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How to Do Things with “Fall-Out” Systems in Troilus and Cressida

(1) “The culture of any society at any moment is more like the debris, or ‘fall-out,’ of past ideological systems, than it is itself a system, a coherent whole.”¹

(2) “[The conventions of petrarchism] form the second great international system of conventional love, between the chivalric love of the middle ages and the romantic love of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.”²

(3) “The term nature could stand... for the divinely ordained power that presides over the continuity and preservation of whatever lives in the sublunary world; or for a creative principle directly subordinated to the mind and will of God.”³

0. Preliminaries

The strategy of the present essay is to assume that the proposition of the first citation (1) holds true of literary culture as well, and to try to see *Troilus and Cressida* in terms of the “fall-out” of past ideological sys-

1. Harold Rosenberg in the mouth of Victor Turner, in the latter’s *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors* (Cornell UP, 1974), p. 14.

2. Leonard Forster, *The Icy Fire: Five Studies in European Petrarchism* (Cambridge UP., 1969), p. 2.

3. George D. Economou, *The Goddess Nature in Medieval Literature* (Harvard UP., 1972), p. 3.

tems, of which we can hardly dispense with the following three: “chivalric love,” “petrarchism” (2), and what may be termed “natural love” (cf. [3] above). The validity and advantages of this strategy can be sought in the wider explainability of a dynamic model—as has been well exemplified in cultural anthropology and literary history—which manipulates systems within a spatio-temporal configuration in contradistinction to a static model which makes a systematic but monolithic attempt at “a coherent whole.”⁴ What guarantees the applicability of this dynamic model to *Troilus and Cressida* lies not only in the play’s conspicuous textual quality that demonstrably throws into relief the manipulation of systems as “fall-out” but also, more generally, in the Renaissance and late medieval practice of literary production, which is not characterised by “romantic originality” but draws heavily on conventions or on literary stock-in-trade; hence the importance of such ideas as “*genera mixta*”⁵ and “*sens*” made out of “*matières*.”⁶ To make out how this kind of manipulation operates in the making of *Troilus* will reveal something vital to a better understanding of the play in its relationships to the culture in which it is produced.

4. Turner calls this strategy “processual analysis.” See Turner, op. cit., p. 44: “Processual analysis assumes cultural analysis, just as it assumes structural-functional analysis, including more static comparative morphological analysis. It negates none of these, but puts dynamics first.” What hastens to add is also relevant to our tentative strategy of systematic formulation: “Yet in order of presentation of facts it is a useful strategy to present a systematic outline of the principles on which the institutionalized social structure is constricted...”

5. Cf. Rosalie L. Colie, *The Resources of Kind; Genre-Theory in the Renaissance* (U. of California P., 1973); Idem, *Shakespeare’s “Living Art”* (Princeton UP., 1974), whose chapter on *Troilus and Cressida* (Ch. 8) is illuminating.

6. Cf. Eugène Vinaver, *The Rise of Romance*. (Oxford, 1971), Chapter II. It is a perilous business, I am fully aware, to conflate the medieval and the Renaissance poetics in such a rough formulation, but with no prospect, so far as I know, for any comprehensive poetics for the English Renaissance save for the illuminating but amply broad frame of reference, “the rhetorical ideal and practice of *homo rhetoricus*” (Richard A. Lanham, *The Motives of Eloquence* [Yale UP., 1976]), it seems to me safe to be wide-ranging. The recent theory of “imitation,” convincingly put forward by Thomas Greene in his fascinating *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (Yale UP., 1982), is richly suggestive in dealing with poems that consciously textualise within themselves their specific ancient sub-texts, but for those texts which only contain allusive references to medieval texts and are largely based on non-specific legendary sub-texts, such as *Troilus and Cressida*, it is of little use. I am not sure whether anything like “the humanist sense of anachronism” which is heuristic and creative in what he calls “the dialectical type of imitation” is at work in Act III

With a due caution against a static systematisation we may enlarge on the three constituent systems in the form of three pairs of more or less distinct types of love: (1) personal, (2) social, and (3) cosmic. Each of these pairs is divisible into two antagonistic halves to form a binary opposition. The personal is thus differentiated into (1.1) petrarchist⁷ and (1.2) alba-type; the social into (2.1) chivalric-irrational (-courtly) and (2.2) chivalric-rational (-matrimonial); and the cosmic into (3.1) unnatural and (3.2) natural. In each case the differentia or the differential axis along which the binary distinction is made is the presence/absence of consummation, rationality, and order respectively. For instance, the petrarchist type of love, as has been rightly pointed out, is essentially distinguished by the inherent unattainability of its fulfillment and consummation while the alba-type from its nature postulates consummation, serving as a “safety valve”⁸ for the pent-up emotion frustrated by the petrarchist unattainability. Obviously, each of these types strikes a deep root in the literary and cultural tradition and to a certain extent retains its formal and substantial characteristics. Thus (2.1) is quite often designated, though with sufficient ambiguity, as “*amour courtois*” and (2.2) is sometimes called “romantic marriage”¹⁰ in the same way as (3.2) is often referred to as the “Boethian bond of things” or “l’amor the move it sole e l’altre stelle” and (3.1) is typically imprinted in the Christian myth of the Fall. True, these types, though largely defined by historical and generic indicators,¹¹ do not easily fall under a rigid categorisation that permits no overstepping of boundaries but rather by virtue of “metaphor as correspondence”¹² tend to merge one into another. How-

Scene ii. See (1.1.2) below.

