

A Weeping Man and the Mourning Ritual: *Literati Writing and the Rhetoric of Funeral Oration in Eighteenth-Century Joseon**

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Abstract

This article investigates the cultural irony of Confucian discipline set against the literary presentation of emotions, from the angle of cultural studies grounded on historical and philosophical approaches, literary text analysis, and gender criticism. First, it aims to explore how funeral oration legitimized the act of weeping for scholar-officials of Joseon and shows how gender was a key element in understanding the way emotional expressiveness was accommodated, represented, and articulated in the Confucian norm. Next, it examines how the level of emotional expressiveness of the funeral oration was closely linked to bloodline, physical and psychological distance, the nature of a relationship, and social context. Finally, it shows that mourning and sadness were deemed the purest and sincerest expression of authentic feeling, as seen through its close association with bodily reactions, and that the funeral oration served as an exhibition of the interaction of human feelings.

Keywords: emotion, sadness, gender, funeral oration, Confucian culture, bodily pain, physicality, paradox cultural irony, *zhongyong*

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Introduction: *Irony of the Treatise of Human Nature in Confucian Cultural Context through Literati Writings*

When attributing gender to discourse, a male is often regarded as more logical, intellectual, value-laden, and creative, while a female is considered to be more emotional, sensitive and receptive. This perspective, although criticized since the era of David Hume and Adam Smith, stems from the historical and social premise of a pair: a rational male and an emotional female, dating back to Aristotle (Bolen 2003, 2006; Ko 1996). As analyzed by K. Choe (2006, 340), this emerges from the notion that the binary concept of female and male are related to personality and nature and include moral and psychological characteristics. This Western-derived view has widely been criticized for the inherently binary approach that it produces in gendered fields like gender studies, psychology, and sociology (Irigaray 1998, 2000; Bourdieu 2003; Spivak 2003).

However, examining gender differences through a critical approach can still be an effective way of explaining characteristics of writing in premodern East Asian discourse, including that of the Joseon period. Living in a strict Confucian culture, the Joseon literati (*sadaebu*) were disciplined to control their emotions and passions, which was reflected in their writings. There was a strong political, social, and aesthetic imperative not to reveal emotions directly in one's writing. For example, only the *sadaebu* were permitted to write in Chinese characters and in their Chinese poetry, the highest genre of contemporary literature in Joseon, emotional rhetoric had to be moderated or represented in a sublimated style. On the other hand, the poetic expressions of affection or passionate feelings were not seen as refined literary works. Emotional rhetoric belonged to vulgar literature of the lowbrow class.

Literature generally addresses issues of humanity and serves as a mode to locate, construct, and expand ideas about the human state. In other words, all literature must have at its base some element of human nature. Consequently, it is impossible to write something that features the expression and representation of human nature without

considering human emotions. This can clearly be seen in the male literati writing of the Joseon period. Accordingly, this study analyzes the main emotional rhetorical styles of the male literati in eighteenth-century Joseon, and in doing so casts light on the relationship between emotion, gender, and writing as a form of cultural grammar.

In Joseon, male literati were evaluated according to their ability to control and balance their emotions, as per the Confucian concept of *zhongyong* 中庸 (doctrine of the mean) and male literati writing was an exploration of humanity and human nature, a way of reconciling the emotional and rational aspects of human beings. Thus, *zhongyong* was a key concept that helped to shape both their philosophical outlook and everyday lives. This principle emphasized balance and moderation and was applied to emotional expressions in both spoken and written form. The emotions were often referred to as *qiqing* 七情 (*chiljeong* in Korean; “seven emotions”): joy, anger, sorrow, pleasure, love, hatred, and desire. The principle of *zhongyong* discourages the experiencing and expression of extreme emotions, as they were believed to disrupt psychological well-being and social harmony. One key literary genre that is closely connected to this idea is the funeral oration (*jemun*), a short narrative written in Chinese characters to be delivered on the ceremonial occasion of a funeral.

Therefore, the funeral oration is an interesting point of departure in order to consider how a male literatus displayed his inner feelings while also simultaneously expressing himself as a moral being of self-restraint and cultivation. The funeral oration is a formal, official form of writing delivered upon the passing of a family member, a friend, or a community member. Because it details the deceased person’s life in chronological order, the funeral oration can be compared with other forms of writing, such as the biography (*jeon*), the letter to the dead (*myojimun*), or the epitaph (*myobimun*).¹ Unlike these written forms,

1. Writing concerning death and funerals is available in the form of official obituary (*haengjang*), funeral oration (*jemun*), biography (*jeon*), letter to the dead (*myojimun*), epitaph (*myobimun*), inscription (*gwangji*), and eulogy (*noesa*). The various forms were used as a way of remembering the deceased and recording his or

however, the funeral oration involves a public speech at a funeral ceremony. Also, because it is written at the request of the bereaved family, the writer is expected to convey feelings of sadness to share communally with the mourners.² As E. Yi (2001), Hwang (2002), and Park (2003) note, the ritualistic role of the funeral oration is to praise the deceased and its emotional role is to express sorrow. Compared with other forms of writing, the funeral oration functions weakly as an official document commemorating a life, but plays a key role in demonstrating the pathos of loss.

