

Troilus and Cressida

Act III, sc. 3 (line 259 – intercut - Prose)

THERSITES

Ajax goes up and down the field, asking for himself.

ACHILLES

How so?

THERSITES

He must fight singly to-morrow with Hector, and is so prophetically proud of an heroical cudgelling that he raves in saying nothing.

ACHILLES

How can that be?

THERSITES

Why, he stalks up and down like a peacock,--a stride and a stand: ruminates like an hostess that hath no arithmetic but her brain to set down her reckoning: bites his lip with a politic regard, as who should say 'There were wit in this head, an 'twould out;' and so there is, but it lies as coldly in him as fire in a flint, which will not show without knocking. The man's undone forever; for if Hector break not his neck i' the combat, he'll break 't himself in vain-glory. He knows not me: I said 'Good morrow, Ajax;' and he replies 'Thanks, Agamemnon.' What think you of this man that takes me for the general? He's grown a very land-fish, language-less, a monster. A plague of opinion! a man may wear it on both sides, like a leather jerkin.