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In classical Greek society, as in almost all human communities, the death of a member is the object of ritualization. In *thrênos* or funeral lamentation the central function of the female voice is undisputed in the process of transition to the deads' world. The democratic Athens sets up a system of values that makes moderation a supreme value and condemns as *hýbris* a series of behaviours that are thought as excess: the manifestations of mourning, generally female, that custom included in the ritual of *thrênos* become first suspicious and finally the object of a policy of legislative restriction, as Loraux describes in detail in her book *Mothers in Mourning*. This, however, does not prevent the "archaic" wailing of women from taking centre stage in the tragedies. This literary genre tends to play with boundaries and inversions, to explore the nodal conflicts of *polis* life by staging a series of "pre-political" behaviours that the city tries to proscribe. In this way, the mourning voices of women and their ritual gestures involving bodily injury and graphic displays of violent emotionality find fertile ground for their development in tragic plays. From this perspective, the playwrights' interest in the funeral rite is not surprising, since it is easily combined with sacrifice and marriage in the strategy of ritual perversion that frequents the tragic genre. In this paper we will analyse the particular *thrênoi* of Medea in the namesake tragedy and of Agave in *Bacchae*. Although mothers occupy a key place in literary *thrênoi*, the filicidal condition of both characters allows us to place them at the climax of ritual perversion.