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Cognizing the Silent Iole in Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*

Abstract: In questo articolo propongo una nuova lettura della scena di Iole tratta da *Le Trachinie* di Sofocle. Facendo ricorso alla teoria degli schemi e alla cognizione incarnata, interpreto la scena come una narrazione in quattro fasi dell'appropriazione cognitiva di Iole da parte di Deianira, che va da (1) l'attivazione dello schema a (2) il rinforzo dello schema a (3) la messa in discussione dello schema, fino a (4) la conservazione dello schema. Sostengo che le fasi (1) e (2) leggano Iole come l'incarnazione di un generico stereotipo sociale, mentre le fasi (3) e (4) la leggano come un topos letterario. Entrambe le 'letture' riconducono il suo silenzio in categorie cognitive familiari e così facendo lo fraintendono.

Abstract: In this paper I offer a new reading of the Iole scene in Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*. Drawing on schema theory and on embodied cognition, I interpret the scene as a four-stage narrative about Deianira's cognitive appropriation of Iole from (1) schema-activation to (2) schema-reinforcement to (3) schema-challenge to (4) schema-preservation. I argue that stages (1) and (2) read Iole as an instantiation of a generic social stereotype, while stages (3) and (4) read her as a literary trope. Both 'readings' assimilate her silence into familiar cognitive categories and thereby misread it.

Parole-chiave: schemi, stereotipo, silenzio, metafora concettuale
Keywords: schemas, stereotype, silence, conceptual metaphor

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You must tell it in such a way that they don't know you're telling it, and
that they don't know they're hearing it.
Willa Cather, *The Song of the Lark*

We seem never to ask, «Why do you know?» or «How do you believe?»
J.L. Austin, *Other Minds*

Introduction

In his notes for *The Portrait of a Lady*, Henry James wrote that "the whole of anything is never told" (1955: 18), thereby alluding to the unavoidable gaps of every narrative. Silence is a prime generator of narrative gaps since by stemming the verbal flow one invites questions that may admit of no answers. Whether as refusal or as failure to speak, silence differs from stillness, the absence of sound, and from pause, the temporary arrest between verbal expressions. Yet both silence and its near-synonyms forge discontinuities in the narrative, empty spaces awaiting filling. These spaces are particularly noticeable on stage when the silence becomes, to quote Oliver Taplin, «the very stance of the silent character» (1972: 76).[1] In those cases, the *character* becomes a gap, a placeholder for the fragments of a story, stitched together by other characters' stories.

Iole, the silent captive in Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* is one such gap, the enigma of a woman whose unbroken silence generates theatrical meaning. In this story of frustrated desire, perceived betrayal, and human fallibility, Heracles has sacked Oechalia, Iole's city, killed her father and brother, and bedded her before sending her with his herald, Lichas, to his wife, Deianira, in Trachis ostensibly to become a household-slave. Although Iole is on stage for only part of the first episode (221-334), she is the fulcrum of the play: she arouses Heracles' passion, spawns Lichas' fictions, and galvanizes Deianira into action. Her silence is remarkable in that, as David Seale notes, «no other scene in Sophocles or perhaps anywhere else in extant Greek tragedy relies so heavily on unspoken thought»

(1982: 195). Ontologically, Iole hovers between a live subject and an inanimate object, an actor and a prop.[2] The mask covering her face «petrifies her sadness in expressive immobility» (Taplin 1978: 101), asking the viewer to cognize a static emotion. Epistemologically, she oscillates between being completely unintelligible and too intelligible, sanctioning no or any interpretation of her one cares to give.[3] Since she is a *kôphon prosôpon*, her silence may escape notice.[4] In order to show that this mute's silence is more than just a technical constraint, Sophocles foregrounds the girl as a *spectacle* that Deianira is invited to watch, and has Deianira address her twice (307, 320-1). Iole's silence may lack propositional content but encodes meaning. Just who is she and what does she fail to communicate verbally?

Scholars have interpreted Iole either intertextually, as an echo of Cassandra in *Agamemnon*, or intratextually, as a younger version of Deianira or as the embodiment of Aphrodite.[5] These interpretations treat the mute captive as a projection or a double of another. In this paper, I preserve Iole's dramatic autonomy and use her means of theatrical expression—physical presence and silence—as a lens through which to look at how Deianira cognizes the silent girl, first on her own and then assisted by Lichas. Drawing on schema theory, especially the concept of stereotype, and on embodied cognition, especially the notions of image schema and conceptual metaphor, I interpret the scene as a four-stage narrative about Deianira's cognitive appropriation of Iole from **(1)** schema-activation (221-6, 240-5, 291-306) to **(2)** schema-reinforcement (307-13) to **(3)** schema-challenge (314-28) to **(4)** schema-preservation (329-32). Stages **(1)** and **(2)** show that the ignorant Deianira reads Iole stereotypically, as a noble-maiden-turned-pitiable-captive, while stages **(3)** and **(4)** show that the knowing Lichas attempts to modify Deianira's stereotypic reading by metaphorizing Iole. In the new social environment of Trachis, the silent Iole is 'read' first as an instantiation of a generic social stereotype and then as a literary trope. Both 'readings' assimilate her silence into familiar cognitive categories and thereby misread it.

