic schema.
- Betel leaf and betel nut serves as a means of sealing the communication. The betel leaf represents the *Idayam* (heart), while the betel leaf represents a drop of blood. This is an example of a binary rhythmic schema.
- Sugar candy or sweetmeats were a preference of *Ganesha*.

Fig.29

Representation of Lord *Ganesha*, the remover of obstacles.

Seven *Sopukudams* (brass vessels)

Seven brass vessels are placed in front of the pandal. The vessels are filled with water and a prayer called *Mana Pongal* is offered to the vessels. According to N Moodley (pc: 2001), the original reason for this was for seven ladies to fill these pots with waters from the seven holy rivers of India viz. *Ganga, Godaveri, Kaveri, Sarasvathy, Jamuna, Sinthu* and *Narmathayum*. The water was used for washing the *ammi* (grinding stone) and for other important activities for the marriage ceremony. This was to purify the sacred space that had been created for the marriage ceremony.

'*Mana*', or '*Manam*' means aroma or conscience and '*Pongal*' means overflow. By praying to the pots and partaking in the rituals of the marriage ceremony, the bridal couple is claiming abundant consciousness. In other words they pledge that they will be serious and focussed during the entire proceedings.

According to Raman (pc: 2001), the seven pots are also symbolic of *Mother Sakthi* in her seven forms. Alongside each pot, a betel leaf, betel nut, flower and camphor are placed. The bridegroom is required to light three of the camphors while the bride also lights three and the seventh one is lit by both of them together. This is a sign of equality. There is also evidence of balance and equality in this undertaking.

The number seven is a mnemonic number that has been identified repeatedly.

Raman (pc: 2001) and N Moodley (pc: 2001) relate the use of the number seven in the various rituals associated with a marriage ceremony to the seven fairies (goddesses) that control our lives, These fairies' place of abode is at the seven holy rivers of India, hence the use of waters from these rivers in marriages conducted in India. The number seven also refers to the seven prerequisites for a successful marriage mentioned above.

N Moodley (pc: 2001) accounts for the use of the number seven as a representation of the seven days in a typical week, whereby the bridal couple in partaking in the various rituals are appealing to care for each other every day of the week.

Venketraman (pc: 2001) provides another explanation for the use of the number seven where he makes reference to the *Thirukkural* (a religious work written by Saint Valluvar) to support his viewpoint. He makes reference to the *Yele Pirappu*, which means seven births. He says that the concept of re-incarnation, which is characteristic of Hinduism, allows for each human being to go through seven births.

The importance of light

Light plays a very important role in a Tamil marriage ceremony. There are a number of rituals, which involve the use of lamps. The three main lamps found in a marriage *pandal* are:

Paavai Villaku

The *Paavai Villaku* is described as the 'lady with the lamp', with graceful, fluid lines, sensuous curves and a perfect balance of the bodylines as portrayed by the craftsmen that made them. This lamp is used as a means of welcoming the guests to the marriage ceremony. It also symbolically removes all forms of darkness and replaces it with light, literally and figuratively.

Kuday Villaku

The *Kuday Villaku* is a single lamp that is found on the left of the *pandal*. The lamp is placed on a pot, which in turn, is placed on top of a *wural* (rice stamper). This lamp has to remain burning throughout the marriage ceremony. In order to prevent the lamp from going out, a banana leaf is placed around the lamp. When the marriage ceremony is completed, the bride has to put this lamp out. She is later required to take a lamp to her new home. This will be explained later.
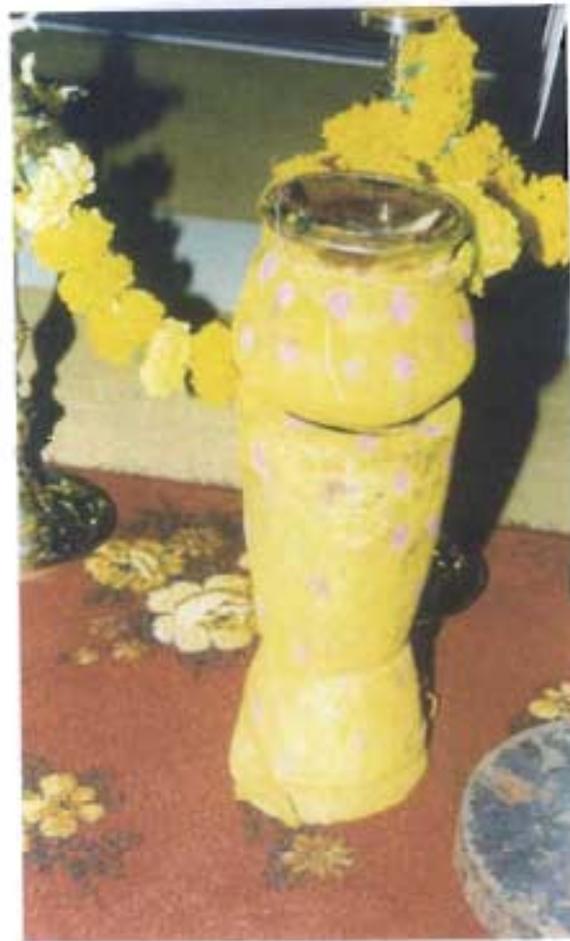
Fig.30

Kuday Villaku (lamp), placed on top of a *wural* (rice stamper)

Kamachee Villaku

This lamp is held by the bride's sister throughout the marriage ceremony and plays an important role during the fastening of the *thali*.

The importance of light is further emphasised in the performance of the *aradhanay*, which is done after every ritual. The turning of a lamp seals each step of the marriage ritual with seven wicks around the heads of the couple, three times in a clockwise movement followed by the sprinkling of water. While doing this, the priest chants the following *mantra*:

"Dhooba dheebam nayvethiam poojam samarpiaamy"   (turning of light)

"Sarva theertham poojam samarpiaamy"   (sprinkling of water)

We offer you the symbolic light, which is filled with ghee and oil

We offer you water as a means of cleansing.

Camphor is also used as a source of burning and is lit throughout the marriage ceremony. It has great spiritual significance. According to Venketraman (pc: 2000) the lighting of camphor is full of valuable symbolism. When you light camphor, even whole camphor, it starts off as a small flame. Then the flame slowly rises until it gradually reaches its zenith or highest point. Then the flame gradually goes down. It gets smaller and smaller until finally it becomes tiny, as small as it began. And then it goes out after a while. The flame of the camphor symbolises our own mortal life. We start life as tiny infants, then rise to full growth and development and then gradually decline until we eventually go back to our second childhood.

Arasani kaal

The *arasani kaal* consists of a bamboo stick with seven knots (nodes) and seven spaces. An *abishegam* is performed to consecrate the stick. This is done by washing the stick with milk, curd, rose water, turmeric water and plain water. A bunch of leaves, comprising of a *banyan* leaf with three *santhanam* stripes and a *kungum* dot, mango leaves and *arasam* leaves and a few stems of flowers are attached to the top of the stick with a piece of white cloth dipped in turmeric water. In a knot using the same cloth, the following items are fastened:

- Turmeric stick signifying the commitment of the bridal couple

- Betel leaf and betel nut signifying a means of sealing the necessary vows

- Flowers which add some colour and beauty

- A Coin, to attach value to the marriage ceremony.

The stick is then planted in a pot and placed on the left side of the *pandal*.

Muthu (1974:54) explains the significance of planting the *arasani* tree as it denotes the Trimurthy - *Brahma, Vishnu* and *Shiva* as the creator, sustainer and destroyer respectively. To perform the marriage ceremony the officiating priest has to create a divine atmosphere in the place of marriage. That is why all the Gods, Devas and Planets are placed as symbols. The *Arasani* tree represents the Trimurthy, the seeds the planets, the vessels the consorts of the Trimurthy - *Parvathi, Lakshmi* and *Saraswathee.*

A Moodley (pc: 2001) explains that the *arasumaram* (banyan) tree has a lot of spiritual significance in a marriage ceremony. It is said that according to some of the religious teachings, if you meditate under an *arasumaram* tree, you will be able to get flashes of insight of your previous lives, flashes of spirituality and flashes of the transcendental world. Therefore, in ancient times especially in India, in order to receive the necessary sanctity, marriages were conducted under an *arasumaram* tree. However, in recent times, this tree is not easily available, both in India and in South Africa. A bamboo stick is therefore used to represent an *arasumaram* tree.

Raman (pc: 2001) explains why a green bamboo is used for this purpose. The philosophy behind a green bamboo is that it is bendable. If it bends it does not break, unlike a dry bamboo. The symbolism is that the marriage itself must allow for a certain degree of compromise and flexibility without breaking if there are any problems.

Pillay (pc: 2001) outlines why a bamboo with seven nodes and spaces is chosen. The seven nodes represent the seven stages of life from birth to death, which include marriage. Of the anthropologically significant rituals, birth, the naming ceremony, coming-of-age, and death, marriage alone involves two persons. The joint role of both the bride and groom is highlighted by the strength of the bamboo. At the end of the marriage ceremony, the groom is expected to remove the bamboo stick and carry it to his home. This is symbolic, as, first the *Trimurthy* has blessed it' and second it serves as a wand of protection, and as from that day, the groom is officially the protector of his wife. N Moodley (pc: 2001) states that most of the Hindu mythological figures carry wands, which serve as a means of protecting their devotees e.g. *Krishna* (flute), *Hanuman* (*thandaayagam*-club), *Muruga* (*vel*-spear), *Sivan* (*sulam*-staff).

The significance of the coconut

The use of the coconut in a Tamil marriage ceremony, like other Hindu religious ceremonies cannot be over-emphasized. A coconut is used in the following activities and rituals associated with a marriage:

- It is broken in many pieces to welcome the bridal couple at the marriage venue.

- It is used in the *kalsam* as a head and two eyes to represent the Trimurthy.

- It is used to hold the *kanganam*, before attaching it to the wrists of the bridal couple.

- It is used to hold the *thali*, before it is tied around the bride's neck.

- It is broken in two halves when offering prayer at a temple after the marriage ceremony.

- It is broken into many pieces before entering the respective homes of the bridal couple.

- It is broken in two halves when prayers were offered to *Ganesha* before the commencement of the nalungu.

- A coconut is also broken in two halves and offered to the chosen deity before the bride leaves her parents home with the *Kamachee Vilaku* (lamp).

Venketraman (pc: 2000) provides a philosophical explanation of the importance of a coconut in religious ceremonies. He says that a coconut is broken in two halves and placed on either side of a deity when an offering is made. He also explains the symbolism associated with the coconut .He states that a coconut is pure white when it is broken. The devotee is asking the Lord to make his soul as pure as the purity of the coconut, which is housed inside the coarse outer covering. Furthermore, the coconut water is always pure. Even though the water that nourishes the palm tree that bears the coconut may be polluted, no matter what dirt or filth there is at its feet, the palm produces the coconut with its absolutely pure liquid.

In associating the above with a marriage, the bridal couple is actually appealing to God that in the same way that this water from the coconut is pure, even though they

may mix with people who may not be good, even though their surroundings may be faulty or even polluted, they appeal for their own souls to be as pure and as accepting as is the water of the coconut.

According to N Moodley (pc: 2001), when a coconut is broken during a marriage ceremony, it means the couple is declaring that their inner spirits are now ready to commit themselves in all the rituals

Bridal hair arrangement

The dressing of a bride's hair is a time consuming affair and a distinguishing feature of a Tamil bride. Subramanian and Murugan (1980:185) state that the Tamils, especially women, have many ornaments to adorn their bodies. They use different ornaments for head, neck, ears, nose, hands, fingers and legs. The Tamils do not like to have their hands and neck bare. Even though they may not be rich enough to buy ornaments made of gold, they may have ornaments made of any other material.

Earrings are amongst the most beautiful of bridal ornaments, whether long swinging ones, heavy studs, or simple tops, worn according to the occasion and attire, they are essential for a complete bridal look.

According to Raman (pc: 2001) it is believed that the tinkling of anklets on a bride denotes the arrival of Goddess Lakshmi (Goddess of wealth), in the house. As such, the bride is supposed to bring wealth and prosperity to the husband's home.

According to Kuppusami (1993: 23), the jewellery fitted on a bride's hair is called *Jadanagam* and is very symbolic. Each part is neatly screwed into the braided hair. The *Rakash*, which is shaped like a disc, represents the sun, which symbolises brilliance. This is followed by another item depicting the crescent moon, which is evocative of peace and calm. Then comes the hydra-headed divine cobra, *Anantha* (Lord Vishnu rests on the coiled cobra). In the present time, jewellery pieces are rarely used. The bride wears a substitute made with selected flowers deftly woven into the braid. The finished product is as exquisite and as meaningful as the real thing.

The bridegroom is also required to wear a *malar* (gold chain) around his neck. This chain consists of gold sovereigns. According to Raman (pc: 2001), this chain was used to raise the status of the groom in preparation for his important role in the marriage ceremony

Tamils have given much importance to adornment from the ancient times. According to Subramanian and Murugan (1980: 185), flowers and ornaments had supremacy in adornment in all ages. Equal importance was given to flowers and dresses. There is no function without flowers whether it is a happy or sad one. It is worth mentioning that flowers are considered auspicious in a Tamil person's life.

9.2 The procedures involved in a Tamil marriage ceremony

9.2.1 Arrival at the *Kalyana Mandappam* (marriage hall)

When the bridal couple arrive at the hall with their parents and immediate family, they are welcomed in the traditional way with the turning of the *alum* (water mixed with lime and turmeric), and the breaking of the coconut. This is done in order to eradicate or counteract any negative or bad vibrations. A Moodley (pc: 2001) states that if the marriage is conducted in a temple or a temple hall, a prayer is performed in respect to the presiding deity of the temple in addition to the above.

After this procedure, an entourage comprising the parents of the couple, two young ladies representing the bride and groom, and a married lady, leads the couple from the outside to the inside of the hall. As this is done, the guests rise and welcome the couple, while the *Mangala Vathium* is played on the *Nadaswaram* (musical instrument). According to A Moodley (pc: 2001) the *Mangala Vathium* is very important in South Indian prayer ceremonies. The *Malari Raga* (musical notation) has been specifically written for a marriage ceremony. It clears the way for a good, prosperous, long and happy marriage. Nowadays, a modern dance or a *bhangra* song item, has replaced this very traditional and significant aspect.

The couple, parents and other assistants will go around the *pandal* (Divine canopy) three times and than present themselves to the priest. The first thing that is done when the couple enters the *pandal* is the blessing of the garlands, which are then placed around the neck of the bride and the groom. The blessing is sought from the deities in the pandal. In most Tamil weddings, the couple enters the sanctified area already garlanded.

Venketraman (pc: 2001) explains that the flowers in the garland signify interwoven lives. Just like the fragrance of a flower, cannot be separated from the flower itself, so too, an appeal is made to Lord Shiva to keep the lives of the bridal couple together.

According to Pillay (pc: 2001), there are two ways in which the garland is draped around the necks of the couple. In some instances, the couple drape it on each other. There is a very strong belief that the bridal couple should not drape it for each other at this stage, as they are not married as yet. The generally accepted procedure is for the respective sisters to drape the garlands for the bridal couple.

9.2.2 Anga Sutham (purification ceremony)

The bridal couple is prepared for the rituals by partaking in a purification ceremony. They are required to place their left hands on top of their right hands. The priest scoops water in the mango leaf, which he then places in the hands of the bride, and groom. Using the fingers of the right hand the bridal couple are required to wet their fingers and then touch their bodies with their wet fingers. This anointing procedure is a symbolic physical and mental cleansing process, which is stimulated by the reciting of the appropriate *mantras*.

9.2.3   Kanganam (tying of turmeric string)

Once the purification ceremony is completed, the bridal couple are required to take an oath stating that their minds are fully committed to the ensuing rituals and ceremonies in which both of them are going to participate. The tying of the *kanganam* seals this.

Kanganam is cotton dipped in turmeric powder and tied with a turmeric stick, which the officiating priest ties to the wrists of the bridal couple, during a ritual known as '*Kappu Kattuthal*' (tying of the string). This ceremony is conducted to ensure spiritual protection for the couple and to commit them to the rituals that follow. In other words, the priest and the bridal couple pledge not to divert from the principles and rules pertaining to the marriage ceremony as laid down by the scriptures.

Fig. 31

Tying of the *kanganam* (turmeric stick)

The preparation of the *kanganam* is very symbolic as explained by Muthu (1974: 11). Rice mixed with turmeric must be spread on a pan; a coconut decorated with turmeric and *kungum* must be placed on the spread rice. The significance of rice as explained by N Moodley (pc: 2001), is part of a very old tradition, whereby tremendous respect is accorded to this grain as the staple diet of millions of people in India. Therefore, by using rice in religious ceremonies, a similar type of respect is sought from the participants. Respect is also accorded to turmeric, which has important sterilising and healing properties.

Muthu (1974: 11) explains that the *kanganam* ceremony signifies that the bridal couple swear that they will, till the completion of the wedding rites, be true, honest and steadfast. After the completion of the wedding, this process is reversed. That is, the bridegroom must place his right hand on the coconut and the officiator must untie the *kanganam*, while the bride places her left hand on the coconut and the bridegroom, unties the *kanganam*. While this is being done instrumental music is played at high pitch, so that any unwanted sounds including coughing and sneezing are inaudible.

According to A Moodley (pc: 2001) and Muthu (1974: 16), in traditional weddings, and before the tying of the *kanganam,* the bridal couple is presented with a new set of clothes, which are blessed and worn for the actual marriage ceremony. New clothes, jewellery, flowers, betel leaves and nuts are placed on a tray. The priest chants a few *mantras* or sings a hymn and presents the clothes to the groom. He does the same for the bride. While the couple leave the stage to change into the new set of clothes, there is a break for an orchestra or *katcheri* (musical performance) to bridge the time. This

practice provides an opportunity for local artists to showcase their talents. In most cases, the songs that were rendered were devotional in nature, which contributes towards invoking divine intervention for the marriage rituals that follow. This practice does not take place in modern times due to time constraints.

Fig.32

Katcheri (musical recital), of semi-classical and devotional songs.

After having attired themselves in the bridal clothes, the couple re-enters the *pandal* to take their marriage rituals.

In most marriage ceremonies, the couple is also given a grass ring made out of *dharbar* grass, which is a long grass with a spine. A Moodley (pc: 2000) explains that a ring made of *dharbar* grass has the potential of amplifying the prayer, a multitude of times.

According to Balasubramaniam (2001:10) the *dharbar* grass, also known as *kusha*, is a significant part of all Hindu rituals, and is used unfailingly for all auspicious occasions. The Ramayana refers to *kusha* grass. *Sita* is said to have placed a blade of grass between herself and *Ravana*, when he tried to win her over. The symbolism of

grass is further illustrated in the same article when Balasubramaniam says that one of the valuable lessons of life can be elucidated with the example of the humble grass: of how the grass weathers many a storm by simply bowing to the mighty wind and standing up again, once the storm passes. On the other hand, a bigger stronger tree simply crashes with the force of the wind. This illustrates how one can overcome calamities and stand tall again.

N Moodley (pc: 2001) states that both the *kanganam* and *dharbar* ring serve the same purpose, to commit the bridal couple to the rituals and processes involved in the marriage ceremony. After the tying of the *kanganam* the couple is now mentally and physically prepared to participate in the rituals.

9.2.4 Vinayaga prayer (removal of obstacles)

The marriage ceremony commences with a prayer offered to *Lord Vinayaga* also referred to as *Gajananam* (elephant head). This prayer is also known as the Akreea Poojay (prayer), which is done in order to seek the blessing of *Vinayaga (Ganesha)*, to purify, cleanse and to clear the atmosphere of all obstacles and impediments. The reason for this worship is that among the Hindus, there is a firm belief that in order for any function or ceremony to be successful, the impediments or obstacles need to be removed. It is *Vinayaga* who is expected to clear the path. According to Vadivelu (pc: 2000), if you want to see the manager of a factory, you are not expected to go directly to him. You always consult with his secretary who makes the necessary appointments. Similarly, it is *Vinayaga* who prepares you for the spiritual encounter with God.