In general, male literati were deprived of opportunities to weep and mourn both socially and officially, even in the private and domestic spheres. However, the funeral oration gave them the opportunity to weep, mourn, and lament as they wished. By writing a funeral oration, a man could express his grief and sorrow and even cry in front of family and friends who were also mourning. This did not mean that he was weak or immature; rather, it created a meaningful context through which he could reveal his emotional vulnerability and thus show his compassion as a family member, friend, or colleague. In Confucian culture, funeral writing functioned as (1) the manifestation of courtesy, composing a significant part of the ritual, (2) the authentication of sincerely felt feelings for the deceased, and (3) a natural and familiar response arising out of human nature, a sort of sphere in

her life story. The mourning ritual served as a place to display humanity and was a major part of literature and culture. In a culture where family plays an important role in a literatus's life, writing about one's personal history is judged to be as important as that of family history. For cases of the ritual process and reciting of the funeral oration in funeral rites during premodern China, see Wang (2010). In addition, there were four subgenres of mourning literature in premodern China, *aici* 哀辭 (verse of condolence), *jiwen* 祭文 (funeral oration), *diaowen* 弔文 (eulogy), and *leici* 諒辭 (speech of condolence) (Chen 1995, 292-297).

2. In her dissertation, E. Yi (2001) studied funeral orations of the Joseon period. There are several other studies of writings related to funerals, but they do not deal primarily with funeral culture in late Joseon. Research on funeral orations through gendered perspectives include those of Hwang (2002), Park (2003), and H. Kim (2006). For discussion on funeral orations of the premodern Tang dynasty of China, see Yu and Fu (2009), and on the Ming dynasty, see Li (2008).

which to rediscover humanity. This article focuses on the literary and cultural roles of the funeral oration and the ways in which this literary form made it possible for the literati to weep in public and by doing so to rediscover themselves as emotional subjects, distinguished from their political, administrative, and official identities.

The premise of this research is that funeral orations written in Joseon during the eighteenth century are proper and valid literary materials for the analysis of the emotional rhetoric of condolence and sorrow. In order to explore the intersection of human emotion and Confucian mourning culture, approximately 400 texts, including 387 funeral orations written by Joseon literati, were examined.³ Through analyzing a sample of these texts, this article aims to show how male members of the elite sought a way of legitimizing the act of weeping and crying, a social taboo, through the funeral oration, as well as discuss how historical and cultural context can redefine human nature and emotions. Accordingly, it considers how gender was a key element in understanding the way emotional expressiveness was accommodated, represented, and articulated in Confucian eighteenth-century Joseon. Next, it examines how the level of emotional expressiveness of the funeral oration was closely linked to bloodline, physical and psychological distance, the nature of a relationship, and social context. Finally, it shows that mourning and sadness were deemed the purest and sincerest expression of authentic feeling, as seen through its close association with bodily reactions, and that the funeral oration served as an exhibition of the interaction of human feelings.

3. The source materials are available in *Hanguk munjip chonggan* (Comprehensive Collection of Literary Collections in Korea), published by the Korean Classics Research Institute, which is available on the website of the Institute for the Translation of Korean Classics (<http://db.itkc.or.kr>), and *18 segi yeoseong saenghwalsa jaryojip* (The Sourcebook of Women's Life in the Eighteenth Century), edited by Hwang Su-yeon et al. (2010).

The Neo-Confucian Curb on Emotion and the Politics of Emotional Expression

The Ideal of Zhonghua and the Notion of Gender in Emotion

Eighteenth century Joseon saw the notion of emphasizing *qing* 情 (*jeong* in Korean; “emotion”) over *li* 理 (*i* in Korean; “principle”) spread in the *li-ki* philosophical discourses (D. An 2003, 39). When short texts from the Ming and Qing dynasties of China depicting the writer’s everyday life and inner thoughts began to circulate, some Joseon literati groups and individuals also began emulating this writing style (Jung 2007, 335, 359). This literary trend was also reflected in the funeral oration genre. Narrating private episodes and describing emotional feelings became important literary rhetorical tools (Park 2003, 320). Hwang (2002, 67) contends that the greater reinforcement of the emotional role in the funeral oration genre during the late Joseon period reflected the tendency to appreciate reality over the ideal.

During this period, the prevailing trend among Joseon literati was to write funeral orations for females. The women being recognized in these funeral orations were represented as good wives and wise mothers (Hwang 2002, 66-67). In terms of literary style and rhetoric, the writers of funeral orations for deceased female had more opportunity to naturally reveal their emotions, as well as express their lyricism. In this way, they were able to rediscover and reconstruct themselves as common people with ordinary daily lives. These changes, related to literary trends since the late seventeenth century, resulted in emotional representations and reconsidered everyday sentiment.

According to Paolo Santangelo’s (2003) analysis, the definition of *qing* 情 in premodern East Asia is different at the semantic level from its Western counterpart, translated as emotion, feeling, affection, sentiment, passion, etc. The word “emotion” was conceptualized and disseminated to the public at the dawn of modern psychology as an academic field, whereupon the term was objectified as a categorization and measurement of strength (Santangelo 2003, 13). However, while in Western societies the word “emotion” is considered the opposite of

“reason,” it is difficult to find a word with a similar binary relationship to the word “emotion” in East Asia. As Santangelo (2003, 3) noted, this is due to the fact that emotion and passion are features of both culture and history. Such conceptual differences emerge from the different cultural and historical contexts in which emotions, as representation and symbols, are academically approached. It should also be noted that the elements that compose a sociocultural system—attitudes, values, ideals, and beliefs—all belong to the so-called mentality and are transmitted by means of socialization and education (Santangelo 2003, 7).

The East Asian tradition rejects the Western binary juxtaposition of emotion and reason. Instead, it identifies emotion as a natural response of the human mind generated from human nature. Accordingly, as the following passages from classic Confucian texts express, an understanding of human nature is important in assessing human emotions.

