‘Rebuilding the Fabulated Bodies of the Hoard Warriors,’

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Submission to *postmedieval*

‘Gūðbyrne scān

heard hondlocen; hrinġīren scīr

song in searwum. Ƿā hīe tō sele furðum

in hyra gryreġeatwum gangan cwōmon.’

 (*Beowulf*, lines 322-324)

[‘Their coats of mail shone

hard, hand-formed; iron rings shining

resounded in their armor, when first into the hall,

in their terror-ornaments, they came advancing.’]

‘They moved like one creature, huge strange machine. Sunlight gleamed on their helmets and cheekguards and flashed off their spearpoints, blinding.’

(John Gardner, *Grendel*, p. 155)

What does it mean to cover oneself in armor of iron, gold and gems? What does it mean to become profoundly, dangerously resplendent? When Beowulf and his men arrive on the shores of Daneland, what does it mean that they are wearing ‘gryreġeatwum,’ that is, ‘horror-’ or ‘terror-ornaments’? How would the warriors who wore what became the Staffordshire Hoard have appeared not to *us*, but to their enemies on the field of battle? Are these resplendent creatures monstrous, that is, teratological, from the Greek *teras,* meaning fascination of terror and wonder? Or heroic? Or both—true ancient teratological gods who collapse all binaries to coalesce in their incandescent excess? This essay will explore the hoard wearing body of the warrior as an emergence of *fah*, embodiying the *ælf-sciéne* of posthuman teratological wonder, and of a coalescence of the visual with the incandescently otherworldy material. The Old English terms, further explicated below, describes affects of encounters with things both wondrous and terrifying, beautiful and destructive. In posthuman theory, the field of teratology has become increasingly crucial in exploring the less hermeneutic, futuristic, and more material form of cyborg or fabulated monster. *Teras*, the coalescence of fascination as horror and wonder, aversion and desire, resonates with *fah* and aligns posthuman teratology studies with those of the hoarders. For this reason, although it seems tenuous to describe the warriors as monsters due to their alignment with incandescent, *ælf-sciéne* beauty more than abjection, we formulate a kind of *fah teratology* which takes into account the horror and purposefulness of armor and weaponry as signifying imminent acts of violence. This should not be denied. Where monsters insinuate threat, warriors promise threat, and to deny this forgets the monstrous horror of the violence of the battlefield. Concepts such as hybridity—both of emergence and of affect—are common to both *fah* and teratology. The hoarders thus occupy an important place in tracing an alternate genealogy of posthuman bodies as gods and monsters who have always been—past cyborgs and future imaginings of a more decorative, textured, and horrifically seductive creature of science fiction.

This essay will explore the imperative for us to imagine the hoard not as a series of objects but as embodied apparatuses inextricable from those wearing them and from the encounter with these warriors through the utility and visual affectivity of the warriors in their hoard. As cyborg, monstrous, hybrid elicitators of *fah,* the warrior is both fighter and poseur, terrestrial in his impending battle and otherworldly in the godlike visage the excesses of the metals present, violent in his visual assault which comes to stand in for actual fighting capacity. In these ways the warrior fulfils criteria of cyborg, god, and monster, all of which make up the posthuman as embodied spectacle and affective icon. This essay will explore these ambiguous tenets and asks its reader to always keep in the imagination the material-actualised affectivity of encountering the hoarder as an *event*, a visual spectacle *as* encounter without distance or dialectic objectivity. The collapse of this binary is crucial in understanding the *fah* of the hoarder and the posthuman potentialities of our contemporary understanding of the hoard.