7. The word “petrarchistic” or “petrarchist” may sound strange but I follow Forster’s definition that petrarchism is essentially characterised by the elaboration and exploitation of Petrarch’s own personal note (i.e., the Petrarchan). See, Forster, op. cit., p. 4.

8. For interesting “safety valves” theory, see *ibid.*, Chapter 3.

9. The term, incidentally, seems to have been coined by Gaston Paris in 1883. Cf. Roger Boase, *The Origin and Meaning of Courtly Love: A Critical Study of European Scholarship* (Manchester UP., 1977), p. 4.

10. C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (Oxford UP., 1936; 1968), pp. 340–45; Mark Rose, *Heroic Love: Studies in Sidney and Spenser* (Harvard UP., 1968), pp. 18–34.

11. Cf. Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes*, (Harvard UP., 1982), Chapter 8: “Generic Signals.”

12. Cf. S. K. Heninger, Jr., *Touches of Sweet Harmony: Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics*, The Huntington Library, 1974, pp. 325ff: “Metaphor as Cosmic Correspondence.”

ever, this does not mean that they are merely products of a distinction without a difference; they are feasibly distinguishable materials for a text-making.

1.1.1. “*Canticum Troili*”

On his first appearance at the beginning of the play Troilus presents himself in a typically petrarchistic vein. Though in form no sonneteer, he strikes the right theme and note when he compares his love to war and thereby introduces the petrarchist idea of the “*dolce nemica*” (the “sweet enemy”);¹³

Why should I war without the walls of Troy,
That find such cruel battle here within?¹⁴

The “battle here within” can be taken in this context to be either “the battle within his members” or “the battle within the walls of Troy,”¹⁵ and it is important to note that this ambiguity suggests the possibility that Troilus’ subjective world is imperialistically coextensive with the whole of Troy. Within this extensive subjectivity are found further generic indicators of petrarchism, the antithetical pair of fear-hope feeling¹⁶ (“But sorrow that is couch’d in seeming gladness/Is like that mirth fate turns to sudden sadness”) and the praise of the lady’s beauties¹⁷ (“Her eyes, her hair, her cheek, her gait, her voice/... O-that her hand”). What induces Troilus’ paradise is Pandarus’ negative suggestion, “I would not, as they term it, praise her,” whose reference to “they,” i.e., petrarchists, reveals the existence and extent of the prevalent system. The whole tone and dominant vein are confirmed by and culminate in the generically

13. Forster, op. cit., p. 13.

14. All quotations from Shakespeare are from the Arden Edition of *Troilus and Cressida*, ed. Kenneth Palmer (Methuen, 1982).

15. Kenneth Palmer in his recent edition (*ibid.*) seems to take only the former interpretation (the war in the members) but I prefer the multivocality, whose significance I hope will be shown in what follows.

16. Forster, op. cit., p. 20.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 8–9.

ingrained “nautical image”¹⁸ in which Troilus’ state of affairs is unforgettably expressed;

Her [Cressida’s] bed is India; there she lies, a pearl.
Between our Ilium and where she resides,
Let it be call’d the wild and wand’ring flood,
Ourself the merchant, and this sailing Pandar
Our doubtful hope, our convoy and our bark.

Troilus’ subjective imperium, supported by mercantile ideology, feels free to expand from the confines of his own limbs far into an exotic landscape. But his imaginary imperialism is no mere expansionism but a kind of missionary of civilization; Cressida is a priceless pearl that the “base Indian”¹⁹ will throw away and only the civilized people deserve to be the seeker of. The pearl-metaphor serves as an eloquent justification and convenient outlet for his imperialist emotion that is bound to be pent up in the Petrarchan frustration. When the same metaphor is used again by Troilus in his defense of Helen and the war for her (II. ii. 83) its function remains fundamentally the same, but of which more later (2.1).

1.1.2. “*As True-as Troilus*”

About halfway through the course of action (III. ii. 171–205) there is a kind of tableau scene representing in a crystallized, if oblique, form, the forces of action as they are being realized in performance by the title roles and Pandarus. Their love’s consummation at hand, Troilus and Cressida are taking lovers’ vows with Pandarus as witness. Troilus ascertains the extent of his truth by assuming the destined canonization of his name as a simile: “as true as Troilus” (180), while Cressida in a similar fashion expresses the measure of her non-falsehood by supposing the impossible canonization of her name as a simile: “as false as Cressid” (194). Pandarus for his part follows up these highly rhetorical asseverations with an equally formal summing-up:

18. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

19. *Orbello*, V. ii. pp. 347–48; Cf. *Matthew*, xiii. pp.45–46.

If ever you prove false one to another, . . . let all
constant men be Troiluses, all false women
Cressids, and all brokers-between Pandars. (197–202)

The whole scene is wound up with a quasi-ritualistic solemnity, “Amen” repeated by the three.