My interpretation is interdisciplinary in scope, blending classical exegesis with social cognition, a subfield of social psychology that studies the mechanisms involved in the perception, comprehension, and memory of social stimuli. Social cognition examines the cognitive constructions of social reality, the mental processes which underlie and mediate our responses to social input. A prominent theory of social cognition is social schema which I shall present shortly. At the moment, let me just say that my interpretation of the Iole scene offers two main advantages to readers of Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*, a play that problematizes knowledge and belief. First, it illuminates Deianira's sympathy for Iole by embedding it in a frame of entrenched views about female social roles: Deianira misreads the silent Iole because she reads her myopically through the lens of her social stereotypes; and secondly, it reveals a new facet of Lichas, a figure caught between loyalty to Heracles and concern for Deianira. Lichas emerges as a figure poised between the desire to spare Deianira the truth about Iole-soon-to-become-more-than-a-slave and the urge to make her get close to this truth by means of a new interpretative tool, a metaphor informed by image schemas. Social psychologists may also benefit from seeing in this 5th century Greek play conditions under which intermental functioning—the cognitive activity in social interactions—may fail to alter intramental functioning by loosening or breaking rigid cognitive templates.[6] Deianira's mental insularity, evident already in the prologue, which reads like an interior monologue or stream of consciousness, and culminating in the hasty decision to send the poisoned robe to Heracles, shows a woman in the grip of readymade truths and prone to brisk inferences, both conducive to 'late learning'.[7]

In section 2, I offer an overview of schema theory with an emphasis on stereotypes or social roles, and of embodied cognition with a focus on image schema and conceptual metaphor. In section 3, I apply these models to the Iole scene. I end with a conclusion in section 4.

Schemas

Schemas originated in the work of British psychologist Frederic Bartlett (1932) who sought to demonstrate the value of an individual's prior knowledge for perception, comprehension, and remembering. Schema theory received enormous attention in the AI work of the 1970s and the 1980s because of its contribution to visual recognition and the understanding of texts. Schemas are higher-order cognitive structures, abstract knowledge or memory structures used to coordinate concepts that belong to the same superstructure or event (e.g., Rumelhart 1984). Although several terms have been used to designate these structures, such as prototypes or templates, stereotypes, frames, scripts or plans, the terms schema and schemas (or schemata) have gained currency.

Schemas derive from direct or indirect experience and exist in a potential state awaiting input: the mind prompted by an observable stimulus or trigger activates a schema to make sense of it. Schematic thinking is 'typological' thinking, the belief in the existence of an inner classifiable essence that generates what we see on the outside and which we attempt to read on the basis of perceptible data (Mayr 2001: 165-6). Schemas direct attention to «the network of inter-relations that is believed normally to hold among constituents that are instances of the schema» (Rumelhart 1978: 33); they are means of structuring and ordering information in a stimulus configuration by telling the perceiver what data to look for and how to interpret the data that is found; and they simplify cognition and promote efficiency by providing cognitive shortcuts or default assumptions about objects and events, their characteristics, relationships, and entailments in conditions of incomplete information (e.g., Kahneman & Tversky 1982, DiMaggio 1997).

Role schemas are used in social cognition to organize knowledge about norms and behaviors attached to social roles or positions. A stereotype is a type of role schema that gathers together prior knowledge and social expectations on the basis of visual features (e.g., age, race, sex, and ethnicity) or information about them (e.g.,

religion and education). Stereotypes have affective and behavioral consequences: they enable people to decide how to feel about and what to do with outsiders. Scholars have noted three general stances: (1) people within a group (in-groups) minimize the variability of outsiders (out-groups). Schema-consistent information prevails upon retrieval, even with rich visual stimuli, whereas schema-discrepant information receives attention, if conditions allow (e.g., longer encoding); (2) in-groups have less complex conceptions of out-groups; and (3) the schema of in-groups slants perception of what out-groups think or do (Wilder 1981). Emotions may also be regulated by stereotypes. People tend to have an implicit fear of out-group members (Phelps et al. 2000) and fail to show empathy for people in the out-group (e.g., Avenanti et al. 2010).

Schemas continue to be valuable theoretical constructs for cognitive theory, especially these days with racial, homophobic, and gender-stereotyping on the rise. If stereotyping is automatic, as many cognitive and social psychologists believe, role schemas are an important part of mental economy. Even sophisticated social processes, such as group decisions, can happen without a deliberate attempt to make the decisions (Frith & Frith. 2012). Most critics of schema theory accept the importance of schemas as means of describing and thinking about prior knowledge in text interpretation but fault early schemas for being rigid representations of experience, existing independently of variable events and embodied activity (Schank & Abelson 1977). Schemas, for example, hinder the reading of 'bizarre texts' (Sadoski et al. 1991: 469), i.e., ambiguous texts that contain few or no concrete referents.

The alternative notion to stereotype pertinent to this paper is image schema, which presupposes that cognition is embodied, the product of interactions between an individual and their environment. In cognitive linguistics, an image schema makes possible conceptual metaphor mappings, the understanding of one idea or conceptual domain in terms of another. Although the term "image schema" is no novelty, building upon ideas of Kant and Merleau-Ponty among others, it was first put forward simultaneously by Mark Johnson

(1987) and George Lakoff (1987). A schema is both abstract, applicable to a wide range of experiences, and concrete, grounded in our physical interactions with the world. Examples of image schemas include in-out, center-periphery, and front-back.[8]

In a number of publications, Johnson (1987, 2005, 2007) argues that the structure of these shared physical experiences forms the base for rational and abstract thought. Image schemas can be extended metaphorically to the realm of abstract phenomena. He writes that «The central idea is that image schemas, which arise recurrently in our perception and bodily movement, have their own logic, which can be applied to abstract conceptual domains. Image-schematic logic then serves as the basis for inferences about abstract domains» (2005: 24). To illustrate this point, he refers to BALANCE, which is often used to structure a rational argument: «When I set out to convince others of my view, I pile up evidence, amass facts, and build up a weighty argument. Ideally, anyone who listens to my argument will weigh its merits. Two arguments may carry equal weight, so we then try to tip the scale in favor of our view by adding further evidence. If we are successful, we feel the balance tip in our favor, as we add to our argument» (1987: 89). The BALANCE image schema allows us to understand the abstract in terms of the concrete and is often used to describe the structure of a rational argument.

