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"Macbeth among the Animals: Or, How the Rhinoceros Lost Its Horn"*

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ABSTRACT

Macbeth's invocation of three exotic beasts in Act 3, Scene 4 infuses the play's final reckoning at Dunsinane with ecological significance beyond the vengeful marching of trees. Unlike the "Hyrcan tiger" and the "rugged Russian bear," the "armed rhinoceros" falls from the play's verbal patterning, yet becomes a potent sign of how power was performed in this period, and the paranoia that haunted its pursuit. Beginning with the ill-fated rhinoceros that inspired Albrecht Dürer's iconic 1515 *Rhinoceros* woodcut, this article traces how rhinos were mobilised in the period as instruments of intellectual rivalry, exploitation and display. Such contexts illuminate Macbeth's injudicious reference to an "armed rhinoceros" in the banquet scene. From coats of arms to rhino-horn cups, early modern material culture brims with rhinos, whose frequent confusion with unicorns further reframes the play's engagement with Anglo-Scottish sovereignty, mythmaking and power.

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Scholars have long shown interest in the natural and unnatural forces at work in the Scottish play, from the strange behaviour of birds and horses to broader disturbances in the natural order signalling the hero's ambition and decline.[1] Yet there remains a notable neglect of one particular, and somewhat peculiar, beast in *Macbeth*: the "armed rhinoceros" conjured by Macbeth in the banquet scene (Act 3, Scene 4) and never mentioned again. Drawn from nature's furthest climes and held aloft by Macbeth as a powerful heraldic charge against his spectral nemesis, the ghost of Banquo, the rhinoceros forms the centrepiece of a symbolic triptych of exotic beasts:[2]

> What man dare, I dare.
> Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
> The armed rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger,
> Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
> Shall never tremble (3.4.97–101)

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[1]See States, "Horses in *Macbeth*," 52–66; Daly, "Of *Macbeth*, Martlets and other 'Fowles of Heauen'," 24; Mentz, "Shakespeare's Beach House, or The Green and the Blue in *Macbeth*," 84–93.

[2]Quotations from *Macbeth* are taken from the Arden.

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Sourced from what Elisa Oh describes as the play's "choreography of 'strange' foreign travel",[3] the tiger and the bear of Act 3, Scene 4 make their presence known elsewhere within the play. Initially figured in Act 1, Scene 3 as a merchant vessel bound for Aleppo, the "tiger" is later drawn into the play's economy of witchcraft, with its entrails used to complete the Witches' brew in Act 4, Scene 1.[4] Macbeth's conjuring of the "rugged Russian bear" in Act 3, Scene 4 also achieves a chilling, retributive circularity by the play's close, with the hero captured and bound like his ursine insignia: "They have tied me to a stake; I cannot fly, / But bear-like I must fight the course" (5.7.1–2).[5] Yet, no sooner is the rhino summoned than it fades, its presence scarcely visible within the verbal vasture of the play and the wider Shakespeare canon.

Shakespeare seems to have conjured the rhino from a place far beyond his usual imaginative range, leaving no trace of the rhinoceros in any of his previous or later works. Early modern literature registers this elusiveness at the level of spelling itself, with the word "rhinoceros" ensnared in an etymologycal conundrum stemming from the Greek word *monokerōs* (Latin: *monoceros*): a term that caused centuries-long debate as to whether the word denoted the single-horned rhino of India, the unicorn (also believed to originate in Asia), or another horned beast altogether.[6] Locating Shakespeare's rhinoceros is, therefore, a challenging pursuit. But, in a play where even the most innocuous words and phrases reverberate with an uncanny resonance, the rhino also acquires the "eerie, *secondary* force" of words and symbols, which George Walton Williams observed long ago to function "independently of the speaker's presumed intention".[7] The rhino's force, I argue, is felt at other, more subtle, moments in *Macbeth*, particularly within the play's penultimate scenes of arming and disarming, culminating in a grim ecological reckoning for the hero in his final hour.

As well as performing at the level of etymology and language, rhinoceroses performed in several other key roles in this period, appearing in the curiosity cabinets, menageries, heraldic insignia, and dining rituals of elite political figures such as the Habsburg princes and Medici popes, as well as appearing in the spectacles and pageants of the early modern English stage. As this article shows, rhinos were enmeshed in a culture of intellectual one-upmanship, exploitation, and display; qualities that enable a more careful reflection on Macbeth's menagerial musings in Act 3, Scene 4. With reference to Erica Fudge's concept of the "absent-presence" of animals in the early modern period, this article traces how the rhinoceros was remembered—and, indeed, mis-remembered—in *Macbeth* and the early modern imagination. It begins with the story of the well-known but ill-fated rhinoceros, nicknamed Ganda, that inspired Albrecht Dürer's iconic engraving of 1515, entitled *Rhinoceros*. As discussed in more detail below, rhinoceroses were extensively reproduced during this period, appearing in Medici coats of arms, while rhinoceros

[3]Oh, "Shakespeare, Race, and Movement," 306.