These bits and pieces of gold and garnet, these wrought, cut, polished, filed, and filigreed fragments, were once held and worn by *real people*. This basic fact gets lost in technical analyses and museum displays, and needs to be forcefully asserted. The objects are extricated from their lived relationship when studied *as objects*; however these were corporeal inflections belonging with as much as to the flesh, signifying wealth, certainly, and status, of course, but also an intimacy between flesh and creative synthetic aesthetics which sought to elaborate and extend the limits of the natural finitude of the borders of the flesh. Their value as objects of power lies not (or not merely) in their symbolic power nor their role as displays of power located elsewhere (in landholdings or acts of violence), but in their invocations of actual power, hammered into their designs and conferred to those who wore these ‘terror-ornaments’ and wielded them in battles. The objects—along with many others—cannot be limited to modern understandings of signifying fetishes of capital or of objects which augment the human form via abstractions of ‘status,’ ‘power,’ or even discouraging symbols designed to frighten. As they are both worn and wielded, carried and utilised *as* the subject of the warrior, theirs creates an intimacy with the body more akin to fleshly extension and thus subject modification, creating an emergent new warrior when the body of the warrior is adorned.

Imagining these objects as refigurations of the body should shift our focus from their symbolic function to their form as mobile corporeal expression. Symbolic function defers the body to its purpose and limits its capacities to the realm of what is perceived as possible and appropriate. Consideration of the bodies as corporeal expressions takes each moment of each fleshly adorned incarnation as potential power to affect, without limiting what it can do and especially do *to us* in catalysing new ways of thinking bodies as premodern posthuman. This shift is crucial in apprehending the new organisation of flesh these fragments performed. They both fragmented the forms of the bodies who melded with them and created the materiality of expression itself as a multi-fragmental series of participations of proximity between flesh and metal, design and skin, zones of shared corresponding intensities, such that the items of the hoard are not so much worn as the warrior is its own unique kind of fabulated creature unique to the event of his power *as* this fabulation. This warrior-creature is less a powerful human and more a creature of otherwordly genesis, a plane of power itself with no referent, but dazzling to encounter.

Power refers to the capacity to affect rather than an oppressive force or brute capacity. Throughout this essay, power continues to emphasise the varied ways the armoured warriors distributed their capacity to affect through their material and visual incarnations, not through their physical prowess. Traditional comprehensions of genealogy based on repetition of form are denied us here. Recognition is prevented as the spectacle resonates with nothing familiar to us, not human, not machine, not even a god, so the warrior is entirely otherworldy, because we have no referent for the creature, yet are drawn undeniably to the spectacle as it materially affects us. This dazzle—the sunlight that flashes off of the arms and armor of Beowulf and his troop and blinds Grendel, in Gardner’s retelling—is central to the potency of the new warrior fabulation (Figure 1). The resultant hybrid is not a monster—at least not a known one—and not a god (though many, including the god of Moses, blaze with light and are blinding); the fusion of metal and man does not recreate a *known* thing but instead creates a new being. That it also creates relations with other planes of intensity—the shine of the sun, the myopia caused by the glare off the warrior, the sound of the metallic plates colliding—furthers the extensivity of this creature into a point of coalescence within a constellation between the heavens and earth, speech of warrior and guttural brute cries, and the timbre of precious metal. The warrior’s relationship with natural and other elements due to the affects produced by the armored form makes him more than just an object in space but a force in an otherworldly relation with surrounding elements. His relationship with the world has changed.

The Anglo-Saxon warrior—like other warriors from other eras—was a construction, built out of the metalwork casings around parts of his body, the steel and iron, the gold and garnet grafted onto him to produce a being far greater than the ordinary man that was merely one of its component parts. Following recent work on cyborgs—modern and medieval—we want to think about how these mythic, though not mythical, warriors were assembled. As Rodger Wilkie writes regarding medieval literary warriors like Cethern Mac Fintain and Beowulf, ‘What if the epic hero were a cyborg? What if his armaments were not merely things that he used (tools), but rather components in a biological-technological hybrid identity?’ Through an acknowledgement of the integration of technology and flesh, we can gain ‘a revelation of the hero as a figure occupying the border between the human and the non-human—his nature as not just born but made, as not just man but also machine and therefore tool’ (Wilkie).

