The funeral oration: a mean of educating the younger generations in the classical city.

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Abstract
In this paper, I set out to analyse the use of funeral oration in ancient cities as an educational strategy for dealing with the pain of death. In general, the forms of mourning present in a culture play a key part in the formation of future citizens: they contribute to shaping both collective and individual identity, offering shared meanings about major life events. The *epitaphios logos* helped both the individual and the community to overcome the fear of death, by "finding in the deeds of the dead a means of educating the living", as Lysias observed in his *Oration for the Fallen in the Corinthian War*. I therefore examine literary texts from the classical era that illustrate the educational function of funeral orations, briefly comparing them with another educational tool for addressing bereavement, the tragedy.

Il contributo intende analizzare la funzione dell'orazione funebre nelle città antiche quale strategia educativa per affrontare il dolore della morte. Infatti, le forme di elaborazione del lutto presenti nelle culture risultano molto significative per la formazione dei futuri cittadini: esse contribuiscono a creare un'identità collettiva, confermano l'identità individuale, e offrono valori condivisi riguardo ai grandi eventi della vita, "educando i vivi attraverso le azioni dei morti", come Lisia afferma in *Orazione per i caduti in difesa dei Corinzi*. Il saggio analizza alcune testimonianze letterarie di epoca classica che mostrano la funzione educativa dell'orazione funebre; in seguito, propone un breve confronto con un'altra strategia educativa di elaborazione del lutto, la tragedia.

Keywords: informal education in Ancient Greece, pedagogy of death in ancient Greece, funeral orations in Ancient Greece, funeral laments in Ancient Greece, mourning in ancient Greece

Parole chiave: educazione informale in Grecia antica, pedagogia della morte in Grecia antica, orazione funebre in Grecia Antica, lamento funebre in Grecia antica, lutto in Grecia antica

Introduction

"I say that as a city we are a *paideusin* for Greece": in his *History of the Peloponnesian War,* Paragraph II, 41, 1, the historian Thucydides attributes these words to Pericles, in the context of a funeral oration proclaimed for those who had fallen in the first year of the Peloponnesian conflict, 430 BC. This utterance clearly conveys the notion that the ancient city in the classical era was a holistic educational enterprise, with the explicit aim of forming its citizens in set roles and shared values. Informal education in antiquity was thus all-pervasive and effective in generating social integration and cohesion: as is well documented, it took place through multiple events – such as rituals, orations, festivals, ceremonies, theatre, and so on – and in multiple ways. This informal education system was highly impactful and long-lasting, persisting almost unchanged from the end of the 6th century BC through the Hellenistic period.

The ancients themselves were aware of this, as the above quotation from Pericles and numerous other contemporary accounts suggest. Further examples, among the many possible, include the words of Isocrates in his *Panegyric*, or Plato's impassioned critique in the *Republic* of Aristophanes' comedy, *The Frogs*.

In this paper, I specifically set out to explore the use of funeral orations in the ancient cities of the classical era, as an educational strategy for helping their citizens to cope with bereavement and overcome the anguish associated with death.

During both the archaic and classical eras, ancient Greek society was far more exposed to death than are our Western societies today: the death of warriors in battle was a common event; there is also abundant evidence to suggest that women died frequently in childbirth, often at a very young age, meaning, as Aristotle points out in Paragraph 6, 12, 588a of his *Historia Animalium*, that a child's entry into the world was a hugely risky event for both mother and infant (Demand, 2004). Neither was the premature death of children, either during the neonatal period or in early childhood, a rare occurrence in ancient families (Grmek, 1983; Grmek & Gourevitch, 1998)[1]. Additional evidence for the everyday proximity of death in ancient society comes from the ancients' own numerous representations of death. These span many fields, featuring prominently in all: epic poetry, for example, tells us of untold numbers of deaths, whether describing them in passing or providing detailed true-to-life accounts; the phenomenon of death is also a constant theme in classical tragedy, in some cases constituting the very heart of the narrative (Vernant, 1985).