Schemas and Iole

The Iole scene takes place in the first episode and unfolds over 113 lines (221-334). Deianira has related the story of her early life and lamented the woes of marriage. She is now distraught because of Heracles' latest absence, and so sends her son Hyllus to find out where his father is. A messenger arrives to announce that Heracles has just won a battle, is making offerings on Cape Cenaeum, and coming home to Trachis. Lichas, Heracles' herald, brings in a procession of captives and after an elaborate account of why Heracles laid siege to Oechalia, the captives become the

focus of the play. The four-stage narrative of Deianira's schematic processing begins as soon as the captives enter the stage and ends when they are taken inside the house.

Stage 1: Schema-activation (221-6, 240-5, 291-306)

The chorus refers to the approaching captives as a spectacle and invites Deianira to interpret it as a clear sign of Heracles' triumph.[9] Deianira finds out from Lichas that Heracles sacked the women's city, whereupon she calls them 'pitiable' (οἰκτραί, 243) and enquires into their identity and master. Lichas reports that Heracles chose these women as his possession and a gift for the gods (221-45).

Deianira activates THE CAPTIVE schema in response to the visual and aural stimulus of a group of masked women referred to as war-spoils and future household slaves. Fifth century masks typically convey generic distinctions, such as rank, age, and sex, which facilitate schematic processing.[10] Deianira interprets the configuration of the stimulus by organizing the schema on the basis of two properties: social hierarchy/age, as read off the mask (she is the middle-aged mistress of these young female captives); and temporal sequence, as implied by Lichas' description of the women (spoils-of-war-soon-to-become-slaves). Although schemas are often thought not to require affect as a precondition for their activation,[11] in Deianira's case the boundary between schematic activation and affective engagement is fuzzy for no sooner does she see the captives than she is engulfed by pity.[12] Her sympathy is so strong that it displaces the joy that the captives' arrival seemed to augur, and her prescient hedge «unless their misfortunes deceive me» (243) is too anemic to prompt scrutiny of Iole, the captive whose misfortune will prove deceptive.[13] So for Deianira THE CAPTIVE schema is reducible to THE PITIABLE CAPTIVE schema.

After Lichas finishes his report on Heracles (248-90), the initial reversal between anticipated joy and actual pity at the sight of the captives elicits another reversal and a maxim that turns reversal into a cosmic principle (291-306).[14] Whereas Lichas' report should have given Deianira a 'manifest cause for rejoicing' (τέρψις ἐμφανής, 291), it has generated mixed feelings—joy for Heracles' triumph is

tinged by fear «for the man who prospers so, lest he fall» (296-7). A mixture of joy and fear is deemed the proper response to the mutability of fortune, a proverbial piece of wisdom and a leitmotif in the play.[15] Now Deianira assumes that the captives have also been subject to this mutability because without knowing anything about them she infers that these are «ill-fated exiles, homeless and fatherless in a foreign land. Once the daughters, perhaps, of free men, but now doomed to the life of slaves» (ταύτας … δυσπότμους ἐπὶ ξένης χώρας ἀοίκους ἀπάτοράς τ' ἀλωμένας, αἳ πρὶν μὲν ἦσαν ἐξ ἐλευθέρων ἴσως ἀνδρῶν, τανῦν δὲ δοῦλον ἴσχουσιν βίον, 299-302).[16] The principle of the reversal of fortune unites the triumphant Heracles with the hapless captives: Heracles' anticipated transition from happiness to unhappiness (a probable but as yet unrealized event) causes fear (297), and the captives' imagined transition from living with free parents to a life as slaves (a probable event reinscribed as certain) generates 'a terrible pity' (298). This principle informs THE PITIABLE CAPTIVE schema as shown by the temporal sequence underlying it: then spoils, now slaves.

The PITIABLE CAPTIVE schema is not the only instance of Deianira's schematic thinking. Scholars have long observed that her pity for the captives is mobilized by the affinity between their misfortune and status as foreigners, and her own marital misery, since she, too, considers herself 'unfortunate' (δυστυχῆ, 5) and lives in 'a stranger's land' (ξένῳ παρ' ἀνδρὶ ναίομεν, 40).[17] What is important for my purposes is that Deianira presents her case as illustrative of the general truth that married women are unhappy (144-52) and reproaches the chorus for its inability to understand it because of its innocence (141-3). Deianira thinks by analogy to her own life experiences, which she takes to reflect *general* truths.[18] She divides her life into two distinct stages: maidenhood is marked by an 'untroubled life' (147), whereas motherhood is beset by 'worries and fears about husband or children' (149-50). This dichotomy maps onto the mutually exclusive schemas THE ANXIOUS WIFE and THE CAREFREE MAIDEN, which dominate Deianira's thinking. We shall return to these schemas in Stage 2.

Deianira's perceived similarities with the captives' misfortune mobilize her pity, but her different social status from them makes detachment possible, a necessary element of ancient Greek pity (Konstan 2001) and necessary for the activation of the schema. Though anxious about her ever-absent husband, Deianira is the daughter and wife of kings, whereas the captives of a razed city will become their captor's slaves;[19] though a stranger in Trachis, she has been living there for a while, whereas the Oechalian maidens have just arrived; and as the mistress of the house in her husband's absence, she has sole authority over allowing the captives inside. Deianira occupies a place of social power from which she can sympathize with the captives' fallen state. Her age enhances her pity and strengthens the schema: being older than the captives, she has ample experience of the mutability of fortune and can feel for the young captives who she thinks are now undergoing their first transition from freedom to slavery. The captives are the out-group to Deianira's in-group and are subject to the three common attitudes of in-groups toward out-groups mentioned above: Deianira perceives no variability among them; her understanding of them conforms entirely to the schema; and her higher social rank governs her perception of them as pitiable.

Stage 2: Schema-reinforcement (307-13)

Deianira shifts her attention from the captives as an ensemble to one captive, Iole, whom she addresses as 'unfortunate' (δυστάλαινα, 307), a variant of the earlier δυσπότμους used in reference to the group and a hint that she continues to operate on THE PITIABLE CAPTIVE schema. This receives confirmation a few lines later when she says that upon seeing Iole she «pitied her most among these women, since only she knows how to behave» (ἐπεί νιν τῶνδε πλεῖστον ᾤκτισα βλέπουσ', ὅσῳπερ καὶ φρονεῖν οἶδεν μόνη, 312-3).[20] Deianira perceives Iole both as a particular instantiation of the schema (a pitiable captive) and as its exemplary instantiation (the most pitiable captive) by virtue of an attribute that she alone possesses, knowledge of how to behave.