According to Pillay (pc: 2001), the couple is required to place flower petals near the *Ganesha* idol while the priest chants 108 *mantras*. The couple is required to say '*Potri, Potri',* each time, which means, 'Lord I praise You, I laud You, I thank You, I beautify you, I glorify you". As soon as the prayer is completed the couple is required to sprinkle water over the Idol, seven times. Each time they sprinkle water the priest utters the names of the seven holy rivers of India.

Vadivelu (pc: 2000) states that the prayer is normally conducted in a sanctified atmosphere, hence, the choice of appropriate *mantras.* He adds that in order to get maximum benefits from this exercise, the following procedure must be adopted:

Each participant adds a little powdered camphor to the *deeba kalsam*, when the words *namaha* is mentioned. The participants also utter the words *namaha*. Flower petals can be used in place of camphor. As an alternative, the hands can go around the head before dropping the flowers.

After every ritual, an *aradhanay* (prayer) is performed whereby the bridal couple turn the *deeba kalsam* with lit camphor, three times for the chosen activity. This is done three times in a clockwise direction followed by three times in an up down formation. Jousse (2000:240) maintains that without this bilateral geste of the High and the Low, the world would make absolutely no sense. This is followed by offering water with a small bunch of *darbha* grass. Both water and fire are important environmental elements on which man is dependent for survival.

9.26 Kalsam prayer (invocation to the Trinity)

The *kalsam,* which is built up by the use of a coconut, represents the *Trimurthy* of God, in His triple attributes, *BRAHMA* (creator), *VISHNU* (preserver), and *SHIVA* (dissolver). Although each attribute is different, God is one. According to Raman (pc: 2001) Hinduism is essentially a concept of unity in diversity. *Brahma, Vishnu* and *Shiva –* the *Trimurthy*; the holy trinity; three in one and one in three and the thousand other manifestations of the One. The *kalsam* prayer, which takes the form of offering flower petals to the *kalsam*, is now directed to God, who rules over the universe, and is the main witness to the marriage ceremony. The priest leads the prayer with the chanting of *mantras,* seeking a life free from hardships, problems and other difficulties.

Prayers are also offered to other minor deities representing the female aspect of God, viz. *Saraswathee, Lakshmi,* and *Parvathi.* Vadivelu (pc: 2000) says that the female aspect of God represent the energy, which is the primary source of everything that happens on earth. Energy is necessary for all motion, without which there will be no activity. Vadivelu (pc: 2000) uses the following example to explain this. Take a piece of clay and place it in front of a person. The person knows that he can shape the clay into any form, i.e.. He has the knowledge. He can sit the whole day and look at the clay and nothing will happen. However, as soon as he uses his knowledge to transfer energy into his hands, and he shapes the clay with his hands, his knowledge is put to good use. The female aspect of God represents this energy.

Fig.33

The bridal couple offering flower petals to the *kalsam*

The female aspect of God is also represented by the *Kamachi Villaku* (lamp), which is held throughout the marriage ceremony by a female assistant who stands behind the couple. The female energy is translated into light and heat.

According to A Moodley and N Moodley (pc: 2001), when prayers are offered to the consecrated *Kalsam*, the prayer not only serves as a commitment by the bridal couple, but also acts as a communication medium to the Divine Master. Furthermore, the families have a choice in the selection of deities to be given prominence during the marriage ceremony. It is believed that certain deities provide assistance and support to

families during times of need and it is therefore necessary to pay homage to these deities during an important occasion like a marriage ceremony.

According to Raman (pc: 2001), at this point of the marriage ceremony, it is important to determine whether the marriage has been consummated prior to the ceremony. The status of this revelation will have an influence on the actual rituals that follow, especially with the breaking of a coconut, which cannot be done if the bride is pregnant. According to him, these days, the couple feel embarrassed or offended if this question is asked. However, as a precautionary measure, and to obviate any problems, a special prayer can be offered to counteract any negative effects that can happen. In fact according to A Moodley, (pc) it is better to do the prayer, as you will be undertaking the *Ashtamurthi,* which is the eight *Rudras* of *Lord Shiva.*

At this juncture, tribute is also paid to the five elements that rule life on earth viz. air, water, fire, soil and the weather. The choice of the prayer and associated *mantras* for the *kalsam* prayer differ from priest to priest. However, the intention and the procedures follow the same format. N Moodley (pc: 2001) commences this ritual with the *Maha Vishnu Thotram*, a prayer to *Lord Vishnu*. Thereafter, he recites a set of *mantras*. The bridal couple are required to utter the words *'Namo Namaha'* after every line, while they offer flower petals to the *kalsam*. These words mean 'my prostrations unto you'. The offering of the petals and the utterance of the words *'Namo Namaha'*, connect the couple with the Divine Being.

9.2.7 Mana Pongal (prayer to the seven holy rivers)

After the *Vinayaga* and *Kalsam* prayers, the couple is led to the front of the *pandal* where they face the seven *Sopukudams* (vessels or pots). The seven pots symbolically contain the waters from the seven sacred rivers: *Ganga, Jamuna, Sarasvati, Narmada, Kaveri, Sindhu,* and *Godaveri.* The pots also represent the seven good fairies that are responsible for bringing the seven requisites necessary for a successful marriage. The couple is required to light camphor next to each one of the pots. The bride will light the three on the extreme right while the groom lights the three on the left. The seventh camphor in the centre is lit by both of them.

N Moodley (pc: 2001) explains that special deities control the seven holy rivers in India. According to him, there are over 330 million deities in Hindu Mythology. A deity controls every star, sun, planet, stream, river or any aspect of metaphysical life. The seven holy rivers representing the *Kanniamma* (seven fairies) play a very important role in the well being of a marriage.

The couple then face the *Arasani Kaal* and offer a prayer. The *Arasani Kaal* (bamboo stick) has seven nodes. If the space above the last node or the space below the first node is taken into account, it will be observed that there are seven spaces. Each space represents a stage in the development of a human being i.e. embryo, childhood, youth, adulthood, parenthood, grand parenthood, and finally renunciation. In the last space of the stick, three kinds of leaves are tied which represent the *Trimurthy - Brahma, Vishnu* and *Shiva.*

Muthu (1974:54) explains that the significance of planting the *Arasani kaal* denotes the *Trimurthy - Brahma, Vishnu and Siva.* To perform a marriage ceremony the

officiating priest has to create Divine atmosphere in the place of the marriage, that is why all the Gods, Devas and Planets are placed as symbols. The *Arasu* tree represents the Trimurthy, the seeds - the planets, the vessels - the consorts of the Trimurthy, *Parvathi, Lakshmi* and *Sarasvathy.*

By offering a prayer to the stick, the bridal couple are reminded symbolically of the noble and elevated nature of life, the purpose of life and what should be attained ultimately.

9.2.8 Kanyadanam (giving away the bride)

This procedure involves the bridal couple as well as their parents. It is known as *Kanyadhaan* (giving away the bride) in Sanskrit. This is an important ceremony as the bride from this day changes her *Gotra* (surname/practices) and assumes her husband's *Gotra*. There should be no inhibitions whatsoever in the bride's parents in handing her over in marriage and from the bridegroom's parents in receiving her. In order to effect these changes:

- The bride must obtain her parent's consent
- The groom's parents must agree to receive the bride as a member of their family.

The priest seals this arrangement in the following manner.

The bride places her right palm on top of her left palm .The bride's father holding his palms in the same manner as the bride places his palms under the bride's palms. The groom holding his palms in the same manner, places his palms under the palms of his

father in law. The groom's father holding his palms in the same manner places his palms under the palms of his son.

BRIDE'S HANDS

BRIDE'S FATHER'S HANDS

GROOM'S HANDS

GROOM'S FATHER'S HANDS

When the priest has arranged the hands in the above manner, he places a betel leaf, betel nut and a flower on the palm of the bride. The priest offers water to the flower and betel leaf, while reciting a *mantra*.

According to Pillay (pc: 2001) a small brass vessel containing water; a betel leaf; a betel nut and a flower is placed on the palms of the bride

The priest says to the bride, *"To signify your willingness to marry the groom, remove both your hands sideways'.* The betel leaf will fall on to her father's palms. The priest than says to the bride's father. *Your daughter has consented – now will you say to the groom – This is your bride and the responsibility is yours – to cherish and to care for, now remove your palms sideways".* The betel leaf will now fall on the groom's palm. The priest says to the groom. *"You are telling your father – This is my bride –please accept her as a member of our family-now remove your palms sideways.'* The betel leaf will fall on the palm of the groom's father. The priest finally says to the groom's father. *"You are telling your son – In joy and happiness we accept your bride as a member of our family".* The groom's father takes the betel leaf and flower with him. This symbolises that he will keep his daughter-in-law for life.

Fig.34

Kanyadanam (giving away the bride)

According to N Moodley (pc: 2001), the symbolism of fire in this ritual is very important. When this ritual is started, lit camphor is placed on a leaf, which is housed in a small container and placed on the bride's palm. The bride is expected to be truthful in her decisions and actions. It is believed that truth emerges from fire. The parents also commit themselves by placing a dot on each other's foreheads.

Jousse (2000:75) explains how Corporeal-manual style man is able to perform certain actions by merely re-playing what was done in the past and states:

> Corporeal- manual Style man has been trained routinely to mime and re-play, corporeally and especially manually all the actions and interactions of the universe in his concrete, modelling, logical Propositional Gestes. From the depths of his bilaterally structured organism and almost in spite of himself, he thus feels himself impelled, after each Propositional Geste has been played, to re-play this Propositional Geste in a form that is identical, analogous or antithetical. A single Propositional Geste will thus trigger one or two others, which physiologically and semantically, will balance the first.

9.2.9 Mami Kuray (gift to bride's parents)

The parents of the bride are asked to move to the left of the *pandal*, where they are handed a gift from the groom. The priest recites a *mantra* and offers flowers indicating that this is a gift from the groom thanking the bride's parents for caring for his future wife for all the years that have gone before.

Fig.35

Mami Kuray (gift to the bride's parents)

9.2.10 Yagiam (raising of the sacred fire)

The couple is required to move towards the front of the *Manavarai*, in order to make offerings through the agency of fire. The sacred fire is lit during appropriate recitations of *mantras* to purify the atmosphere by burning aromatic herbs and to symbolically kindle the fire of mutual love and affection in the couple.

The *Yagiam* involves the raising of the sacrificial fire. Raman (pc: 2001), states that this fire, which is known as *Omam Valarthal*, and all the lamps that burn in the *pandal* represent the light of the universe – the *'Arul Jothi'* which dispels all

darkness, all ignorance and all evil. It illuminates the mind, providing radiance and inner wisdom. Fire is also regarded as the power and source of all energy and evolution.

The lighting of the fire for ablution signifies the essential elements for all aspects to live in the material world e.g. ***Fire (Sun), Moon, Water, Sky, and Air.*** The fire must constantly flame until the marriage ceremony is completed and finalised. This signifies that there is continuous light, for the fulfilment of the important rituals and commitments.

Vadivelu (pc: 2000) describes how the *Yagiam kundum* (container) should be prepared.

- *Kungum, gadampudi* and *munja* are sprinkled on the bottom of the container.
- Four *dharbar* sticks are placed on top of the powders to form eight segments with a centre.
- A betel leaf with a slab of camphor is placed in the centre.
- Slabs of camphor are placed in all the segments. In total, there will be nine slabs.
- Dry mango sticks are placed in the container building around the centre. A small gap is left in the centre to allow for breathing and to enable the fire to burn properly.

Fig. 36

Preparation for the *yagiam* (sacrificial fire)

A Moodley (pc: 2001) emphasises the importance of the *Mahayagna* or *Yagiam* in a marriage ceremony. The purpose of this ritual is to ensure a trouble free marriage. The offerings made to the fire are all natural elements that will assist in the development of the fire in order for the priest to complete the necessary *mantras*. Some of these elements include roots, beans etc. Vegetable ghee is also used to develop the flames. The ghee is mixed with powdered roots and nine types of seeds. This represents the *Navagrahas,* or the planets, which according to ancient scriptures control the destiny of man.

According to Venketraman (pc: 2001) these offerings are made to the sacrificial fire, to pay tribute to the God of Fire himself, *Maha Agni.* However, before that, an offering is made to *Lord Ganesha.* Thereafter, tributes are paid to all the deities, *Shiva, Vishnu,* and *Muruga* as well as to the mother element of God, especially *Mother Lakshmi,* who plays a very important role in a marriage. The *Yagiam* is complimented with the chanting of different *mantras.*

Fig.37

Bridal couple performing the *yagiam* (*havan*)

Chetty (pc: 2000) uses the *Yagiam* as an example to explain that certain rituals have deep symbolical meaning and, provided that these are properly explained to the people, they have tremendous value. He remarks that the *Yagiam* or *havan* provides for two or more persons, often drawn from family groups to partake in prayer together, each joining with the other. The aroma of burning incense is delightful as are the symbolism of fire. The cleansing smell of the smoke of mango sticks, also helps.

A piece of lit camphor is placed in a large container comprising dry mango sticks, which is used for the purpose of raising the sacrificial fire The couple is given '*havan*

samagari', which is made up of various natural elements, which have to be introduced to the fire each time the priest recites a set of *mantras*. The couple utters the word, *'swaha'*, when they place the mixture in the fire. The *mantras* are recited to invoke the blessings of all the deities.

Venketraman (pc: 2001) states that both camphor and incense have great significance in Hindu religious ceremonies. They are both symbolic of self-sacrifice. Both the camphor and the incense provide positive benefits for other people, by providing either light or a sweet and refreshing aroma. But in doing this, it destroys itself. In the same way, when the bridal couple turn camphor as part of an *aradhanay* (prayer) after each ritual, they are in fact declaring that they are prepared to make sacrifices in order to make each other comfortable or happy.

Pillay (pc: 2001) states that while the role of the priest is important during the *Yagiam,* the couple also play an active role. They are required to turn the offering of the camphor. They are also required to offer the petals in praise of the different deities as well as the sacrificial elements to the fire. By uttering the words, *'swaha', 'potri'* or *'namaha'*, the bridal couple is in agreement with what the priest is doing.

Most of the couples interviewed indicated that they did not understand Tamil and Sanskrit, the languages that were used to perform the rituals. However, they felt comfortable merely following the actions of the priest. They felt that by participating in this way, they were satisfying the principles underlying a typical marriage ceremony. Jousse (2000:73) explains this as follows:

> The Corporeal-manual Style man is able to embed the countless actions and interactions of the universe in his entire acting, sensing and knowing being. This he does, both for himself and for others: for himself a summarised microscopic gesticulation which still allows him to grasp with full consciousness and to trace with clarity each of the phases of the Propositional Geste will suffice, while for others he lets his corporeal and manual Mimemes irradiate macroscopically with all the amplitude needed to make them easily recognisable and understood.

According to Raman (pc: 2001) and Vadivelu (pc: 2000) the bride and groom are then required to go around the fire seven times after they have completed the *Yagiam*. They lead each other alternately around the fire, while the priest recites the *mantras*. These are invocations to God, asking Him to provide them with the seven requisites for a successful marriage:

1) **NOURISHMENT**: God must provide the couple with food that is nourishing.

2) **GOOD HEALTH**: The couple must be blessed with good health, which means freedom from illness etc.

3) **STRENGTH**: The couple must be provided with the strength to withstand adverse conditions.

4) **WEALTH AND PROSPERITY**: They must be provided with enough wealth to survive through difficult economic times.

5) **WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE**: They must have the right knowledge to choose the right path.

6) **LOVE AND UNDERSTANDING**: There must be always love and understanding between husband and wife.

7) **GOOD CHILDREN**: For continued happiness the children that follow must be good, not only in their response and reaction, but also physically.

It is believed that a combination of all these factors will result in a successful marriage.

Muthu (1974: 60) explains that the circumambulation of the sacred fire denotes the commitment of the married couple to abide by the rules of law and principles of marriage as lay down in the scriptures. Muthu (1974: 37) further explains that the *Panigrahana* (taking hold of the hand) and *saptapadi* (taking seven steps) are very important in sacramental marriage as it signifies that the bride, by permitting the groom to take hold of her hand and following his foot-steps around the *Manavarai* consents to be his life-partner and follow him in the marital journey.

N Moodley (pc: 2001) explains that the couple hold hands during the circumambulation process so that no one can come in between them and destroy their marriage. He further explains that it is a cultural norm for the groom to first lead his bride around the fire, as it is perceived that a man has to shoulder most of the responsibilities in a marriage. Thereafter, the couple alternate in leading each other around the fire, until they complete this process seven times.

The *Yagiam (havan),* performed by Pillay (pc: 2001) and other priests vary slightly from the above. Pillay requires that the couple sit and perform the *havan* ceremony, while the priest chants the *mantras* 108 times. According to Venketraman (pc: 2000), the figure 108 is derived from the number nine, which is symbolic of the nine planets, which, according to the Hindu religion, plays a very important role in man's daily existence. According to Pillay (pc: 2001), this ritual is performed with the fire burning to remove all the ill luck, misfortunes, and evil spirits, and to introduce light into the lives of the married couple.

N Moodley (pc: 2001) maintains that it does not matter how the *havan* is performed, whether, while standing, walking or sitting: it is participation of the couple that is important. Furthermore, by walking around the fire seven times, the Saptapadi, a ritual, which originated during *Vedic* times, is being satisfied.

Raman (pc: 2001) explains that while the sacrificial elements are being offered to the fire, a series of *mantras* are recited in honour of *Mother Lakshmi* who plays a very important part in a marriage. Thereafter, *mantras* are uttered in praise of the *Navagrahas* (nine planets), which also play an important role in religious ceremonies. Moodley (pc) further explains that, according to the Hindu scriptures, the nine planets control man's life; hence the scriptures teach us not to underestimate or downplay the role of the *Navagrahas*. That is why this prayer is performed twice in a marriage ceremony, during the kalsam prayer as well as during the *Yagiam*.

Moodley (pc) explains that the purpose of offering natural elements to the *Yagiam* or sacrificial fire is to ask the deities to emerge from the fire and occupy the minds of the bridal couple as they take this bold step in their lives.

There are a number of different types of *mantras* that are used to raise the sacred fire. The officiating priest recites the *mantra* while the couple chant the last word and offer the *havan samagari* (mixture) into the fire. Muthu (1974:24) uses the *mantra*, which is called the '*Namasivaya Vazhga*' (dedication to Lord *Shiva*). In these lines, Saint Manickavasagar enumerates the divine, supernatural, noble and heroic attributes of Lord *Shiva* and makes salutations to Him.

The procedure is completed with the circumambulation of the sacred fire. The couple is required to walk seven times around the fire reciting the words *'swaha'* after the priest. The purpose of this *mantra* is to seek the essential attributes for a successful marriage.

9.2.11 Mangaliam Poojay (prayer for the nuptial cord)

The parents of the couple are requested to enter the *Manavarai* in order to offer prayer to the *mangaliam* (nuptial cord). The priest takes the tray with the *mangaliam* and places it in front of the seated couple in the presence of the *kalsam*. The couple together with their parents offer flowers to the *mangaliam* while the priest recites the appropriate *mantras*.

After the prayer, the priest takes the lamp in his right hand and the *mangaliam* tray in his left hand and proceeds towards the guests to seek their blessings. He first goes to the left, the centre and then to the right. He performs this task while reciting a prayer. He than returns to the *Manavarai* and places the tray in front of the *kalsam*.