[4]Macbeth's reference to the "Hyrcan tiger" also alludes to Book 4 of Virgil's *Aeneid*, in which Dido rebukes Aeneas for being nursed by the *Hyrcanae tigres* (4.367). A familiar emblem of tyranny and ambition, the "tiger" had become so common in early modern plays "that it needed to be repurposed, to stop it resembling for readers part of a dusty parade of creaking figures"; Knight, "Pyrrhus and the Tiger," 1064.

[5]In addition to Fudge's influential *Perceiving Animals: Humans and Beasts in Early Modern English Culture*, see Höfele, *Stage, Stake, and Scaffold*.

[6]In the translation of the Hebrew bible, the Greek term "monosaur"[**AQ2**] substituted the word "re'em," which referred to a powerful mammal characterised by a dangerous appendage on its brow. See Sozzi, "Armonia e disarmonia: il posto dell'uomo nella natura," 7–19.

[7]Williams, "'Time for such a Word': Verbal Echoing in *Macbeth*," 240, original italics.

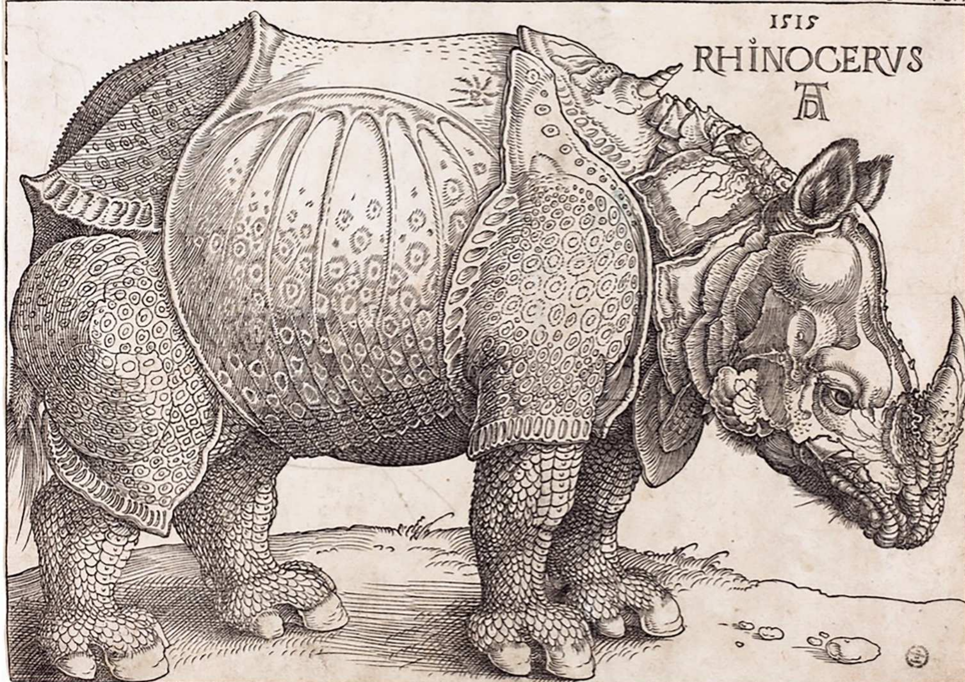

Figure 1. Albrecht Dürer, woodcut, 1515 (Image in the public domain).

horns circulated widely due to their supposed prophylactic powers. The fleeting reference to the rhinoceros in Act 3, Scene 4 occurs at a pivotal moment: the banquet where Macbeth struggles to assert his dominance as host and his unravelling is fully underway. Macbeth's panicked appeal to rare and endangered species in this scene highlights the abuses inherent in the performance of power and the paranoia that often haunts those who wield it. From coats of arms to rhino horn cups, I conclude with reference to the common, potentially fatal, errors inherent in confusing rhinos with unicorns, enabling reflection on the play's concerns with Anglo-Scots heraldry and power, and ending with a potential literary analogue between the murder of king Duncan and the medieval "wooing" of the unicorn.