- (1) What are the emotions of men? They are joy, anger, sorrow, fear, love, dislike, and desire. These seven things are innate.⁴
- (2) All human beings have six emotions: like (*hao* 好), dislike (*wu* 惡), joy (*xi* 喜), anger (*nu* 怒), sorrow (*ai* 哀), and pleasure (*le* 樂). These six wills originally come from the six *ki* 氣 (*yin*, *yang*, wind, rain, darkness, and brightness). . . . If a person could express his/her sadness and delight with courtesy, those would correspond to the nature of heaven and earth.⁵
- (3) When there are no stirrings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, or joy, the mind may be said to be in a state of equilibrium. When those feelings have been stirred and act in their due degree, there ensues what may be called the state of harmony.⁶

4. “何謂人情，喜怒哀懼愛惡欲，七子佛學而能” (“Liyun 禮運” [The Conveyance of Rites], in *Liji* [Book of Rites]). All translations of the Chinese classics in the article are mine, if not otherwise noted.

5. “民有好惡喜怒哀樂，生于六氣。是故審則宜類，以制六志。 . . . 哀樂不失，乃能協于天地之性” (“Zhao-gong 25 nian” [25th Year of the Reign of Duke Zhao], in *Zuozhuan*).

6. “喜怒哀樂之未發謂之中，發而皆中節謂之和” (*Zongyong*, chap. 1).

Liji 禮記 (Book of Rites) refers to seven emotions: joy, anger, sorrow, fear, love, dislike, and desire. The *Zuozhuan* recognizes six emotions: like, dislike, joy, anger, sorrow, and pleasure, while placing an emphasis on the regulation of emotion expressed through *li* 理, (propriety/ritual). The *Zhongyong* introduces the concept of *zhonghua* 中和 (equilibrium and harmony), suggesting that emotions such as pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy are to be moderated in accordance with concepts of centrality and normality. The principle of *zhongyong* does not underestimate the importance of emotion in constituting human nature, but it emphasizes the idea that emotions are to be controlled by moral power. This gives premise to the idea that a scholar should aim to be perfectly mature and cultivated. The following excerpts are the description of the ordinary life and manners of adults and children, written by Yi Deok-mu, a Confucian literatus and representative writer during the eighteenth century.

- (4) Never give a strained laugh, nor be furious without rational reason. Do not show a suspicious attitude before anything occurs. Only be cautious if you regret something, just in case.⁷
- (5) A habitually discontented man has the tendency to blame others. As a result, others come to dislike him. A person who often laughs and behaves generously is apt to love others easily and to be respected by them consistently.⁸

This concept of emotion resonated in Joseon society as a form of cultural grammar. For instance, Yi Deok-mu presents human emotions as the outcome of natural responses but also warns against the fallibility of negative emotions, as seen in passage 4.⁹ He also considers feelings of anger, hatred, wrath, desire, holding a grudge, cursing, and sorrow to be negative emotions, and tries to make it consistently clear that

7. “勿作有意强笑，勿生無故激惱，須防先事多疑，須慮從時從悔” (*Cheongjanggwan jeonseo*, vol. 6).

8. “嘯咤拂鬱者，心常不滿，故善尤人，而人亦惡之，笑言雍穆者，心常自足，故能愛人，而人亦敬之” (*Cheongjanggwan jeonseo*, vol. 6).

9. For this reason, traditional fiction has been criticized for its fabrication of emotions or expression of fake emotions.

one should control these feelings, as seen in passage 5.¹⁰

Joseon society, under the influence of the Confucian value system, was inclined to define human emotions as a universal and natural response of human nature regardless of gender. However, regarding differences between male and female emotions, women were stereotypically represented as more prone to emotional sensitivity and having a wider range of emotional outbursts than men. Still, although a woman expressing her emotions was more widely accepted than a man, the female manner of concealing emotions, as seen in passage 6, was regarded as a mature attitude. In addition, moderating frank feelings, as seen in passage 7, was promoted as a virtue.

- (6) I thought to myself, “Men of other days felt sorrow when they said farewell to their beloved, even if they were young and strong men. Then how much more weak would women like mothers and young daughters be?”¹¹
- (7) Most people cannot endure sorrow, pain, or grudges. However, the madam regarded such emotions as useless and dismissed them and behaved as if she never recognized such feelings. Her acquaintances never noticed her inner mind.¹²

10. Appreciation of *qing* 情, including the concept of emotional feelings, developed metaphysically into a specific form of the Four-Seven Debate during the Joseon period. Korean research into the Four-Seven Debate can be divided into four parts, depending on the philosophers: Toegye, Gobong, Yulgok, and Seongho. Regarding this, see Yun (1971), Y. An (2009), and Bae (1978). Besides these, regarding the next generation of philosophers, see Y. An (2005). The practical application of the theory of emotions based on the Confucian metaphysics of *li* and *ki* focused on the courteous control of emotion, as mentioned in *Zhongyong*. Accordingly, the expression of feelings was strictly allowed within the limited scope of moral emotion. With only the Four-Seven Debate in the intellectual genealogy, there is a limit to our understanding of the detailed aspects of emotional rhetoric and representation processes; however, research into funeral orations acts as an effective compensation for these weak points. By examining the emotional representation in the funeral orations, it is possible to understand Joseon literati’s emotional experience and its literary code, or rhetoric.

11. “余竊謂別離之際，‘古人所恨，黯然消魂，丈夫尚余。而況於弱女慈母之情’” (*Giwonjip*).

12. “其有悲哀傷恨，常人所不可堪，度其無益而去之，如未嘗有者，人不能測其際” (*Hanjeongdangjip*).