Fig. 38 The Brahmin (priest) blessing the *thali*

A Moodley (pc: 2001) states that in India, there is more than one priest who officiates at a marriage ceremony. One of the priests has a duty of taking the *thali* to each member of the audience to seek their blessings. This is not practical in South Africa, due to the shortage of priests; hence the priest waves the *thali* from the stage.

It has already been explained that the *'Thali'* is a gold pendant attached to a cotton string, which has been dipped in turmeric paste. The *mangaliam* ceremony i.e. the tying of the *thali* is considered to be the most important part of a Tamil marriage ceremony. During the act of tying the thali, the *Kamachee Villakku,* the lamp of the *Goddess Lakshmi,* is held above the couple, with the belief that the goddess is present to witness and bless the marriage.

The *thali,* also known as *mangalsutra,* usually depicts auspicious emblems of popular deities, or fruits and vegetables, signifying fertility and abundance. It also symbolises a promise or a vow. The thali, being symbolic of the bride's married status, is viewed as a sacred ornament – to be cherished and preserved by the woman forever.

Vadivelu (pc: 2000) outlines the procedure for the preparation of this important marriage symbol. The string is wound around a coconut and placed in a tray containing rice, turmeric paste, betel leaves and betel nuts. Turmeric and sandalwood paste is applied to the *thali* in order to consecrate it. These elements symbolise *'sustenance','good health', 'fertility', 'purity'* and *'dedicated Love'.* It is important to note that once the thali is placed on the tray after consecration, neither the priest nor any one else except the groom may touch it. Before tying the *thali* the bride and

groom pray that this symbol of their marriage will be blessed with the grace of God and theirs will be a permanent and loving union.

The shape and design of the *thali* (pendant), changes according to caste, represented by the family name. This practice is slowly fading away in South Africa where there are no caste differences, except for different family names. This practice originated in India where caste differences necessitated an identification symbol. The colour of the bride's sari was also determined by the surname of the bridegroom.

Raman (pc: 2001) adds that before the commencement of a marriage ceremony, the *thali,* which is tied around a coconut, is placed next to the *kalsam* where it absorbs positive energy and the blessings of all the deities. Before being accepted by the bride it is taken around on a brass tray and shown to the witnesses who give it further blessings and more energy. This is very important as it increases the chances of happiness in a marriage.

A Moodley (pc: 2001) explains that gold plays a very important role in religious ceremonies. He adds that the Hindu religion recognised many years ago that gold is the only metal that can be obtained in its pure form. It is because of its symbol of purity that gold has been assimilated into marriage ceremonies. Apart from the *thali,* gold jewellery is also given to the bride as gifts in the form of earrings, bracelets and neck-chains.

9.2.12 General prayer

The guests are requested to stand, while the priest leads them in prayer, in preparation for the *mangaliam*. According to N Moodley (pc: 2001) this is called *mangaliam asaivanam,* which is simply seeking the blessing of the witnesses for the *thali*. The wedding invitation is officially read and it is publicly announced that the couple is about to tie the marital knot. In some instances, and time permitting, the priest provides a brief explanation of the marriage ceremony.

9.2.13 The marriage vow

While the couple is seated the priest asks them to repeat the marriage vow after him. He also asks the guests to pay careful attention, as they are the main witnesses. According to Raman (pc: 2001), N Moodley (pc: 2001) and Pillay (pc: 2001), the bride takes the tray while the *Manamagan* (groom) places his hands on the *mangaliam* and says:

> *Thaaliyai un kazhuthil anaivika irukum naan unnai yendrum*
>
> *Kai vida maatern. Thunbathilum inbathilum vazhvilum thaazhvilum*
>
> *Naam inaip piriyaadhu vazhkaiyai naduthuvorm. Panbum paasamum*
>
> *Porundha vaazhvorm. Indru mudhal yen vaazhvin suga thukang-galil*
>
> *Pangu perugiraai.Ithu Sathiyum*

"I the person who is going to fasten this thali promise you that I shall not forsake you. In sorrow and in joy, in prosperity and in adversity we shall inseparably lead our life together. Let us lead a life of devotion and loyalty. From this day onwards you shall share in my happiness and my distress. This is my oath".

The bridegroom takes the tray. The *Manamagal* (bride) places both her hands on the *mangaliam* and says:

Naan aniya porgum indha mangalamaana thaaliyai yen wuirinum

Merlaaga madhithu thangal manam kornaamal nadandhu,

Inbathilum thunbathilum, vazhvilum thazhvilum inip piriyaadhu

Vazhvorm. Thangalin sugame yen sindhai thangalin virupame yen

Korikai. Indru mudhal wungal vazhvin suga thukang-galil pangu

Kolgiren. Ithuve yen kadamai. Ithaiyai pin patruvern. Ithu uruthi

"I the person who is going to wear this auspicious and sacred thali promise to respect it more than my life and shall not give you cause for complaint. In sorrow and in joy and in prosperity and in adversity we shall inseparably lead our life together. Your happiness shall be my concern; your pleasure shall be my desire. From this day onwards I shall share in your happiness and my distress. This shall be my duty. This is my promise".

Fig.39 The bridal couple taking the marriage vows

The couple is now ready to tie the *thali* (nuptial knot)

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9.2.14 Mangaliam (tying of the nuptial knot)

While the bride holds the tray, the groom takes the *thali* off the coconut. While this is being done the priest recites a prayer, to bless the *thali.*

N Moodley (pc: 2001) emphasises that once the priest blesses the *thali* he is not allowed to touch it again, as it is the property of the groom, who is the only person, henceforth who is allowed to touch his wife's *thali.*

When the *thali* is being fastened it is done by means of three knots. For each knot the priest recites a *mantra* while he offers flowers to invoke the blessings of *Lakshmi,* *Sarasvathy* and *Ambigadevi.* The three knots represent Creation, Preservation and Destruction. The *thali* is the most important external sign of marriage.

Fig 40 The tying of the *thali* (nuptial knot)

Venketraman (pc: 2001), while agreeing that the *Trimurthy* plays an important role in religious ceremonies, states that the number three is also important because of the three *karnams* that control everything that man does viz. *mind, body* and *language* (talk). In other words when offerings are made, it is done wholeheartedly using all the *karnams.*

On the completion of the knots the bridegroom does the following:

i. He dots the knots with *munja* (turmeric), *santhanam* and *kungum,* which act as a sealant.

ii. He circles round the bride's head and places a *kungum* dot on her forehead. He then places a dot on his forehead.

iii. He sprinkles rose water on the knot.

iv. He does an *aradhanay.*

v. He then lifts his hand in prayer to the knot.

The bride scoops the coconut with some of the white rice and places it on a handkerchief. The coconut is wrapped and knotted in the handkerchief.

A Moodley (pc: 2000) explains the role of the different people on stage during the tying of the *thali*; one of the two sisters that were standing behind the couple during the entire ceremony holds the lamp while the other holds the tray containing the burning camphor.

Three *Sumangalis* (married ladies) assist in the tying of the knot. N Moodley (pc: 2001) further states that there is a general belief that widows are not allowed on stage. If one of the parents is a widow they will be allowed on stage, but will not be permitted near the area where the *thali* is being tied. There is a view that marriages will break up if widows are anywhere near the area where the *thali* is tied.

A Moodley (pc: 2001) states that although it is general practice for the groom to tie the *thali,* there are rare occasions when the *thali* is tied by three married ladies and not the groom. This is at the request of the bride's family after consulting with the groom and his parents. The reason for this is that the bride may have experienced serious health problems when she was young. In order to overcome these difficulties certain rituals were performed whereby the girl was given over to the *Goddess Marieamman,* thus preventing a male from tying the *thali* when she eventually gets married.

The tying of the *thali* is the most important part of the Tamil marriage ceremony. In most Tamil marriages the bridegroom is expected to wear a turban during the ceremony, more especially during the tying of the *thali.* According to most of the priests interviewed locally, they all agree that the tying of the *thali* is the most noble and honourable tasks any male can accomplish. Therefore to prepare him for this important role he is elevated to the status of royalty, hence the wearing of a turban.

The groom is required to tie three knots. For each knot a *mantra* is recited in praise of the three consorts *Saraswathee, Laksmi* and *Dhurga.*

The tying of the *thali* is accompanied by music performed on the *Nadaswaram*, a wind instrument accompanied by the *thavil*, which is a loud percussion instrument. According to A Moodley (pc: 2001) the reason for this accompaniment during the tying of the *thali* is to obliterate all other sounds in the auditorium so that full attention is given to this important part of the marriage ceremony. He goes on to say that in India there is always more than one priest officiating at a wedding. Prior to the officiating priest reciting the *mangaliam mantra* the assistant will utter the words '*getimura*', '*getimura*' in a loud voice. This is referred to as the 'counteracting mantra', aimed at counteracting evil and negative forces. In modern times, especially in South Africa, the *Nadaswaram*, either through a live performance or by recorded music, achieves this effect. This in effect is an indication that the marriage ceremony has reached its climax.

Fig. 41

Musical accompaniment during the tying of the *thali*.

In Joussean terms the tying of the knot is a form of writing. In Orality Literary Studies, we examine forms of expression, speaking and writing. We differentiate the one from the other. In a society where there is no scribal writing, there are often forms

of writing, what Jousse calls "mimographic" expression viz. power of fixed expression. Knot tying is a form of mimographic expression, like signing a contract, or signing a marriage register. Tying the knot in a traditional society is the same as putting the signature on paper as is the case in a literate society. The interesting thing about *'tying the knot'* is that it is not restricted to Indian culture. It is also referred to in the English society, where it means getting married. There must have been a knot-tying ceremony somewhere in the English tradition or else there would not have been the idiom, *'tying the knot'*.

All such significance is anthropological. Even if the behaviour has disappeared, we find evidence in the language that is used. That is why we must listen carefully to the idioms of our language. The evidence of our past and of our history is evident in the language that we use.

After the tying of the *thali* when the priest has concluded the *mangaliam mantra,* the *Mangalam* song is performed either through a live performance or by recorded music. The mangalam in a song format is a way of showering praise on the bridal couple and wishing them, on behalf of all the witnesses a life of wealth, prosperity and eternal happiness. The *mangalam* is specially written for the married couple and is very personalised. According to Nirmala (Rhythmo-stylistic workshop:02/6/01) the importance of the *mangalam* is to let everyone know that the couple are now united through marriage and is an indication of the achievement of an important milestone in their lives. A *mangalam* is sung at the conclusion of any ceremony, which brings the entire proceeding to a logical conclusion.

9.2.15 Pottu (tilak) – application of red dot

After the tying of the *thali* the bridegroom applies a red *kungum* dot, called *pottu* or *tilak* on the forehead of his bride. Thereafter the groom will take his finger off the bride's forehead and place a dot on his forehead to signify the union between the two of them, The significance of this ritual, is that the *pottu* applied by her husband should not be effaced by the wife till the end of her life. The placing of a red dot on the forehead has been an essential ritual in almost every Hindu religious and wedding ceremony. It is with this strong belief in the sanctity of the colour red, that the wedded woman continues to apply a *pottu* thereafter. The bright red colour got from vermilion signifies fertility and prosperity.

According to N Moodley (pc: 2001), the *kungum* dot, *thali* string and *minji* (toe rings) are visual symbols of a woman's state of marriage. Sivagami (1980:187) states that the placement of the *kungum* (dot) on the woman's forehead is very important. This practice has been traced to the early periods of Tamil history .It is also the mark of the women, whose husbands are living. Widows have been traditionally been prohibited from having *kungum* and flowers.

9.2.16 The wedding rings

At this point the couple change positions and exchange rings. The exchange of rings, according to A Moodley (pc: 2000), is an adoption of a Christian tradition and has become fashionable in most modern Tamil weddings. The traditional marriage ceremony has been somewhat changed to accommodate this aspect as well as other

Christian practices such has the cutting of a wedding cake. The bride will now stand on the left of the groom. Vadivelu (pc: 2000) explains that, up to the tying of the *thali* the bride was the groom's equal and independent. Hence she sat on the right. After the *mangaliam* she as the groom's wife, is now dependent on him. She is now his companion and partner in life. And has therefore to be on his left - next to his heart.

In most weddings the parents also change position at this juncture whereby they follow their respective children. However, according to N Moodley (pc: 2001) and Raman (pc: 2001) who follow the Vadivelu style of marriage ceremony, they recommend that the parents remain in their original positions, in order to acknowledge their new additions to the respective families and to regard them as their own children.

Fig.42 Application of the pottu (red Dot)

9.2.17 Exchange of garlands

The bride and groom exchange the garlands three times. This symbolises the state of equality. " *What adorns me shall also adorn you.*" In effect it means, "*What is mine shall be yours and vice versa and there shall be no difference between us.*" The exchange of garlands marks the beginning of the couple's life together where they will share their life, love, and worldly goods with each other.

Muthu (1974:10) states that the exchange of garlands and the *saptapadi* (the bridegroom walking around the *pandal* holding the bride's hand) are indispensable to a Tamil system of marriage, since by these acts, the audience (witnesses) come to know about the mutual consent of the bridal couple.

A careful scrutiny of the placement of the garlands will reveal that after the exchange of the garlands, the bride is wearing the garland, which the groom originally had, and the groom is wearing the garland, worn previously by the bride.

After the exchange of garlands the newly married couple sit on the bridal stool.

Fig.43

Exchange of garlands

9.2.18 Minji (toe rings)

The couple is led to the grinding stone, which is found on the left of the *pandal*. The significance of the grinding stone (*ammi*) and grinder (*khuzavi*) is that these two are inseparable. One is useless without the other. Likewise the groom and bride in their marital life must be of value to each other and be inseparable.

According to Raman (pc: 2001), the *ammi* is representative of the male while the *khuzavi* represents the female. Each one is dependent on the other in order to accomplish tasks as a married couple. They cannot work in isolation. An absence of

either one of them will render them useless. The *ammi* and *khuzavi* also symbolise *Shiva* and *Shakti* i.e. knowledge and energy. These two are inseparable if a result is required. Knowledge in itself is inert. It is energy that transforms knowledge into action. Without action there is no existence.

Fig. 44

The *ammi* (grinding stone) and the *khuzavi* (grinder)

The groom kneels down and puts the *minji* on the bride's toes. This is the first time the groom is expected to go down on his knees for a woman.

Fig.45

Placement of the *minji* (toe ring)

According to A Moodley (pc: 2001) the social concept of this is that the bridegroom is telling his wife that he has now married her .In doing so he has placed himself entirely at her feet. His entire dignity, his pride and his respect is now with her. When this has been done the bride falls on the groom's feet with her forehead touching his toes, to acknowledge his lordship over her. In doing so the bride is indicating to her husband that by falling down on her knees she is putting her entire life at his feet, and therefore does not expect him to do anything that will bring her dignity and respect into disrepute. In other words this ritual is a symbolic undertaking of two people coming together in marriage, undertaking to be faithful to each other in accordance with the rules and norms that prevail in society.

Venketraman (pc: 2001) provides two explanations for the use of the *ammi* in a marriage ceremony. According to mythology there was a teenage girl who because of her ill doings was turned into a stone. It was only on the marriage of *Lord Shiva* and *Parvathi*, who married to rid the world of its evils, that the curse was lifted. It is therefore said that only if *Lord Shiva*, who represents the male force, places his foot on the ammi, that the curse will be dispelled and the girl will become herself again. The symbolic explanation of this in a marriage ceremony is that when the groom places his foot on the ammi, the girl will become her normal self and be prepared to undertake her new role as a wife.

Muthu (1974: 39) explains that this ritual is meant to instil into the mind of the bride the importance of chastity. It brings to her mind the story of *Ahalya*, the wife of *Sage Gautama*, who when found unfaithful to her husband by having connection to *Indra*, was cursed to become a stone by her sage husband for violating the marriage rules and polluting her chastity. She begged the Sage to pardon her and give her a reprieve. The Sage pardoned her by saying that when the foot of the righteous *Rama* who is the incarnate of *Lord Vishnu* touches her she will get her form back as a woman. *Lord Muruga* performed the above act when he got married to *Sri Valli* in *Thiruchendur*. There is a verse in the *Kandaranupoothi* by *Arunagiri* (Verse 22) as quoted by Muthu (1974: 57).

My Lord! Thou art the Supreme Head of this World and the Lord of Devas; Thou do pay homage to the holy feet of thy consort Sri Valli, with her long and lovely tuft of hair (for Her sincere and steadfast devotion to thee). More bounteous is thy grace towards me. I look upon thee (in thought and feeling) as the mighty meru mountain tall and majestic and as Kumaran the daring God of eternal youth. What penance have I performed to deserve this privilege to worship thy sacred feet !

According to Raman (pc: 2001), a similar ritual to instil in the mind of the bride the importance of chastity and devotion to her husband was called *Arundati*. This was performed at many marriage ceremonies in the past, but is no longer. The ritual involved the bridegroom showing the bride a star in the sky, known as *Arundati* named after the wife of *Sage Vashishta,* who was renowned for her chastity and unfailing devotion to her husband.

The philosophical aspect of the *ammi*, according to A Moodley (pc: 2001) is that the base of the *ammi* is a solid granite stone. If you carry the stone at height and drop it, it will shatter into a thousand pieces. The symbol of this in a marriage is that the priest, their parents, and community members have advised the couple about their role in society as husband and wife. In other words they have been placed on a pedestal and everybody now looks up at them. Should they do anything wrong and deviate from their marital obligations, they too will fall and shatter into a thousand pieces, and the marriage will become meaningless.

Muthu (1974: 39), states that this ritual signifies that the bride should stand foursquare against the dashing waves of the sea. A stone broken into two cannot be put together and made one. This is a warning to the bridal couple against the danger of disunity between them. Through symbols man is able to obtain a clearer picture of certain complex details.

The couple return to the bridal stool, after the groom has placed the *minji* on his wife's toe.

9.2.20 Varisay (gifts)

In most weddings there is an exchange of trays (gifts) during the concluding stages of the wedding. There are normally seven sets of gifts from each party that are exchanged. Vadivelu (pc: 2000) explains that this ceremony is not only colourful but it is also very symbolic as the exchange provides an opportunity for the two families, who have been united by virtue of the marriage of their son and daughter, to start bonding.

Varisay means gift. These gifts are exchanged by the parents of the couple and normally consist of items of clothing like saris and shirts. The exchange of gifts is a sign of goodwill between the parents and in so doing; they acknowledge the union of their children. This item as part of the wedding ceremony is optional and is done only if both parties desire it.

In recent times there is more than one set of gifts that are exchanged. According to Vadivelu (pc: 2000), seven young girls, exchange gifts on behalf of the bridal parties. This feature adds colour and glamour to the marriage ceremony.

Fig. 46 The exchange of *Varisay* (gifts)

9.2.21 Removal of kanganam and arasani kaal

The couple hold hands and move towards the *arasani kaal*. They perform the *aradhanay* and the stick is removed, which is then carried by the groom.

Thereafter the *kanganam* are removed from the wrists of the couple. The couple then face the *kutha villakku*. The bride extinguishes the lamp with a flower. This signifies the end of the marriage ceremony.

Fig. 47

Removal of the *arasanikaal* (bamboo stick)

The couple than assemble in front of their parents to seek their blessings. The two young ladies who stood behind the couple during the marriage ceremony lead the couple to the hall to receive the blessings of the guests.

The marriage is concluded with a prayer offered at a temple.

CHAPTER 10

TAMIL MARRIAGES – POST MARITAL CEREMONY

10.1 Temple prayer

At the conclusion of the rituals and the social function at the *Kalyana Mandappam* (marriage hall), the newly married couple proceed to a temple in order to pay homage to the presiding deity. The procedure at the temple is very simple and not very time consuming. The resident priest leads the couple to complete the following:

- An offering of three kinds of fruit and milk is made to the presiding deity. This is done as a thanksgiving measure for the successful completion of the marriage ceremony.