Faced with such dramatic and distressing perceptions and representations of death, the Ancient Greek world developed a series of educational strategies for dealing with bereavement, at both the individual and collective levels: these strategies helped both the individual and the community to overcome fears of death, and involved on the one hand staging ritual forms of weeping, and on the other "finding in the deeds of the dead a means of educating the living", as remarked by Lysias in his *Oration for the Fallen in the Corinthian War*.

In this paper, I intend to focus on a specific educational strategy used in the Greek cities of the classical era to address the theme of death: the funeral oration. The delivery of an oration, similarly to the enactment of the classical tragedy, was a key educational event, whose purpose was to integrate issues of grief, loss and dying with the notion of a community whose shared history continued to unfold and develop. Analysis of this strategy suggests that the Ancient Greeks consciously avoided spectacularizing death, seeking rather to accommodate and manage the emotional aspects of bereavement, contrary to what happens all too frequently in our contemporary culture. From a history of education perspective, it is useful to examine the Ancient Greek approach to coping with grief, because this can help us to identify ways of overcoming the taboo on death that currently pervades our own societies. The ancients' strategies for managing bereavement – key elements of which included caring for the corpse and building a shared memory from the mourning process – prompt us to reflect on the fact that these aspects are often neglected or feared in our own day, with the effect of obstructing a true pedagogy of death.

A reflection on the state of the art and methodological notes

Recent fruitful collaboration among different disciplines has extended the available evidence concerning representations of dying and bereavement, and approaches to dealing with death, in ancient Greek culture. Abundant iconographic sources allow us to reconstruct both funeral rites and representations of death. For example, archaic and classical ceramics feature fascinating depictions of death scenes and funerals. The iconographic evidence is supplemented by the literary sources (epic and lyric poetry, drama, works of history and philosophy), which not only describe funeral rites, but also raise profound and painful questions about grief and bereavement, and even reflections on how to deal with it. The classical tragedies, for example, frequently stage stories of death and funeral rites. In the field of anthropology, interesting studies on this topic were conducted by Vernant (1985), who analysed representations of death in the Ancient Greek imaginary. Because the Greeks viewed death as an unnameable and irreducible figure, they came to confer ideality on dying: their key strategy for warding off the horrors of chaos unleashed by bereavement, was to affirm the continuity through society of the individual nature that had perished. Remaining in the anthropological domain, the stimulating work of Loraux (1991) reminds us that certain codified literary forms, such as the classical tragedy, were closely based on ancient funeral rites. Specifically, this author emphasized the resemblance between the musical rhythms, laments and gestures that were characteristic of ancient funeral ceremonies, and the part recited by the chorus in many classical tragedies. A similar