The scene is attractive in many ways but particularly so with its peculiar mixture of formal simplicity (both verbal and visual) and semantic complexity. In its form the scene is simple and clear: beginning with Troilus’ Petrarchist type of discourse, whose generic hyperbole-simile occasions from Cressida yet another, and both followed and summed up by Pandarus’ pattern-making. In a sense, then, the whole scene can be described as a Petrarchist hyperbole writ large in a ritualistic manner. But unlike its form its semantic structure or the effects of its discourse are not so simple and clear. Or perhaps, in this instance, it would be more appropriate to say “because of its form” since it is in the nature of the sonneteer’s hyperbole that an extraordinarily complex structure of meaning is expected to inhabit an unproportionately simple and narrow vehicle. Be that as it may, for this particular semantic complexity there are at least two sources that can be held responsible. One is concerned with epistemology, the question of “truth.” The other is a dramatic irony that the audiences command better knowledge as to the future consequences of the historical *dramatis personae*: the late comer is better in the know. These sources of semantic complexity, however, are closely interrelated. Thus in Troilus’ sonnetting confession more than one truth are detectable and at the same time advantage of the dramatic irony is taken in a specific way.

True swains in love shall, in the world to come,
Approve their truth by Troilus, when their rhymes,
Full of protests, of oath, and big compare,
Wants similes, truth tir’d with iteration
(As true as steel, as plantage to the moon,
As sun to day, as turtle to her mate,
As iron to adamant, as earth to th’centre)
Yet truth’s authentic author to be cited,

“As true as Troilus” shall crown up the verse
And sanctify the numbers. (III. ii. 171–81)

Centering around the keyword “truth” there are two conceptual frames of reference-binary-opposite pairs of subjective/objective and historical/ahistorical-at work, intermingling with each other so as to produce ironico-comic effects. If Troilus’ “big compare” (i.e., “as true as Troilus”) is unique it is because it first distinguishes itself in the subjective-historical (awareness of difference in history-time)—“shall” (twice); “in the world to come”; “by Troilus”—from other “comparisons” whose truth essentially depends on the ahistorical-objective (observable repeatability)—“(As true as steel, . . . th’centre)” —, and then puts its truth, subjective-historical, over and above other truths, objective-ahistorical, by sublimating it, albeit in an hyperbolic assertion, to the level of the objective-historical, i.e., “as true as Troilus” as a historical fact, which the audience’s coign of vantage as belated is ready to permit.²⁰ There are involved three types of truth: the subjective-historical, the objective-ahistorical, and the objective-historical. In Troilus’ judgment personal conviction (the subjective-historical) is entitled in validity to a fulfilled historical fact (the objective-historical) which is considered superior even to the natural law (the objective-ahistorical). It is indeed a paradox to see the observable, repeatable truth—the truth the men in this century habitually prize as *the* truth and those in the Renaissance were presumably beginning to attach the prime importance to—regarded as inadequate precisely because it is repeatable and hence worn-out. And it is an anachronism to see one’s truth arbitrarily committed to the “established” future. That the paradox and the anachronism are effective is the measure of a rhetorical and dramatic success. But behind this success lies an epistemological topsyturvydom. If the paradox entails the discarding of the objective, ahistorical truth then the anachronism brings with it a blindness to the sense of history (both the subjective- and the objective-historical). Committing and projecting himself to the “established” future, Troilus reduces himself to “pure” subjectivism or subjective absolutism

20. Cf. William Empson’s comment on this scene: the scene “appealed to what everybody knew was going to be the story” (*Seven Types of Ambiguity*, 1930, pp. 265–66), quoted in the Oxford Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, ed. Kenneth Muir, 1982, p. 121. Cf. also note 6 above.

(thee subjective-ahistorical). What he gains with his rhetorical, dramatic triumph, which is made at the expense of objectivity, is then pure subjectivity-consciousness demanding obedience to its truth from the “Other,” be it history, objectivity, or circumstances—, which makes itself felt, perhaps most harmlessly, in the sonneteer’s discourse. In his sheer subjectivity Troilus thus takes his flight far away from objectivity.

Induced as it is by Troilus’ extravaganza, Cressida’s repartee, if that is the word, does not follow his line of argumentation. The underlying pattern looks similar, culminating in the simile conducive to dramatic irony, but the sum of the resultant effects is totally different. Although distinction again is made in history-time between the present and the future and similar use is made of the “established” future (“as false as Cressid”), yet there are some crucial differences. These differences will present themselves most conspicuously relating to the problem of “truth.” Cressida begins by rightly and perceptively identifying Troilus’ aspirations to absolute subjectivity as prophet-like.

Prophet may you be!
 If I be false, or swerve a hair from truth,
 When time is old and hath forgot itself,
 When water-drops have worn the stones of Troy,
 And blind oblivion swallow’d cities up,
 And mighty states characterless are grated
 To dusty nothing-yet let memory,
 From false to false, among false maids in love,
 Upbraid my falsehood. When they’ve said “As false
 As air, as water, wind, or sandy earth,
 As fox to lamb, or wolf to heifer’s calf,
 Pard to the hind, or stepdame to her son”—
 Yea, let them say, to stick the heart of falsehood,
 “As false as Cressid.” (183–94)