While it might be tempting to dismiss (or celebrate) these shining objects as so much medieval bling, this would be to stress their visual impacts on human viewers. As Krista Thompson writes:

Even as bling denotes an investment in the light of visibility, the concept may also be seen to pinpoint the limits of the visible world: the instant that reflected light bounces off a shiny object, it denies and obliterates vision (Thompson, 483).

The shine of gold—on the Cash Money Millionaires’s Baby Gansta, who coined the term in 1998 (Thompson, 483), or *The Battle of Maldon’s* Byrhtnoð, whose name literally translates as ‘Bright Boldness’—pushes back against the very vision that might be taken as its ostensible target. Like much early medieval art, indeed, the objects of the Hoard were designed to serve more important functions than as objects of human spectatorship, and their basic properties, like the rock crystal on which Karen Overbey meditates, deny at least some of our scopic pleasure (Overbey, 9). Byrhtnoð wields a sword that is ‘bruneccg’ [lustrous-edged] and ‘fealohilte’ [gold-hilted] (lines 163 and 166), but its purpose—at which it fails, like so many swords in Anglo-Saxon poetry—is to break armor and take life:

Ða he oþerne ofstlice sceat,

þæt seo byrne tobærst; he wæs on breostum wund

þurh ða hringlocan, him æt heortan stod

ætterne ord (*Maldon*, lines 143-146).

[Then he another quickly shot

so that the byrnie burst apart; he was wounded in the breast

through the coat of mail; at his heart stood

a poisonous spear.]

That the *Maldon* poet dwells on the gleaming of Byrhtnoð’s sword, rather than on its sharpness or firmness, suggests that its visual qualities are integral, even essential, to its function. Orienting the bling context within capital regimes where the visual often correlates with signified value, not through qualitative analysis but the quantifiability of an index of power—the label, the brand, the name—the hoard objects as museum pieces will inevitably be indexed via the materials with which they are made and the contemporary context of those materials. Guy Halsall, for example, has calculated that the objects were of immense value, comprising enough gold, in raw weight, to have bought about 80 horses; of course the workmanship, as well as the gems, silver, and millefiori glass, invested them with yet more material value (Halsall). In criticism of such compulsions to index the world according to the human (rather than understanding the human within the world), Michel Serres calls this hominiscent tendency a blinding reversal of human and world: ‘In other words, the concrete world behaves as if we have made it; similarly the money we mint and the projects we undertake act towards us as if we have not produced them’ (Serres 2014: 29). Focus on the ‘blingness’ of the armor and sword privileges the making of the world by the human as a subject extricated from that world and is a decidedly post-industrial mode of understanding, where object and subject are extricated and the relationships of objects to humans are as additions (what we ‘have’) rather than extensions (what we are becoming with them). While the blingness of the hoard was created by the warrior, the medieval understanding of what status that gave both the resplendent warrior and the objects in relation with him should not be conflated with our modern focus on the visual and the curated as the indices of signification. These objects when worn recreated the world, if we imagine them in *use* and as *part* of the warrior body, where body and world are co-emergent; this perspective supplants the simplified belief that the medieval human occupied and grappled with the world, or the post-industrial human has produced the world through endless signifiers of capital. By being us within the world, yet an us we find utterly unrecognizable and otherworldly, the warriors demanded we reframe our referencing of the world, and thus the world becomes new. ‘The visual,’ ‘value,’ and even ‘object’ are three terms that are rethought when configuring their relationship as part of—rather than belonging to—the warrior.