We might think that Iole's perceived uniqueness threatens

Deianira's schema by ushering variability into a homogeneous group of maidens, but this is not the case. Scholars have wondered how we are to imagine that the girl conducted herself so as to merit special attention. Jebb claims that Iole distinguishes herself by her sense of grief, shame, and embarrassment, while the other captives are 'comparatively callous'. He takes φρονεῖν here to mean «that fine intelligence which is formed by gentle breeding and which contributes to delicate propriety of behavior» (1892: 51). Kamerbeek suggests that Iole stands out «by her dignified self-restraint and beauty» (1959: 13). If masks «represented a uniform expression throughout the drama» (Konstan 2006: 271 n. 41), calling attention to the «distant, figure whose constant ethos [they] portray» (Taplin 1978: 14), Iole's mask must have conveyed sadness over the loss of home and native family, perhaps even fear of her new environment, but it would most likely fail to convey any shades of these emotions.[21] Given her silence and the paucity of reliable information about fifth century masked performance, it is prudent to adopt the universal view, registered by Easterling, that Iole is conspicuous by virtue of her 'noble looks' (1982: 117; Heiden 1989: 77). Nobility may be a social marker, conveyed by her clothing and mask, and/or a character trait—a noble ethos—evinced by her modest appearance.[22] In either case, it is consistent with THE PITIABLE CAPTIVE schema: pitiable captives may be innately and/or manifestly noble without thereby ceasing to be pitiable captives.

Iole's nobility is not only consistent with the schema but it also reinforces it by being assimilated to maidenhood, an attribute that all the captives are thought to share. In Stage 1, activation of THE PITIABLE CAPTIVE schema involves perception of the women as 'fatherless' (300) and 'perhaps daughters of free men' (301-2). For Deianira these captives are *daughters*, not wives and mothers, and they are pitiable because they have lost their fathers and social status as freeborn women. Their helplessness inspires her prayer to Zeus to protect her own children from disaster (304): unlike the captives, Deianira's children have a mother who can act on their behalf.

Now, Iole is perceived not simply as a maiden (τίς … νεανίδων, 307), but as a noble maiden. Deianira asks whether she is «a maiden or a mother» (ἄνανδρος, ἢ τεκνοῦσσα, 308) because her looks (πρὸς μὲν γὰρ φύσιν, 308) suggest that she is inexperienced in all these things (the concomitants of marriage and motherhood) but "someone noble" (γενναία δέ τις, 309). Kamerbeek finds the antithesis of maidenhood and nobility 'very strange' (1959: 88), but an appeal to Deianira's schemas will help us understand it. Close attention to one member of the group activates not only THE PITIABLE CAPTIVE schema applicable to all members, but also the two dominant and mutually exclusive schemas of Deianira's cognitive apparatus, THE CAREFREE MAIDEN and THE ANXIOUS WIFE. Like all women in Deianira's experience, herself included, Iole must instantiate one *or* the other. Her bearing is taken to mean that she is not an anxious wife but 'someone noble', i.e., a maiden of noble birth.[23] Iole may be anxious about her future but she continues to be 'carefree' in the sense that matters to Deianira, i.e., free from wifely cares, and to that extent she is a carefree maiden. When Iole fails to reply, Deianira appeals to Lichas and asks about the girl's parents, first about her father (310), and then about each parent separately (311). She reckons that the girl's aristocratic descent is the only explanation for her noble countenance in the face of adversity, which in turn makes her most worthy of pity. So Iole, a specific pitiable captive, activates in Deianira THE NOBLE MAIDEN schema, which serves as a variant of THE CAREFREE MAIDEN schema and intensifies THE PITIABLE CAPTIVE schema.

The term *schêma*, used in reference to a performer's controlled appearance and denoting 'posture', 'gesture' or 'deportment,' further illustrates the connection between schema-qua-demeanor and schema-qua-schematic-demeanor.[24] As Arnheim writes regarding the relationship between visual image and thought, «the reduction of a human figure to the simple geometry of an expressive gesture or posture can sharpen the image … This quality is invaluable for abstract thought in that it offers the possibility of reducing a theme visually to a skeleton of essential dynamic elements» (1969:

71; emphasis added). As a still and silent maiden of noble bearing, Iole is the very image of Noble Maidenhood. For Deianira visual perception becomes tantamount to visual knowledge because having rejected the only other schema available to her, THE ANXIOUS WIFE schema, «[she] assigns [Iole] a place in the system of things constituting [her] total view of the world» (Arnheim 1969: 90).

Restricting ourselves to the characters on stage, the problem with Deianira's reading from the point of view of Lichas, the Messenger, and Iole herself is that the mute captive is no longer a carefree/noble maiden and not yet an anxious wife but «a woman who has failed to make the transition between *parthenos* (virginal and unmarried) and *gunê* (married and a mother) … Iole is caught somewhere in between [sexual experience and maternity]: she has lain beside Heracles and is therefore in one sense no longer a *parthenos*, but she has not yet borne a child and thus is not yet fully a *gunê*» (Wohl 1998: 33)[25]. As Hyllus' future wife and the progenitor of Heracles' descendants, she is not unqualifiedly pitiable, either. Deianira's mental resources are inadequate to help her discover the truth since neither THE NOBLE MAIDEN nor THE ANXIOUS WIFE nor THE PITIABLE CAPTIVE schema can account for *this* woman, a liminal figure situated in the interstices of these schemas, partially described by each but fully explained by none. For cognitive progress to be made, another speaking character must step in. Enter Lichas.