In contrast to Troilus’ dazzling topsyturvydom Cressida’s logical clarity is outstanding. She is far more aware and cautious of historicity and subjectivity. Her acute sense of history-time is on the one hand conveyed by her reference to the vicissitudes of things, the fall of Troy and subsequent *translatio imperii* (to the audience familiar and unforgettable topoi),²¹

and is on the other hand indicated by the conditional “if” in dealing with the future, by which means the possibility is denied to the Troilian projection of the present to the future. And if the use of conditional results from her acute sense of historicity (awareness of objective presence susceptible of mutability), it results in a paradoxical dramatic irony; when she says, “If I am false I shall then be remembered ‘as false as Cressid,’” the audiences stand in a position to enjoy, whether with tragic sense or not, the simile as a piece of established truth. Thus it is from the audiences’ coign of vantage that since Cressida is in fact “as false as Cressid” she must needs be false. If Troilus, as we have seen, puts his subjective truth over and above the objective truth in his aspirations to subjective absolutism, Cressida does not speak of truth but conditionally, and even that conditional truth, “as false as Cressid,” is not allowed, as in the case of Troilus, to “crown up” the objective truth but only comparable with it. The logicity and objectivity in Cressida’s case presents a striking contrast to the illogicality and subjectivity in Troilus’.

This contrast between Troilus’ illogical subjectivism consequent on his hyperbolic discourse and Cressida’s logical objectivity is in fact detectable throughout this scene (III. ii). Troilus, meeting Pandarus in front of Cressida’s house, almost sings thus;

I stalk about her door,
 Like a strange soul upon the Stygian banks
 Staying for waftage. O, be thou my Charon,
 And give me swift transportance to those fields
 Where I may wallow in the lily beds
 Proposed for the deserfer! (7–12)

Troilus imagines himself as a ghost on the Stygian banks with Pandarus as Charon to take him to Cressida in Elysium. This imaginary relationship—Troilus (ghost) – Pandarus (Charon) – Cressida (in Elysium)—cannot but remind us of another we have seen at the very beginning of the play and discussed in the section (1.1.1.) above: Troilus (merchant) – Pandarus (bark) – Cressida (pearl in India). In the Troilian extravaganza the

21. E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. W. R. Trask (Harper and Row, 1953), p. 29.

whole picture changes from this—worldly to other—worldly.²² To Troilus the petrarchist “th’ imaginary relish is so sweet” (17) indeed.

1.2. “*The Busy Day Wak’d by the Lark*” or *Alba*

The extravaganza of “th’ imaginary relish” flows out of the pent-up emotions produced by the petrarchistic situation, generic unattainability of the lady. But what if the lady should be attained and consummation take place, which indeed is the case with Troilus? As is expected, the whole expanse of his imaginary empire, which is sustained by the petrarchistic frame and the exploitation of its bitter-sweet tension, will necessarily be undermined and reduced to a far less fantastic plane. Once his India with its pearl and his Elysium with Cressida are attained the world coextensive with colonialism and the inferno-paradiso cosmos is deflated into that of “the busy day,” which,

Wak’d by the lark, hath rous’d the ribald crows. (IV. ii. 9)

The bitter-sweet illusion of petrarchism gives way to the claims of the real, waking world of the alba or aubade. Essentially the genre “turns on the conflict between the sweet deception and reality, with the inevitable victory-for the time-of the outer world of day”²³ as the celebrated instance of the farewell of Romeo and Juliet clearly shows. But here it does not so much stake out its own world comprising “the conflict” as mark a transitional stage from the sweet deception to reality—the stage from petrarchistic inflation to tragic deflation. Troilus’ ominous reference to “the ribald crows” roused by the busy day is not conducive to the suspense of the sweet deception any more than Cressida’s pragmatist reminder of the importance on her part of the delay-teasing technique. (“You men never tarry. /O foolish Cressid, I might have still held off, /And then you would have tarried.”)²⁴ If the sweet deception is enjoyed,

22. And even “toward the limitless” in flight of infinite desire. See, Willard Farnham, “Troilus in Shapes of Infinite Desire,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 15 (1964): 257–62.

23. Peter Dronke, *The Medieval Lyric* (Hutchinson University Library, 1978), p. 169. Cf. also Forster, *op. cit.*, pp. 84–121; Marjorie Garber, *Coming of Age in Shakespeare* (Methuen, 1981), pp. 143–45.

it is only too brief and with an ominous overtone at that;

Cress. Night hath been too brief.

Troil. Beshrew the witch! With venomous wights she stays
As tediously as hell, but flies the grasps of love
With wings more momentary-swift than thought.

And this brief pathos is devastatingly wound up with down-to-earth bathos:

Cress. You will catch cold, and curse me. (IV. ii. 11–15)

The realistic deflation, introduced by the dawn harbinger of the alba and underlined by the pragmatic behaviour of the couple, functions as a good transitional phase and paves the way for the subsequent course of tragic disillusionment.

2.1. “*Why, She Is a Pearl*” or *the Irrational-Courtly*

It may look arbitrary to divide “the chivalric love” into “the irrational-courtly” and “the rational-matrimonial” but it is justifiable in view of the fact that there exist two types of chivalric romance, one concerned with adulterous love and irrational honour and the other with marital love and rational honour. If the former has often been solely associated with “the chivalric love” and long since monopolised the name of “medieval romance” it is mainly because of the predilections and prejudices of modern times, where the latter type has almost always been out of favour; *Tristan* held in higher esteem than *Cligés*.²⁵ Another justification for this apparently arbitrary division—a justification then more up-to-date than

24. In defence of an innocently ambiguous Cressida, Talbot Donaldson suggests the possibility that what I term “the delay-teasing technique” can be “memorized advice from her mother, recited by a girl of no experience.” But its far-fetchedness eventually necessitates its negation: “But that the words could come naturally from a woman of experience in bed-matters is undeniable,” “Cressid False, Criseyde Untrue: An Ambiguity Revisited,” pp. 76–77 in *Poetic Traditions of the English Renaissance* (Yale UP, 1982), eds. Maynard Mack and George deForest Lord.