However, to reduce the encounter with the hoard warrior to a visual event alone reduces his power to an expectation yet to express, or to a fetish without force. The warrior is voluminous through multi-sensorial affect. Because the hoard is indivisible from skin, and the objects create new trajectories of experience of an imminently experienced other, those who perceive a hoard warrior could not reduce him to a representation because there is no representation *of* anything; this is an unthought creature without deferral to a base-level adorned or armored man. Texture, intensity of light, and even the sound of the hoard warrior play roles in the experience of the event of the warrior. (When displayed at the National Geographic Museum in Washington D.C., the objects of the Hoard were introduced by ‘large and rather loud projected images of Anglo-Saxon warriors at battle, as portrayed by modern reenactors,’ [Tilghman].) All senses engage. Serres states that ‘adornment is so well adapted to [the body’s] nature that our breath is taken away, just as when we gaze at the world; but cosmetics become an aesthetic of sensations … [adornment] accentuates with colour the place to be kissed, crowning the zones of words and tastes, underlining hearing with an earring, traces bridges and mountains of the senses’ (Serres, 34). Most beautifully, Serres states, ‘You who look at everything through your perpetually open eyes, is your lucidity never bathed in tears?’ (46). We presume that sight is illumination. Illumination is associated with wonder and with dissipative trajectories of understanding that proliferate thought and astonishment. Post-Enlightenment thought reduces illumination to a sadly forensic nakedness where to see is to entirely and exhaustively excavate and ultimately know, so looking and seeing are simply tools for knowledge and its associated utensil power. Serres emphasises that the joy in the sense of sight not toward knowledge but as a corporeal phenomenon of wonder *is* the experience, which affects the entire self, of bearing witness to something which produces tears of experience. Lucidity, for Serres, is a sense where encounters with visual wonder create tears that show that what one sees can never reveal ‘truth,’ and that there ends the function of sight. Quite the opposite—seeing something creates a new kind of myopia that shows we cannot see exhaustively, and the more wondrous, imaginative and affective something is, the more we cannot exhaustively see and thus know it. Our relationship is not seeing and therefore knowing the object, but seeing the object and its wonder and therefore un-knowing ourselves. This is a crucial function of the monster, an encounter rather than a pre-existing being that destabilizes our understandings of ourselves and our humanity (Mittman, 7-8); it is also the crucial function of the warrior, a being that began as human but, hybridized through the engrafting of the hoard objects, becomes monstrous. In this process, the warriors become known by the enemy in a manner that forces the enemy to unknow themselves and their own powers. The warriors’ bling neither obliterates and blinds vision as a power—not quite—nor invites slow, careful analysis via the seduction of detail, as similar styles might in other contexts. The energetic imagery of Insular and Anglo-Saxon manuscripts are filled with much the same visual vocabulary as the objects of the Hoard (Figures 2 and 3). Like the Hoard objects, the St. Gallen Gospels, for example—along with the famous imagery of the Book of Durrow, the Book of Kells, the Lindisfarne Gospels, and others—is replete with linear and zoomorphic interlace, spiral whorls, patterned feathers, step-designs and abstracted figures. Both have tangles of dragons, hook-beaked raptors, geometric designs, and a careful attention to that special brand of Insular beauty, *fah*, a term used for swords and serpents, ‘meaning hostile or guilty but also beautiful or decorated in variegated colouring … both beautiful and deadly’ (Karkov, 75-76). But the process of their usage, the interactions with their intended audiences, enlivens them in fundamentally different ways. The manuscripts—St. Gallen, Durrow, Kells, Lindisfarne, and the rest—were conceived, created, and used by monastics, and invite the slow, ruminative contemplation described by Jean Leclerq as a route to ‘spiritual nutrition’:

[T]he vocabulary is borrowed from eating, from digestion, and from the particular form of digestion belonging to ruminants … To meditate is to attach oneself closely to the sentence being recited and weigh all its words in order to sound the depths of their full meaning. It means assimilating the content of a text by means of a kind of mastication which releases its full flavour (Leclerq, 73).