"NON BUELVO SIN VENCER": Ganda's Story

Prepared in 1515 by the engraver and designer of royal armour Albrecht Dürer, the celebrated *Rhinoceros* captures the likeness of a real Indian rhino named Ganda, derived from *gainda*, the Hindi word for the animal (Figure 1). Ganda had been presented by Sultan Muzaffar Shah II of Gujarat to King Manuel I of Portugal, and arrived in Lisbon in 1515, marking one of the most extraordinary diplomatic gifts of the age.[8]

[8]See Clarke, *The Rhinoceros from Dürer to Stubbs, 1515–1799*, 20. Important studies informing my research for this article include: Gowers, "The Classical Rhinoceros," 61–71; Bedini, "The Papal Pachyderms," 75–90; Esteban, "Dürer's Rhinoceros" 137–65; Sen, "Locating the Rhinoceros and the Indian," 32–49; Rookmaaker, Monson, and Billia, "Early

Numerous reprintings of the image (amongst the most notable being Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia* (1548), Conrad Gessner's *Historiae Animalium* (1551–1558), *Aristotelis Meteorologicarum libri IV* (1555), Paolo Giovio's *Dialogo dell'imprese militari et amorose* (1559), and Ambroise Paré's *Des monstres et prodiges* (1573)) meant that, by the time of Shakespeare's play, the image of the rhinoceros had achieved a kind of visual orthodoxy within early modern Europe.[9] Versions of Dürer's rhino, easily transferable because of its stark isolation against the white background upon which it originally appeared,[10] were also hand-copied into European Books of Hours and bestiaries, incorporated into tapestries of woodland creatures, Delftware tiles, engravings of biblical subjects, and bronze statues, and also took the form of a concealed limestone carving on the Torre de Belém in Lisbon, where it gazes quietly out to sea.[11] As it passed through various media, Ganda's image underwent several makeovers, most notably through the addition of iron fetters, ropes, a neck collar, and chains, as shown in Hans Burgkmair the Elder's *Rhinoceros* (1515). A lesser-known example of Dürer's rhino's print legacy is Petrus Plancius' double hemisphere map of 1594, where an allegorical female figure representing Asia rides a notably docile rendering of the creature (Figure 2).

Plancius' image was later adapted for Jan Huygen van Linschoten's *Itinerario: Voyage ofte Schipvaert naer Oost ofte Portugaels Indien* (Amsterdam, 1596), a landmark of travel literature that exposed "nautical and economic information about the Indian Ocean until then carefully guarded by the Portuguese".[12] Here, the rhino is substituted with a camel, and a smaller version of Dürer's renowned rhinoceros moved to the backdrop where a unicorn had previously stood with its horn plunged into a lagoon.

While Linschoten's world map returns Dürer's rhinoceros to the Indian wilds, the fate of the real animal that inspired Dürer's woodcut was far less fortunate. When King Manuel I of Portugal tired of the creature, he offered it as a gift to the newly crowned Pope Leo X, Giovanni di Lorenzo de' Medici. Manuel ordered that Ganda be draped with rose garlands and carnations for its admission into the pope's menagerie at Belvedere, thereby contributing to the spectacle and prestige through which the Catholic Church asserted its expanding empire of knowledge. Manuel had already presented the pope with several other exotic animals from his own menagerie at Paço da Riberia in return for papal concessions and as a reminder (to the Medicis) of his own imperial and commercial might.[13] One of these was an exceptionally rare white elephant, shipped from Lisbon to Rome along with forty-two other "animal ambassadors", including a horse from Persia, numerous exotic birds, and a cheetah.[14] Taking the same journey

Depictions of the First Lisbon Rhinoceros in the 16th Century," 168–79. I am also indebted to the important work carried out by the Rhino Resource Center (http://www.rhinoresourcecenter.com/) which has allowed me to locate a number of the primary sources discussed in this piece.

[9]See Leitch, "Dürer's Rhinoceros Underway: The Epistemology of the Copy in the Early Modern Print."

[10]Leitch, "Dürer's Rhinoceros Underway," 243.

[11]Other notable examples of the rhinoceros in circulation include Peter van Elst's "Animals in a Wood, Including an Elephant, Rhinoceros, Monkeys, Camels and a Lobster" (1549); Willem Goeree's depiction of "Noah's Ark" (1689); see Monson, "The Source for the *Rhinoceros*," 50–3; Belles, "The Other Rhinoceroses that Dürer Did not Know," 15.

[12]Saldanha, "The Itineraries of Geography: Jan Huygen van Linschoten's *Itinerario* and Dutch Expeditions to the Indian Ocean, 1594–1602," 149.

[13]Sen, "Locating the Rhinoceros and the Indian," 39.

[14]Belozerkaya, "Menageries as Princely Necessities and Mirrors of Their Times," 63; see also Subrahmanyam, *The Career and Legend of Vasco Da Gama*, 269.