Stage 3: Schema-challenge (314-28)

With Lichas the inquiry into Iole's identity becomes dialogical and interactive. If Deianira is to break free from her schemas, she will need a new trigger (physical or social stimulus) that will challenge the existing schemas or a new mode of cognition that will problematize her schematic inferences. In his earlier account of Heracles' whereabouts, Lichas presented himself as a reliable herald bearing happy tidings to his clueless audience. In his upcoming exchange with the Messenger and Deianira (393-496), he will admit that he was not entirely honest to Deianira about Iole «lest he should cause pain in her heart» (481-2). This later admission is taken to suggest that in the intervening scene with Iole Lichas

is also dishonest, a well-intentioned prevaricator out of concern for Deianira's feelings. This reading, while correct, does not do full justice either to Lichas' complex attitude to truth or to his concern for Deianira. In what follows, I shall show that Lichas tries to curb Deianira's tendency to stereotype by inviting her to cognize Iole in new ways. His answers to Deianira's questions may be thought as attempts, however unintentional, to foster in her a kind of meta-cognition, a reflection on her cognitive tools for reading others.

His first tactic is evasion and dissimulation. Deianira's question about Iole's parents elicits a string of lies, hedges, and half-truths: «What do I know? Why do you question me? Perhaps in birth she is not among the humblest of that land» (314-5). When Deianira presses on by asking whether Eurytus had a daughter (316), Lichas feigns ignorance (317), and when she asks for the captive's name (318), he tells her that he does not know it (319). This rapid repartee sharpens the epistemological urgency of the moment: Deianira continues to use THE PITIABLE CAPTIVE schema and to ask after the girl's 'royal birth', specifically her father and name, while Lichas defers meaning and frustrates her desire for knowledge by remaining vague about Iole's high birth and professing ignorance about her father and name.

In effect, Lichas' sparse account reconstitutes Iole as an enigmatic object by turning her into a 'place of indeterminacy' (Ingarden 1973), a site of underdetermined features capable of provoking reflection. His clipped answers may be seen as ways of making Deianira reconsider her habitual templates by defamiliarizing a woman that has been all too anxiously familiarized. We need not assume that Lichas intends to cast Iole as an enigma (his intentions, beyond sparing Deianira pain, are never articulated and may at best be surmised), but to complicate Deianira's thinking about the girl. Notice that whereas her Iole stood out of the group as the-most-pitiable-qua-noble-maiden, Lichas' Iole recedes back into the group: she is a maiden, like her fellow captives, and her nobility is rendered both speculative (ἴσως, 314) and ambiguous by means of litotes (γέννημα τῶν ἐκεῖθεν οὐκ ἐν ὑστάτοις, 315).

Lichas' evasions, however, fail to provoke in Deianira what DiMaggio has called 'deliberative cognition', a natural cognitive endowment that involves overriding «programmed modes of thought to think critically and reflexively» (1997: 271-2). At the end of the exchange, Deianira turns to the mute girl to ask once again who she is: «Then do tell us yourself, my poor child (ὦ τάλαιν', 320), for it would be a shame not to know who you are» (320-1). Iole seems wretched, just as she did before Lichas intervened (ὦ δυστάλαινα, 307), and more pitiable in her aloneness since ignorance of her story makes it hard for Deianira «to offer her personal sympathy» (Jebb 1892: 52). Lichas' defamiliarization fails to challenge THE PITIABLE CAPTIVE schema because it fails to shake, either enough or at all, its two pillars, Iole's maidenhood and nobility. Maidenhood still informs Deianira's obsessive concern with Iole's past, her parents and family name,[26] while nobility remains but has become ambiguous. Perhaps this failure is an inevitable limitation of an interaction that consists of brief answers to set questions. It is time for a new approach.

In his second and last attempt to challenge THE PITIABLE CAPTIVE schema, Lichas invites Deianira to move away from ascertaining *who* Iole is (her essence via a determination of social role) to fathoming *what* she stands for. This shift supplements visual and auditory perception with metaphorical cognition: the mute girl becomes a symbol that encodes a dark foreboding of the future. When Iole fails once more to tell Deianira who she is, Lichas explains that the captive has not uttered a single word since she left her home but «has been travailing with the burden of her sorrow and weeping bitterly» (ἀλλ' αἰὲν ὠδίνουσα συμφορᾶς βάρος δακρυρροεῖ δύστηνος, 325-6). This symbolic reading of Iole makes use of three ideas: Iole is pregnant with a heavy misfortune; she bears her misfortune as a pregnant woman bears her labor-pangs; and she has been weeping since she left her fatherland. Commentators have seen here an allusion to Iole's imminent destruction of Heracles' house. The cognitive tools of image schema and conceptual metaphor will illuminate the contribution of this

reading to the ongoing exchange between Lichas and Deianira without detracting from Iole's general function in the play.

The primary image schema pertinent to Lichas' reading is the CONTAINER. The minimum requirements for the CONTAINER are interior, boundary, and exterior (akoff 1989).

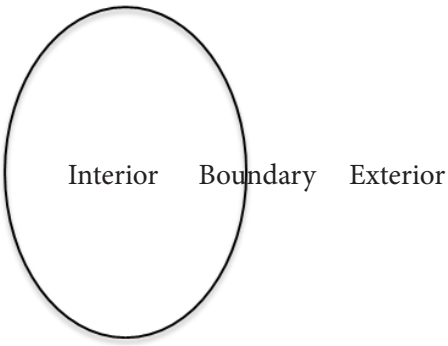

Fig. 1: The Container

The CONTAINER presupposes CONTAINMENT, which entails the notions of container, containing, and content. Peña (1999) has further developed the logic of the CONTAINER, noting that the entities in the interior of the container may affect it, a fact that becomes part of the extended logic of the schema. If we adapt Lichas' reading to the spatial parameters of the CONTAINER, we obtain the following result: Iole is the container, heavy misfortune is the interior, heavy-misfortune-borne-with-tears is the boundary (the face under the mask), and heavy-misfortune-borne-with-silence is the exterior (the masked face of a mute). The boundary and the exterior are physical surfaces and sites of affect: the teary face and the tragic mask convey sadness.