Seeing as rumination loosens the conceptual bonds between sight and knowledge or sight and revelation. It extends time. To claim to know closes off openness to thought as creative imagining, and this is resisted by breaking the perceived relationship of visibility to revelation of knowledge. The formal properties of designs might be similar book to brooch, but the circumstances of their encounters are fundamentally different. While the glittering, laboriously wrought objects from the Hoard might well have incited close viewing, when they were activated, ignited by their incorporation into the posthuman cyborg that was the warrior, this vivification would prevent such *ruminatio*. Before the battle, yes; after the battle, for the victors, yes, though the hasty rending of many of the Hoard’s objects militates against an image of a battle’s winners gazing in rapt wonder at each fine work (Figure 4). In traditional posthuman style, the laborious pleasures of ruminations upon the glittering beauty of the hoard are simultaneous with the hyper-velocity of the immanent event we can only imagine as the battle clash. As objects of contemplation, the hoard items are apprehended within a rupturous violent event, and at enchanting leisure. Time is not conditional for their use; time creates each event of encountering the hoard as a specific experience.

The blood-red garnets favoured in the Hoard—as in Anglo-Saxon and other early medieval metalwork, more broadly—recall the three invocations of things described in *Beowulf* as ‘blode fah,’ ‘stained’ or ‘decorated with blood’: Hrothgar’s hall, Grendel’s mere, and the body of a fallen warrior (*Beowulf,* lines 934, 1593, 2974). Is this what it means to be ‘Bright Boldness,’ to wear ‘terror ornaments’? The objects catalyse wonder, which is the myopia of tears—of beauty and fear, a monstrous fascination, a compelling invigoration and reminder of every sense. As Timothy McCall writes about the ‘glamour, resplendence, luster, and splendour’ of ‘[l]ight radiating from the … clothing, jewels, and armor of flesh-and blood princes’ of later periods, these ‘ illustrious bodies were charismatic, drawing gazes and desire toward them’ (McCall, 445). The cheek pieces are a caress (Figure 5); the zoomorphic elements are interkingdom connections with unthinkable textures and hyper-heightened senses; the written inscriptions are tattoos of speech and sound—but each can only be glimpsed at their moment of use.

Together, these objects worked to construct a posthuman warrior, to generate a medieval ‘cyborg state’ in which ‘the body, interfaced with state-of-the-art weapons technology, becomes more effective in its given task than it could otherwise be, while the technology itself limits and more importantly defines the function and thus the social role of the hero’s body’ (Wilke). This process of fabulation constructs the hero out of the man, and in so doing, as Henri Bergson characterises the process, ‘brings added strength to the individual’ (Bergson, 120).

We only glance, here, and yet our glance is rebuffed by the shine. The single inscription in the Hoard calls out: ‘Rise up, Lord, may your enemies be dispersed and those who hate you flee *from your face*.’ (Figure 6) The original inscription reads:

[S]URGE:DNE:DISEPENTURINIMICITUIE/T

[F]UGENT QUIODERUNTTEAFACIETUA

This would likely be expanded and standardized to ‘[s]urge domine disepentur inimici tui et [f]ugent qui oderunt te a facie tua,’ and is clearly based on the Vulgate’s Numbers 10:35, though Psalms 67:2 is similar (Okasha, 2011, and Okasha 2012, 189). The inscription is an invocation, an incantation, on a gold fragment that was originally pinned to something (Okasha, 2012, 187). Leslie Webster calls it, ‘a fierce biblical text invoking the scattering of God’s enemies … framed within the body of an equally fierce creature with a triple-forked tongue … both designed to ward off evil’ (Webster, 125). They do so through the same mechanism as bling, by pushing back against the vision of the viewer, of the competitor, of the enemy. They empower the viewer by denying a gaze *at his face*. Moses descends from Mount Sinai, with his face disfigured through direct contact with God, horned—or perhaps *shining* with rays—and therefore needing the *masweh*, the veil before his face to protect his followers from ‘the gruesome sight’ he had become (Eerdmans, 20-2; Propp, 384). So too, the shining prosthetics of the hoard press against vision and thereby and convey power.