During Joseon, although emotions were recognized as human nature and representative products of humanity; they were never considered to be the direction in which a human being's state should be orientated. Rather, cultural manners were established that emphasized the ability to control emotions harmoniously and express them gently as a supremely humanistic virtue.

Moral Sentiment, Confucian Cultural Grammar, and Sorrow

Self-cultivation and moral realization, things acclaimed by Confucian tradition, were connected to the enhancement of virtue and character. In other words, the nurturing of a particular emotion was said to affect the development of one's personality and cultivation. At the same time, the significance of *qing* arose in assessing the nature of one's being and also in evaluating moral and immoral behaviors (M. Kim 2009). Particularly, emotions such as like (or good feelings) and dislike (or bad feelings) were taken as closely related to moral sentiment, corresponding to one's degree of self-cultivation.

Accordingly, the emotional experience of anger or annoyance that one feels when reading a historical novel that describes a faithful subject being framed and exiled by a villain can be sanctioned as a righteous sentiment and even considered to be a mark of self-cultivation. Although an excess of emotion violates the principle of *zhongyong*, if it is a righteous sentiment, it can be integrated into the code of righteous action as *yifen* 議憤 (*uibun* in Korean; "righteous indignation"), regardless of gender, as seen in passage 8:

- (8) When people read a story about an old man loyally giving his life for justice and the nation, they should respond by crying resolutely, as if facing the event in the present (*Cheongjanggan jeonseo*, vol. 6).

The degree of one's dignity or cultivation was judged by their response to righteousness. Where a sense of righteousness existed, even passionate outbursts were accepted positively, regardless of gender,

because a sense of righteousness was regarded with sympathy in recognition of moral sentiment. It was also connected with the politics of emotion; the subject of the emotion was considered a moral one. The passage 8 suggests that the cultural sense surrounding emotions was a product of training and learning, resulting from emotional education.

Along with the manifestation of righteous indignation, feelings of sadness and sorrow prompted by the loss of a deceased person were also perceived as moral sentiments. Therefore, tears and sorrow involved in the mourning ritual were approved. As *Liji* (Book of Rites) states, “sorrow and weeping,” differentiated from other feelings, are important parts of the proper ritual of funeral and memorial services:

- (9) When he lost his mother at ten years of age, he burst into bitter tears. The participants were touched by his devotion and filial piety.¹³
- (10) Then water was leaking from the coffin, and she began to wail, “My father had a virtuous personality and never misbehaved toward others. Now what can we do with that?” She never stopped her crying but the leaking stopped immediately.¹⁴

In the Joseon period, being lost in deep grief when one’s parents, a family member, or a friend died had significant cultural meaning. The demonstration of sorrow over death was a manifesto of sincerity regarding one’s relationship with the deceased and an indicator of the mourner’s decorum and civility. It also served to indicate the deceased person’s value to society, since the number of mourners was regarded as an indication of the deceased’s level of moral and social influence during their lifetime. That is to say, if the deceased had no mourners, that person was considered a miserable person. As seen in passage 9, it was also conventional sentiment that if someone observed another person’s lamenting a death, they also came to feel sadness. This senti-

13. “十歲母喪哭泣，使觀者悅” (*Byeonggyeip*).

14. “棺罅有潰漏，孺人號哭于柩前曰；‘父性淨潔，平日未嘗以污穢示人，今何爲哉？’哀慟不已。潰漏即止” (*Byeonggyeip*).

mental structure, as Adam Smith (2009, 76) pointed out, meant sympathetic solidarity through feelings of sorrow and lament. Additionally, as seen in passage 10, the imaginative idea that a grief-stricken heart made heaven and earth move with sincerity toward the deceased, a sort of materialization of essential energy, was also recognized. In this cultural context, a person who was in serious grief was respected as a highly cultivated and noble figure.

The emotion of sorrow over death was seen as sincerity toward the deceased, thus weeping was a physical sign of morality. A tender person was recognized as having discovered humanistic value through the deceased, and the funeral oration, the writing of condolences, functioned as a place of communication within which to exchange and share humanity. Thus, the feeling of sorrow occupied privileged emotional ground: finding, identifying, and demonstrating of humanity.

At the zenith of the semantic context surrounding sorrow stood traditional funeral rites. When someone's parents died, he or she was responsible to hold a funeral as honorably as possible, as sorrow was seen as a criterion by which others could discern one's filial piety. Accordingly, wailing during the funeral rites was not just a manner of sorrowful emotion, but also an expression and fulfillment of practical filial duty. Crying for others signified both one's dedicated emotional loyalty and the revelation of one's genuine feelings, unable to be contained.

The Funeral Oration as a Nexus for Exchanging and Confessing Feelings of Sorrow

Key Roles and Meanings of Funeral Oration Writing

There were four major rituals in Confucian culture during the premodern Joseon period: capping ceremonies, weddings, funerals, and ancestral rites. Among these, funeral and ancestral rites served as cultural devices for the offering of condolences and expressing of sorrow for the deceased. Expressing sorrow was not taboo; rather, it was accepted

and normalized in the funeral and ancestral rites. As defined by Liu Xie (1994), the funeral oration was a literary genre in which lament and sorrow over the loss of a dead person and love for him/her could be clearly described.

Thus, the funeral oration was designed to fulfill the ritualistic function of mourning within the funeral ritual. As analyzed by Li Yuan (2008), funeral orations carried social and political meanings; notably, they intimated the strengthening of the legitimate and orthodox position of the worshiper. In addition, they expressed the folkloric wish for blessings and the prevention of disaster. Moreover, they also reflected a complex and delicate conception about heaven, deities, ghosts and spirits. In writing funeral orations, the Joseon literati created the cultural meaning of the genre. As shown below, funeral oration of the eighteenth-century Joseon had several key characteristics.