The secondary image schema of relevance is the PATH, which has the following three properties: a starting point, an ending point, and contiguous points in between (Johnson 1987).

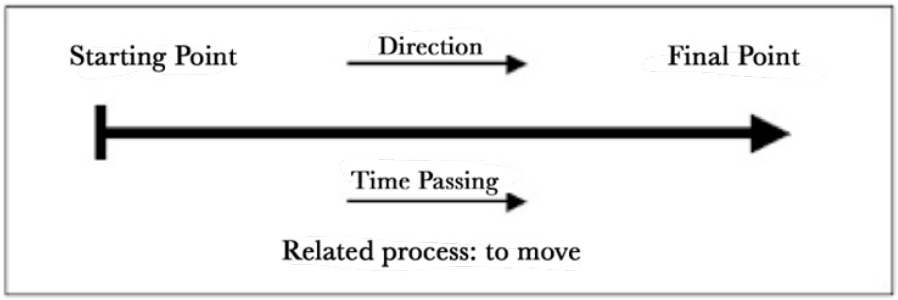

Fig. 2: The Path

Although Johnson argues that paths are 'directionless' (1987: 114), he cites metaphors based on the PATH, which express abstract purposes in terms of physical goals (hence the use of the arrow in Figure 2). As he points out, the physical starting location of a path is mapped onto the initial state of some purpose, and the final location onto the final state, yielding expressions such as «She's just starting out to make her fortune» and «I've got quite a way to go before I get my Ph.D» (1987: 114-5). The PATH is a dynamic image schema that conveys Iole's journey from Oechalia (starting point; cf. 326-7) to Trachis (final point), with her stop in front of Heracles' house being a temporary sojourn. The text conveys the PATH's spatiality. As soon as Deianira sees the captives, she comments on their procession (226), and Lichas states that their arrival is good (229). At the end of the scene, Deianira lets Iole proceed into the house (329; cf. 333). The PATH also conveys the temporal progression of Iole's pregnancy from a past point in Oechalia (conception) to a future point in Heracles' house (delivery), with the present interval being a point-in-between (pregnancy). Whereas the CONTAINER expresses Iole's boundedness, her being a self-enclosed system of destruction, the PATH expresses her purposive destructive agency.

The CONTAINER structures two metaphors, which inform Lichas' reading. The first metaphor (M_1) is FETUS IS BORNE where a fetus is conceived as a physical entity contained in the pregnant woman and painfully borne by her. The property of 'bearing a fetus' conceives of the pregnant woman as a receptacle, a metaphor

celebrated in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*:

SOURCE	TARGET
Container	Iole
Containing	Bearing painfully
Thing contained	Fetus

Fig. 3: To bear a fetus (M_1)

The second metaphor (M_2) is AFFECTS ARE BORNE where heavy misfortune is conceived as a physical entity capable of being borne painfully and tearfully. The property of 'bearing a heavy misfortune' is conceived as the state in which a person bears painfully and tearfully a heavy object:

SOURCE	TARGET
Container	Iole
Containing	Bearing painfully and tearfully
Thing contained	Heavy misfortune

Fig. 4: To bear a heavy misfortune (M_2)

The sources of M_1 and M_2 obey the logic of the CONTAINER, and their targets can be mapped onto one another as the physical and the psychic correlates, respectively, of a woman weighted down and in pain. Iole's body is the analogue of her psychic space. The interplay

between the image schema and the metaphors deepens a previously flat character. Deianira's schematic thinking rendered Iole a noble captive on the basis of mask, bearing, and an inferred transition from freedom to slavery. Deianira did not so much determine 'the internal from the external' (Wohl 1998: 41) as run together two externals, maidenhood and nobility-qua-noble-birth, and used the hybrid to reinforce THE PITIABLE CAPTIVE schema that she activated upon seeing Iole. Lichas counters this surface schematic reading with a conceptual metaphor that turns Iole into a woman with a multi-layered subjective experience: a masked and silent exterior hides a face covered with tears, and a masked and clothed body hides a misfortune borne like a fetus by an aching soul. The external belies the internal: the mask is a static sign that visualizes a narrative of fixed meaning, whereas silence encodes a story of inexpressible grief by 'bringing to light' or 'foreshowing' nothing (προὔφηνεν οὔτε μείζον' οὔτ' ἐλάσσονα, 324). With Iole we have the perception of a presence but the experience of an absence.

The CONTAINER, the PATH, M_1, and M_2 revise, either totally or partially, THE PITIABLE CAPTIVE schema as it applies to Iole. Of the schema's two properties, maidenhood and nobility, the former has proved the hardest to shake, but Lichas' reading effectively erodes it: far from being 'inexperienced' (309) or a maiden, Iole is a woman suffering labor-pangs and bearing misfortune. Later the chorus validates this reading. After Hyllus informs Deianira of Heracles' fatal embrace with the robes, the chorus pities Heracles for having won in battle «this fatal bride from steep Oechalia» (857-9); and after the Nurse announces Deianira's suicide, the chorus metaphorically associates procreation with death: «That bride, newly come, has borne, has borne a mighty Fury for this house» (893-5; cf. 842, 850). Iole's sexual maturation brings destruction—to borrow from Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, she «gives birth astride of a grave». As Hyllus acknowledges in his pitiful protest to his dying father: «How could anyone [take Iole as his wife] when she alone shares the blame for my mother's death and your condition?» (1233-4; cf. 447).