The strip bears on its back ‘a nearly identical version of the same text, although less carefully executed, and with some extra letters at the end,’ and also surrounded by the fork-tongued serpent (Okasha, 2012, 190). Elisabeth Okasha logically suggests that this secondary text, ‘which would have been hidden when the strip was fastened on … was done as a practice attempt, in the knowledge that it would not be visible once the object was assembled’ (190). However, this still assumes that the foremost function of the texts was to be read by a human being. However, Okasha assumes that the goldsmith was likely illiterate (Okasha, 2011), and, regardless of whether we are convinced by this assertion, the majority of the warriors were certainly not literate, and not in Latin.

Comparable strips bearing Latin liturgical texts from a helmet from York were fasted in the shape of the cross. As Okasha argues, ‘The function of these strips’ which also bear a repeated inscription on their backs, ‘was no doubt to afford added protection, both material and divine, to the wearer of the helmet’ (Okasha, 2012, 192). As Don Skemer notes, ‘[q]uotations or readings from scripture were among the standard elements in textual amulets from antiquity until the end of the Middle Ages. Brief quotations embodying the word of God and the promise of divine protection could func-tion as life-saving textual shields and powerful weapons against demons (Skemer, 84). Anglo-Saxon examples provide ‘particularly valuable evidence of the place (albeit limited) of textual amulets in a predominantly oral culture,’ including ‘the Venerable Bede’s reference to a textual amulet based on loosing spells in the semi-pagan world of the Anglo-Saxons (Skemer, 77). This

The texts did not have to be legible to their bearers to function; indeed, neither the material nor the divine protection afforded by these inscribed strips of metal rely on the inscriptions being legible by human readers. The power contained in an inscription of the Word of God is not in its reading, but in its original inscribing, and its basic existence. If this strip were part of a cross-shape, this would have furthered its protective power, as the cross was used for all sorts of protections against monsters, devils, disease, and on (Metcalfe, 25 and Warren, 145). Indeed, a common term for spoken ‘Anglo-Saxon Christian hymns or prayers [was ] *loricae* (from the Latin word for a leather cuirass or metal breastplate)’ because these ‘offered verbal body armor to protect people and their immortal souls’ (Skemer, 42). The texts and images of the Hoard objects—including the unseen content of the gold strip—were planes of power rather than symbols or messages for human reflection.

 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari state of the facial machine, ‘it is necessary to produce successive divergence types of deviance for everything that eludes biunivocal relationships, and to establish binary relations between what is accepted on first choice and what is only tolerated on second’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 177). The human face is not a natural phenomenon. It is a most intricate signifying machine. Encounters with the face operate to place the subject within recognisable categories of race, gender, age, class or whichever binary options are most important for each geographical and temporal state. Upon categorising the face via these binary options, the face is then univocalised—made into one expression that becomes the subject—and the status of that subject is affirmed through position in the social order or hierarchy. The face is inhuman insofar as it entirely alienates the human from being a being, but makes it instead a subject, subject to signifying systems and their associated values. This system functions in relation not simply to the posthuman—the human who resists humanization through the facial signifying machine—but also to what Julia Kristeva has referred to as ‘the in-between, the ambiguous, the composite’ (Kristeva, 4). This is her ‘abject,’ and our ‘monstrous.’ The hoard warrior fulfils ‘not the individuality of the face … but the efficacy of the ciphering it makes possible’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 175). To say the face is natural denies each face its specificity both as belonging entirely to a unique body and belonging to an individual who does not choose the significations bestowed upon a face (though of course we do not choose how our subjectivity is read via the face with which we are born.) However when the face is adorned with a mask it can both confound and connect the face with the entire body as a newly organised corporeal expression. The hoard warriors were thus adorned and thereby recomposed. Their masks survive in fragments, such as the gold cheek piece (See Figure 5), covered in zoomorphic interlace and geometric patterning. This is a hefty piece of metalwork, but other more fragile fragments survive that covered hoarders’ faces. On small piece of silver foil not only was perhaps part of the mask of a warrior, but itself is stamped with images of other warriors (Figure 7). Like the warrior whose face was in part obscured by this very object, the warriors on the foil fragment are faceless. Their heads are gone, but, like the hoard, their arms and armor survive. We see round shields, swords or scabbards, spear shafts, and variously patterned coats of mail. The three figures stand in formation, with their shields in a straight line; their abstracted arms look like the connecting rod on a locomotive, driving this faceless assemblage of men and materials forward into battle. All of the elements within the image make new possibilities, and their presence on the mask of the warrior make for yet more potentialities.