- The coconut that has been saved from the *kalsam* ceremony is broken in two halves and placed on either side of the deity. In performing this task, the couple is declaring that their inner spirits are ready to commit themselves in their new life as a married couple.

On completion of this prayer the couple then proceed to the bride's home.

10.2 Departure from the bride's house

On arriving at the bride's house, the groom, accompanied by a few of his family members, are welcomed and introduced to the bride's family.They remain at the

bride's house until it is time for them to proceed to the groom's house. The time of departure has to be auspicious and is therefore determined by an astrologer, after consulting the almanac.

Closer to the time of departure, members of the groom's party arrive at the bride's home to partake in a social get-together, before escorting the bride to her new home.

10.3 Handing over of kamatchee villaku (lamp)

As soon s it is time for the bridal couple to depart, preparations are made to conduct the concluding prayer and to hand over the *Kamachee Villaku* (lamp) to the bride. This is a very solemn occasion, and is very emotional for bride's family. The following procedure is completed, before the departure:

Milk and three kinds of fruit are offered to *Mother Lakshmi*, who is regarded as the Goddess of Light. The bride's mother then hands over the *Kamachee Villakku* to her daughter, who by virtue of marriage is required to provide an eternal light in her new home for the benefit of her husband and her new family. Gifts of clothing, jewellery and household goods are given to the bride by her parents and other members of the family. In the olden days, a *kist* with all the above-mentioned items was given as a going away present, to start the bride off in her new home. The kist, which is made of solid wood, also symbolises a strong foundation for a marriage.

The lamp (light) plays a very important role in Tamil way of life. The *Kamachee* lamp, which is found in every Tamil home, is lit in the evenings as soon as the sun

sets. This is symbolic of the fact that the light from the lamp eliminates darkness, and brightens the life of man. The *Kamachee* lamp, also known as the *Kamachee Amman* lamp denotes the love for mother earth. The *Villaku* or lamp is an essential part of every Hindu household. Lighting of the lamp is to welcome *Goddess Lakshmi* in the home. Therefore when a bride leaves her parents home after her marriage she takes with her a *Villaku*, which is given to her by her mother. As soon as she reaches her new home, her first task as a new member of the family is to light her lamp, which signifies that she is the new *Lakshmi* (light) of the house. Her role as the wife is to ensure that the light burns brightly for the duration of her marriage.

Padayachee , writing in the *Rising Sun* (2001), explains that light symbolizes all the virtues of divine truths. Light, which represents purity, righteousness, beauty, learning and knowledge, is equated with the Ultimate Reality and is supposed to be the consciousness of life. She quotes from the *Chandogya Upanishad* (33.13.7) to illustrate her point: *"There is a light that shines beyond all things on earth, beyond us all, beyond the heavens, beyond the highest, the very highest heavens. This is the light that shines in our heart"*.

The significance of the light in a marriage ceremony, more especially for the bride and groom is that when the lamps are lit, they should reflect their glory in their hearts so that they can shine as a beacon to lead them from darkness to light, from death to immortality and from ignorance to knowledge.

According to a message from the mystical spiritual leader *Satya Sai Baba*, which appeared in The *Rising Sun* (29/10/2001), it was stated that:

> If the darkness of ignorance is to be dispelled, man needs a container, oil, wick and a matchbox corresponding to what an external lamp needs. For man, the heart is the container. The mind is the wick. Love is the oil and *vairagya* (sacrifice) is the matchbox. When you have these four, *Atma-jyothi* (the Divine flame of the Spirit) shines effulgently. When the light of the Spirit is aflame, the Light of Knowledge appears and dispels the darkness of ignorance.

10.4 Arrival at groom"s house

On arrival at the groom's house, the bridal couple are welcomed with the turning of the *alum*. The breaking of the coconut that was used during the *mangaliam* ceremony follows this. According to Raman (pc), the practice of breaking the coconut on the day of the marriage is a recent one. According to tradition, the coconut was only broken three days after the marriage. During this period, there was no physical contact between the bride and the groom. Since most Tamil marriages were arranged, this period was used for the couple to get to know each other better. However, most modern couples plan their honeymoon immediately after their wedding. The couple is therefore required to have an oil bath, in order for them to break the coconut. This enables them to have physical contact with each other.

After being formally introduced to her new family, the bride immediately lights the *Kamachee Villakku*. This symbolises that she is the new *Lakshmi* (light) of the house.

In order to break the ice and extend a hand of friendship, the bride distributes "atharsum"(a sweet dish made of rice), to her sister-in-laws and other close members of the family. According to Vadivelu (pc), rice is a symbol of fertility. As the new daughter-in-law, the bride will be responsible for producing offspring that will continue the family name.

10.5 Changing of thali (nuptial string)

Three months after the wedding, the bridal couple are invited to the home of the bride's parents. During this occasion, the bride's mother changes the *thali* string, from a flimsy cotton thread to a more permanent string or gold chain. A gold pendant which is called "*goondoo*" is added to the *thali*. According to Raman (pc), the "goondoo", represents an addition to a family. If the bride is pregnant she cannot change the *thali* string, until she gives birth.

Moodley N (pc), while acknowledging that the *thali* is a very important marriage symbol, brings our attention to the misconception of the role of the string in relation to the actual *thali*, which is the gold pendant. Many people attach greater importance to the yellow string than the pendant. He states that the yellow string merely holds the pendant and has no other significance. Therefore, it is quite acceptable for people who have the necessary financial resources to use a gold chain to hold the pendant instead of an ordinary yellow string. In India, *munja* (turmeric) was considered important because of its closeness to the colour of gold. He further states that the string that is used on the wedding day is only temporary, therefore, it is very flimsy. A permanent string or gold chain replaces this string after three months. Normally, it is the bride's

mother who is responsible for the replacement. This takes place at a social function arranged by the bride's family, as it is supposed to be the only time that the bride returns to her parent's home after getting married.

The changing of the *thali,* three months after the wedding, is the last ceremony, which is associated with a Tamil marriage.

SECTION D

CHAPTER 11

RHYTHMO-STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF TAMIL SONG – MANGGALAM

Oral- style traditioned texts are texts originally composed orally out of age-old formulas handed down from generation to generation .The purpose of the analysis is to establish the incidence of the mnemonic Laws: **Bilateralism, Rhythmism** and **Formulism**. The focus will be on the balance and repetitions in the song and the rhythms in the singing.

The analysis and interpretation of each text will be represented in the following manner:

1. As a prose structure as it appears in written text.

2. Translation of the text from *Tamil/Zulu* to English.

3. The text will be written as an Oral-style traditioned text where the *Tamil/Zulu* text will be printed in the centre of the page to demonstrate bilateralism.

4. The text will be written in Oral-style rhythmic schemas. The text is arranged in what Jousse (2000) calls 'binary and ternary rhythmic schemas', i.e. pairs and trios of boxed formulas, which demonstrate the incidence of balance or bilateralism in the performed text. Each of the boxed formula is termed a *pitgâmâ*.

5. The perimeter of the boxes holding the repeated rhythmic schemas will be coloured.

6. The repeated pitgâmâ will be coloured to highlight the number and nature of repetitions of pitgâmâ.

7. The repeated syllable or word sections will be colored to demonstrate the pattern of repetition.

8. The pitgâmâs will be reprinted with the vowels coloured to demonstrate repetition *(avocalization)*. Each repetition will be connected with correlating coloured lines to demonstrate the 'weaving of sound' as a mnemonic texture.

9. The pitgâmâs will be reprinted with the consonants coloured to demonstrate repetition *(aconsonantization)*. Each repetition will be connected with correlating coloured lines to demonstrate the 'weaving of sound' as a mnemonic texture.

10. In the case of the Tamil song the pitgâmâs will be reprinted with the vowel-consonants coloured to demonstrate repetition. Each repetition will be connected with correlating coloured lines to demonstrate the 'weaving of sound' as a mnemonic texture.

11. A concluding comment on the evidence of the density of the mnemonic structure of the text will be given. Instances of geometric patterns will be analysed and commented on.

The song, *Manggalam Padi* presented as written-style text in Tamil

Manggalam padi padiya vaazhtu

Manggala Manggala Me

Iraivan arulaal anantha jothi

Manggala Manggala Me...(X2)

Manamagan Rajanthiran Manamagal Nirmala

Manggala Manggala Me...

Manggala mejaya manggala mesubha

Manggala Manggala Me...

Iraivan arulaal anantha jothi

Manggala Manggala Me...

Manggalam padi padiya vaazhtu

Manggala Manggala Me...

Iraivan arulaal anantha jothi

Manggala Manggala Me...

Subha manggala manggala me...

Jaya manggala manggala me...

Subha manggala manggala me...

Jaya manggala manggala me...

The song *'Manggalam Padi'* written in English

Auspicious Song Singing Benediction

Auspicious blessings unto you

God's Blessings happy light

Auspicious blessings unto you (x2)

Bridegroom Rajendran, Bride Nirmala

Auspicious blessings unto you

Auspicious victory auspicious goodness

Auspicious blessings unto you

God's blessings happy light

Auspicious blessings unto you

Auspicious song singing benediction

Auspicious blessings unto you

God's blessings happy light

Auspicious blessings unto you

Auspicious blessings with goodness

Auspicious blessings with victory

Auspicious blessings with goodness

Auspicious blessings with victory

The song, *Manggalam Padi* presented as an Oral-style text in Tamil

Ordinarily, the presentation of a song text on the page is problematic in that it appears to be written text, i.e. a text that is composed in writing. To avoid this perception, the text is placed in the centre of the page. In this way the text is not aligned to a left-hand margin but creates its own 'shape' around a 'spine running down the centre of the reproduced 'Oral-style' text. The arrangement of the text around the spine of the performer. (Lecture notes: 2001)

Manggalam padi

padiya vaazhtu

Manggala Manggala Me

Iraivan arulaal

anantha jothi

Manggala Manggala Me...(X2)

Manamagan Rajanthiran

Manamagal Nirmala

Manggala Manggala Me...

Manggala mejaya

Manggala mesubha

Manggala Manggala Me...

Iraivan arulaal

anantha jothi

Manggala Manggala Me...

Manggalam padi

padiya vaazhtu

Manggala Manggala Me...

Iraivan arulaal

anantha jothi

Manggala Manggala Me...

Subha Manggala Manggala Me...

Jaya Manggala Manggala Me...

Subha Manggala Manggala Me...

Jaya Manggala Manggala Me...

The Anthropological Mnemonic Oral-style Laws of Mimism, Rhythmism, Bilateralism and Formulism

In the analysis of *Manggalam Padi* the following will be observed, in order to demonstrate and describe the mnemonic structure of the song in words/graphics/codes on a page. In other words an attempt will be made to put 'performance on the page'.

Metaphor (meaning)(mimism)

Rhythmic Schemas

Pitgâmâ

Syllables

Vowels

Consonants

Vowel-consonants

Metaphor (mimism)

Mimism is the imitating process whereby the 'anthropos' potentially mirrors, voluntarily and involuntarily, the balanced rhythmic formulas of the universe in a synchronous balanced rhythmic formulaic expression. The 'mirroring' rises into intellectual consciousness with repetition, becoming potentially intuitive, which is effective by the principle of 'the universe plays in and the anthropos replays'.

The song, *Manggalam Padi* is an expression made by the singer on behalf of the three main witnesses to the marriage ceremony viz. the Divine Being, the respective parents and the guests. The institution of marriage occupies a very important place in human society. It is an institution that admits men and women to family life. According to Hindu Law it is also a civil contract carrying with it serious obligations, hence the need for the various witnesses.

The singer offers blessings and benedictions to the couple on behalf of the witnesses and prays that the Divine light will shine on the couple so that they will enjoy eternal happiness.

The *manggalam* is normally sung at the conclusion of any important ceremony. In this case the song is sung at the end of the marriage ceremony when the groom has tied the *thali* (nuptial knot). The song brings the marriage ceremony to its logical conclusion.

Manggalam Padi and the Oral-style Laws of Balance and Rhythm

Manggalam Padi in Rhythmic-Schemas

#	
1	Manggalam
2	pādi
3	pādiya
4	Vaazhtu
5	Manggala
6	Manggala
7	Me…
8	ē
9	Iraivan
10	arulaal
11	ānantha
12	jōthi
13	manggala
14	manggala
15	Me…
16	ē
17	Manggalam
18	pādi
19	pādiya
20	Vaazhthu

21 Manggala

22 Manggala

23 Me…

24 ē

25 Iraivan

26 arulaal

27 ānantha

28 jōthi

29 manggala

30 manggala

31 Me…

32 ē

33 Manamagan

34 Rājanthiran

35 Manamagal

36 Nirmalā

37 Manggala

38 Manggala

39 mē

40 ē

41 manggala

42 mējaya

43	Manggala
44	mēsubha

45	manggala
46	manggala

47	Mē…
48	ē

49	Iraivan
50	arulaal

51	ānantha
52	jōthi

53	manggala
54	manggala

55	Me…
56	ē

57	Manggalam
58	pādi

59	pādiya
60	Vaazhthu

61	Manggala
62	Manggala

63	Me…
64	ē

65 Iraivan

66 arulaal

67 ānantha

68 jōthi

69 manggala

70 manggala

71 Me…

72 ē

73 Subha

74 manggala

75 manggala

76 Me…

77 jaya

78 manggala

79 manggala

80 me

81 Subha

82 manggala

83 manggala

84 Me…

85 jaya

86 manggala

| 87 | manggala |
| 88 | me |

Jousse (1990:125) explained the mnemonic employment of Rhythmic Schemas by Oral-style improvisers and reciters as an aid to enhance propositional gesture and to bring about balance in a song. According to him the earliest rhythmic schemas was not an expression of feeling but a mnemonic expression of thought.

COMMENT

'*Manggalam Padi*' is constructed from eighty-eight Rhythmic schemas, arranged in forty-four simple binaries. The rhythmic schemas are shown in boxes. Each binary is shown in different colour.

| 9 | Iraivan |
| 10 | arulaal |
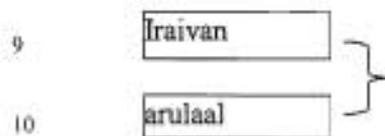
The forty-four binary rhythmic schemas are divided into eleven sets of eight binary rhythmic schemas.

There is evidence of repetition of sets of binary rhythmic schemas as follows:

Sets [1, 3, 8]

Sets [2, 4, 7, 9]

Sets [10, 11]

The repetition aids in memory, learning and 're-play'.

Further evidence of repetition is found at the end of each set of the first nine sets. The repetition of the four rhythmic units in binary pairs acts as a 'memory –aid'.
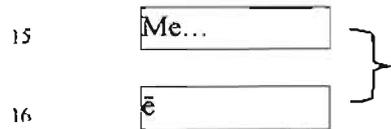
| 15 | Me... | } |
| 16 | ē | |

The presentation of the song as rhythmic schemas indicates the incidence of repetition of whole rhythmic units marked in coloured boxes.

1	Manggalam	}
2	pādi	
3	pādiya	}
4	Vaazhthu	
5	Manggala	}
6	Manggala	
7	Me...	}
8	ē	
9	Iraivan	}

10 arulaal

11 ānantha

12 jōthi

13 Manggala

14 Manggala

15 Me…

16 ē

17 Manggalam

18 pādi

19 pādiya

20 Vaazhthu

21 Manggala

22 Manggala

23 Me…

24 ē

25 Iraivan

26 arulaal

27 ānantha

28 jōthi

29 | Manggala
30 | Manggala

31 | Me…
32 | ē

33 | Manamagan
34 | Rājanthiran

35 | Manamagal
36 | Nirmalā

37 | Manggala
38 | Manggala

39 | Me…
40 | ē

41 | manggala
42 | mējaya

43 | Manggala
44 | mēsubha

45 | Manggala
46 | Manggala

47 | Me…
48 | ē

49 Iraivan

50 arulaal

51 ānantha

52 jōthi

53 Manggala

54 Manggala

55 Me...

56 ē

57 Manggalam

58 pādi

59 pādiya

60 Vaazhthu

61 Manggala

62 Manggala

63 Me...

64 ē

65 Iraivan

66 | arulaal

67 | ānantha
68 | jōthi

69 | Manggala
70 | Manggala

71 | Me...
72 | ē

73 | Subha
74 | manggala

75 | manggala
76 | Me...

77 | jaya
78 | manggala

79 | manggala
80 | Me...

81 | Subha
82 | manggala

83 | manggala
84 | Me...

85	jaya
86	manggala

87	manggala
88	Me...

Each repetition constitutes a formulaic clamping.

Jousse focuses on the balanced bilateral of the human whole – the left side and the right side, the front and the back, the top and the bottom, and noted that we also acknowledge the importance of balance even in our emotions.

Jousse identifies three modes of balance in pair words, Mnemotechnical devices and/or rhythmic schemas as manifestations of the Law of Bilateralism in human expression. :

The 'Yoke' or 'balancing' - from side to side (right to left)

The 'Burden' or ' lifting' - from front to back

The 'Berceuse' or the 'cradling' - a combination of the 'Yoke-Balancing' and the 'Burden-Lifting' (Conolly Vol.4, 2001:45)

The pitgâmâs in the rhythmic schema of 'Manggala Padi' shows the balance of the pitgâmâs placed from the front to the back. This is shown by boxes, which are linked by a bracket. Jousse refers to this as a 'Burden'.

3	pādiya	}
4	Vaazhthu	
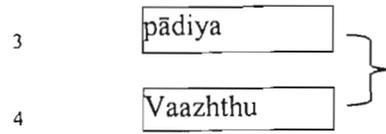
The rhythmic schema clearly demonstrates balance, because in each set of eight binary rhythmic schemas the pitgâmâs on either side (front and back) is equaled - 4:4. Such a pattern becomes easy to store in one's memory and 're-play' can be effected with minimal effort.

The formulaic refrain

7	Me...	}
8	ē	
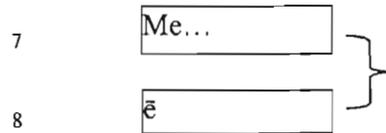
Is repeated twelve times in the song. In rhythmic schemas numbers 7-8, 15-16, 23-24, 31-32, 39-40, 47-48, 55-56, 63-64, 71-72, 80, and 88.

Jousse (2000:33) identifies four 'Rhythms' - 'Rhythm of Duration, 'Rhythm of Intensity, 'Rhythm of Timbre', and 'Rhythm of Pitch'. In the analysis of 'Mangalam Padi', the 'Rhythm of Pitch' is clearly demonstrated in the performance of the song, where the pitch of the voice moves up and down. In ' Carnatic' music terms this is called 'gamakkum' which means 'quiver'. This aids the singer with accentuation. The sound matches with the movement of the head and the hands. Thus the "corporeal- manual" (head and hands) and "laryngo-

buccal" (voice) modes of expression are working together. The movement of the pitch of the voice is demonstrated in the graphics below:

The pitch of the voice in   [Mē ... ē] is observed strongly on the [ē] with the circumflex on the [ē] in the first box and a rising inflection on the [ē] in the second box.

As the formulaic refrain is chanted the singer's head moves from front to back with a greater intensity on the back movement.