25. Cf. D. S. Brewer, “The Nature of Romance,” *Poetica* (Tokyo), 9 (1978): 24–25: “For the

the medieval one-can be sought in the play itself, particularly in “the Trojan Council” scene (II. ii), where “the irrational-courtly” takes the form of Troilus’ conception of chivalry while “the rational-matrimonial” is, if briefly, represented by Hector’s initial attitude. The debate, describable in our context as that between the courtly and the humanist tradition, can indeed be said to reflect or even serve as an epitome of “the Counter-Renaissance” situation.²⁶

Troilus’ courtly conception of chivalry, first indicated by his dismissal of reason (“spans and inches so diminutive/As fears and reasons”), is best expressed in terms of Cressida and Helen, who are, significantly enough, replaceable as the Other in his code of love-and-honour. While the debate is conducted on the real value and worth of keeping Helen, which Hector argues “dwells not in particular will,” Troilus makes an oblique rejoinder which eventually hints at his present, real concerns:

I take today a wife, and my election
Is led on in the conduct of my will:
My will enkindled by mine eyes and ears,
Two traded pilots ‘twixt the dangerous shores
Of will and judgement-how may I avoid,
Although my will distaste what it elected,
The wife I choose? There can be no evasion
To blench from this and to stand firm by honour. (II. ii. 62–69)

Troilus apparently imagines himself having successfully steered between the Scylla of “will” and the Charybdis of “judgement” with the aid of two skilled navigators, “eyes and ears” and settled on his choice. The nautical metaphor not unnaturally reminds us of his petrarchist vision in

romances sexual love is the passionately desired source of good, the object of the quest, champion of the conflict, the great adventure and the great justification of existence. Its successful mutuality in marriage is the usual form of the essential happy ending. Love is the great individualising force, for it is exclusive; lovers can only desire each other, and such love is impossible except as proceeding from one to one. At the same time, through marriage, it is the great socialising force.” Cf. also Susan Wittig, *Stylistic and Narrative Structures in the Middle English Romances* (U. of Texas P., 1978), which analyses the recurrent structural motifs, among which stands out “marriage.” It is probably symptomatic of the modern culture that no de Rougemont has appeared for *Cligès*.

26. Hiram Haydn, *The Counter-Renaissance* (Harcourt: Brace & World, 1950), pp. 605–12.

which Troilus the merchant ventures to seek Cressida the Pearl in India on the bark named Pandrus. The bark, he admits there, is “doubtful” (I. i. 104) and so are the “two traded pilots” here in reality; as Kenneth Palmer rightfully comments, “eyes and ears ought to offer evidence, and will and judgment would then decide the matter between them; whereas Troilus’ choice is effected by enflamed will.”²⁷ This is impassioned irrationalism under the guise of learned *aurea mediocritas*. His “election” is not a result of reasonable deliberation followed by choice in the will as it seems to claim. But whether or no his decision is rationally reached, it is for him a veritable question of honour to keep to his “election.” His kind of chivalric code demands it. Now, “a wife,” his election, as has been suggested, can be taken both as Cressida on the one hand in view of his haunting concerns and as Helen on the other in the immediate context of the debate, and this ambiguity points to a conflation of two ladies as *the* Lady in the petrarchist-courtly complex of Troilus’ inflated vision. The proof of this psychology is in the use of metaphor, peculiar and rich in its implication, which renders Helen and Cressida identical: “Why, she is a pearl” (II. ii. 83).²⁸ It is as if Cressida the pearl was transported straight from India to Troy as Helen, and with it Troilus’ petrarchist vision acquires the potential dimension of a social code, courtly chivalry. Henceforth, a pearl does not remain unrelated to the question of honour.

2.2. “A Law in Each Well-Order’d Nation” or the Rational-Matrimonial

Hector’s ideal of chivalric love, though destined to be contaminated later by the Troilian irrationalism, is first suggested in the mouth of grandiloquent Aeneas;

27. The Arden Edition of *Troilus and Cressida*, p. 160. Cf. also Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I a-2 ae. xiii. I, C & ad. 2: “Choice is materially an act of the will, formally an act of the reason. The decision or judgement, drawn by the reason as a conclusion, is followed by choice in the will,” quoted in *ibid.*, p. 161. For the important suggestion that Troilus is moved by two wills, sexual as well as theological, see David Kaula, “Will and Reason in *Troilus and Cressida*,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 12 (1961): 272 ff.

28. I find Juliet Dusinbere note this metaphorical conflation in reference to her concern, “beauty.” See her “*Troilus and Cressida and the Definition of Beauty*,” *Shakespeare Survey* 36 (1983): 86.