If maidenhood is metaphorically voided, nobility seems to fare better, but insofar as in Deianira's mind it is parasitic on maidenhood, it, too, is compromised, if only in terms of its exclusive association with the paternal oikos.[27] Here the PATH is especially important. A pregnant woman belongs to her husband's house, and Iole is already Heracles' 'hidden bedmate' (κρύφιον … λέχος, 360) and about to become his 'wife' (τῇδε τῇ γυναικί, 447; δάμαρτ', 428). That she eventually becomes Hyllus' wife does not alter the fact that she already belongs to Heracles' *oikos*; her imminent entry into the house will seal this fact. The PATH, M_1 and M_2 thus point to the future as something that originates in the past but also breaks with it because the past no longer matters. Iole is valuable because she makes succession possible by 'killing off' the past (Deianira and Heracles) and engendering the future (Heracles' descendants). The chorus' reference to her as Fury, a chthonic deity of vengeance, renders this succession not only necessary, but also inevitable.

Stage 4: Schema-preservation (329-32)

Lichas' metaphorical reading of Iole seems to have no effect on Deianira who urges the girl to enter the house 'in whatever manner is most agreeable to her' and worries lest she increase her pain (330-1). Although she no longer refers to her as pitiable, her concern over Iole's emotional wellbeing suggests that she continues to think of her as worthy of pity. Lichas' reading has seemingly failed to break THE PITIABLE CAPTIVE schema or at least to make Deianira reflect on its appropriateness.

Why should this be the case? One reason might be that the schema is simply too strong to break in a single encounter. Deianira may need more exposure to ambiguous stimuli like Iole to begin to view the schema critically. Another reason might be that Lichas' metaphor is not novel enough to prompt a new way of thinking since Deianira has already used the idiom of pregnancy to describe her own painful endurance of Heracles' absence. In the prologue, she says that Heracles' departure has 'pierced her with pangs' (ὠδῖνας αὐτοῦ προσβαλὼν, 42), and in the first episode she tells the chorus that only a married woman worried about her husband and

children could understand 'the troubles with which she is weighed down'(κακοῖσιν οἷς ἐγὼ βαρύνομαι, 152). Her many sorrows have made her weep (153), and the chorus testifies to her 'tearless yearning' for Heracles (106-7). For Deianira, labor pangs, burdens, and tears are deeply and exclusively associated with her social roles as wife and mother. Her typological thinking prevents her from seeing them as affective states and expressions of a woman she persists in viewing as a maiden. What could have been schema-discrepant information ends up being schema-consistent information.[28]

If Deianira seems to make no cognitive progress in this scene, we readers of the play progress by realizing that her schema needs to be contextualized in order to become a reliable and useful guide for action. As an abstract 'in the head' category, THE PITIABLE CAPTIVE schema encodes a social reality that turns war captives into pitiable property. This schema is woven into the social fabric of the times and has heuristic value as a general cognitive tool, but its relevance depends on contextual or contingent parameters that mediate cognition and learning. Such parameters include ambiguous stimuli that resist schematic structures like Iole or people whose cognitive processes can challenge one's own schemas.

Conclusion

The silent Iole in Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* provides a good opportunity for test-driving, as it were, two well-known staples of social cognition and cognitive linguistics: social stereotype and conceptual metaphor. Deianira sees Iole through the prism of her social schemas, which fail to yield an accurate reading of the silent girl, and Lichas fails to modify Deianira's view with a metaphorical reading of Iole. Cognitive scientists will find here a critical engagement with schematic and embodied cognition that shows the advantages and limitations of both. As mental structures of preconceived ideas or frameworks of aspects of the world, schemas can facilitate the perception and understanding of new stimuli, but they may also be too rigid to account for 'bizarre' texts

or ambiguous stimuli, like a silent person. Conceptual metaphors, on the other hand, though cognitively richer may be too 'primitive'[29] or culturally unresponsive[30] to shift one's thinking. Classicists will recognize the pessimistic and all too Sophoclean lesson about the limitations of human cognition. What they will also see, I hope, is that a cognitive reading of the scene illuminates its function as the fulcrum of the play. **Stages 1 and 2** reflect Deianira's mental paralysis, her entrapment in fear and anxiety that have resulted in inertia, whereas **Stages 3 and 4** signal the need for deliberation and action. Soon afterwards Deianira will find out the truth about Iole and set in motion the events that destroy Heracles' house. The Iole scene thus encapsulates the play's broader preoccupations with illusion and knowledge, stagnation and progress, the past and the future.[31]

Note

1 On the Greek tragic stage, femininity is usually associated with silence construed either as failure to speak at all (Aeschylus' Iphigeneia, Sophocles' Iole, or Euripides' veiled Alcestis) or as inability to keep on speaking, caused by intimidation, rhetorical convention, or physical removal (Aeschylus' Cassandra, Sophocles' Chrysothemis or Tecmessa, Euripides' Phaedra).

2 For props and cognition in Greek tragedy see Chaston 2010.

3 For narrative gaps as stimuli of the imagination see Iser 1974: 283 and 1978: 194.

4 Mutes were often used to create a sense of status as companions, members of a retinue, etc. For the view that Iole refuses to speak because there was no speaking actor to take her part see Schlesinger 1930.

5 On Iole and Cassandra see Bowra 1944: 123-4, Seale 1982: 195, Scodel 1984: 31, Garner 1990: 102, and Wohl 1998: 110. For Iole as a double of Deianira see Fuqua 1980: 40-1 n. 108, Heiden 1989: 65 and Wohl 1998: 17-8. On Iole and Aphrodite see Kamerbeek 1959: 189, Burton 1980: 73, Seale 1982: 202-3, and Segal 1998: 72. For Iole's opacity as indicating the limits of mortal knowledge see Rood 2010. For treatments on silence on the Greek stage see Ormand 1996 and Papadodima 2020 with many assorted articles.

6 For intermental and intramental functioning see, e.g., Vygotsky 1987 and Rogoff 1998. More recent studies include Palmer 2004, 2010 and Zunshine 2006, 2009, 2011, 2012.