First, considering the relationship between the writer and the deceased, the act of writing a funeral oration was not only a vehicle for honoring the dead and expressing the writer's sorrow (*gaoai* 告哀 or *jianai* 薦哀); it also functioned as an oath, saying that neither the dead nor the grief would be forgotten (*buwangbei* 不忘悲). Although the funeral oration was intended to serve the purpose of a ritual, it was also a nexus of exchange through which sorrowful feelings were expressed and the writer's innermost feelings and humanity exposed.

(11) I honor my sorrow by performing ancestral rites immediately and wish for your return as a spirit to taste the dishes and liquor.¹⁵

(12) While I was describing my sorrow in the funeral oration, my tears were ceaselessly dropping on the paper. It is said that someone's sincere heart can make the spirit move. Please return and understand my true heart for you. Alas, I am sorrowful.¹⁶

15. “一醴告哀，庶幾鑑饗” (*Unpyeongjip*).

16. “緘辭薦哀，淚潰于紙。誠至則通，靈必鑑是。嗚呼，哀哉！” (*Yeohojip*).

Second, because it was read loudly during ancestral rituals on an annual basis, funeral oration was a genre premised on the idea that the relationship with the deceased would never end, despite his or her death. A funeral oration was written not only on the date of one's death, but also for a sending-off ceremony, the burial, and other occasions. As such, funeral orations were written intermittently for approximately a decade after a death; it was a genre of reminiscence.¹⁷ Writers expressed their sadness to the deceased by serving dishes and liquor. Such behavior was considered an exchange of humanity and feeling sorrow meant showing one's sincerity toward the deceased.

Third, the writing of the funeral oration served to convey shared memories with other mourners. Awakening recollections of the deceased called to mind the ontological meaning of the deceased during his or her lifetime. The writer expressed his sadness, provoked by both the fact that he would never meet the deceased again and that this loss would be tangible in everyday life.

- (13) When I was living in exile in Haemi, my life was like a castle of thorns. Then, without Chun-bo, who could have consoled me? I went to Mt. Unbong barefoot with my hair down. Then, if not Chun-bo, who would have taken care of my loneliness? Chun-bo always followed me like my shadow when I held a funeral or served a secret royal inspector. When I was relegated to a less important post in Geumjeong last year, I went to the Yeongbo pavilion and the Goransa temple. Then, Chun-bo accompanied me, as ever.¹⁸

As seen in passage 13, when emotional intimacy was strong with the deceased during their lifetime, the sorrow felt was more intensely expressed in the funeral oration. However, reminiscences about the deceased also led the writer to recognize that they could never be dis-

17. For example, in "Je Jeonggwan seonsaeng mun 祭靜觀先生文" (The Funeral Oration for My Teacher Jeonggwan) in *Nongamjip*, Kim Chang-hyeop (1651-1708) wrote his reminiscences of his teacher and also father-in-law, 33 years after his death.

18. "海美之謫, 在枳棘城中, 非春甫孰我情? 雲峯之頂, 雞斯徒眺, 非春甫孰衛我箚? 而敦匠之事, 直指之行, 春甫於吾, 若影之于形, 前年余謫金井, 而永保亭鼻蘭寺, 春甫皆與之偕征" (*Yeoyudang munjip*).

connected from each other. The rhetorical expressions that presented sorrow over death as a physical pain were formed from the premise that there were inseparable mental, emotional, and memorial ties between the audience/deceased and the writer/survivor.

Fourth, the funeral oration was a textual place where the writer could revisit and condense his sadness as part of a healing process and therefore find catharsis. Expressing sorrow through language was seen as the elimination of sorrow. The idea was that it could heal a hurt mind.

(14) I am yelling loudly as I set the dishes for you. How can I at least throw off my painful sorrow? Alas! So sad. Please try this offering (*Sugokjip*).

If someone read the funeral oration loudly instead of the writer, or listened to others reciting it not having written it directly, he or she regarded him or herself as being healed and consoled emotionally at both the psychological and social level. This stemmed from the appreciation that a funeral oration was a memorial media for the deceased, a conveyor of his or her life values to the descendants. The act of writing about someone in itself meant resisting his or her disappearance from life.

Fifth, the funeral oration acted as a cultural rite by which to say farewell to the deceased, and was recognized as an officially and formally sanctioned outburst of emotion.

(15) I will speak to you my farewell. I dedicate to you a ritual to part from you now. The spirit is not willing to stay and will now leave forever. So I am writing a funeral oration for you and want you to know my farewell. Please come and taste these dishes and liquor and then return to your grave. Take a rest forever there. Alas! I am so pained.¹⁹

19. “永遷之禮。靈辰不留，柩車將啓，畧陳祖羞，涕泣爲文，並告終天之訣。靈其歆格，歸安於窆窆也。嗚呼痛哉！” (*Pungseojip*).

Finally, the funeral oration not only dealt with the sadness of loss, but also recounted the deceased's personal history, endowing value and meaning to his/her life. If the deceased was male, the funeral oration frequently gave an account of the man's official positions and social achievements; if the deceased was female, it usually described the significance of her role as a wife, daughter-in-law, or mother in the household, as well as highlighted her wifely virtues.