If there be one among the fair'st of Greece
 That holds his honour higher than his ease,
 That feeds his praise more than he fears his peril,
 That knows his valour and knows not his fear,
 That loves his mistress more than in confession
 With truant vows to her own lips he loves,
 And dare avow her beauty and her worth
 In other arms than hers—to him this challenge:
 Hector, in view of Trojans and Greeks,
 Shall make it good, or do his best to do it,
 He hath a lady wiser, fairer, truer,
 Than ever Greek did couple in his arms. (I. iii. 264–75)

In proof of his honour and valour Hector defends his lady against those who contend that their mistresses are superior in wisdom, beauty, and truth. The ideal, if inflated in appearance by the grandiose herald, is in line with the traditional code of chivalry and does not strike us as peculiar except for its seemingly negligible distinction between “lady” and “mistresses.” This distinction indeed may be insignificant but, if we take due account of what initially appears to be Hector’s basic position expressed in “the Trojan Council,” it seems likely that it comes to gain importance. For, although notoriously inconsistent in his disputation, Hector, before his *volte face*, stands for the traditional humanist idea of love-and-honour, which is characterised by and based on Natural Law. Arguing against the retention of Helen, which is being defended and justified by Troilus in the cause of the irrational-courtly chivalry, Hector resorts to the familiar world picture which is rationally grounded on the divine law and order and has long been sanctioned by the tradition.

Nature craves

All dues be render'd to their owners: now
 What nearer debt in all humanity
 Than wife is to the husband? If this law
 Of nature be corrupted through affection,
 And that great minds, of partial indulgence
 To their benumbed wills, resist the same,

There is a law in each well-order'd nation
 To curb those raging appetites that are,
 Most disobedient and refractory.
 If Helen then be wife to Sparta's king,
 As it is known she is, then moral laws
 Of nature and of nations speak aloud
 To have her back return'd.

In the beginning is Nature, who, traditionally as *vicaria Dei*,²⁹ gives both natural and positive laws to all the activities of the sublunary world. At once a model and legislator of rational order, she moderates “affection,” “benumbed wills,” and “ranging appetites.” Accordingly, honour, in this view, is reasonably expected to be in accord with the observation of Natural Law, and love, in the same way, out of accord with the Troilian irrational-courtly one, is to find its suitable expression in one of the “moral laws,” the institution of marriage. If Hector’s conception of love-and-honour is based on the working of Nature, Troilus’, as has been noted, being incompatible with reason and order and hence instrumental to the retention of Helen, is fundamentally grounded on the earthly Venus (so to speak) and adultery. In his conflation of the petrarchist and courtly visions Troilus sublimates Helen-Cressida into the “pearl,” in which his putative “wife” and the enemy’s wife are indiscriminately disposed of in the name of and in his aspirations toward honour. Hector’s rational code of chivalry, however, allows him to see through the contradiction and absurdity of Troilus’ conflation and keeps him from confounding in the name of honour the adulterous lady and “his lady,” who is most reasonably inferred to be no other than Andromache.³⁰

But out of the blue Hector makes a *volte-face* after having set forth one of the most familiar and established views on law and order, typical

29. Economou, op. cit., pp. 1, 26, 33, 36.

30. In this connection Marilyn French’s observation based on her theory of the gender principle is illuminating: “Inconstant women are central to male rhetoric, and the moral ‘worthlessness’ of Helen and Cressida is symbolic of the futility of war. But in fact there is a chaste constant woman in the play—Andromache—and she is held in little esteem” (p. 159); “His [Hector’s] treatment of his wife is slighting and disdainful. Yet it is this same wife whom he names as ‘a lady, wiser, fairer, truer, /Than ever Greek did couple in his arms’ (I. iii. 275–76) in his ‘cause,’ his challenge to the Greeks to single combat” (p. 160), *Shakespeare’s Division of Experience* (Summit Books, 1981).

“fall-out” system;

Hector's opinion
 this in way of truth; yet ne'ertheless,
 My spritely Is brethren, I propend to you
 In resolution to keep Helen still
 For 'tis cause thatt bath no mean dependence
 Upon our joint and several dignities. (II. ii. 189–94)

The way of truth, traditionally sanctioned by divine reason, gives in to the cause of “dignities,” fundamentally irrational and most eloquently advocated by Troilus. Honour and reason that go along well together “in way of truth” split up to the advantage of honour, which in the process turns out to be contaminated and infected by Troilian irrationality. When Hector concedes to Troilus, who maintains that Helen “is a theme of honour and renown” (200), it is no exaggeration to say that all humanistic values are discarded at a stroke. Far from being a question of his personal inconsistency, Hector's volte-face can be taken as a symbolic gesture that marks a socio-political choice of one system against the other, i.e., the courtly against the humanist, and as such closely related to a considerable extent to the “Counter-Renaissance” movement.³¹ Furthermore, since the force of his argument entirely depends on the metaphoric logic of cosmic correspondence, his defeat in the debate may even point to the end of the whole traditional picture of *harmonia mundi*.³²

3.1. *Homosexuality and Adultery or the Unnatural*

Taboos in the male-female or sexual relationship provide for literature important themes, and there are several types of love, generally considered unnatural, which often recur with paramount importance: incest, adultery, homosexuality and virginal celibacy. A glance at Shakespeare's plays with these unnatural types in mind will reveal, however, a rather surprising modesty in dealing with incest, adultery, and homosexuality

31. Haydn, loc. cit. Cf. also Douglas Cole, “Myth and Anti-Myth: The Case of *Troilus and Cressida*,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 31 (1980): 76–84.