***Manggalam padi* and the oral-style law of formulism marked by mnemotechnical devices**

Marcel Jousse (2000) defines the Oral Style as a system that operates effectively as a reliable mnemonic record because it acts as an 'aide-memoire' (memory aid) through the use of Mnemotechnical Devices which operate as 'clamping' devices.
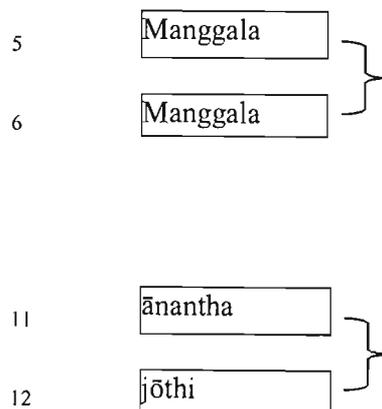
Jousse identifies repetitions e.g. of sounds   - [th] – and words [*Manggala*] as clamping devices, and memory aids (Jousse 2000:201) (Conolly Vol.4, 2001:71)

The song, *Manggalam Padi* is characterized by a repetition of words, syllables, consonants and vowel-consonants.

Mangalam Padi in Rhythmic Schemas - Pitgâmâs

The whole pitgâmâs are reprinted in different colors to identify the frequency of repetition (annomination)

1   Manggalam

2   pādi

3   pādiya

4   Vaazhthu

5   Manggala

6   Manggala

7   Me...

8   ē

9   Iraivan

10 arulaal

11 ānantha

12 jōthi

13 Manggala

14 Manggala

15 Me…

16 ē

17 Manggalam

18 pādi

19 pādiya

20 Vaazhthu

21 Manggala

22 Manggala

23 Me…

24 ē

25 Iraivan

26 arulaal

27 ānantha

28 jothi

29 Manggala

30 Manggala

31 Me…

32 | ē

33 | Manamagan
34 | Rājanthiran

35 | Manamagal
36 | Nirmalā

37 | Manggala
38 | Manggala

39 | Me…
40 | ē

41 | Manggala
42 | mējaya

43 | Manggala
44 | mēsubha

45 | Manggala
46 | Manggala

47 | Me…
48 | ē

49 | Iraivan
50 | arulaal

51 ānantha

52 jōthi

53 Manggala

54 Manggala

55 Me...

56 ē

57 Manggalam

58 pādi

59 pādiya

60 Vaazhthu

61 Manggala

62 Manggala

63 Me...

64 ē

65 Iraivan

66 arulaal

67 ānantha

68 jōthi

69 Manggala

70 | Manggala

71 | Me...

72 | ē

73 | Subha

74 | manggala

75 | manggala

76 | Me...

77 | jaya

78 | manggala

79 | manggala

80 | Me...

81 | Subha

82 | manggala

83 | manggala

84 | Me...

85 | jaya

86 | manggala

87 | manggala

Me...

COMMENTS:

PITGÂMÂ	COLOUR	NO OF TIMES REPEATED
manggalam	purple	3
pādi	grey	3
pădiya	light blue	3
vaazhthu	orange	3
manggala	red	28
Me	green	13
Iraivan	torquise	4
arulaal	brown	4
anantha	yellow	4
jōthi	pink	4
subha	light purple	2
jaya	dark blue	2

Manggalam padi in rhythmic schemas - syllables

The pitgâmâs are reprinted to illustrate the repetition of the syllables in pitgâmâs.

9	Irai-van
10	aru-laal
11	inan-**tha**
12	jō-thi
13	Mang-ga-la
14	Mang-ga-la
15	Me...
16	ē
17	Mang-ga-lam
18	pā-di
19	pā-di-ya
20	Vaazh-thu
21	Mang-ga-la
22	Mang-ga-la
23	Me...
24	ē
25	Irai-van
26	aru-laal
27	inan-**tha**
28	jō-thi
29	Mang-ga-la
30	Mang-ga-la

31	Me...
32	ē

33	Mana-magan
34	Rājan-thi-ran
35	Mana-magal
16	Nir-ma-lā
37	Mang-ga-la
38	Mang-ga-la
39	mē
40	ē

41	Mang-ga-la
42	mē-jaya
43	Mang-ga-la
44	mē-subha
45	Mang-ga-la
46	Mang-ga-la
47	Mē...
48	ē
49	Irai-van
50	aru-laal
51	tha
52	ō-thi

53 Mang-ga-la

54 Mang-ga-la

55 Me...

56 ē

57 Mang-ga-lam

58 pā-di

59 pā-di-ya

60 Vaazh-thu

61 Mang-ga-la

62 Mang-ga-la

63 Me...

64 ē

65 Irai-van

66 aru-laal

67 inam-tha

68 jō-thi

69 Mang-ga-la

70 Mang-ga-la

71 Me...

72 ē

73 Sub-ha

74 Mang-ga-la

75	Mang-ga-la
76	Me...

77	ja-ya
78	Mang-ga-la

79	Mang-ga-la
80	me

81	Sub-ha
82	Mang-ga-la

83	Mang-ga-la
84	Me...

85	ja-ya
86	Mang-ga-la

87	Mang-ga-la
88	me

COMMENTS

SYLLABLE	COLOUR	TIMES REPEATED
Mang	brown	31
ga	pink	31

lam	dark grey	3
pā	dark yellow	6
di	orange	6
ya	teal	5
vaazh	aqua	3
thu	plum	3
la	grey	28
mē	black	15
irai	blue grey	4
van	violet	4
aru	dark green	4
laal	light blue	4
anan	rose	4
tha	black	4
jo	orange	4
thi	dark blue	4
jaya	grey	3
subha	green	3
mana	dark pink	2

The pattern of repetition demonstrates the 'clamping' as a memory aid making it easier to learn the song and to remember it. The initial, medial or final position of the (composite) morpheme is significant.

- Where the repeated (composite) morpheme appears **at the beginning of the Rhythmic unit** it performs as an "initial clamp" as in the case of:

  [mang] - which appears 31 times and,

  [pa]   - which appears 6 times

- Where the repeated (composite) morpheme appears **within the rhythmic unit** it performs as a "medial clamp" as in the case of:

  [ga] - which appears 31 times and,

  [di] - which appears 3 times in boxes {3, 19, and 59}

- Where the repeated (composite) morpheme appears at **the end of the Rhythmic unit** it performs a "final clamp" as in the case of:

  [la] - which appears 28 times and,

  [tha] - which appears 3 times in boxes {4, 20, and 60}

In addition to the morphemic clamping identified above, there is further repetition in the meaning of the lyrics, which further support the mnemonic structure of the song. In Rhythmic units 4, 20, 60, the word ' *Vaazhthu*' (benediction) carries the same meaning as '*arulaal*' (blessings) in units 10, 26, 50, and 66 and the word '*manggala*' (blessings), which appears 31 times in the song. The repetition of these words is intended to emphasise the importance of the different sources of blessings in a Tamil marriage ceremony viz. the blessings of the Divine element, the blessings of the parents and the blessings of the guests.

Manggalam padi **in rhythmic schemas - vowels, consonants and vowel-consonants**

The following illustration show the pitgâmâs reprinted with the vowels, consonants and vowel-consonants in different colors to identify the frequency of repetition .The mnemotechnical elements have also been joined by lines to show the resultant patterns.
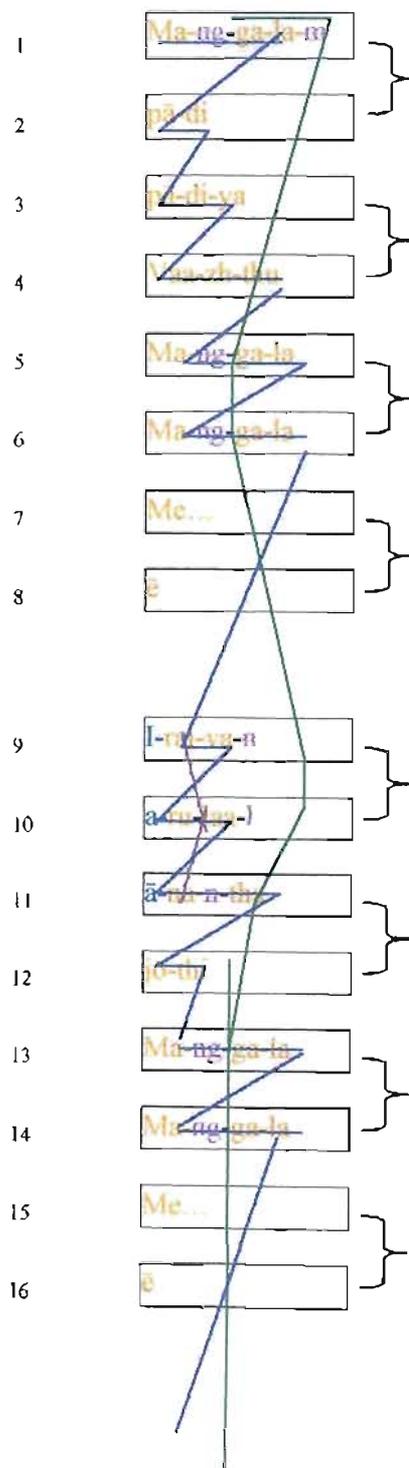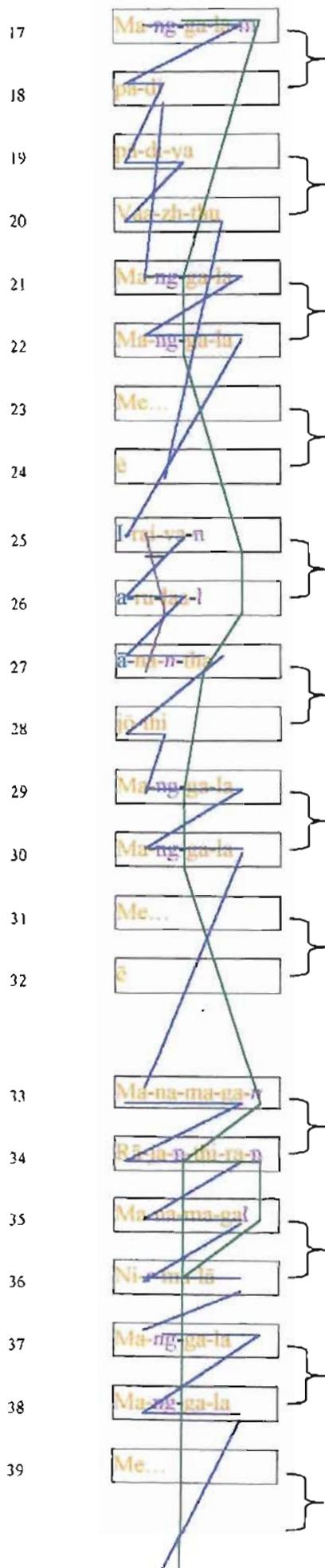
17	Ma-ng-ga-la-m
18	pa-ti
19	pa-ti-ya
20	Vaa-zh-ttu
21	Ma-ng-ga-la
22	Ma-ng-ga-la
23	Me...
24	e
25	I-rai-va-n
26	a-ru-la-l
27	a-na-n-tha
28	jo-thi
29	Ma-ng-ga-la
30	Ma-ng-ga-la
31	Me...
32	e
33	Ma-na-ma-ga-n
34	Raa-ja-n-thi-ra-n
35	Ma-na-ma-gal
36	Ni-n-ra-la
37	Ma-ng-ga-la
38	Ma-ng-ga-la
39	Me...

40	e
41	Ma-ng-ga-la
42	pa-cha-ya
43	Ma-ng-ga-la
44	me-su-bha
45	Ma-ng-ga-la
46	Ma-ng-ga-la
47	Me...
48	e
49	I-ra-va-n
50	a-ru-na-!
51	a-na-n-tha
52	ja-thi
53	Ma-ng-ga-la
54	Ma-ng-ga-la
55	Me...
56	e
57	Ma-ng-ga-la-m
58	pa-di
59	pa-di-ya
60	Vaa-zh-nu
61	Ma-ng-ga-la

62	Ma-ng-ga-la
63	Me...
64	ē
65	-ra—va-a
66	a-ra-va-l
67	ā-na-n-tha
68	jō-tha
69	Ma-ng-ga-la
70	Ma-ng-ga-la
71	Me...
72	ē
73	Su-bha
74	Ma-ng-ga-la
75	Ma-ng-ga-la
76	Me...
77	ji-va
78	Ma-ng-ga-la
79	Ma-ng-ga-la
80	Me...
81	Su-bha
82	Ma-ng-ga-la
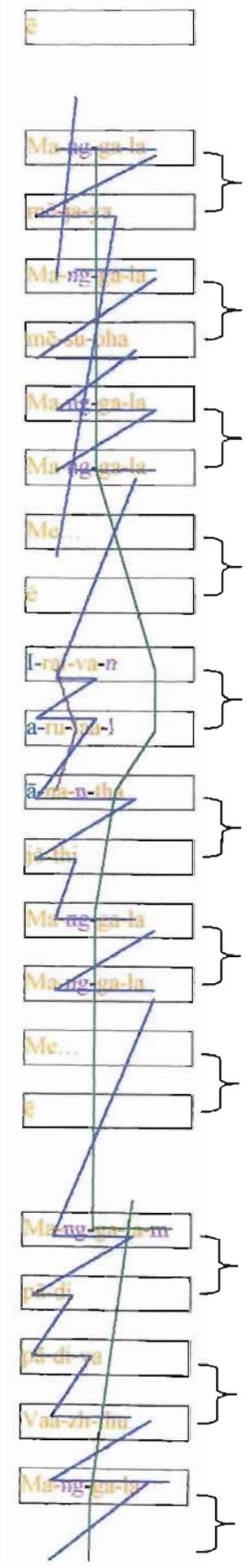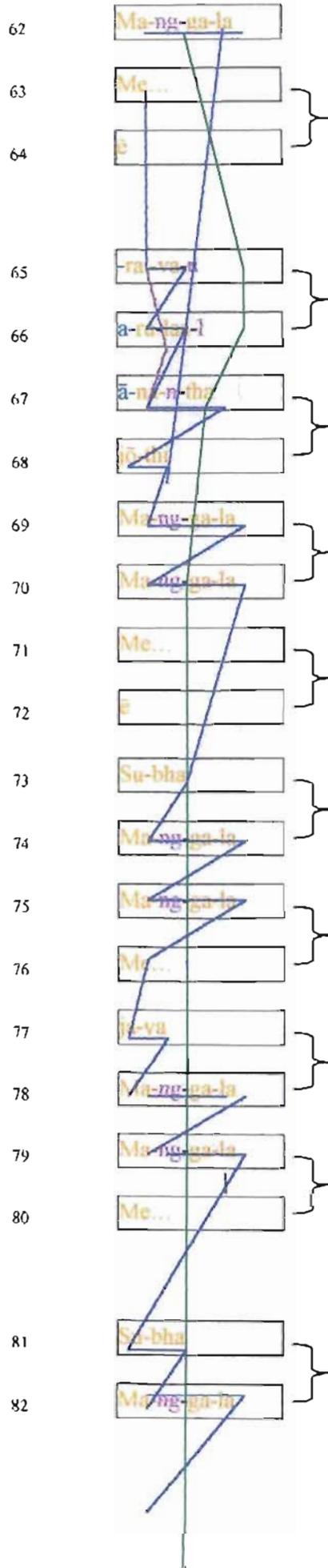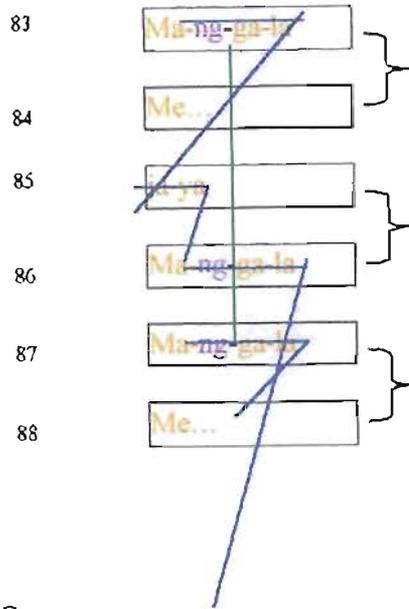
COMMENTS

The Aconsonantisation clamping formulas in the above song are marked in purple as follows:

ng - is repeated 31 times

m - is repeated 3 times and

n - is repeated 8 times

The green line joining the consonants reveal a straight line running through the centre of the body of the song indicating a balance between the two sides.

Vowel- consonants

The clamping formulas associated with the vowel-consonants are marked in orange and are repeated as follows;

to his promises. The payment of *lobola* seals the union between the bride and groom. Therefore the song is sung with a great deal of expectation.

The song, *Mangab' Uyovuma* is also sung when the bride falls pregnant before getting married. The bride is uncertain whether the groom will fulfill his obligations and responsibilities to the changed circumstances of the bride. The song is in essence an appeal to the groom to compensate the bride's family for the situation that she is placed in.

Mangab' Uyovuma **and the Oral-style Laws of Balance and Rhythm**

Mangab' Uyovuma **in Rhythmic- Schemas**

1		2
Mangab		Uyovuma

3		4
Nom		Uyophika

5		6
Maseku		Njena

7
Manje

8		9
Mangab		Uyovuma

10		11
Nom		Uyophika

12
Maseku

13
Njena

14
Manje

15
Kuphelanje

16
Ngifun

17
Inkomo

18
Yam'

19
Kuphelanje

20
Ngifun

21
Inhlawulo

22
Yam

23
Kuphelanje

24
Ngifun

25

Inkomo

26
Yam'

27
Kuphelanje

28
Ngifun

29
Inhlawulo

30
Yam'

31
Mangab

32
Uyovuma

33
Nom

34
Uyophika

35
Maseku

36
Njena

37
Manje

38
Mangab

39
Uyovuma

40
Nom

41
Uyophika

42
Maseku

43
Njena

44

Manje

45
Kuphelanje

46
Ngifun

47
Inkomo

48
Yam'

49
Kuphelanje

50
Ngifun

51
Inhlawulo

52
Yam'

53
Kuphelanje

54
Ngifun

55
Inkomo

56
Yam

57
Kuphelanje

58
Ngifun

59
Inhlawulo

60
Yam'

61
wi..wi..wi

62
wi..wi..wi

63
wi..

64
wi..wi..wi..wi

65
wi..

66
wi..wi..wi..wi

67
wi..wi

68
wi..wi..wi

69
wi..wi..wi

70
wi..

71
wi..wi..wi..wi

72
wi..

73
wi..wi..wi..wi

74

wi..wi

75

wi..wi..wi..wi

76

wi..wi

77

wi..wi

78

wi..

79

wi..wi..wi

80

wi..wi

81

wi..wi

82

wi..

83

wi..wi..wi..wi

84

wi..wi

85

wi..wi

86

wi..

wi..wi..wi

88

wi..wi

89

wi..wi

90

wi..

91		92
Mangab		Uyovuma

93		94
Nom		Uyophika

95		96
Maseku		Njena

97

Manje

The rhythmic-schemas and or their pitgâmâs can be substituted for one another through a variety of ways in order to accommodate the creative composition of oral-style recitatives.

The song *Mangab' Uyovuma* consists of 97 rhythmic-schemas which are made up of 13 sets, which are arranged as follows:

- 15 binary rhythmic- schemas

- 37 single rhythmic-schemas

RHYTHMIC SCHEMA	TYPE	COLOUR	NO. OF TIMES REPEATED
Mangab'Uyovuma	binary	brown	5
Nom' Uyophika	binary	light brown	5
Maseku Njena	binary	green	5
manje	single	purple	5
kuphelanje	single	light blue	8
Ngifun'	single	gold	8
inkomo	single	orange	4
inhlawulo	single	black	4
yam	single	blue	6

In addition to the above rhythmic-schemas the song *Mangab' Uyovuma* is also characterized by 'graphic abbreviations'.

Jousse identifies the incidence of graphic abbreviations, which occur where the performance is so well known that it is taken for granted that there is no need to write it down. When this happens, those parts that are best known are not recorded, or are partially recorded and they become the first to disappear from the oral repertoire (lecture notes: 13/10/2001). When the first version of the song was written down, there was no

mention of the *wi wi wi's* . The performers had to be prompted to make these utterances, which contributed to the rhythmic nature of the song.