The funeral oration is a genre read aloud and also a genre of ritual formality and practicality. Some funeral oration rhetoric was formalized, such as "in the beginning of this year" (維歲次), "alas! I'm so pained" (嗚呼痛哉), and "please try this offering" (尙饗), and the representation of the writer's sadness mainly depends on customary expressions. However, writers also revealed their individual sadness and physical pain through the individual reminiscences and shared memories of the deceased. The writing of a funeral oration was a literary act, one that provided an opportunity for the discovery of an open and individual social identity, by revealing one's innermost feelings as a way of expressing condolences.

Gender Performance in the Expression of Emotion for the Dead

The funeral oration contained a certain level of emotional expressiveness regardless of gender. However, gender differences did play a crucial role in shaping the mourner's overall emotional response towards the death in the funeral oration.²⁰ As mentioned by Hwang (2002) and Park (2003), during this period the number of funeral orations for female subjects increased, and more emotional expression could be found in them than those for males. Additionally, if the deceased was male, the funeral oration often engaged metaphysical questions concerning life and death.²¹ Some funeral orations referred to a belief in

20. This article does not discuss funeral orations written by females in Chinese characters. Female writings of funeral orations are relatively scarce in premodern Korea.

21. Kim Chang-hyeop wrote four funeral orations for his son. The fourth oration, titled "Je manga myomun 祭亡兒墓文" (Paying a Tribute to My Dead Son in Front of His Grave), mostly deals with his speculation and understanding of death. By conceptu-

reincarnation, while others attempted to ignore emotional suffering altogether.²² In other words, funeral orations that ruled out direct emotional expression or raised philosophical questions about death were common if the deceased was male. On the other hand, if the deceased was female, funeral orations seldom addressed philosophical questions or transcendental contemplations of death, instead focusing on the rhetoric of emotional expression. However, the funeral oration for a widow who committed suicide as an act of loyalty to her late husband or for a friend's wife, required a more sensitive and delicate approach. Customarily, when a woman committed suicide after the death of her husband, it was perceived as an act of virtue and righteousness. Therefore, in this case, mourners restrained their expressions of sorrow, since overt displays of sorrow drew the risk of being interpreted as expressing the unjustness of the death. In addition, strict notions of gender did not allow a male writer to express sorrow over the death of another man's wife;²³ following the Confucian rule of social division by gender, "a boy and a girl should not sit together after the age of seven." Thus, the expression of sorrow or weeping over the death of another man's wife was firmly prohibited and seen as unethical.

Such gendered differences show how the prior interactions between the writer and deceased were reflected through the emotional response in funeral oration. Metaphysical or philosophical debates might have occurred between the writer and a deceased male in life, and therefore such experiences could be reflected in the writing of the funeral oration. On the other hand, females were deprived of the chance to

alizing death in a philosophical domain, he appears to have overcome the somatic forms of sadness.

- 22 "Je jokhyeong Baek-gyeom seongdalmun 祭族兄伯兼盛達文" (A Funeral Oration for Elder Brother Kim Baek-gyeom), in *Nongamjip*.
23. In fact, in Kwon Man's "Jeong Ja-seong naeja seongsugin aesa 鄭子成內子成淑人哀辭" (The Verse of Condolence for Madame Seong, Wife of Jeong Ja-seong) in *Gangjwa-jip* and in Yi Min-bo's "Jo Gyeong-seo naesil aesa 趙景瑞室內哀辭" (The Verse of Condolence for a Wife of Jo Gyeong-seo) in *Pungseojip*, there were no emotional expressions except conventional comments, only some admiration for their honorable and valuable lives.

engage in such theoretical debates or forge intellectual bonds, so a funeral oration for a female tended to instead illuminate personal and emotional experiences.

In the funeral oration for a male, the demonstration of sadness was centered on lamenting the loss of the deceased's social achievements, talents, and abilities. That is, sorrow was felt due to the loss of the official and social contributions of the deceased to society. In this way, the writer could indirectly express their deep sorrow while avoiding the suspicion that their mourning was a solely emotional reaction.²⁴ When the deceased was older than the writer, this tendency was particularly reinforced. Even with the death of his own son, scholar Kim Chang-hyeop, rather than expressed his grief, mourned the loss of his son's writing talent to society.²⁵

Writers tended to commemorate the deceased individual's social role, moral influence, and official accomplishments rather than to narrate the writer's own personal experiences or feelings. It was considered favorable to avoid revealing personal feelings, especially if the deceased had served in high-ranking posts or been academically influential. In the case of a female death, however, the male writer's sad feelings were narrated naturally, although he did not express that he was in grief due to their personal relationship. If a woman followed her husband to death by committing suicide, the funeral oration generally dealt with the significance of her martyrdom. By doing so, it emphasized the societal meaning of her death. These differences in emotional responses were based on the belief that the relationship between the writer and the deceased would be maintained in the afterlife.

Distancing Relationships from Emotion

The extent of emotional expressiveness in a funeral oration depended on the physical distance, degree of emotional intimacy between the

24. In "Je Yi Nak-bo mun 祭李樂甫文" (The Funeral Oration for Yi Nak-bo) in *Nongamjip*, Kim Chang-hyeop praised and listed his talents.

25. See "Manga saengil jemun 亡兒生日祭文" (The Funeral Oration for My Son on His Birthday), in *Nongamjip*.

writer and the deceased. In other words, the kind of relationship between the two determined the degree of linguistic expressiveness. In funeral orations, the expressive intensity matched the degree of intimacy of the relationship. Therefore, it is possible to understand the intimacy between the writer and the deceased through an analysis of the use of rhetoric regarding sadness.