Figure 2. Petrus Plancius, *Orbis Terrarum Typus de Integro Multis in Locis Emendatus*, 1594 (Image in the public domain).

to Rome via Marseilles, the ship transporting Ganda was struck by a violent storm and its precious cargo washed up on the shores of Genoa in 1516. Determined that the now-deceased beast would still make it into the papal collection, the ship's sailors dried the rhino's carcass on the beach and presented it to Pope Leo X stuffed full of straw ("chea de palha"); a gift which he received with much astonishment and sadness ("muito espanto, & tristeza").[15]

While the remains of other animal acquisitions have been unearthed at the Vatican, no trace of Ganda's taxidermied remains have been found.[16] Ganda's legacy was nonetheless secured, both in the many iterations of Dürer's woodcut image, and in the material culture of the Medici dynasty, which included Pope Leo X. The Medicis had long exploited the possibilities of animal emblems and insignia; a tradition dating back to Giovanni di Cosimo de' Medici (1421–1463), son of Cosimo the Elder (1389–1464), who transformed the family emblem—a diamond ring and feather—into a personal device featuring a peacock. Under Cosimo the Elder's namesake Archduke Cosimo I (1519–1574), a grotto was constructed in the Giardino della Villa di Castello near Florence, inspired by the Roman example of a similar menagerie of stone creatures in the Caffarella Valley. The grotto was completed before 1568, its overall theme based on the third-century Greek *Physiologus*, with Dürer's famous image serving as a model for a rhino sculpture in the grotto's left-hand niche.[17] As "true heirs" of the ancient Romans, the Medicis often modelled their iconography on exotic animals from their menageries,

[15]de Góis, *Chronica do Serenissimo Senhor Rei D. Manoel*, 491.
[16]Bones believed to be those of Leo's white elephant were discovered in the 1960s, suggesting that Ganda, too, may "still lie forgotten in some neglected basement storage room or vault": Bedini, "The Papal Pachyderms," 86.
[17]Châtelet-Lange and Franciscond, "The Grotto of the Unicorn and the Garden of the Villa di Castello," 51–8; Castellini, Ferretti, and Giannotti, "La grotta degli animali a Castello: Nuove acquisizioni tra storia e tecnica," 219–42.

using them both as artistic subjects as well as symbols to vaunt their imperialist credentials. The most famous of these examples is a five-metre-square fresco known as the *Tribute to Caesar* (c. 1520) in the central hall of the Villa di Castello, which includes a giraffe that had been presented to Lorenzo I by the Sultan of Cairo and which "allowed the most telling juxtaposition between the image of the Florentine *Signore* and that of Julius Caesar".[18]

Renowned for its strength, the rhino served as a striking emblem of military might; Pliny the Elder recounts in his first-century AD *Historia Naturalis* that it could even take down an elephant with its horn. Across antiquity, the rhinoceros was repeatedly portrayed as an emperor's plaything and a creature of formidable presence in the Roman gladiatorial arenas. As late as 1684, an English commentator noted that rhinoceroses had been owned by Augustus, Heliogabalus, and Pompey, who

> produc'd a *Rhinoceros* in his publick Spectacles; as *Seneca* witnesses And *Antonius Pius*, amongst the Gifts that he bestowed upon the People, is said to have given them for their publick pastimes, *Tygers, Rhinoserusses* and other wild Beasts. And *Martial* in one of his Epigrams, confirms it to us, That in the Reign of *Domitian,* there was a *Rhinoceros,* which in the Emperors presence toss'd up a wild Bull into the Air, as if he had been a meer Tennis Ball.[19]

Eager to recreate Domitian's theatre of animal cruelty, King Manuel I arranged a battle between the rhinoceros Ganda and a rival pachyderm. The opposing elephant fled before any real harm could be done, and so the rhino won by default. Pope Leo X's distress over the animal's mangled state following the shipwreck at Genoa might have stemmed from his desire to orchestrate a similar spectacle in Rome. Leo's special attachment to the creature is also documented in Paolo Giovio's *Dialogo dell'imprese militari et amorose* ("Dialogue on Military and Amorous Devices"), first printed in 1556. The account forms part of a lengthy section dedicated to the devices of the Medici family, in which Giovio explains the events following Ganda's tragic embarkation and her journey to Rome, where the rhinoceros's shape ("la forma") was made in beautiful embroidery ("bellißimi ricami"), which also served as coverings for the barbarian horses that raced in Rome. The device is completed with a defiant motto in Spanish: "NON BUELVO SIN VENCER" ("I shall not return without victory") (Figure 3).[20] Giovio's account then ends with reference to Pope Leo X's great-nephew Alessandro de' Medici (1510–1537) who took such delight in the story of Ganda that he had the rhinoceros emblem engraved into agate work for his suit of armour ("E parve, che questa impresa gli piacesse tanto, che la fece intagliare di lavoro d'agimia nel corpo della sua Corazza").

The material and textual remains of Ganda affirm Fudge's argument that, to understand animals in early modern culture is to attempt a conversation with the dead that

[18]Massetti, "New World and other Exotic Animals in the Italian Renaissance: The Menageries of Lorenzo Il Magnifico and his Son, Pope Leo X," 48.