perspective is put forward in the work of De Martino (1958), who argued that Greek culture differed from that of other ancient civilizations in that it developed a unique and fruitful link between ritual dirges and profane literature. Through his own rigorous research, De Martino discovered that codified forms of aspects of the ancient funeral rite still survived in 20th century Mediterranean folklore. Regarding Ancient Greek culture, De Martino argued that it had successfully evolved strategies of mourning that helped to ensure the continuity of the cultural process. In the same vein, Faranda (1992) analysed Archaic literary sources, identifying a transition from individual anguish over death to shared and encoded weeping, which on the one hand, contributed to the construction of individual identity and, on the other, to the development of collective memory. This crucial passage is reflected in the progression from Achilles' despairing, undignified, disoriented, and disorienting scream, to Odysseus' tears and Andromache and Hecuba's ritualized lamentation. The ritual option allowed individuals to acknowledge their negative emotions in the context of a dialogue with the community and from a perspective that preserved meaning and identity by affirming the continuity of existence. In a further study of Greek tragedy, Loraux (1998) examined a key aspect of mourning ceremonies and the codification of anguish, namely female grief, especially that of the mother, which was perceived in the ancient city as a destabilizing phenomenon to be isolated and contained. This work offers an illuminating analysis of the intertwining of gender roles, regulated and "allowed" manifestations of suffering and mourning, and the city's political and social institutions. From a literary and philological perspective, Mirto (2007) examined ancient Greek conceptions of the afterlife, and their cultural and religious underpinnings, during the archaic and classical eras. She drew on literature and art to build up a picture of funeral rites and ceremonies, showing that ritual forms of mourning remained virtually unaltered from the Archaic through Hellenistic periods, and encompassed a wealth of concrete and symbolic references to broader ancient Greek culture. This author also examined the relationship between mourning and collective memory. In this regard, Greek civilization developed its own effective strategies for affirming the continuity of community life in the face of death. The existence of a funeral ideology and the political use of the funeral rite reflects the deep-running tension, within archaic and classical society, between the needs of bereaved individuals and families on the one hand and political or public agendas on the other. All the studies just reviewed suggest that rituals associated with death played a key role in ancient Greek culture. While this scholarship is of considerable interest to the fields of anthropology, literature, and art, a specifically pedagogical reflection on these complex themes is still lacking. Yet, the forms of mourning present in a culture play a key part in the formation of future citizens: they contribute to shaping both collective and individual identity, offering shared meanings about major life events. The process of mourning is never purely individual, but inevitably mediated by culture. This means that it may be viewed as a key – albeit frequently implicit and informal – educational process.

Thus, in the current paper, I offer an analysis of selected educational aspects of mourning practices, particularly the funeral oration: the sources examined are funeral speeches from the classical period and the Euripides tragedy *The Suppliants*, which contains an example of a funeral discourse. These are complex texts: in some cases, they are reported versions (Thucydides) and it is not possible to assess how faithfully they reproduce the original orations; in other cases (such as that of Plato, and perhaps Lysias), they may be literary exercises, or it may not be clear for what purpose they were written. Nonetheless, they may be taken as salient sources if we bring to bear due interpretative caution and an awareness of how history and rhetoric are often intertwined (Covato, 2017; Ginzburg, 2006).

Funeral orations represent meaningful evidence, because in the classical city they were commonly-used and impactful educational vehicles for the transmission and sharing of values, as the most recent studies suggest. More specifically, in relation to death, the funeral oration may be defined as a mourning strategy that facilitated a pedagogy of death, via the expression of emotion, the codification of grief, and the construction of collective memory.

Let us begin our analysis by briefly reviewing the mourning strategies featured in the Homeric epics, which laid the cultural ground for the subsequent development of funeral orations and tragedies in the classical era.

The antecedents: death education in Homer's epics

De Martino (1958) observed that Greek civilization was more instrumental than any other in the ancient world in liberating the dirge from its original ritual setting and transforming it into a profane literary form. Arguably, the first traces of a progression towards more complex, shared, and emotionally manageable forms of mourning may be found in the epic narratives, which were the forerunners of classical tragedy and funeral orations. The process of educating feelings and emotions is borne out by changes in the expression of mourning. In the Homeric poems, grief over violent, distressing, or almost unbearable death is initially externalized in a way that evokes the stage of inconsolable despair immediately following bereavement. Achilles, on learning of Patroclus' death, is wrapped in "a cloud of black agony", pours ashes over his head to darken his face, and tears at his hair, according to vv. 22-26 in the eighteenth Book of the *Iliad*. On the demise of Hector, Hecuba tears her hair and throws off her fine veil, wracked by violent weeping, while Priam rolls about in mud and smears his head and neck with dung, as depicted in vv. 405-409 of XXII Book and vv. 163-165 of the XXIV Book of the *Iliad*. Andromache throws off her beautiful robes, tiara and veil, and faints, while a "night of darkness" comes over her eyes. At Achilles' funeral, Thetis screams so frightfully that she upsets the sea and terrifies the Achaeans: we are told by the spirit of Agamemnon in vv. 47-49 of the XXIV Book of the *Odyssey*. Alongside these descriptions of insurmountable anguish, epic poetry also presents early forms of ritualized mourning, which served to channel individual grief into a shared community setting, and may be viewed as reflecting an initial death education strategy. Homer's epics may thus be read as the beginning of a complex path leading from the scream, or limitless lamentation, to a composed choral lament. The funeral oration and tragedy would later inherit key aspects of grief management from these earlier literary forms, exhibiting them in public ritual space, and allowing the disturbing event of death to be effectively integrated into the flow of individual and community life: thereby offering a full-blown pedagogy of death.