7 When she realizes that Nessus deceived her to avenge his slayer, Deianira says, «and I gain the knowledge of this too late, when it avails no more» (ὧν ἐγὼ μεθύστερον, ὅτ' οὐκέτ' ἀρκεῖ, τὴν μάθησιν ἄρνυμαι, 710-1). Cf. Kraus 1991 for 'late learning' in the play.

8 By way of illustration, let us see how Johnson associates the IN-OUT schema with the image schema CONTAINER as manifested in a person's start of an ordinary day: «You wake out of a deep sleep and peer out from beneath the covers into your room. You gradually emerge out of your stupor, and pull yourself out from under the covers, climb into your robe, stretch out your limbs, and walk in a daze out of the bedroom and into the bathroom. You look in the mirror and see your face staring out at your. Your reach into the medicine cabinet, take out the toothpaste, squeeze out some toothpaste, put the toothbrush into your mouth, brush your teeth in a hurry, and rinse out your mouth» (1987: 331).

9 In the first five lines of the brief exchange between the chorus and Deianira there are five expressions of seeing: ἴδε ἴδ' (222), βλέπειν (224), ὁρῶ (225), ὄμματος (225), μὴ λεύσσειν (226). See Taplin 1972: 58 and Montiglio 2000: 188-92.

10 A special mask could register her distinctive beauty, like the mask of Dionysus in Euripides' *Bacchae*, which conveyed the god's effeminate beauty. See Seale 1982: 188 who cites Pickard-Cambridge for Dionysus' mask. Cf. Jones 1962: 45, Golder 1992: 328, Marshall 1999: 190-5, and Wiles 2007: 41

11 Affect has various meanings such as attitudes, autonomic arousal, drives, emotions, feelings, needs, purposes and values. Following Higgins *et al.*, I use affect to refer to «the phenomenological experience of physiological arousal» (1981: 408).

12 For the view that pity was both cognitive and social see Konstan 2006: 201-2.

13 All translations come from Jameson 1957 with minor modifications.

14 The mutability of human fortune is a major theme of Greek heroic myth and a standard preoccupation of Greek moralizing. See, e.g., Isocrates 9.70 and 16.48. As generalizations that are trusted pre- or unreflectively, maxims are versions of schematic thinking.

15 For the centrality of this theme in the play see e.g., Easterling 1982: 2, Reinhardt 1979: 35, and Conacher 1997.

16 Just as the earlier hedge «unless their misfortune deceive me» (243) failed to motivate an inquiry, so the current 'perhaps' is cognitively inert.

17 In *Rhetoric*, likeness is stipulated as a precondition for both pity (1386a 25) and fear (1383a 10). For this notion in *Trachiniae* see Dickerson 1972: 224 n. 71 and Heiden 1989: 65.

18 For Deianira's analogical thinking see Kraus 1991: 83.

19 Cf. the chorus' vocative 'queen' (ἄνασσα, 291), the Messenger's 'mistress' (δέσποιν', 370), and Lichas' «to the queen Deianira, daughter of Oeneus, wife of Heracles…» (πρὸς τὴν κρατοῦσαν Δηάνειραν, Οἰνέως κόρην, δάμαρτά θ'

Ἡρακλέους, 405-6). In her later exchange with Lichas, Deianira combines aristocratic terminology (*kalos*/*kakos*, 450, 452, 454, 457) with the free/slave distinction (453) to make Lichas tell her the truth.

20 The infinitive φρονεῖν in this context has been rendered variously as «to feel her position» (Jebb), «to behave» (Kamerbeek), and «to feel» (Jameson). Kamerbeek's translation is the closest to Easterling's understanding of how Iole must have struck Deianira, for which see below.

21 Sadness is one of the six 'basic emotions', as defined by Ekman and Friesen (2003)—fear, joy, sadness, disgust, surprise, and anger—that the Greek mask is thought capable of depicting. Meineck 2011: 141-52 argues that since the masked characters are required to play many different emotional states, the viewers must do a lot of cognitive work to supply the missing visual information underpinning each of these states.

22 Iole's nobility is associated with her being γενναία (308), a description I discuss below. Mastronarde says that it possible that Iole performs a gesture, such as bowing her head in shame, adding that in this case «Sophokles … plays with the irony of situation in which Iole's failure to communicate may be at least partly voluntary, but Deianira believes it to be wholly involuntary» (1979: 77).

23 Jebb (1894: 51) equates γενναία here with εὐγενής on the basis of the words' etymological association.

24 For σχῆμα in the sense of an actor's deportment and gesture see Aristophanes, *Wasps* 1485; Aeschylus, *Seven Against Thebes* 488; Euripides, *Medea* 1072; Aristotle *Poetics* 1455a29, 62a3, and *Rhetoric* 1386a31. See also Meineck 2011: 144. For the association between σχῆμα and ὄψις see Halliwell 1986: 337-9 and 1993: 207-9.

25 The text alternates between the two terms and their synonyms when referring to Iole: γυνή (400, 447, 486); δάμαρ (428, 1224); παρθένος (1219, 1275), κόρη (352, 536); νεάνις (307); παῖς (585).

26 When Deianira finds out who Iole is, she associates her name with her birth: «Oh, wretched me, what secret pain have I welcomed into my house? For surely she was not born nameless (ἆρ' ἀνώνυμος πέφυκεν), as her escort swore, a girl so illustrious in her appearance and nature?» (375-9). Note also the Messenger's use of the imperfect in reference to her name immediately afterwards: «Yes, illustrious by name as by birth: she is the daughter of Eurytus, and was once called Iole» (…Ἰόλη 'καλεῖτο, 380-1). What Iole will be called from now on, i.e. her social allegiances, is in question, and that is the question Deianira should be asking.

27 See Segal 1994: 63.

28 See above, page 6.

29 This is the term used by Gallese and Lakoff (2005) and Dodge and Lakoff (2005) to refer to image schemas such as the CONTAINER, suggesting that other schemas might be more complex, less clearly tied to the body.

30 For this type of criticism see Yu 1998 and Kövecses 2005.

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