[19]"A Description of the Rhinoceros, Lately Brought from the East-Indies."

[20]The full account reads as follows:

> Fecesi dunque la forma del detto Rhinocerote in bellißimi ricami, che servivano anchor per coperta di cavalli barbari, i quali corrono in Roma et altrove il premio del pallio, con un motto di sopra in lingua Spagnuola, NON BUELVO SIN VENCER … io non ritorno indietro senza vittoria, secondo quell verso, che dice. "Rhinoceros nunquam victus ab hoste redit"E parve, che questa impresa gli piacesse tanto, che la fece intagliare di lavoro d'agimia nel corpo della sua corazza.

Paolo Giovio, *Dialogo dell'imprese militari et amorose* (G. Roviglio, 1559), 50.

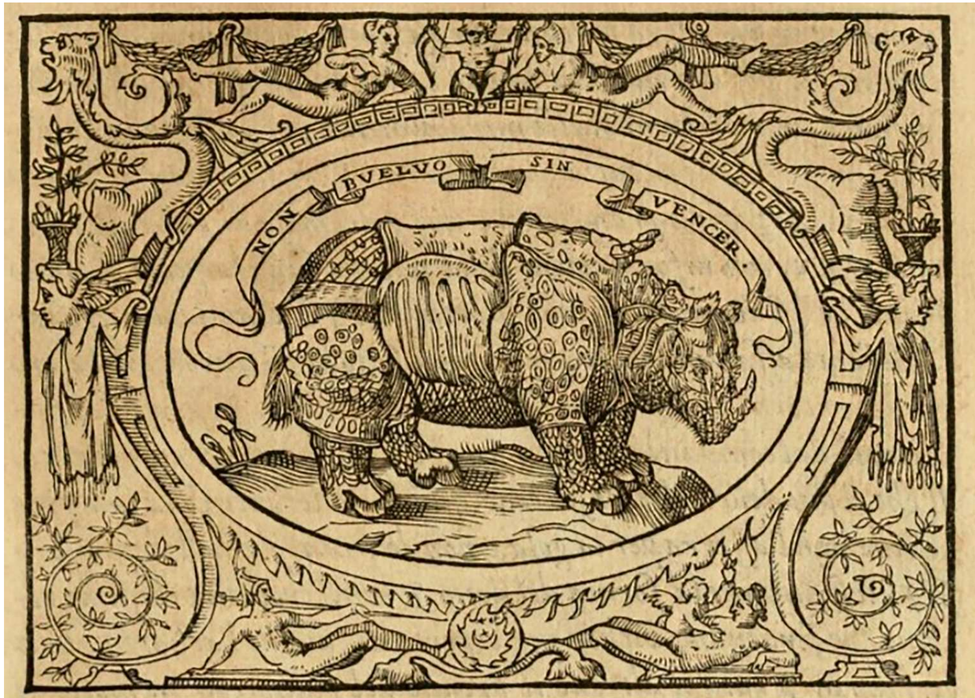

Figure 3. from Paolo Giovio, *Dialogo dell'imprese militari et amorose* (Guglielmo Roviglio, 1559), 49.

relies on the mere "traces" of their "use, edibility, training, and exploitation";[21] their voices and experiences predominantly mediated through libraries and archives and the "vellum, leather, and glue" used in textual production: "there, but not speaking".[22] Fudge's theory of the "absent-presence" of animals is similarly applicable to the theatrical world: costumes made of leather, feathers, and fur, as well as the use of butcher's blood on stage, embody the mediated nature of the animal in this period, as do unusual museum objects like the rhinoceros horn cup commissioned by Emperor Rudolf II discussed below, the true provenance of which is a matter of great speculation. Fudge discusses how human supremacy is often sought through animals, as in poems like Ben Jonson's *To Penshurst* (1616), where the fish and fauna that supply the Sidneys' table are described in terms of tribute, surrender, and self-sacrifice. These anthropomorphic gestures give the animal world a quasi-human status that "undermines the desire to make a clear separation between the species".[23] While humans construct their identity relationally, this also exposes a paradox: we "need animals in order to be human", states Fudge.[24] The rhinoceros in Act 3, Scene 4 is one of three creatures invoked as "the other against which the human"—in this case, Macbeth himself—"is constructed".[25] Yet, as we will see in more detail below, the scene exposes several of Macbeth's

[21]Fudge, *Perceiving Animals*, 2.
[22]Ibid.
[23]Ibid., 4.
[24]Ibid.
[25]Erica Fudge, *Brutal Reasoning: Animals, Rationality, and Humanity in Early Modern England*, p. 60.

weaknesses, particularly his inadequacy as a host and his mental dissolution in the face of a supernatural foe. Using endangered and exotic animals to face down his ghostly nemesis, Macbeth also, fatefully, discredits the forces of nature, infusing the play's final reckoning at Dunsinane with ecological significance beyond the vengeful marching of trees.