What the encounter with the incandescing warrior makes possible opens out the planes of the facialised body, delivered from function and enclosure. Identity is neither visible nor invisible; the hoard creates from signified human flesh forms animal, human, and metal—’each free faciality trait forms a rhizome with a freed trait of landscapeity, picturality or musicality’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 190). The quality of the hoard both includes animal, patterning and sensorial motifs, and makes the warrior the landscape itself of that inclusion. His body is a mark and is marked as a territory of making possible. This opening to the possible is indispensible for the warrior seeking to strike the enemy. The hoard warrior is a site, within a site, archaeologically and historically, and in a fabulated cultural memory when we unearth the hoard. The hoard warrior’s status in history is similarly real without being temporally fixed, immanent and emergent. Like the hybrid monster fabulations contained on many of its objects, the hoard shows a fabulated time, perhaps a ‘demonics’ of time itself, in its ambiguity, but in shining—now and within our grasp—a celestial time also. For Deleuze and Guattari, ‘demonology’ describes unknown nature, or being as a practice of expression and affect—what one does to other elements, what one becomes in unnatural participations with unlike entities (240). History suggests time is a series of places that can be unearthed and empirically known, chronologically and causally. But the hoard in its ignition of imagined use and affect—both of its time and for today—relies on the unnatural participation of metal, flesh, and nature, just as its affects rely on protective function, elicitation of wonder, and embodiments of otherworldliness. This makes it more than a collection of items from a particular time, signifying a clear picture of that time. Its use was fabulation, so it makes a fabulation of the time it conjures for the historian.

 The Old English *fah*, discussed above, is a monstrously seductive, variegated beauty that is also, in *The Dream of the Rood,* the stain of sin: ‘ond ic synnum fāh’ (Swanton, line 13). No finitude exists in the encounter with the armoured hoarder, no oscillation between two options of human-animal, human-cyborg/metallic form, shining beauty/stained sin. The warrior is all at once, unlike the *Dream’s* cross, which wavers before the Dreamer, unfolding in time, at one moment covered in blood and the next shining with gold (lines 7, 16, 18, and 77) and gems (7 and 16)—easily pictured as the gold and the blood-red garnets of the hoard:

hwīlum hit wæs mid wætan bestēmed,

beswyled mid swātes gange, hwīlum mid since gegyrwed (Swanton, lines 22-23)

 [Sometimes it was with wetness made damp,

 Stained with the flowing of blood; sometimes with treasure adorned.]

 The hoard warrior, in contrast, is all at once, and more emphatically in excess of a grammar of perception and subjectivisation. Dominik Perler claims that in medieval thought ‘angels provide the model for pure cognition without any material constraint’ (148). The dressed warrior liberates through materiality because his relationship is not *with* his objects—he *is* his objects, and they he, in his becoming-warrior. Sensorial cognition—the experience of the affect of the warrior—is the encounter without comprehension, like the demon, the monster, the threshold of perception and sensation. Becoming cognisant of the warrior upon and as landscape reflects the angel as cognition, without need for a deferred meaning. Shine, of the rays that are Moses’ horns, of the gold and gems of the hoard, of Byrhtnoð and of Baby Ganta’s bling, is all and always the Anglo-Saxon *ælf-sciéne*—a beauty that is alluring but fey, powerful and dangerous (Bosworth). The shining elf, the faceless angel, the warrior devoid of identifying face—all are clothed in the ambiguities which, catalysing thought in the witness, show only the recognition of constraints.

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