In the Homeric poems, one element of an initial mourning strategy is the ritual of lamentation. The first detailed and fascinating description of the *threnos* (funeral lament) appears in Book XXIV of the *Iliad*: Andromache, after an initial moment of unrestrained agony, begins the dirge while embracing Hector, whose dead body has been laid out on a special bier placed at the centre of the household. The long lament, interspersed with Andromache's sobs, is echoed by the women gathered around her. Hecuba responds with an equally moving lament, followed by Helen representing the dead man's sisters-in-law. Only after the performance of this ritual, which is dialogical and rhythmic, and centred around sobbing, physical contact with the corpse, and the shedding of copious tears, does King Priam give the order to proceed with the next part of the ceremony, the cremation of the body, according to vv. 720-787 of the XXIV Book of the *Iliad*. It should be noted that this elaborate funeral ceremony could only be held once the elderly Priam had recovered his son's corpse. This had entailed bravely venturing onto enemy ground and moving the fierce Achilles to pity. Celebration of the rite thus implicitly depended on a pact between generations (the aged father of the deceased and the young murderer) and on the setting aside of hatred among enemies, in the name of their shared humanity and the ineluctable condition of fragility and insecurity that was common to all, as depicted in vv. 460-580 of the XXIV Book of the *Iliad*. Hence, this ritual may be described as an initial educational strategy that already drew on shared meanings to mitigate the experience of bereavement. The next shift towards other modes of death education took place in the classical age, with the advent of the tragedy and the funeral oration. These new educational strategies served to impose further boundaries on lamentation and to moderate the frightful scream in the face of death, helping individual loss to be overcome by means of a collective rite: the grieving process was thus definitively integrated into a dialogue with the community. As we shall see, tragedies and funeral orations represent complementary educational strategies: the first uses communicative and expressive registers that are typical of the female code (prelogical speech, musical rhythm, gestures); the second draws on registers typically associated with the male code (rationality, historical reconstruction, rhetorical fiction). Hence, together these the two rites fulfilled the vital educational function of transmitting generational values, social cohesion, and the codification of gender roles.

I next offer a succinct analysis of the educational aspects of funeral orations, before briefly comparing them to the educational features of the tragedy.

The funeral oration as an educational strategy for dealing with bereavement

There are few extant examples of funeral orations, because unfortunately many have been lost. Those surviving include: an oration delivered by Pericles in 430 BC to commemorate those who died during the first year of the Peloponnesian War, which is reported in full in Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*; another dedicated to the fallen in the Corinthian war, composed by Lysias between 392 and 386 BC, and part of the Lysian corpus of speeches; an oration by Demosthenes honouring those killed at Chaeronea (338 BC), of doubtful authenticity; and another for the fallen in the Lamian war, delivered by Hyperides (322 BC), also of dubious authenticity. In addition, we have Plato's *Menexenus*, in which Socrates delivers an oration attributed to Aspasia (post-387 BC). Scholars have engaged in lively debate regarding the last-mentioned work: for some it is a sort of parody, for others an apologetic discourse that reinterprets the history of Athens from the perspective of the ideal Platonic state. Contemporary thinkers tend to regard it as not as a caricature, but rather as a fascinating interpretation of Athenian history.