First, a blood relationship with the deceased provoked the most intense display of emotion in funeral writing, especially in the case of a parent, child, or sibling. In these cases, the portion of complimentary rhetoric expressing the social value of the deceased's life was less than that of the emotional rhetoric expressing sorrow.²⁶

Second, the frequency of visits, the durability of the relationship, and the physical distance also affected the level of emotional expressiveness. The higher the actual durability and degree of intimacy of the relationship, the more seriously sadness and grief were described. However, durability of relationship and blood ties were not inviolable. Even when the writer and the deceased were blood relations, if the writer's residence was distant from that of the deceased, the funeral oration usually presented conventional respect and appraisal of the deceased's life, rather than emotion. On the other hand, a non-blood relationship with strong, close bonds resulted in a strong demonstration of emotion.

Third, the nature of the relationship also affected the level of expressiveness. A personal relationship warranted a more emotional and personal reaction to the death. In the case of a funeral oration for an official and political purpose, for example commemorating a contribution made to the nation, the writing was consumed with enumerating the deceased's official tasks, duties, and degree of loyalty to the nation and people. It also typically included a final sentence asking for the deceased's protection of the fate of the dynasty or closed formally with an oath of admiration; these sentences generally used the formu-

26. Generally, emotional rhetoric in funeral orations for mothers was greater than those for fathers. This seems to reflect the perceived physical and emotional bond between the mother and child from the fetal stage until reaching adulthood.

laic expression “Please be our witness” quite distant from the emotional rhetoric of private and intimate experiences of everyday life. In contrast, the writing for a family member, friend, or teacher included emotional expressions of affection, respect, trust, interdependence, and so forth.

Fourth, the writer’s evaluation of the deceased’s life and happiness also affected the rhetoric of the funeral oration. For instance, if the person died young, suffered a life of deprivation, or did not receive an official post despite his excellence, then the funeral oration would express feelings of regret or guilt. A funeral oration for a person who died young was often referred to as *aesa* 哀辭 (verse of condolence), reflecting the need for an extra term solely to emphasize sympathetic feelings for the prematurely deceased. The younger the death, the higher the level of expressiveness. The most anguished oration was that of living parents to their deceased children.

In various ways, the nature of the relationship between the writer and the deceased played a crucial role in evoking grief and mourning, and this form of writing reflected the historical and cultural epistemology of humanity, surrounding the views of life and death. This literary tradition commemorated the value of the deceased’s life, as well as embraced it as a part of reality. The writing of *jemun* offered a public space for individuals in the form of a literary ritual and also gave male literati, who were ordinarily forbidden to mourn or lament loudly in public, an official and culturally acceptable opportunity to weep.

The Physicality of Sadness Expressed through Bodily Pain

Identifying with the Deceased Emotionally and Physically through Sadness

Because emotion is often represented as a form of physical pain, the funeral oration frequently included descriptions of bodily pain. Generally, emotional rhetoric was represented in the Chinese word *qiqing* 七情, meaning “seven emotions”; and often it focused on these ques-

tions: how do people sense sorrowful feeling? How do they respond to such painful emotions through their bodies? And, how does sorrow control the subject's whole body and dominate their psychology?

The following are some examples of this rhetorical style in funeral oration.

How can I stop myself from feeling sorrow at your passing away?
My sorrow for you is sorrow for myself.²⁷

Ah, my sorrowful pain! Ah, my sorrowful pain! Since you passed away, I sit in my room, blankly facing the wall all day. It is as if I have lost my mind or am intoxicated by sadness. I do not know what to do. Even when I go out, I know not which way to go. I only sigh when I open a book and sigh again when I face the dining table. Sometimes I talk with shadows. When I see mountains, I think of you. When I see a stream, again I think of you. . . . I am so emotional you might find it strange. My only wish is that you can hear me in your grave. Alas, my sorrowful pain! Alas, my sorrowful pain!²⁸

The above quotations show that the writers were emotionally bound to the deceased. The second of the two passages above shows despair at the loss of a six-year-old daughter. Rather than distancing themselves from the deceased, the writers express shock and sadness as intensely as if facing their own deaths. The phrase in the first passage, “my sorrow for you is sorrow for myself,” displays Jeong Beom-jo’s sadness over the loss of his wife. Following the passing of his wife, Jeong confessed in the funeral oration²⁹ that he was suffering because he was overwhelmed by the household affairs he now needed to take care of, like supporting his parents, nursing his mother, organizing ancestral rituals, raising his son, etc., since the passing of his wife. As a result, he had no time to think of his dead wife and was in deep sorrow. In this confession, Jeong identifies himself with his deceased

27. “今先我而亡，吾又安得不哀也？雖然，吾之哀君，所以自哀也” (*Haejwajip*).

28. “自汝之逝，塊處一室，終日面壁，昏昏悶悶，如癡如醉。坐不知其所爲，行不知其所之。或臨卷而嘆，或對飯而吁，或對影而語。見山則思汝，觀水則思汝. . . 嗚呼慟矣！嗚呼慟矣” (*Dutacho*).

29. See “Goksil inmun 哭室人文” (A Writing to My Wife), in *Haejwajip*.

wife by conflating feelings of sorrow for himself with feelings of sadness for his wife.

These passages show that funeral orations revealed feelings of sadness by describing both emotional and physical pain. They also show that emotions are prone to affect one physically and that the body makes sorrow evident and tangible. In the written form, sadness is physicalized through the recognition of sorrow manifested as bodily pain.