Strange Me(a)ting: The Banquet Scene

Returning to Fudge's model, humans need animals to validate their own status, yet it is often in the violence used to assert human superiority that the difference between the species is blurred.[26] This dynamic appears in a range of contexts assessed by Fudge, with a particular emphasis on blood sport, including bear-baiting, and extends to the bloodshed involved in bringing flesh produce to the table. Leaving the rhinoceros aside for a moment, we will do well to remember that *Macbeth* is introduced by way of two acts of butchery: the execution of MacDonwald, "unseamed" by Macbeth "from the nave to th' chops" (1.2.22), and the Witches' displays of knifely precision in "Killing swine" (1.3.2). These are two of many "curious doublings or chiastic reversions" that define the play's structure,[27] from the Witches' "Fair is foul, and foul is fair" speech (1.1.9) at their own strange me(a)ting upon the blasted heath. Act 3, Scene 4 is particularly interesting for subverting the conventional symbols and rituals of dining, which, in Dyson's influential reading of the play, should promote "harmony, fellowship, and union" between humans and signify "a fulfilment of nature".[28] As Raber also explains, banquets relied on and applauded "human exceptionalism and … control over nature by testifying to the creative and transformative power of the human cook (and host)".[29] By Fudge's logic, the banquet's dependence on animals also carves out opportunities for the vulnerability and fallibility of humanity to be laid bare. Lady Macbeth is first to observe Macbeth's ineffectiveness as a host, chastising his violation of social protocol by greeting Banquo's assassins before his more distinguished guests:

> My royal Lord,
> You do not give the cheer: the feast is sold,
> That is not often vouch'd, while 'tis a-making,
> 'Tis given with welcome: to feed were best at home;
> From thence, the sauce to meat is ceremony;
> Meeting were bare without it
> *Enter the Ghost of* BANQUO, *and sits in Macbeth's place.*
> (3.4.31–4)

As Lady Macbeth observes, such lack of "ceremony" is like serving meat without the savour of sauce. By the time Macbeth's breach of etiquette has been acknowledged, however, the dinner's usual formalities have already been disturbed by the assassins' entrance: their faces smeared with Banquo's blood (3.4.11–2) in a gruesome entrée that "signifies his absence among the feasters".[30] Lady Macbeth's words demonstrate

[26]Fudge, *Perceiving Animals*, 4.
[27]Berry, "Reversing History: Time, Fortune, and the Doubling of Sovereignty in *Macbeth*," 382.
[28]Dyson, "The Structural Function of the Banquet Scene in *Macbeth*," 370.
[29]Raber, "Animals at the Table: Performing Meat in Early Modern England and Europe," 17.
[30]Pożar, "An Unexpected Journey 'From the Naves to the Chops': *Macbeth*, Animal Trade, and Theatrical Experience," 101.

how a well-staged feast might echo and secure one's social standing. Yet the role usually performed by "meat" fails to sustain this particular gathering:

> Avaunt and quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee.
> Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;
> Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
> Which thou dost glare with. (3.4.91–4)

Banquo's re-appearance, just as the toast is raised, shatters all hope of gastronomic sustenance, fulfilling Lady Macbeth's concerned prospect of a "bare" meeting.

Many plays of this time demanded specific cuts of meat to be brought onstage, as in the reference to a "femur Caponis" ("capon thigh") in Walter Hawkesworth's *Labyrinthus* (dated 1603), and the "jo[w]le of fresh Salmon" in John Marston's *The Dutch Courtesan* (1605).[31] Although the opening stage direction calls for a "*Banquet prepar'd*", the "meat" served by the Macbeths onstage is never fully revealed. The word "meat" could, of course, refer to any form of sustenance yet, unlike the butcher's blood commonly used for gory scenes onstage, meat was often substituted by more affordable and sustainable options like bread.[32] The scene's theatrical and dramatic interest lies not in culinary fulfilment, but in the presence of guests in overplus ("The table's full", 3.4.44) and in a ghostly game of musical chairs where "what, or who, is 'really' present onstage" is open to query.[33]