Finally, one of Euripides' tragedies depicts both ritual female lament and a funeral oration: in *The Suppliants* (422 BC), after Theseus has engaged with the Theban troops and recovered and laid out the bodies of the fallen from Argos, he entrusts the task of commemorating the dead to the Argive king Adrastus, who with pride and emotion declares himself – in v. 859 – most willing to praise his "friends", in "all truth and sincerity". This play clearly juxtaposes feminine, emotional aspects of ritual lament – personified by the chorus of mothers, who intone a painful, pre-logical song and perform a ritual rhythmic dance with marked gestures –, and masculine rational discourse – which is also emotionally charged to some extent, but unfolds clearly and logically according to a set pattern.

In this speech, Adrastus praises each warrior for his own specific virtues, concluding with a reflection on values in general (verses 911-917: "A noble upbringing produces a sense of shame. Every man who is trained in good deeds is prevented by shame from becoming base. Courage may be learned, for even a baby learns to speak and to hear things he does not yet understand. And what a man learns he tends to treasure up until he is old. Therefore, raise your children well!". The women's chorus in contrast, interrupts his speech from time to time, bursting out in a lament that is heavy with emotion, illogical, and often evokes birth, as in verses 918-924: "Alas, my son, it was for misery/that I carried you next to my heart and nourished you,/bearing the pain of childbirth!/ And now Hades has taken/ the fruit of my labour, wretch that I am,/ and I have no one to tend my old age, though I,/ unhappy one, have borne a child!").

According to Mirto, this work draws a key distinction between male and female cultures: the men approach the funeral rite with the rationalism of those seeking to comply with the laws of the established order, while the religiosity of the women is founded on archaic traditional values and family ties (Mirto, 1984, p. 64).

The play simultaneously illustrates the process of mourning as it is treated in the ancient tragedy and in the funeral oration, allowing viewers to make a side-by-side comparison of the two approaches. The funeral oration takes place immediately after a long and intricate celebration of the superiority of democracy over tyranny, during the exchange between Theseus and the Theban herald. It is interesting to note that in the tragedy, the grieving process is tied in with discourse on democracy, reflecting the social patterns of the period.

Indeed, in classical Athenian society, delivery of the funeral oration or *epitaphios logos* had become a highly elaborate ceremony, governed by precise rules that symbolically evoked the ideology of the city. We owe our knowledge of this ceremony to the descriptions of Thucydides and Plato. In the former's account, three days before the ceremony, the bones of the fallen were put on display, and the citizens were invited to bring appropriate offerings for their own deceased kin. At the funeral itself, each tribe carried the bones of its own dead in a wagon; an empty bier, covered in drapes, symbolized those missing in action, for whom no remains had been recovered. Following the procession of the wagons, the funeral oration was proclaimed. It had been composed by a man chosen for the task by virtue of his "intelligence" and "reputation", as outlined in Paragraph II, 34, 1-3 of Thucydides' *History*: "When the bones have been laid in the earth, a man chosen by the city for his intellectual gifts and for his general reputation makes an appropriate speech in praise of the dead, and after the speech all leave. This is the procedure at these burials, and all through the war, when the time came to do so, the Athenians followed this ancient custom". From Plato's *Menexenus*, we know that this ceremony was held annually in memory of those who had fallen in battle (Socrates points out that those who die defending the homeland enjoy the privilege of praise), and that identification of the one

to be entrusted with the task of reciting the oration was the outcome of discussion and reflection (the Platonic dialogue begins just as the assembly is deliberating on whom to appoint), indicating that it was a coveted role and tricky to assign.