The Physical Rhetoric of Sorrow/Pain

The manifestation of sorrow as bodily pain is also found in *Liji*.³⁰ The Joseon male literati made a memorial system using their bodies. They recorded their empirical lives in their bodies as a sort of self-media. The rhetoric of sadness associated with the physical appears as follows:

1. Bloody Tears

“Here I address the grave of my mother, Faithful Madam from the Yi clan of Yeonan, shedding bloody tears.”³¹

2. Pain to the Bone, Brain, and Five Viscera

a. Bones: “Pain reaches my heart and my bones. I cannot endure the pain any longer. Alas, it is so sad.”³²

b. Viscera: “This regret is inexplicable. My liver is torn apart.”³³

c. Heart: “My heart collapsed.”³⁴

3. Loss of Reason, Madness, and Fainting

“When Dongdeok-gun died, his wife fainted. The wife regained consciousness but was unwilling to drink a drop of water. She wished to follow him to death.”³⁵

30. See “Wenshang 問喪” (Questions about Mourning Rites), in *Liji*.

31. “泣血敢告于顯妣，貞夫人延安李氏之墓” (*Bonamjip*).

32. “痛纏心骨，實難堪任，嗚呼痛哉！” (*Sunam seonsaeng munjip*).

33. “慟矣此恨，欲言腸裂” (*Sugokjip*).

34. “我胸已摧” (*Bonamjip*).

35. “通德君既卒，恭人絕而僅甦，勺水不入口，欲自裁以從” (*Nureunjip*).

4. Complicated Pain

“Truly my pain reaches heaven and passes through the earth. Feelings of regret lodge in my heart and my bones. If I reveal my feelings to the spirits, I feel like my five viscera and six entrails are torn apart and my soul is wandering aimlessly. I can no longer hold the brush because I have become speechless. It will be regrettable if I do not say a word, but I only offer sacrifices of wine and food.”³⁶

First, the writers become speechless, overwhelmed by the powerful emotion of sadness, but in the end are unable to shed a tear. The most excessive of weeping results in tears of blood. Such rhetoric shows emotional gradation, the degree of sorrowful feeling perceived through the body. As shown here, physical expression was a part of rhetoric that emphasized the level of emotional intensity.

Second, sadness was also expressed through descriptions of burning experiences, like severing a bone or the tearing of the five viscera. Psychological stress resulting from a beloved person's death is transpositioned in literary writing as a sense of pain in the five viscera. It not only has an effect on the rhetorical level, but also on the psychological level in the realm of reality. Some writers appealed to the actuality of the pain.

Third, intense sadness led to a form of madness. Women were shown to be more prone to suicidal thoughts, which was logical in a culture that promoted widow martyrdom. Finally, as revealed in the final passage, the expression of sadness could take various forms, especially when associated with bodily expression. The rhetoric of emotion manifesting itself in the body was also frequently seen in the popular musical form of *pansori*³⁷ and in the fictional writings of the Joseon period, such as *Chunhyangjeon* (The Story of Chunhyang).³⁸

36. “誠以窮天之冤，極地之痛，結轆於心腑，貫徹於髓骨，欲一披露於神明之前，則五內潰亂，神志迷錯，筆不能下，而語不能次第矣。若遂默無一言，而徒然薦其蠶豆，則又心之所不忍也” (*Nongamjip*).

37. *Pansori* is a genre of performance, a sort of premodern Joseon musical.

38. *Chunhyangjeon* is a representative novel in Joseon. On the characteristics of emotional rhetoric, see Choe (2003, 2012).

Conclusion

By analyzing over 400 literary texts including funeral orations and official obituaries, letters to the dead, and epitaphs, this article has examined the literary function of condolence and sorrow, narrated through funeral orations, in discovering, exchanging, and memorializing humanities. By doing so, funeral orations played a crucial role as psychological and cultural mechanisms. It is surprising that cultural permission existed for a man to weep in premodern Joseon, because male intelligentsia had primarily been disciplined to control their emotions and passions through *zhonghua* 中和 (equilibrium and harmony). The ability to successfully express or control emotions in a balanced, harmonious style reflected the level of one's self-cultivation. Within such cultural conventions, Joseon male literati were forced to repress their passionate feelings, including mourning, and were therefore deprived of social opportunities to weep officially, or even privately. However, the literary genre of funeral oration provided a textual space that allowed *sadaebu* to weep in public, and offered a rare opportunity to affirm one's humanity as emotional subject and to dedicate sincerity to the deceased.

Through this examination, this article has touched on five dimensions. First, that the funeral oration resisted the idea that male intelligentsia should not mourn or weep in premodern Joseon. Second, that emotion was considered neither inferior to reason nor something to be suppressed; rather, it was recognized as an influential and effective physical sense and an activity through which to discover, share, and memorialize humanity. Third, that factors like bonds of blood, physical distance, duration of relationship, as well as sensibilities like respect, affection, and sensitivity factored heavily into the level and style of emotional rhetoric for a funeral oration. Fourth, that a funeral oration can be defined as a ritual form recording the deceased's life as well as admiring and showing respect for the deceased, but the key role was still the emotional expression of sorrow and condolence. Fifth, that there was a tension inherent in the cultural structure surrounding funeral. On the one hand, the ability to control one's emo-

tions according to Confucian concepts of courtesy, reflected self-cultivation; on the other hand, being overcome with sorrow to the point of weeping reflected one's morality and humanity.

This analysis, by emancipating the cognitive contradiction between convention and reality, culture and literature, as well as gender and ideology, sheds new light on the interdisciplinary approach needed when analyzing the emotions and sensibilities in premodern Joseon. Although Joseon society was heavily governed by Confucian discipline, a literary mechanism also existed, which created a nexus for embracing the incongruence in the emotional, physical, rhetorical, and conventional layers of humanity.

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