32. Heninger, op. cit.

on the one hand and the conspicuous frequency with which he employs the theme of virginal celibacy.³³ This theme always functions as an occasion for the female figure to accomplish the *rites de passage* and usually leads up to the happy marriage,³⁴ at whose conceptual base works the metaphoric logic of correspondence that supports the *discordia concors* of love and reason in the festive atmosphere. If the disproportionate configuration found in Shakespeare's treatment of unnatural types of love can be produced as a measure of his general predilection for “natural” love, it serves by the same token as a foil to set off specific characteristics of *Troilus*, which not only deals with adultery (Helen's and perhaps Cressida's) but also presents a homosexual pair (Achilles and Patroclus). Just as the adulterous relationship between Helen and Paris, justified by Troilus' conception of honour and socially underscored by Hector's volte-face, undermines the Trojan camp, even so the activities of the homosexual pair, most clearly presented in Ulysses' speech on degree, are an indication of the unnatural sickness and contagious disease of the Greek camp. To be sure, homosexuality does not enjoy literary treatment as much as adultery does,³⁵ but the reason is not far to seek. Not only is it too unromantic for the courtly tradition but also it is too outrageous for the establishment: it “departs from the natural passion and desire, planted into nature by God, according to which the male has a passionate desire for the female. Sodomy craves what is entirely contrary to nature. Whence comes this perversion? Without a doubt it comes from the devil.”³⁶ Nothing is considered more egregiously unnatural. It is hardly surprising that Ulysses' famous “degree speech,” remarkably orthodox and apparently authentic,

33. Garber, op. cit., pp. 127–37.

34. Ibid., p. 148: “For a dramatist of his time Shakespeare is unusually interested in the whole cycle of marital behavior, but perhaps particularly in the fruits of marriage.”

35. The whole vogue of “*amour courtois*” is essentially based on the fascination of adultery.

36. Martin Luther, in D. P. Verne, ed., *Sexual Love and Western Morality* (Harper and Row, 1972), pp. 142–43. Cf. also Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (abridged edition), (Penguin, 1979), p. 309: “The sixteenth century inherited from the medieval church a strong hostility to homosexuality, which over time, particularly because of the affair of the Templars and the Albigensian crusade, had become closely associated in official thinking with religious heresy.” The attitude of the medieval church is best expressed by Aquinas in his *On the Truth of the Catholic Church*: “That the emission of semen under conditions in which offspring cannot follow is illicit is quite clear. There is the text of Leviticus (18: 22–23): ‘thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind... and thou shalt not copulate with any beast,’” quoted in Verne, op. cit., pp. 123–24.

pales before his own representation of the mimicry practised by the homosexual pair and the actual depravity of chivalry exemplified by Achilles towards the end of the play. The consequences of the defense of adultery in the Trojan camp are in the last analysis none other than Cressida's betrayal and Hector's death.

The Unnatural in the Greek camp behind the mask of orthodoxy finally breaks out while, publicly sanctioned in the Trojan camp, it goes its inevitable way.

3.2. "Metaphor as Cosmic Correspondence" or the Natural

Enough has been said about Ulysses' speech on degree³⁷ and it would hardly be justifiable to revisit it were it not for significant implications it has for our purposes. In the speech Ulysses diagnoses the state of the Greek military stagnation as an illness, whose cause he argues is to be sought in their willful disregard of the mirror of nature and the divine message written in the cosmos. The commonwealth should be like a beehive (I. iii. 81–83) and its constitution is to be compared to the cosmic movements (85ff.), from which derive order, health, norm and moral. Essentially at one with Hector's discourse before his conversion, this world-view differs from the latter only in degree and in its close affiliation with the establishment it comes to be regarded as "the common currency of the intellectual marketplace."³⁸ As a common currency it naturally takes root in various traditions ranging from Neoplatonic (cf. our opening citation [3]) to Christian humanist.³⁹ Multivocal as it is, this world picture, however, can be distinguishable by the following denominators: (1) supplementarily of reason to nature, (2) belief in the redemption of nature, and (3) the language of "metaphor as cosmic cor-

37. A succinct account of scholarly achievements is found in Kenneth Palmer's Appendix IV in his edition of *Troilus and Cressida*, where he says, "it is a tissue of commonplaces... I think that on the whole Shakespeare took his ideas where he found them, irrespective of possible agreements in other doctrines with the writer from whom he drew."

38. Heninger, op. cit., p. 345.

39. For the Neoplatonic tradition, see Economou, op. cit., and for the Christian humanist tradition, see Haydn, op. cit., pp. 462–63 and Eric LaGuardia, *Nature Redeemed* (Mouton, 1966).

respondence." The fundamental tenet of this tradition is that corrupted nature, regarded as sickness, in the commonwealth or the individual can and must be redeemed by virtue of reason on the model of divine cosmos.