Both ancient historians and contemporary scholars link the custom of funeral orations to efforts to "monitor and contain mourning" in the Greek cities, at the end of the archaic period and during the transition to the classical era. In Paragraph 21, 5-7 of his *Life of Solon*, Plutarch describes measures introduced by Solon in Athens with a view to regulating the expression of grief. These included the banning of female practices viewed as excessive, the containment of dirges and laments, the forbidding of large-scale sacrifices and exaggerated adornment of the corpse, and a prohibition on mourning earlier deaths: "He forbade women to tear at and beat their breast during funerals and he forbade wailing and weeping at funeral celebrations …. He did not allow oxen to be sacrificed in such circumstances, or the dead to be shrouded in more than three garments, or tombs to be visited, except during funerals".

A similar move to regulate manifestations of mourning and provide "death education" is attributed to Lycurgus in Sparta: this leader authorized the construction of tombs at the temples so that young people might not be horrified at the prospect of death, but to learn to know and live with it; enforced sobriety during funeral ceremonies and mourning periods was also intended to mitigate grief, as implied by Plutarch in *Institutio lacaedeamonium* and Paragraph 27, 1-4 of *Life of Lycurgus*: "He did not allow anything to be buried with the dead, rather the body was to be laid in the tomb wrapped in a scarlet tunic and covered in olive leaves. The name of the deceased was not to be inscribed on the tomb, except in the case of a man who had been killed at war or a woman who had died in childbirth. He set a limited time for mourning, eleven days; on the twelfth it was mandatory to offer a sacrifice to Demeter and cast off one's grief". These laws are complex in meaning and may be interpreted from multiple perspectives. However, as argued by De Martino (1958), they were certainly designed to guide the transition from the highly exaggerated manifestations of mourning typical of heroic culture and a society founded on noble clans, to expressions of grief that were more in keeping with the ideology and practices of democratic society. In Ancient Greece, the dirge was never abandoned; yet in the course of Greek history, it evolved towards literary and dramaturgical forms that were less closely bound to the funeral ritual itself. With the decline of the heroic age and the advent of democracies, there was a strong drive to suppress over-emotional rituals of mourning. Yet, in De Martino's view the regulation of mourning should not be interpreted as contrary to the *goos* (lament) of family members during the *prothesis* of the corpse, but rather as targeting the pompous and dramatic forms of lament that had been characteristic of the heroic age. It seems significant that the custom of funeral oration came to the fore in parallel with the introduction of rules for mourning in Athens. The *epitaphios logos* went beyond and completed the style of mourning to be found in the classical tragedy. Indeed, the funeral speech almost offers a mirror image of staged tragedy, containing numerous references to tragic themes, which it addresses and resolves in complementary ways.

At the funeral ceremony itself, mourning centred around the importance of the burial: the wagons bearing the bones of the dead, that is to say, the least perishable part of the corpse, along with the empty wagon, suggest that burial was ensured even for those whose bodies are missing. Thus, just as in ritual weeping and tragic representations, dealing with the disturbing presence of the corpse with its impurities and the perceived risk of contamination was transformed into a rite of accompaniment.

The funeral oration was ultimately intended to replace lamentation and weeping, now understood as an illogical means of building memory and coping with bereavement: the *epitaphios* provided a link between the deceased and the community that survived them, introducing complementary forms of funeral celebration other than the lament. In this scenario, Vernant (1985) pointed out that community no longer coincides with family, or with the boundaries of a restricted social group. Ensuring that the deceased do not fall into oblivion but are remembered, shifts them into the broader social sphere and distances them from the private one. The dead become part of the culture, and are recalled not so much for their individual personalities, as for the shared values that they embodied. Vernant has argued that by this means the Greeks transferred the experience of death to an aesthetic and ethical level, neutralizing and idealising it. Significantly, in a funeral oration delivered by Gorgias (of which a fragment has come down to us), celebrating the dead generates shared community values, thus becoming an educational strategy. In Fragment 4, the rhetorician praises the deceased for their respect for the gods, filial piety, obedience, and

loyalty to their friends: "No strangers were they to the spirit of war, to legitimate love, to the clash of arms, to the blessings of peace, justly devout toward the gods, attentively dutiful to parents, righteously fair toward comrades, firmly faithful to friends".