An analysis of the song *Mangab'Uyovuma* has shown the following graphic abbreviation which has been represented in 6 binary rhythmic-schemas and 12 single rhythmic schemas as follows:

wi..wi..wi..wi   - repeated 6 times, in boxes 64, 66, 71, 73, 75, and 83.

wi..wi..wi   - repeated 6 times, in boxes 61, 62, 68, 69, 79, and 87.

wi..wi   - repeated 10 times, in boxes 67, 74, 76, 77, 80, 81, 84, 85, 88,

       and 89.

wi   - repeated 8 times, in boxes 63, 65, 70, 72, 78, 82, 86, and 90

There is evidence of repetition of sets of binary and single rhythmic schemas as follows:

Sets [1, 2, 5, 6, and 13]

Sets [3, 4, 7, and 8]

Sets [9 and 10]

Sets [11 and 12]

The repetition aids in memory, learning and 're-play'.

Further evidence of repetition is found at the end of the following sets, 1,2,5,6,and 13

with the pitgâmâ,

| Manje |

The repetition of the single rhythmic unit

| Kuphelanje |

In sets 3, 4, 7, and 8 also acts as a memory aid.

An analysis of the song *Mangab' Uyovuma* in Rhythmic-schemas show evidence of the

Law of Bilateralism. In this case there is evidence of two types of balance.

- The 'Yoke' or 'balancing' - from side to side (right to left) and

- The ' Burden' or 'lifting' - from front to back (top to bottom)

This is observed as follows:

'Yoke' - side to side

sets [1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, and 13] as is shown in the following examples:

| Mangab | | Uyovuma |

| wi..wi..wi | | wi..wi..wi |

The ' Burden" - top to bottom

Sets [3, 4, 7, 8, 11 and 12] as is shown in the following examples:

16
Ngifun'

17
Inkomo

18
Yam'

This is accompanied with the singers stamping their right feet, three times with the rhythm of the song. Thereafter the following text is sung with the stamping of the left feet, three times. According to Khuzwayo (rhythmic-stylistic workshop:2001), the stamping of the feet on the ground is a means of communicating with the ancestors. Furthermore, the bride's party is emphasizing their demands for compensation in the form of the *lobola*. During this performance the movement was temporarily halted and replaced with the stamping of the feet, with a definite rhythm and pattern.

When an attempt was made to sing the song without any movement, there was a loss of vitality and dynamism. Jousse has pointed out that movement is dynamo-genetic. It generates energy and rhythm.

20
Ngifun'

21
Inhlawulo

22
Yam'

The rhythmic – schema clearly demonstrates balance because in each set (verse) the pitgâmâs are either placed on the 'left and right' or 'top to bottom' of each other. "Formulas or patterns such as these embed themselves better in memory".

According to Hadebe (2000:30),

> "Jousse identifies the essential rhythmical nature of man and his environment and the role that rhythm plays in all of the anthropos activities both voluntarily and involuntarily. He also observes the natural dependence of man on the process of rhythm in a wide range of behaviors and milieux".

Rhythm and balance complement each other in the song *Mangab' Uyovuma.*

In the analysis of the song, the Rhythm of Intensity is clearly demonstrated in the performance of the song. The singers stamp their right feet with great emphasis when the following words are sung :

16
Ngifun'

17
Inkomo

18
Yam'

This is followed by the stamping of the left feet with great emphasis accompanied by the following words :

20
| Ngifun' |

21
| Inhlawulo |

22
| Yam' |

There is clear evidence of the voice matching or mirroring the movement of the legs –

thus the 'corporeal- manual' (body and legs) and the 'laryngo-buccal' (speech) mode of

expression are working together during the performance of the song.

Mangab' Uyovuma in Rhythmic Schemas - Pitgâmâs

The pitgâmâs are reprinted in different colours to identify the frequency of repetition

1
| Mang-ab |

2
| Uyo-vum-a |

3
| Nom |

4
| Uyo-phi-ka |

5
| Mas-eku |

6
| N-je-na |

7
| Man-je |

8
| Mang-ab |

9
| Uyo-vum-a |

10
Nom

11
Uyo-phi-ka

12
Mas-eku

13
N-je-na

14
Man-je

15
Ku-phe-lan-je

16
Ngi-fun

17
In-kom-o

18
Yam'

19
Ku-phe-lan-je

20
Ngi-fun

21
In-hla-wu-lo

22
Yam'

23
Ku-phe-lan-je

24
Ngi-fun

25
In-kom-o

26
Yam'

27
Ku-phe-lan-je

28
Ngi-fun

29
In-hla-wu-lo

30
Yam'

31
Mang-ab

32
Uyo-vum-a

33
Nom

34
Uyo-phi-ka

35
Mas-eku

36
N-je-na

37
Man-je

38
Mang-ab

39
Uyo-vum-a

40
Nom

41
Uyo-phi-ka

42
Mas-eku

43
N-je-na

44
Man-je

45
Ku-phe-lan-je

46
Ngi-fun

47
In-kom-o

48
Yam'

49
Ku-phe-lan-je

50
Ngi-fun

51
In-hla-wu-lo

52
Yam'

53
Ku-phe-lan-je

54
Ngi-fun

55
In-kom-o

56
Yam'

57
Ku-phe-lan-je

58
Ngi-fun

59
In-hla-wu-lo

60
Yam'

61
wi..wi..wi

62
wi..wi..wi

63
wi..

64
wi..wi..wi..wi

65
wi..

66
wi..wi..wi..wi

67
wi..wi

68
wi..wi..wi

69
wi..wi..wi

70
wi..

71
wi..wi..wi..wi

72

73

wi..

wi..wi..wi..wi

74

wi..wi

75

wi..wi..wi..wi

76

wi..wi

77

wi..wi

78

wi..

79

wi..wi..wi

80

wi..wi

81

wi..wi

82

wi..

83

wi..wi..wi..wi

84

wi..wi

85

wi..wi

86

wi..

87
wi..wi..wi

88
wi..wi

89
wi..wi

90
wi..

91
Mang-ab

92
Uyo-vum-a

93
Nom

94
Uyo-phi-ka

95
Mas-eku

96
N-je-na

97
Man-je

COMMENTS

According to Conolly (Vol.4, 2001:93),

> "A pitgâmâ is a propositional geste, which is an expression of meaning. It is the Aramaic for the Hebrew equivalent of 'Pitegâm' which is 'word' understood as 'The smallest unit of rhythmic expression of the psycho-physiological anthropological whole' given that the expressed word is understood as a stream of sound which is reduced from the 'corporeal-manual' whole and localized in the 'lyrango-buccal' mechanism".

Mangab' Uyovuma is constructed from 97 pitgâmâs made up as follows :

PITGÂMÂ	COLOUR	NO OF TIMES REPEATED	
Mangab'	Dark red	5	
Uyuvuma	pink	5	
Nom	teal	5	
Uyophika	violet	5	
Maseku	Dark blue	5	
Njena	orange	5	
Manje	Dark teal	5	
Kuphelanje	gray	8	
Ngifun'	blue	8	
Inkomo	black	4	
Yam'	brown	6	
Inhlawulo	Pale blue	4	

Mangab'Uyovuma in Rhythmic Schemas - Syllables

The pitgâmâs are reprinted to illustrate the repetition of syllables.

1	2
Ma-nga-b	U-yo-vu-ma

3	4
No-m	U-yo-phi-ka

5	6
Ma-se-ku	Nje-na

7
Ma-nje

8	9
Ma-nga-b	U-yo-vu-ma

10	11
No-m	U-yo-phi-ka

12	13
Ma-se-ku	Nje-na

14
Ma-nje

15
Ku-phe-la-nje

16
Ngi-fun'

17
I-nko-mo

18
Ya-m'

19

Ku-phe-la-nje

20
Ngi-fun'

21
I-nhla-wu-lo

22
Ya-m'

23
Ku-phe-la-nje

24
Ngi-fun'

25
I-nko-mo

26
Ya-m'

27
Ku-phe-la-nje

28
Ngi-fun'

29
I-nhla-wu-lo

30
Ya-m'

31
Ma-nga-b

32
U-yo-vu-ma

33
No-m

34
U-yo-phi-ka

35
Ma-se-ku

36
Nje-na

37
Ma-nje

38
Ma-nga-b

39
U-yo-vu-ma

40
No-m

41
U-yo-phi-ka

42
Ma-se-ku

43
Nje-na

44
Ma-nje

45
Ku-phe-la-nje

46
Ngi-fun'

47
I-nko-mo

48
Ya-m'

49
Ku-phe-la-nje

50

Ngi-fun'

51

i-nhla-wu-lo

52

Ya-m'

53

Ku-phe-la-nje

54

Ngi-fun'

55

I-nko-mo

56

Ya-m'

57

Ku-phe-la-nje

58

Ngi-fun'

59

I-nhla-wu-lo

60

Ya-m'

61

wi..wi..wi

62

wi..wi..wi

63

64

wi..

wi..wi..wi..wi

65
wi..

66
wi..wi..wi..wi

67
wi..wi

68
wi..wi..wi

69
wi..wi..wi

70
wi..

71
wi..wi..wi..wi

72
wi..

73
wi..wi..wi..wi

74
wi..wi

75
wi..wi..wi..wi

76
wi..wi

77
wi..wi

78
wi..

79
wi..wi..wi

80
wi..wi

81

wi..wi

82

wi..

83

wi..wi..wi..wi

84

wi..wi

85

wi..wl

86

wi..

87

wi..wi..wi

88

wi..wi

89

wi..wl

90

wi..

91

Ma-nga-b

92

U-yo-vu-ma

93

No-m

94

U-yo-phi-ka

95

Ma-se-ku

96

Nje-na

97

| Ma-nje |

As in the case of the Tamil song, the pattern of repetition demonstrates the 'clamping' as a memory-aid making it easier to learn the song and to remember it. The **initial, medial** and **final** position of the (composite) morpheme is significant :

- Where the repeated (composite) morpheme appears **at the beginning of the rhythmic unit** it performs as an "initial clamp" as in the case of :

    [ma]   -   which appears 11 times

    [ngi]   -   which appears 8 times

    [nje]   -   which appears 13 times

    [no]   -   which appears 5 times

    [u]   -   which appears 10 times

    [ya]   -   which appears 8 times

    [ku]   -   which appears 13 times

    [ʃ]   -   which appears 8 times

- Where the repeated (composite) morpheme appears **within the rhythmic unit** it performs a "medial clamp" as in the case of :

    [ŋga]   -   which appears 5 times

[se]   -   which appears 5 times

[phe] -   which appears 8 times

[yo]   -   which appears 10 times

[vu]   -   which appears 5 times

[phi] -   which appears 5 times

[la]   -   which appears 8 times

[nko] -   which appears 4 times

[nhla] -   which appears 4 times

[wu]   -   which appears 4 times

- Where the repeated (composite) morpheme appears at the **end of the rhythmic unit** it performs a "final clamp" as in the case of :

[b]   -   which appears 5 times

[ma]   -   which appears 9 times

[m]   -   which appears 13 times

[ka]   -   which appears 5 times

[ku]   -   which appears 13 times

[na]   -   which appears 5 times

[nje] -   which appears 13 times

[fun] -   which appears 8 times

[mo]   -   which appears 4 times

[lo] - which appears 4 times

Mangab' Uyovuma in **Rhythmic Schemas - Avocalisation**

The following illustration shows the pitgâmâs reprinted with vowels in different colors to
identify the frequency of repetition.
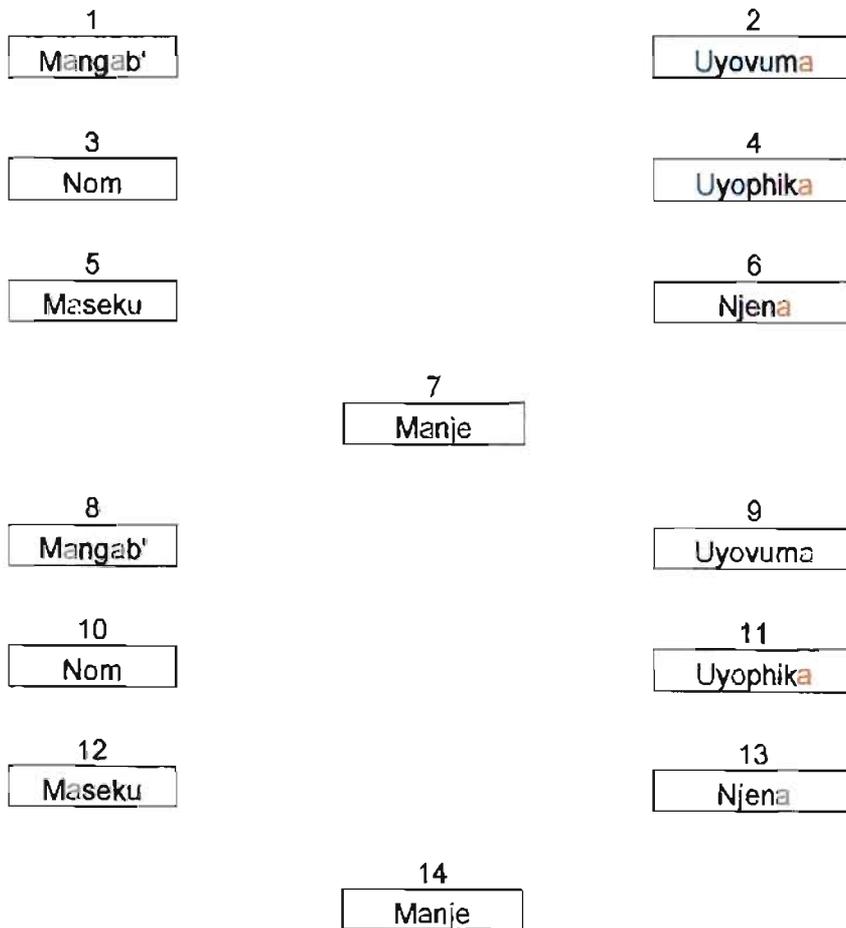
1		2
Mangab'		Uyovuma

3		4
Nom		Uyophika

5		6
Maseku		Njena

7
Manje

8		9
Mangab'		Uyovuma

10		11
Nom		Uyophika

12		13
Maseku		Njena

14
Manje

15

Kuphelanje

16
Ngifun'

17
Inkomo

18
Yam'

19
Kuphelanje

20
Ngifun'

21
Inkomo

22
Yam'

23
Kuphelanje

24
Ngifun'

25
Inkomo

26
Yam'

27
Kuphelanje

28
Ngifun'

29

Inkomo

30
Yam'

31
Mangab'

32
Uyovuma

33
Nom

34
Uyophika

35
Maseku

36
Njena

37
Manje

38
Mangab'

39
Uyovuma

40
Nom

41
Uyophika

42
Mangab'

43
Uyovuma

44
Manje

45
Kuphelanje

46
Ngifun'

47
Inkomo

48
Yam'

49
Kuphelanje

50
| Ngifun' |

51
| Inkomo |

52
| Yam' |

53
| Kuphelanje |

54
| Ngifun' |

55
| Inkomo |

56
| Yam' |

57
| Kuphelanje |

58
| Ngifun' |

59
| Inkomo |

60
| Yam' |

61

62

wi..wi..wi

wi..wi..wi

63

wi..

64

wi..wi..wi..wi

65

wi

66

wi..wi..wi..wi

67

wi..wi

68

wi..wi..wi

69

wi..wi..wi

70

wi..

71

wi..wi..wi..wi

72

wi

73

wi..wi..wi..wi

74

wi..wi

75

wi..wi..wi..wi

76

wi..wi

77

wi..wi

78

wi

79

wi..wi..wi

80

wi..wi

81

wi..wi

82

wi

83

wi..wi..wi..wi

84

wi..wi

85

wi..wi

86

wi

87

wi..wi..wi

88

wi..wi

89

wi..wi

90

wi

91

Mangab'

92

Uyovuma

93

Nom

94

Uyophika

95

Maseku

96

Njena

97

Manje

COMMENTS

VOWEL	COLOUR	NO OF TIMES REPEATED
a	orange	50
e	purple	28
i	pink	21
o	blue	32
u	gray	37

SOUND	NUMBER	PITGÂMÂ	TOTAL
a	1	2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 22, 23, 26, 27, 30, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 41, 43, 44, 45, 48, 49, 53, 56, 56, 57, 60, 92, 95, 96, 97	39
a	2	1, 8, 31, 38, 42, 91	6
e	1	5, 6, 12, 13, 14, 35, 36, 37, 44, 95, 96,	12

		97	
e	2	15, 19, 23, 27, 45, 49, 53, 57	8
i	1	4, 11, 16, 17, 20, 21, 24, 25, 28, 29, 34, 41, 46, 47, 50, 51, 54, 55, 58, 59, 94	21
o	1	2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 32, 33, 34, 39, 40, 41, 43	13
o	2	17, 21, 25, 29, 47, 51, 55, 59, 92, 93, 94	11
u	1	4, 5, 11, 12, 15, 16, 19, 20, 23, 24, 27, 28, 34, 35, 41, 45, 46, 49, 50, 53, 54, 57, 58, 94, 95	25
u	2	2, 9, 32, 39, 43, 92	6

Mangab' Uyovuma in Rhythmic Schemas – Avocalisation

Lines are drawn in different colours to illustrate textual weaving of vowel sounds that are found in the written text

The effects of using colour to mark all repetitions in the performed Zulu and Tamil texts of *Mangab' Uyovuma* and *Manggalam Padi* is to reveal the beauty found in the sound of the song. While the song is primarily a socio-cultural archive and a vehicle for imparting a message there is also beauty in orality. Metaphorically, colour symbolizes the weaving of sound into a *textus* ('weaving' in Latin) known to us as text. (Hadebe 2000:40
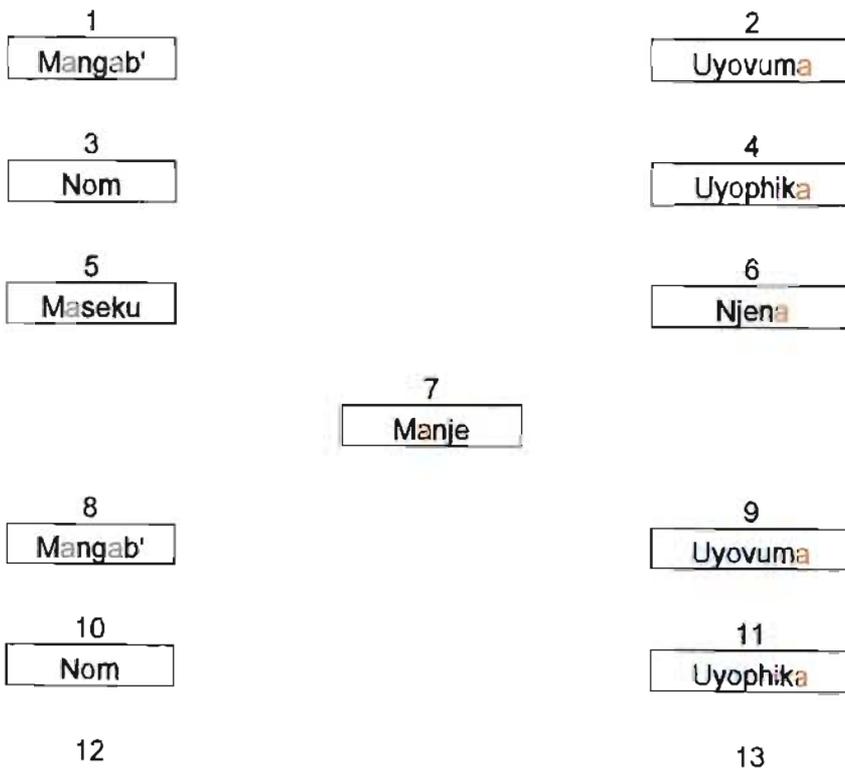
1	2
Mangab'	Uyovuma

3	4
Nom	Uyophika

5	6
Maseku	Njena

7
Manje

8	9
Mangab'	Uyovuma

10	11
Nom	Uyophika

12   13

Maseku

Njena

14

Manje

15

Kuphelanje

16

Ngifun'

17

Inkomo

18

Yam'

19

Kuphelanje

20

Ngifun'

21

Inkomo

22

Yam'

Mangab' Uyovuma in Rhythmic Schemas - Aconsonantisation

The pitgâmâs are reprinted to illustrate the frequency of repetition of consonants.