Contemporary dining rituals thrived on culinary questions and metamorphoses, such as the famous cockatrice and marchpane moulded into the shapes of animals and birds, transforming early modern dining into an occasion of "novelty and wonder".[34] A host's expertise was often defined by their ability to perform a near-alchemical feat of sending an ordinary animal such as a "'fowl' back from the kitchen … in new, saucy attire following the mysterious process of re-creation applied to it".[35] These alterations are abundantly clear within the language and structure of the play, where words echo with an uncanny resonance, but are denied in the literal staging of the banquet scene. Indeed, Banquo's exit and re-entry merely courts the prospect of a culinary spectacle which, as Raber suggests, was essential for a dinner to "perform" and for a host's credentials to be suitably secured. Notably, Banquo's appearance as something that "might appal the devil" (3.4.57) also recalls and subverts a similar moment in Act 1, Scene 3 of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (1604) where Mephistopheles complies with Faustus' demand that he return in a more congenial shape than that of the Devil.[36] When he makes his re-entry, Banquo remains unchanged from his first appearance some twenty lines before, rejecting the more "saucy" or palatable form that would bolster Macbeth's status as a host. Macbeth, meanwhile, is "cabined, cribbed, confined, bound in / To saucy doubts and fears" (3.4.22–3), awaiting his fate as the meal's seasoned centrepiece. Denying the satisfactions of a culinary costume change, Act 3, Scene 4 thus exposes the hero's

[31]Hawkesworth, *Labyrinthus comœdia habita coram sereniss*, sig, C3r; Marston, *The Dutch Courtesan*, [**AQ5**]sig, E3v; see also Chris Meads, "The Presentation of Banquets on the English Stage: 1585–1642," *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England* 12 (1999), 285.
[32]Meads, "The Presentation of Banquets on the English Stage," 269.
[33]See Caton, "The Joint-Stool on the Early Modern Stage: Witches, Wives, and Murderers in *Macbeth* and *Arden of Faversham*," 129–46.
[34]Raber, "Animals at the Table," 23.
[35]Ibid., 22.
[36]Marlowe, *The Tragicall History of D. Faustus*, sig. B4v.

vulnerability while, at the same time, displaying the raw and ugly consequences that the play's foul butcheries have brought forth.

Although we are denied the spectacle of food that should signify good early modern hospitality, Macbeth whips up a surprising—if not desperate—concoction of exotic beasts to enrich his table:

> What man dare, I dare.
> Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
> The armed rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger,
> Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
> Shall never tremble (3.4.97–101)

The play absorbs and regurgitates its own imagery repeatedly, with Macbeth's reference to "the Hyrcan tiger" reconstituted as an ingredient in the Witches' noxious brew in Act 4, Scene 1. Meanwhile, the "rugged Russian bear" referenced in line 98 becomes Macbeth's fate as a man tied to the stake in the play's final scenes. Conjured in the same snatch of breath, the "armed rhinoceros" at line 99 neglects to re-emerge. Given the play's many "curious doublings", to reuse Philippa Berry's phrase, such a potent species may well come back to haunt the hero in unexpected ways.

Grey Anatomy

The rhino's apparent invisibility from the remainder of the play contrasts pointedly with the extensive documentary and material traces it left in the period. Rhino images deriving from Dürer's iconic woodcut proliferated through processes of "transfer and circulation", facilitated largely by the creature's distinctive "profile view, the stark contour, the sparse background, and the close cropping".[37] Its reproducibility also owes much to Dürer's formulation of a detailed and highly replicable visual system of what Leitch calls "particulars"; notably, "the articulated carapace, the spectrum of texture across its body, the detailed head and the graduated horn".[38] In a culture that revered the art of imitation, it was not eyewitness veracity, but the reiteration of these pronounced, armour-like features that, as Leitch observes, "helped outfit the rhino for credibility".[39] Speculation persists as to whether Dürer ever actually saw the rhino Ganda, with the intricate detail of his depiction showcasing his expertise in designing armour. The reproduction of stock visual traits helped authenticate the rhinoceros as it appeared in early modern print. Leitch's research shows how the Swiss naturalist and bibliographer Conrad Gessner's *Historiae Animalium* (1551–1558) enhanced the prominence of Dürer's rhinoceros, which served to authenticate numerous rhetorical descriptions of the beast.[40] Following suit, the English translator and cleric Edward Topsell included the same image alongside this lengthy description in *The historie of foure-footed beastes* (1607):

> In quantity it is not much bigger then an *Orix: Pliny* maketh it equall in length to an Elephant, and some make it longer then an Elephant, but withall they say it is lower, and

[37]Leitch, "Dürer's Rhinoceros Underway: The Epistemology of the Copy in the Early Modern Print," 243.
[38]Ibid.
[39]Leitch, "Dürer's Rhinoceros Underway," 244.
[40]Ibid., 245.