Fundamental cultural ideals are clearly evoked here (the gods are mentioned, then parents, and finally other citizens, in a crescendo that touches on religious and metaphysical aspects, the family, and the wider civic community). Hence, as observed by N. Loraux (1999), the ancient Greek funeral oration served the same function as the Roman *laudatio*, which boosted the pride of the *gens*, and spoke to the civic soul of the entire city. The educational role of these devices may also be deduced from the fact that the *laudatio* was pronounced by a relative of the dead person, while the funeral oration was delivered by a citizen chosen especially for the task. Through the funeral speech, the community consolidated its collective identity because the exploits of the dead were set within the *continuum* of collective history, whether mythical or real. This deeply educational function is evident in the oration for the victims of the Corinthian War proclaimed by Lysias. The orator reviews the city's history, from its early struggle with the Amazons, and subsequent conflict with the Theban heroes, to the foundation of its legal system and institutions, and the Persian Wars: the identity of the community, both mythical and historical, is thus reconstructed in order to attribute deep meaning to death, via a strategy that integrates mourning into the cultural tradition. The pedagogical value of this operation was clear to the ancients themselves. Lysias, at the beginning of his speech, in Paragraph 3, explicitly declares his intention to go back over the deeds of the ancestors before honouring the recently deceased: "in the first place, I shall recount the ancient ordeals of our ancestors, recalling the memory of their fame. It is right for all men to remember those deeds, celebrating them in songs, eulogizing them in memorials of the brave, honouring them on such occasions as this; and finding in the deeds of the dead, a means of educating the living".

A similar strategy is deployed in Plato's *Menexenus*, which traces the main stages in the founding and development of the city of Athens in light of the philosopher's ideology, providing an account that may be part myth or even deliberately false, but that allows death to be situated within the flow of community life and a framework of meaning and shared values. Plato himself explicitly states in Paragraph 236e-237a that this is an educational strategy: "A word is needed which will duly praise the dead and gently admonish the living, exhorting the children and brethren of the departed to imitate their virtue, and consoling their fathers and mothers and any surviving forebears".

A comparison of two educational strategies: the *epitaphios logos* and the tragedy

Finally, it is also of interest to compare the two educational strategies deployed in the classical city for managing bereavement. They appear to be complementary to one another: the classical tragedy situates mourning within the community, but evokes deeper and more uncontrolled emotions, while oration goes further, linking death and society within a broader framework of historical construction and reconstruction. To be sure, the two modes of mourning display other highly complementary features. For example, the close link between birth and death that emerges in the tragic lament (as outlined above) deserves further scrutiny. This connection is also evoked in the funeral speech in relation to the myth of autochthony, or birth by springing from the land. A typical example of this kind of mythological reference is offered in Paragraph 237d of *Menexenus*: "at the time when the entire earth was putting forth and producing animals of every kind, wild and tame, our land was barren and void of wild beasts, and among all living beings choose and brought forth man, who is superior to the rest in understanding, and who alone believes in justice". And again, in Lysias' funeral oration in Paragraph 17: "They had not gathered, like most nations, from every quarter, settling in a foreign land after driving out its people: they were born of the soil, and had in their country both their mother and their fatherland".

However, childbirth in classical tragedy is remembered as a typically female and bloody event, a concrete and vital transition into life, while being born of the earth evokes women's exclusion from the city and citizenship on the basis that they are not recognized the equality of peers. Birth into a family stands in opposition to civil unity, brotherhood among fellow citizens, which goes beyond the ties of blood. This not entirely rational strategy, which chooses to evoke myth, nevertheless remains within a framework of speech,

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while the tragic female characters' evocation of childbirth occurs within a fragmented lament. For example, in Euripides' *The Suppliant Women*, weeping mothers recall the birth of their dead children through their sobs, while the subsequent eulogy by Adrastus is delivered with clarity and following a set pattern. It is significant that, in this work, after the mothers have emotionally recalled birth, the old king invokes education in vv. 913-917.