1 Mangab'	**2** Uyovuma
3 Nom	**4** Uyophika
5 Maseku	**6** Njena

7 Manje

8 Mangab'	**9** Uyovuma
10 Nom	**11** Uyophika
12 Maseku	**13** Njena

14 Manje

15 Kuphelanje

16 Ngifun'

17 Inkomo

18 Yam

19

Kuphelanje

20

Ngifun'

21

Inkomo

22

Yam

23

Kuphelanje

24

Ngifun'

25

Inkomo

26

Yam'

27

Kuphelanje

28

Ngifun'

29

Inhlawulo

30

Yam'

31

Mangab'

32

Uyovuma

33

Nom

34

Uyophika

35

36

Maseku

Njena

37

Manje

38

Mangai'

39

Uyovuma

40

Nom

41

Uyophika

42

Maseku

43

Njena

44

Manje

45

Kuphelanje

46

Ngifun'

47

Inkomo

48

Yam'

49

Kuphelanje

50

Ngifun'

51

Inhlawulo

52

Yam'

53

Kuphelanje

54
Ngifun'

55
Inkomo

56
Yam'

57
Kuphelanje

58
Ngifun'

59
Inkomo

60
Yam'

61
wi..wi..wi

62
wi..wi..wi

63
wi..

64
wi..wi..wi..wi

65
wi

66
wi..wi..wi..wi

67
wi..wi

68
wi..wi..wi

69
wi..wi..wi

70
wi..

71
wi..wi..wi..wi

72
wi

73
wi..wi..wi..wi

74
wi..wi

75
wi..wi..wi..wi

76
wi..wi

77
wi..wi

78
wi

79
wi..wi..wi

80
wi..wi

81
wi..wi

82
wi

83
wi..wi..wi..wi

84
| wi..wi |

85
| wi..wi |

86
| wi |

87
| wi..wi..wi |

88
| wi..wi |

89
| wi..wi |

90
| wi |

91
| Mangab' |

92
| Uyovuma |

93
| Nom |

94
| Uyophika |

95
| Maseku |

96
| Njena |

97
| Manje |

Comments

CONSONANT	COLOUR	NO OF TIMES REPEATED
m	plum	40
n	Sea green	23
g	Light blue	5
b	rose	5
y	Dark yellow	18
v	teal	5
ph	blue	13
k	Dark blue	18
s	orange	5
nj	Light orange	18
l	Blue gray	8
ng	indigo	8
f	brown	8
nk	red	6
w	Dark red	3

CONSONANT	PITGAMA- POSITION	PITGAMA- NUMBER
m	Beginning of pitgâmâ- before first vowel	1, 5, 7, 8, 12, 14, 31, 35, 38, 42, 44, 91, 95, 97

m	Towards the end before last vowel	2, 9, 17, 21, 25, 32, 39, 47, 55, 59, 92
m	At the end of pitgâmâ	3, 10, 18, 22, 30, 33, 40, 48, 52, 56, 60, 93
n	In the middle following first vowel	1, 6, 8, 13, 31, 36, 38, 43, 91
n	Beginning of pitgâmâ	3, 10, 21, 33, 40, 59, 93, 96
n	At the end of the pitgâmâ	16, 20, 24, 28, 46, 50, 54, 58
g	Towards the end before last vowel	1, 8, 31, 38, 91
b	At the end after last vowel	1, 8, 31, 38, 91
y	In the beginning after first vowel	2, 4, 9, 11, 32, 34, 39, 41
y	Beginning of pitgâmâ	18, 22, 26, 30, 48, 52, 56, 60, 92, 94
v	In the middle between two vowels	2, 9, 32, 39, 92
ph	In the middle between two vowels	4, 11, 15, 19, 23, 27, 34, 41, 45, 49, 53, 57, 94
k	Beginning of pitgâmâ	15, 19, 23, 27, 45, 49, 53, 57
k	At the end of pitgâmâ	4, 5, 11, 12, 34, 35, 41, 42, 94, 95
s	In the middle between two vowels	5, 12, 35, 42, 95
nj	Beginning of pitgâmâ	6, 13, 36, 43, 96
nj	At the end before last vowel	7, 14, 15, 19, 23, 27, 37, 44, 45, 49, 53, 57, 97
l	In the middle between two vowels	15, 19, 21, 23, 27, 45, 49, 53, 57, 59
ng	Beginning of pitgâmâ	16, 20, 24, 28, 46, 50, 54, 58
f	Middle between two vowels	16, 20, 24, 28, 46, 50, 54, 58
nk	Beginning between two vowels	17, 25, 47, 55

w	Middle between two vowels	21, 29, 51

When one takes a closer look at the position of the consonants one notices that they are found:

- At the beginning of the pitgâmâ - this aids in the starting of the pitgâmâ with rhythm – explosism

- At the end before the last vowel of a pitgâmâ.

- In the middle between two vowels.

This serves as a memory aid to remember the pitgâmâ and thereafter the whole song.

Mangab' Uyovuma in Rhythmic Schema - Aconsonantisation (Textual Weaving)

Coloured lines are drawn to illustrate the textual weaving of consonants that are found in the written text.

320

5
Maseku

6
Nena

7
Manje

8
Mangab'

9
Uvovuma

10
Nom

11
Uvophika

12
Maseku

13
Nena

14
Manje

15
Kuphelanje

16
Ngifun'

17
Inkomo

18
Yam

19
Kuphelanje

20
Ngifun'

21
Inkomo

22 Yam'

321

23 Kuphelane

24 Ngifun'

25 Inkomo

26 Yam'

27 Kuphelane

28 Ngifun'

29 Inhlawulo

30 Yam'

31 Mangab'

32 Uyovuma

33 Nom

34 Uyephika

35 Maseku

36 Niena

37 Manje

38 Mangab'

39 Uyovuma

40

41

322

Nom	Uyophika

42
Maseku	Mena

44
Manje

45
Kuphelanje

46
Ngifun'

47
Inkomo

48
Yam'

49
Kuphelanje

50
Ngifun'

51
Inhlawulo

52
Yam'

53
Kuphelanje

54
Ngifun'

55
Inkomo

56

323

Yam'

57

Kuphelanje

58

Ngifun'

59

Inkomo

60

Yam'

SECTION E

CHAPTER 13

SIMILARITIES IN ZULU AND TAMIL MARRIAGES

An analysis of traditional Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies have shown a number

of similarities in respect of practices and procedures in the performance of certain

rituals. According to Vadivelu (pc:2000), these two cultural groups lived side-by-side

for a number of years until the Group Areas Act put an end to this remarkable and

close communal relationship where there was a continuous exchange of social and

cultural values and systems. This is in line with the process of 'acculturation', which

is defined by Papini (1994:29) as,

> A process wherein exchange of cultural traits between two societies living in
> continuous first-hand contact produces a hybrid having elements of both, represented
> in various proportions. One could certainly speak of South African history as having
> been – in spite of apartheid – these kinds of situation and process.

Acculturation, then, is the process of systematic cultural change of a particular society

carried out by an alien, dominant society (Winthrop 1991: 82-83). This change is

brought about under conditions of direct contact between individuals of each society

(Winthrop 1991:3). Individuals of a foreign or minority culture learn the language,

habits, and values of a standard or dominant culture, through the process of

acculturation.

Papini (1994:28) also found that material culture studies have contributed to the

knowledge of the historical process of selective adoption of traits, and their analysis

of past borrowings between adjacent traditions. However he cautioned that this must not fall between the theories of Diffusionism and Parallel Evolution, as they are unable to do justice to the process of change in colonized cultures of the nineteenth century. According to Winthrop (1991:83-84), diffusionism as an anthropological school of thought was an attempt to understand the nature of culture in terms of the origin of culture traits and their spread from one society to another. Versions of diffusionist thought included the conviction that all cultures originated from one culture centre; the more reasonable view that cultures originated from a limited number of culture centres; and finally the notion that others influence each society.

While the Diffusionists and Parallel Evolutionists provide answers for the similarities of human rituals and cultural performances, Jousse (2000:30) asks a more fundamental question,

> How does man, placed at the heart of all the immeasurable actions of the universe, manage to conserve the memory of these actions within him, and to transmit this memory faithfully to his descendants, from generation to generation?

According to Jousse cultural performances of all kinds is a Psycho-biological imperative, and the form of that culture is that it is mnemonically structured. Because human beings are similarly structured, the performances will be similar, in addition to which, factors of acculturation, have a part to play. In this way Jousse provides a completely new perspective that throws a new light on how to understand cultural values and norms. The perspective that Jousse provides for the similarities of cultural performances of different societies is neither characteristic of the diffusionist or Parallel evolutionist theories, but it has a little bit of both. Jousse makes frequent

reference to the indivisibility of the psycho-physiological geste, to support his argument.

According to Vadivelu (pc:2000) and Chetty (pc:2000) there was a need for modifying the Tamil marriage system in South Africa, resulting in a system of marriage that is unique to South Africa. The basic structure of the Tamil marriage system as practiced in Tamil Nadu; India was retained while some of the rituals were discarded. This was due to regional and geographical differences, which made it difficult to be introduced in South Africa. Furthermore the advancement of technology and modernisation has made some of the rituals and practices unnecessary and obsolete.

Observations of traditional Tamil and Zulu marriage systems in South Africa have shown some similarities in the rituals and practices.

The role of the Ancestors.

Ancestors play a very important role in both the Zulu and Tamil cultures. Before undertaking any important activity the ancestors are reached through different mediums of communication.

In a traditional Tamil wedding ceremony, the ancestors are consulted to seek their blessing. About three days before the marriage ceremony, a special prayer is arranged for the close family members, where the clothes in which the couple will be getting married in, will be placed in front of the photographs of the close ancestors, to seek

their permission and blessing for a successful marriage ceremony. Sometimes a service group will be invited to render '*bhajans*', or devotional songs in praise of the different deities, also seeking their blessings. The family deities and ancestors are worshipped. They will be invoked to be present at the wedding and give their blessing to the married couple for a successful union. The prayer is conducted at the respective homes of the bridal couple. During this prayer offerings are made to the ancestors in the form of cooked food, fruit, and beverages.

The worship of the ancestors was practiced in many parts of Tamil Nadu. This ceremony is called *Vira kudimakkadam*. The bridegroom has to prostrate before the bricks that represent the ancestral heroes. In former times, a sheep was sacrificed during the ritual.

In a Zulu homestead a special hut is reserved for the ancestors. It is here that important decisions are negotiated. In urban areas where families live in single dwellings, a small area of the house is set aside for the ancestors where incense is lit and communication with the ancestors are undertaken. Similarly in a Tamil home, an area is set-aside for the ancestors, normally where the *Kamachee Vilaku* (lamp) is lit where the photographs of the different deities are found. Here we will also find the photographs of close members of the family who have passed on.

Magwaza (1993:45) states that belief in the ancestor's role in the success of their descendants makes some people put their first salary cheques for at least a day at the *umsamo*, where the ancestors are believed to reside. This they do, also burning the incense *impepho*, thanking the ancestors for the good they have done for them.

Similarly, according to Tamil custom many people place their salaries at the *Kamachee Vilaku* (lamp), in the prayer room, to seek divine blessings as well as the blessings of their ancestors. In some cases I have been told, a small thanksgiving prayer is held whereby fruit, milk or sweetmeats or sweet rice is offered to the Divine Being. This is called *Prasad*, which is a sacred offering to the Lord. After offering them to the Lord they are shared among the members of the household.

Exchange of gifts.

The exchange of gifts features prominently in both Tamil and Zulu marriages. The giving of gifts is a very important gesture. According to Swahananda (1992:158), gifts enable people to remove those who are envious and malignant towards them. The exchange of gifts makes the unfriendly become friendly. The process of marriage, which involves the merging of two family units, can lead to much friction and anxiety. The exchange of gifts can be used as a means of breaking the ice. Magwaza (pc:2001) explains that the exchange of gifts is very significant, because it:

- provides an opportunity for the couple and their respective families to get to know each other more intimately.

- helps to strengthen relationships – bonding occurs

- is a way of buying time.

- Gets other family members to meet each other so that relationships develop.

According to Tamil custom, the exchange of *varsays* (trays with gifts) are done a few days before the actual marriage ceremony, when the groom's family visits the bride's home to hand the wedding trousseau. At the same time trays consisting of various

gifts, in the form of sweet meats, fruit and small ornaments are exchanged as a symbol of bonding and friendship. However the gifts are given to the bridal couple's immediate family and do not include aunts and uncles etc. The exchange of the *varsays* is sometimes performed on the day of the marriage. Vadivelu (pc:2000) states that this addition to the marriage ceremony was introduced in recent years to add some colour and glamour to the marriage ceremony, where young girls tastefully dressed in traditional saris or other eastern garments, performed this task on the stage. After the both parties, (about seven from each side) exchange the *varsays* (trays); they in turn receive small tokens for their efforts. N Moodley (pc:2001) explained that this activity also provides an opportunity for young girls to display themselves as prospective brides.

The exchange of gifts is considered a big thing in traditional Zulu culture. The families of both the bride and groom provide a long list of potential recipients for gifts. These include the parents, grandparents, brothers' sisters, uncles', aunts etc. The gifts take the form of blankets, duvets, bed sheets, pillowcases, beer vessels etc. The exchange of gifts takes place after the marriage ceremony at the home of the groom.

The significance of water

Water plays a very significant role in both Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies. During Zulu marriage ceremonies, all gifts given by the bride to the groom's family is supposed to have a drop of water spilled on it. This is called *hlambisa*, which means cleansing. Similarly in Tamil marriage ceremonies, water is used for various cleansing rituals e.g. water is spilled on the heads of the bride and groom, with a small tuft of

dharbar grass during the *nalungu* ceremony. Water is also spilled on the deities during the *aradhanay* (prayer) after the completion of a ritual. A form of ritual purification, commonly performed at the beginning of a prayer and other ceremonial acts of worship, is known as *achamana* (cleansing). Water is taken in the hollow of the right hand, sipped and swallowed. These actions are performed three times, while uttering the name of Lord Vishnu. According to Kanitkar et al (1995:54), it is believed that evil vapours are formed in the mouth as a result of impure acts or thoughts, leaving the saliva and the mouth ritually unclean, hence the use of blessed water. According to Raman (pc:2001), water has certain purificatory functions, which highlights the importance of the rituals being performed. According to Swahananda (1992:18), the participants of rituals purify their hands, as well as the prayer area with appropriate 'sacred formulas'. The reason for putting water in a circle around the prayer area is to protect the participants from all 'physical and psychical' obstacles.

The significance of incense

In many of the Tamil rituals the burning of *agarbathy* (incense) plays an important role in seeking divine intervention. The sweet smelling odour obliterates all unsavoury odours creating a sacred atmosphere for the important rituals. The incense also acts as a disinfectant. According to the Divine Life Society (1985:197), the lighting of incense, which is also known as *dhoop*, denotes that the Lord is all pervading and fills the whole universe with his presence. The devotee fervently prays: "Oh Lord, let all the desires and impressions dormant in me vanish like the smoke of this incense and become like ashes. Let me become stainless."

In traditional Zulu ceremonies, *impepho* (incense) is burnt before the commencement of any major undertaking. The incense used in Zulu culture is made out of a special grass, which has a distinctive odour. The incense is used as a medium of communication with the ancestors. According to Khuzwayo (pc:2001), by burning incense, an invitation is being extended to the ancestors to take part in the planned activity.

Marriage negotiations

In traditional Zulu culture, important negotiations, like marriage takes place in the 'big hut' or house, which is used as a meeting place for discussing important issues. The senior members of the family and elders of the community are invited to discuss important issues pertaining to marriage. Similarly in traditional Tamil families, the elders are brought together for a meeting to discuss marriage proposals, and to plot the way forward for the actual marriage ceremony. The same people are assembled if the marriage experiences any problems. The people chosen are normally people respected by all parties, and include the uncles of the bridal couple. According to Pillay (pc:2000) and Venketraman (pc:2001), discussions involving respected members of the family and community contribute to stable marriages. Through negotiation, issues are addressed and resolved, obviating the need for any legal settlement such as divorce.

The use of money in marriage ceremonies.

The use of money is observed in both Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies.

Khuzwayo (pc:2001) explains that before the bride departs to the groom's house her father pins paper money on top of his daughter's head. Other members of the family follow. According to her this is a way of indicating to the ancestors that the young girl is about to get married and to indicate that she is not a low person but has dignity. According to Khuzwayo (pc:2001) this procedure is done in order to attach some value to the bride who is about to embark on the most important role in her life i.e. marriage.

Later on money is also used to cover the stab wounds of the cow, which has been selected for the gall ceremony. According to Krige (1950: 148), before the beast is skinned the husband's father will have to cover up all the wounds except the first with money. In Tamil marriages, money is included in all offerings made to the deities, during the rituals. This is an indication that value has been attached to the rituals, which is an important process in bringing two people together. After the marriage ceremony, when the groom arrives at the bride's home, he is expected to pay the bride's sister before entering the house. This is to show that they have lost a valuable member of the family, and the groom has to compensate for the loss.

Removal of obstacles /warding off the evil eye

In both traditional Zulu and Tamil marriage ceremonies, certain rituals are performed to remove obstacles that may be in the way of the ceremony. The aim is to conclude the marriage ceremony without any disturbances. Some rituals are also performed to remove the evil eye that may affect marriage proceedings.

Khumalo (pc:2000) states that the veil of the bride is made of beads and a special kind of wheat called *ubendle*. The beads and the wheat serve as a distraction. The bride is supposed to cover her eyes and not make eye contact with the groom's family. If this is done, or if someone sees her eyes this could cause trouble in the wedding ceremony. There is the issue of the evil eye.

Throughout the marriage ceremony brooms play an important role According to Khumalo (pc:2000) brooms are a symbol of peace. When the homes are swept with the brooms, it is done with the knowledge that the ancestors are present. Some of the senior ladies will wave the brooms in a sweeping motion. The sweeping action symbolises a means of communication with the ancestors asking them to keep the hearts of the people calm: there should be no conflict; rather there should be harmony throughout the negotiations. The waving action of the broom also symbolises the removal of obstacles.

In Tamil marriage ceremonies, there are a number of procedures that are undertaken to remove obstacles or to ward off the evil eye. Before the commencement of any ceremony, a prayer is offered to Lord *Ganesha*, who is considered as the remover of obstacles. According to Kanitkar et al (1995:31), *Ganesha* is considered and widely worshipped as a god of good luck, a remover of difficulties and obstacles, a god of wisdom and a patron of learning. When prayers are offered, a coconut is also broken into two pieces. This is also symbolic of removing obstacles, so that the rituals or procedures will be a success. In order to obviate the evil eye, the *alum* (lime and turmeric mixed in water), which turns into blood red, is turned around the couple, to prevent any misfortune, in the marriage proceedings or in their married life. This is

performed when the bridal couple arrives at the marriage venue, or when they arrive at their new home. The turning of the *alum* is also undertaken after the completion of any ritual or activity.