Although no mention is made of love in Ulysses's speech, it is not difficult to envisage the type of love amenable to this world-view, i.e., the matrimonial, which can be exemplified, for instance, in the medieval Neoplatonic tradition by Alan of Lille⁴⁰ and in the Renaissance humanism by Spenser.⁴¹ Shakespeare, of course, has his share in it,⁴² but in the present instance of *Troilus* it is ostensibly characterised by negativity: adultery instead of matrimony, as has been discussed, lies as an undertone of the war and homosexuality erodes "the unity and married calm of states." Both Hector's conversion and his atrocious death by the foul hand of Achilles the Sodomite are the different faces of the same coin, the Unnatural triumphant. In *Troilus and Cressida* the natural is turned upside down dismally and thoroughly.

4. Configuration of Systems

The Trojan camp falls under the domination of the courtly, irrational and unnatural ideology of Troilus in the same way as the Greek camp goes down its unnatural way out of the grasp of Ulysses' wisdom. If the Trojan camp strikes us as totalitarian and somewhat innovative it is

40. Cf. Economou, op. cit., pp. 53–103; Winthrop Wetherbee, *Platonism and Poetry in the Twelfth Century* (Princeton UP., 1972), pp. 187–219. I dealt with this tradition in reference to Hymen, the god of marriage, in my "On the Consummation of Troilus's Love: Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, III. 1247–1260," *Studies in Language and Culture* (Osaka U.), VIII (1982): 103–30.

41. Cf. LaGuardia, op. cit., pp. 82–125; Rose, op. cit., pp. 77–134; for Spenser's connection with Alan of Lille and Spenserian distancing of the matrimonial love in *The Faerie Queene*, see my "Looking Over *The Faerie Queene* or Spenser 'Dis-in-ludens,'" *The Annual Reports of the Faculty of Letters* (Tohoku U.), vol. 33 (1984): 1–54. To these Neoplatonic and humanist traditions is added the Protestant movement that argues for "holy matrimony," for which see Garber, op. cit., p. 126; Sarup Singh, *Family Relationships in Shakespeare and the Restoration Comedy of Manners* (Oxford UP. [Delhi], 1983.) p. 9; and seminal Stone, op. cit., p. 101. They all adduce William Perkins.

42. Cf. LaGuardia, op. cit., pp. 148–68.

because of the dramatic and drastic conversion made by Hector the traditionalist whereas if the Greek camp does not appear as a solid establishment despite Ulysses' impressive speech it is because of the existence of several outsiders who openly flout the powers that be and in so doing brings to the fore the rigidity and hollowness of the dominant ideology. By their subversive counter-activities the systematised nature of the orderly structure is foregrounded. Among others, Thersites cuts a conspicuous figure. As "a privileged man" (II. iii. 60) he can rail indiscriminately;

Agamemnon is a fool to offer to command Achilles,
Achilles is a fool to be commanded of Agamemnon,
Thersites is a fool to serve such a fool, and this Patroclus is a fool positive. (II. iii. 64–67)

But as a potential outsider he can see the best of the game and make a penetrating, if unwitting, critique of the whole situation;

All the argument is a whore and a cuckold. (74)

What allows him to see through the essential cause and principle (i.e., unnatural adultery), on which the war is being fought, is his noncommittal attitude which approximates to what Victor Turner calls, "liminal."⁴³ His behaviour, together with that of Achilles and Ajax, stands us in good stead seeing the Greek establishment not as "a coherent whole" but as a systematised structure crucially on the decline.

In Troy, as we have seen, the Troilian vision comes to dominate the entire scene. It is as if the "battle here within" subsumed the "war without the walls"; the private system of petrarchism succeeds in the conquest of the public land of courtly chivalry. But this socially expanded vision retains the same structure as "the private which is essentially made up of I-Thou (Lady) relationship, and in Troilus" case the "Thou" (or the Other) of this relationship is shown to be an imaginary construct of his subjective absolutism (see 1.1.2. above). The conception of love-and-honour depends entirely on what the subject ("I") deems is worthy of

43. Turner, *passim*.

the metaphor, "pearl," a supreme and almost unattainable goal. Eventually, however, Cressida-Pearl comes to be attained and, more than that, betrays Troilus and leaves his territory of absolute subjectivism behind. The consequences of her departure from his imaginary empire are clear and even logical; there arise in his horizon two distinct realities, one subjective and the other objective;

This is, and is not, Cressid. (V. ii. 145)

He is compelled to see the outside and to stand "without the walls." His successful systematisation of the ideology "within the walls" is confronted with disillusionment, which forces him to see the real nature and irrelevance of his own system. Petrarchist-courtly textualisation, if you like, loses relevance and is replaced by detexualisation. But, what sort of product is coming out of this detexualisation or what vision does Troilus come to envisage after his bitter disillusionment? Perhaps little can be said in positive terms. But this much can be said: having found his vision-system irrelevant, he is by no means allowed to stand within it. He may venture to stand outside ("exist") or attempt in vain to turn inside.⁴⁴ Whatever the choice he would make, it is certain that he locates himself in "liminality." That he finally breaks with Pandarus⁴⁵ seems to suggest that he finds himself in "the very creative darkness of liminality that lays hold of the basic forms of life."⁴⁶

44. Cole in art. cit. argues for the latter: "In honor as in love, Troilus finds himself at odds with reason and reality. Yet he chooses to stick by his chivalric sentiments, which operate as self-glorifying and self-deluding myths." (p. 82)

45. It does not matter in our context whether the break takes place at V. iii. 112 as the Folio of 1623 has it or at V. x. 32–34 as in the Quarto of 1609.

46. Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 51.