It is as though praising the dead prompts existential reflection on the importance of education and the transmission of values from one generation to the next. Similarly, the oration delivered by Pericles and reported by Thucydides represented an opportunity to emphasize the shared ideals of the city and define an "educational model for the whole of Greece", and it concludes in Paragraph II, 45, 1 and II, 46, 1, by linking celebration of the dead with the exaltation of shared values and the importance of educating the younger generations: "As for you who are the sons and brothers of the departed, I see that your struggle to emulate them will be a challenging one. For all men praise the dead, and, however great your value may be, it will be difficult for you to be judged, I do not say equal to, but even slightly less than the fallen [...] from today onwards, the city will maintain their children until they have reached puberty, this is the solid prize with which, as with a garland, [Athens] crowns her sons living and dead".

Not surprisingly, in Euripides' tragedy, after the funeral oration, Theseus appeals to the sons of the fallen men, inviting them to take the bones of their fathers. He is offering them a civic message, a collective memory. This is the cue for a deus ex machina intervention by Athena, who explains – in vv. 1190-1126 – how the ritual is to be performed and predicts that the buried corpses will act as a bulwark against future enemies, evoking the theme of mutual gift between the living and the dead. Likewise, Pericle's oration closes with a rousing address to the children of the dead men, providing further evidence for educational function of funeral orations and the importance of the relationship among generations.

Hence, the funeral oration situates death within the continuity provided by the community, using different and complementary registers and styles with respect to the mourning staged in the classical tragedy. The oration, among other features, draws heavily on male roles and male emotion management, with an emphasis on logical discourse, civic identity, and publicness (meaning shared by all citizens); the tragedy on the other hand evokes and amplifies female styles and roles, with an emphasis on deeper emotions and more explicit links with ancient ritual lamentation, as summarized in the following chart:

TRAGEDY	FUNERAL ORATION
Communicative and expressive registers typical of the female code	Communicative and expressive registers typical of the male code
Prelogical speech, weeping, lamentation (*goos*)	Speech, rhetoric (*logos*)
Deep emotions	Rationality
Individual biography	Community history
Remembrance of birth as a female, bloody event	Myth of birth from the soil

Precisely because the funeral speech adopts a male and civic register, it underlines the connection between the city's funereal and political ideologies, as reflected in certain passages of the reviewed orations, and especially in the structure and content of Periclean oration.

In conclusion, while the classical tragedy draws on female styles and registers and the funeral oration draws predominantly on male ones, there may yet have been a place for women within civil funeral

ceremonies. For example, Hoffmann (2011) has suggested that the empty bier component of the ceremony (representing the missing dead), evokes the inside of the home, the role of women, and the care given privately to the corpse. According to this author, the empty bed is a sign of the female presence in the *patrios nomos*. Hence, while the civic dimension is expressed and made tangible by urns in cypress wood, the private dimension is made visible by the empty bed, which serves as a synthesis of private and public manifestations of pain. Therefore, it was not women that were excluded from the ceremony, but rather the emotions they traditionally expressed. The funeral thus represented a transition from unchecked, private grief to its public manifestation, a passage that was designed to[2] "convert despair and individual negative sentiment into strong and supportive belief, based on the community's trust in the values of the city" (Hoffmann, 2011, p. 62).

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Notes

[1] This should not lead us to conclude that dying of old age did not exist in antiquity: both the iconographic and literary sources present us with numerous images of "grand old people" facing death at an advanced age, such as Laertes, Nestor, Hecuba, and Priam as they are portrayed in the epics, or elderly characters in classical theatre (e.g., Oedipus and Iolaus) or historical and biographical narratives (Seveso, 2013).

[2] "convertir le désespoir, sentiment négatif et individuel, en une conviction forte et solidaire, fondée sur la confiance de la communauté dans les valeurs de la cité" (Author's Translation).

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