The symbol of a child

A practice that is common in many Tamil weddings, especially in traditional Tamil Societies in India, is the use of a child after the marriage ceremony. The women from the groom's party place a young child in the bride's lap; the bridegroom takes up the child and then prepares a sacrificial fire in the usual manner and prays that the marriage will result in happiness, kindness, benevolence and fertility for the purpose of procreation. The bride than salutes her father-in-law and the relatives of her husband.

According to Magwaza (pc:2000) after the completion of a Zulu wedding the bride carries a child from the main house to the kraal. As she leaves the house her family meets her. The ladies pinch the baby to initiate some crying. This is a symbol of giving birth. The expectation is for her to produce children as part of the process of procreation. The preference is for a male child as the first born to carry the family name. If the bride satisfies this need, she is accepted as the mother of the whole family. Krige states that the women also anoint the bride with fat and fastens the child on to her back.

CHAPTER 14

CONCLUSION

An analysis of the Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies as outlined in the previous chapters, clearly demonstrate that, many of the Tamil and Zulu communities still subscribe to oral tradition, when it comes to rituals and performances associated with marriage. This happens, despite other socio-religious influences such as the impact of Christianity or Islam. The cultural heritages of the Tamil and Zulu people, are characteristic of an Oral-style ethnic milieu – that of the living human memory as a socio-cultural archive.

Instead of restricting his field of observation to the 'dead' letters of texts, the researcher has presented an analysis of the performance of Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies, via the awareness of a 'living' tool; the human geste, in the same way that Jousse has observed, and presented in his Anthropology of Geste and Rhythm.

The researcher has undertaken to demonstrate how the Mnemonic Laws and Mnemotechnical devices discovered by Marcel Jousse can be applied to the rhythmo-melodic gestual-visual/oral-aural performance of selected Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies and songs by 'putting performance on the page'. There is scope to undertake research into other anthropological milestones that are observed in traditional societies, namely, birth, naming ceremony, coming of age, and death.

The most lyrical of descriptions of what cultural heritage is, comes from Collins (1998)

> Cultural heritage is an accumulation of daily details and large traditions, social, racial and religious. Built up from beyond time and memory... It is an accumulation of ethics, foods, medicines and manners; the way people greet each other, love, hate, marry and bury each other... it is the curses in the street, their prayers in the temple and their songs in the field.

The customs, language and expressions of the Tamil and Zulu people are characteristics, which are visible and recognisable signs of living communities, and these signs are authentic, original and firmly rooted in the experience of the people. Most of the rituals and practices have been passed on from one generation to the other, and are still performed today.

The involvement in, or experience in the marriage ceremonies offers us opportunities for personal and collective catharsis. These perspectives are borne not only out of numerous studies that have been done in South Africa and other parts of the world, over many decades, but also through our own direct experience.

The Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies which are referred to as *Kalyanam* and *Umgcagco* respectively, are the most important of the anthropological milestones as it not only involves the bridal couple and their respective families, but the community as a whole, in all aspects of the marriage ceremony. The rituals and procedures associated with the pre-marital ceremonies, the actual marriage and the post-marital ceremonies, are characterised by much performance, which involves many members of the community. Whether the couple is led through the ceremony by a *Brahman* or the elders of the community, they undergo a process, characterised by strong traditional values, which has been passed on from generation to generation. The survival of the ceremonies can be attributed to the actual performance of the songs, *mantras*, prayers and rituals. According to Magwaza (1993:92), "performance re-enacts knowledge and therefore eliminates the dying out of a tradition". Many

members of the community attend traditional Tamil and Zulu weddings. The attendance and active participation of the audience is vital to the life, success and survival of a tradition. The participants and the observers play an important role by ensuring that, the rituals and performances, by way of *mantras*, songs, symbols, actions, are kept in memory, for easy transmission. Jousse's theory of Oral-Style expression, which has been defined in chapter 2 and demonstrated in the chapters dealing with Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies, accounts for the holistic and mnemonic use of the gestual-visual/oral-aural modes of expression.

Jousse identified Rhythmism, Bilateralism, Formulism and Mimism as the "four guiding principles" which he termed 'laws' which explain the process of human expression and memory irrespective of "ethnic identity.

It must be noted that, the observed Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies, do not follow a rigidly fixed form, in respect of the rituals, *mantras*, songs and other elements of the marriage ceremony. However the general structure of the marriage ceremonies in the respective cultural communities is the same, and follows the customs and traditions of an oral society.

In the course of the study, it has become clear to the researcher, that, there are further opportunities to analyse and demonstrate the rituals and performances of marriages as practiced by the other linguistic groups within the Hindu community in South Africa, namely, the Telegu, Hindi and Gujerati, speaking communities, who originate from different parts of India. Although they are united by a common religion, they have different customs and traditions, which can be attributed to regional and caste

differences. Researching the various rituals and practices can provide valuable insights into the social fabric of these minority groups.

Similarly, there are numerous avenues of exploration as yet untapped in the performance of traditional Zulu rituals and ceremonies that are at this point in time still only recorded in human memory and performance and face extinction with the death of their performers: "With the death of every old man in Africa, a library disappears" (Amadou Hampata Ba)

To overcome the material, emotional, aesthetic and psychological destructiveness of apartheid, and to encourage the holistic development of individuals and communities, it is imperative that the cultural dimension should be integrated into the overall processes of social development. Research to find common ground, in terms of cultural practices, can help to provide answers to the many problems that confront a country, which is in the process of transforming out of segregation into a unified whole.

Clearly the post-apartheid South African society faces, enormous social, cultural and economic challenges in its attempts to confront the legacies from previous generations. Any attempts of cross-cultural studies can help with healing the wounds of the past. We have all seen the value of arts and culture in contributing to nation building. Since the inauguration of the President of South Africa in 1994, and the theme of 'many cultures, one nation', there have been numerous multi-cultural celebrations expressing our unity through culturally diverse art forms. Art forms such as dance and music in particular, are exploring and developing new forms, which

combine elements of our various cultures with great success. Similarly studies of the rituals and performances of the different communities can contribute towards a better understanding of the needs and aspirations of the different groups, which will result in forging better relationships, and promise a brighter and more integrated and peaceful future for all South Africans.

CHAPTER 15

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APPENDIX A

MANTRAS USED IN A TAMIL MARRIAGE CEREMONY

1.The blessing of the garlands

On arrival at the bridal stool, the priest blesses the garlands with the following *mantra.*

Gurur Brahma Gurur Vishnu

Gurur Devo Maheshwara

Gurur Satchath Param Brahma

Tasmai Sri Guruveh Namaha

English translation:

Salutations to that Noble teacher who is *Brahma* and *Vishnu* and Lord *Parameshwara*

The Guru is like Lord *Brahma*, because he creates the character in children.

He is like Lord *Vishnu* because he protects the good qualities in his students.

He is like Lord *Maheshwara* because he destroys the evil and bad qualities in them.

2. Anga sutham (purification ceremony)

As the water is placed on each part of the body, the relevant *mantra* is chanted:

HEAD   *- Esaniya Nama Aum*

THROAT   *- Aum Thath Purushaya Nama*

HEART	- *Aum Agoraayya Nama*
RIGHT SHOULDER	- *Aum Vama Devayaa Namah*
LEFT SHOULDER	- *Aum Sathiojadaya Namah*
OVER THE HEAD	- *Aum Para Bramanay Namah*

Aum: is the sacred syllable (also spelt Om) – it is believed to contain the sound of all Reality.

A - *Brahma* (Creator), the individual sound arises from the nose.

U - *Vishnu* (Sustainer), the individual sound that arises from the throat.

M - Shiva (Destroyer), the individual sound that is formed on the lips.

When they join the sound AUM, arises from the region of the navel (*nabhi*), resulting in a primordial sound.

Namah means prostrations to the Supreme Lord.The *mantra* makes referance to the different parts of the body.The sprinkling of water is complimented with the reciting of the following lines.

Aum Gangay Godavaarium

Aum Kaveri Sarasvathium

Aum Yamuna Sinthu Narmathayum

The above *mantra* makes reference to the seven holy rivers.

2. Prayer to Lord Ganesha (Vinayaga)

The officiating priest offers the following prayer to *Lord Ganesha* before breaking the coconut in two halves.

Vakratunda Mahakaaya

Suryakodi Samaprabha

Nirvignam Karume Deva

Sarva Kaaryesu Sarvadha

Oh Lord with trunk and huge mighty body,

Whose lustre is equivalent to that of many suns;

I pray to thee Oh Lord, remove all obstacles

From the good actions I perform.

The reciting of the following *mantra*, which refers to the different names of *Ganesha*, requires the participation of the couple.

Aum	*sumugaya*	*namaha*
Aum	*yega thanthaaya*	*namaha*
Aum	*kabilaaya*	*namaha*
Aum	*gaja karnagaaya*	*namaha*
Aum	*lambo dharaaya*	*namaha*
Aum	*viga daaya*	*namaha*
Aum	*vikna raajaaya*	*namaha*

Aum	*vinayagaaya*	*namaha*
Aum	*dhooma kerthuve*	*namaha*
Aum	*ganaat yatchaaya*	*namaha*
Aum	*bala santhraaya*	*namaha*
Aum	*soorpa karnaaya*	*namaha*
Aum	*herambaaya*	*namaha*
Aum	*skandha poorvajaaya*	*namaha*
Aum	*maha ganapathiye*	*namaha*

3. Kalsam prayer (prayer to the trinity)

Invocatory praises are made to Lord *Shiva* and Lord *Vishnu*.

Mantras

Aum	*Naadha pindhugale*	*Namo Namaha*
Aum	*Naadhandha roobane*	*Namo Namaha*
Aum	*Namasivayane*	*Namo Namaha*
Aum	*Naarayanane*	*Namo Namaha*
Aum	*Panja boothangale*	*Namo Namaha*
Aum	*Panja charame*	*Namo Namaha*
Aum	*Pasubathiye*	*Namo Namaha*
Aum	*Parama sivame*	*Namo Namaha*
Aum	*Parabrahma vadive*	*Namo Namaha*

Aum	*Parama jyothiye*	*Namo Namaha*
Aum	*Paja yudame*	*Namo Namaha*
Aum	Sadaacharame	*Namo Namaha*
Aum	Sarvasvarane	*Namo Namaha*
Aum	Sadha sivame	*Namo Namaha*
Aum	Sankara moorthiye	*Namo Namaha*
Aum	Soma sooriyaakini losanaaya	*Namo Namaha*

A prayer is also offered to the *Nava grahas* (nine planets).

Aum – sacred sound

Devatha – celestial deity

Namaha - prostrations

Aum	*Thithi*	*devatha*	*namaha*	(day)
Aum	*Natchithra*	*devatha*	*namaha*	(star)
Aum	*Yoga*	*devatha*	*namaha*	(meditation)
Aum	*Karana*	*devatha*	*namaha*	(auspicious)
Aum	*Raasi*	*devatha*	*namaha*	(sign of zodiac)
Aum	*Sooriya*	*devatha*	*namaha*	(Sun)
Aum	*Sandhira*	*devatha*	*namaha*	(Moon)
Aum	*Angaaraga*	*devatha*	*namaha*	(Mars)
Aum	*Buthan*	*devatha*	*namaha*	(Mercury)
Aum	*Guru*	*devatha*	*namaha*	(Jupiter)
Aum	*Sukira*	*devatha*	*namaha*	(Venus)

Aum	*Sani*	*devatha*	*namaha*	(Saturn)
Aum	*Rhagu*	*devatha*	*namaha*	(ascending Moon)
Aum	*Kerthu*	*devatha*	*namaha*	(descending Moon)

Finally a prayer is offered to the female aspect of God in the form of *Sakthi*. The mantra is a personification of *Sakthi* in many names.

Maatha	*mayaaya*	*nama aum*
Sarva midhi	*maatha mayaaya*	*nama aum*
Maatha	*mayaaya*	*nama aum*
Lallitha	*maatha mayaaya*	*nama aum*
Maatha	*mayaaya*	*nama aum*
Sri Durga	*maatha mayaaya*	*nama aum*
Maatha	*mayaaya*	*nama aum*
Sri Vaani	*maatha mayaana*	*nama aum*
Maatha	*mayaana*	*nama aum*
Sri Gauri	*maatha mayaana*	*nama aum*
Maatha	*mayaana*	*nama aum*
Sri Parasakthi	*maatha mayaana*	*nama aum*

4. Yagiam (raising of the sacred fire)

Namasivaya Vazhga

A *mantra* dedicated to Lord *Shiva*, is chanted to raise the sacred fire

Namasivaya Vaazhga Naathan thall vaazhga!

Imaippozhuthum ennenchil ningathan thall vaazhga!

Kogazhi aanda gurumanithan thall vaazhga!

Aagamam aaginindru annippaan thall vaazhga!

Egan anegan Iraivan adi Vaazhga!

English translation:

Long live ' *Na MA SI VA YA*' the mystic five letters, Long live the Feet of the Lord!

Long live the Feet of Him who does not leave my mind even for a little time!

Long live the Feet of the gem-like Preceptor of *Gokazhi*! Long live the feet of Him

who tastes Sweet, standing as the One expounded by the *Agamas*! Long live the Feet

of Him who is the One, the Many and the Lord.

Eesan adipotri! Endhai adipotri!

Dhesan adipotri! Sivan sevadi potri!

Neyaththe nindra nimalan adipotri!

Maayappirrappu arrukkum mannan adipotri!

Seeraar perunthurrai nam dhevan adipotri!

Aaraadha inbam arullumalai potri!

English translation:

Hail Foot of the Lord! Hail Foot of my Heavenly Father!

Hail Foot of the Famous one! Hail Foot of the Lustrous One! Hail roseate Feet of

Shiva! Hail Foot of Flawless One who stood in love! Hail Foot of the king who severs

illusive birth! Hail Foot of our Lord of glorious *Perunthurai*! Hail Foot of the

Mountain (Lord) that affords bliss that wane not.

The following *mantra* is chanted while the bridal couple circumambulate the sacred

fire.

Aum	*Bhu*	*Swaha*	(nourishment)
Aum	*Esava*	*Swaha*	(good health)
Aum	*Maha*	*Swaha*	(strength)
Aum	*Jana*	*Swaha*	(wealth and prosperity)
Aum	*Thaba*	*Swaha*	(wisdom and knowledge)
Aum	*Bhuva*	*Swaha*	(love and understanding)
Aum	*Sakthiyum*	*Swaha*	(children)

6. Mangaliam (tying of the nuptial knot)

The following *mantra* is recited to bless the *thali*. The different names of Lord Vishnu

are chanted. The term *bhagavadhe* refers to the *Bhagavad Gita* (religious

doctrine).*Bhagavad* means God.

Aum	*namo bhagavadhe*	*sri*	*paandu rangaaya*	*namaha*
Aum	*namo bhagavadhe*	*sri*	*vaasu dhevaaya*	*namaha*

Aum   namo bhagavadhe   sri   venu gopalaaya   namaha

Aum   namo bhagavadhe   sri   murali daraaya   namaha

For each of the three knots a mantra is recited. The prayer is to sanctify the nuptial chord, which is dedicated to the consorts of the holy Trinity, *Parvathi*, *Laksmi* and *Sarasvathy* respectively.

Aum sarva Mangala maangalya

Jeeva sarvaartha saadhiga

Saranya triambaka devi

Naarayaani namas – thuthe

Thou art the all-auspicious *Shive* (spouse of *Shiva*) the beautiful.

I prostrate myself at Thy Feet O *Triyambake* (spouse of *Shiva*) who has three eyes.

Gauri (the one with the faint yellowish complexion – *Parvathi*)

Naaraayani (the sister of Lord *Naaraayana*)

Namas Tastu Mahaa Mayee

Shri Pithe Sura Puujite

Shankha Chakra Gadaa Haste

Sri Mahaa Lakshmi Namosthute

I bow down to Thy Lotus Feet. O *Mahaa Lakshmi*. Thou control all delusion. You are the source of prosperity. Worshipped by all the Gods. Holding in thy hand the conch shell and the discus and the mace.

Salutations to Thee I Bow down to Thy Lotus Feet.

Yaw Kinden tuatara hare Davila

Yaw Subha vista brutal

Yaw Vienna variant manditakaraa

Yaa Shweta padmaa sana

Yaa Bramaa chyuta shankara

Prabhruti bhi devaih

Sadaa vanditaa

Saa maam paatu

Saraswathi Bhagavathee

Nihshesha Jaadyaa Pahaa

Oh *Sarasvati* the destroyer of our ignorance protect us. She who is fair like the *kanda* flower and like the Moon and Snow and with necklace of pearls. Who is dressed in pure white clothes and who is seated on a white Lotus. Whose hands play the veena and to whom hymns are sung by the Gods, known as *Brahma, Vishnu* and *Shankara.* Oh Goddess of knowledge remove the ignorance completely from my mind.

APPENDIX B

1. OBSERVATION OF TAMIL MARRIAGE CEREMONIES

DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY	PARTICIPANTS	ORGANISATION
24 /03/2000	18h30 to 20h00	Nalungu	Devi Sankaree Govender	Umzinto (private)
17 /02/2001	17h30 to 18h30	Marriage	Kumaran Thambiran Veloshni Naidoo	Merebank Tamil School Society (MTSS)
25/02/2001	10h00 to 11h00	Engagement	Ravichandran Moodley Krishnavelli Govender	Kharwastan Temple Society (KTS)
19/10/2001	18h00 to 20h00	Nalungu	Kamini Naidoo	Gingindlovu (private)
20/10/2001	9h00 to 10h00	Marriage	Vinod Govender Kamini Naidoo	Stanger Siva Sungam (SSS)

2. OBSERVATION OF ZULU MARRIAGE CEREMONY (PHOTOGRAPHS)

DATE	TIME	VENUE	PARTICIPANTS
19/12/2001	10h00	Impume (South Coast)	Inkosi M W Hlengwa and Andile Gumede

APPENDIX C   SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEWS

CATEGORY	NAME OF PARTICIPANT	AGE	DATE	TIME	VENUE
Organisation	Merebank Tamil School Society (MTSS)		28/07/00	11h00	MTSS
	Kharwastan Temple		8/08/00	17h30	Kharwastan Temple
	Stanger Siva Sungam		20/10/01	9h00	Stanger Siva Sungam
Brahmans (priests)	Pillay M	62	28/07/00	10h00	Merebank
	Moodley A	47	16/07/00	16h00	Phoenix
	Raman P	65	20/10/01	9h30	Stanger
	Moodley N	54	13/10/01	16h00	Durban
Authorities/Academics/Cultural Leaders	Vadivelu T	85	26/05/00	14h00	Hillary
	Chetty K	83	8/06/00	14h00	Effingham
	Venketraman R	43	24/06/00	11h00	Benoni
	Magwaza T (Dr)	35	7/09/01	14h00	Durban
	Khuzwayo N	37	16/09/01	15h00	Durban
	Khumalo Z M (Prof)	42	24/10/01	10h00	Empangeni

APPENDIX D   **SCHEDULE OF RHYTHMO-STYLISTIC WORKSHOPS**

DATE	TIME	VENUE	NO OF PARTICIPANTS	PURPOSE
24 June 2000	9 00 to 13 00	UND	15	Analysing performance of Oral Traditional song, dance and religious texts.
2 June 2001	10 00 to 14 00	Doc. Centre	24	The performance, recording and analysis of Zulu and Tamil marriage songs.
13 October 2001	11 00 to 15 00	Doc. Centre	30	The re-enaction of Tamil and Zulu marriage ceremonies as a data gathering exercise.
17 December 2001	10 00 to 14 00	Doc. Centre	4	Analysis of mnemonic structures and mnemotechnical devices, for Tamil and Zulu marriage songs.