> hath shorter Legges … the colour thereof was not like a Box-tree, but rather like an Elephantes, his quantity greater then a Buls, or as the greatest Bull, but his outward forme and proportion like a wilde Boares, especiallye in his mouth, except that out of his Nose groweth a horne, harder then any bones, which he useth in stead of armes, even as a Boare doth his teeth; hee hath also two girdles upon his body like the wings of a Dragon, comming from his backe downe to his belly, one toward his necke or mane, and the other toward his loines and hinder parts … His colour like rinde or barke of a boxe-tree, (which doth not differ much from and Elephant) and on his forehead there grow haires which seeme a little red, and his back distinguished with certaine purple spots upon a yellow ground. The skinne is so firme and hard, that no Dart is able to pierce it, and uppon it appeare many devisions, like the shelles of a *Tortaeise* set over with skales, having no haire uppon the backe.[41]

The verbal metonymies at work here—likening the rhinoceros to the elephant, tortoise, box-tree, boar, and bull—harden into recognisable features that pass from source to source. Eighty years after Topsell's *Historie*, there appeared an anonymous single-sheet publication entitled "A Description of the Rhinoceros, Lately Brought from the East-Indies" (1684), aboard the East India Company ship *Herbert* and exhibited at the Bell Savage Inn on Ludgate Hill, "to be sold to showmen for profit".[42] For a fee of either twelve pence or two shillings, the rhinoceros could be ridden, and rumour circulated that the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, Francis North (1637–1685) took pleasure in this peculiar pastime, "which a more infantine exploit could not have been fastened upon him".[43] Although destined to tour beyond London, the rhino sadly died in 1686, likely as a result of her maltreatment. While alive, she endured relentless scrutiny of her physical features, with the pamphlet's author utilising the same relational terms as Topsell in noting that the creature was "equal in length, if not longer, than an *Elephant,* but withal somewhat lower and with shorter Leggs", its colour "like the Bark of a *Box-tree,* which is not much unlike that of the *Elephants*" and its "outward form" resembling that of "a wild *Boar*"; "two kind of scalie *Aprons,* on each side, like the Wings of a *Dragon*", with the skin "so hard that a dart cannot penetrate it; upon which there appears many divisions like the shells of a *Tortoise,* set over with Scales, without any Hair".[44] Claiming eyewitness authority, the "Description" regurgitates earlier visual patterns while doing away with Dürer's print as proof. Founding member of the Royal Society, John Evelyn (1620–1706), who saw the rhinoceros (which he refers to as a "Unicorne") along with his friend William Godolphin, expanded the established stock of animal similes to record the rhino's "particular & extraordinary" bearing, thinking "It more ressembled a huge enormous Swine, than any other Beast amongst us"; her "Leggs neere as big about as an ordinarie mans wast"; a tail "like a Cowes"; "of a mouse Colour, the skin Elephantine" and "ris[ing] as nimbly as ever I saw an horse".[45] The incitement to subdue and ride the rhino is supported by her likeness to a "[greate] Coach overthrowne, for she was much of that bulke" and her skin hangs "loose like so much Coach leather, & not adhering at all to the body. … So as one

[41]Topsell, *The historie of foure-footed beastes*, 594.
[42]North, *Lives of the Norths* (1780), cited in White, *Heads and Tales; or, Anecdotes and Stories of Quadrupeds and Other Beasts*, 232.
[43]: Ibid., 232.
[44]"A Description of the Rhinoceros, Lately Brought from the East-Indies."
[45]Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, 1673–1689, 389–90.

might take up this, as one would do a Cloake or horse-cloth".[46] Between Topsell and Evelyn, the rhinoceros shifts from chimerical fantasy to tangible commodity; from a corporeal cabinet of curiosities to a rack for peddling domestic goods, including functional cloths and hides of leather.

Slicing through the abundant palette of physiognomic "particulars" in currency at this time, Macbeth conjures a creature whose bearing is both complex and uncertain. Whether the "armed rhinoceros" of Act 3, Scene 4 is endowed with a corporeal weapon like "the lion's armed jaws" (*1 Henry IV*, 3. 2. 102), or trussed up in mail, as a "finger" might "be armed in a thimble" (*Taming of the Shrew*, 4. 3. 146–7) is difficult to know. However, Dürer's iconic image, Leitch explains, so conditioned the eye of early modern audiences that they "could mentally fill in the missing parts".[47] It follows that an ambiguously armed creature might possess, implicitly, the characteristics shown in, and known, through Dürer's work. Evelyn also cites the Ludgate Hill rhino's "impenetrable Scales like a Target of coat of maile, loricated like Armor". Despite these warlike assets, Evelyn observes something amiss with the rhino's blunted nasal horn, noting that it is only "newly Sprowting, & hardly shaped to any considerable point". The reason of the loss was likely due to stress, and Evelyn is cognisant of the animal's mistreatment in a situation he found equally disdainful as the "barbarous cruelties" of the bear-baiting arenas.[48] Other early modern rhinos were left alive in horrifically mutilated conditions, their suffering a consequence of being dragged into the mud-slinging contests of European diplomacy. Sought by several prominent European figures, including Emperor Rudolf II, Archduke Ferdinand II of Tyrol, and Pope Gregory XIII, the so-called "Marvel of Lisbon" was eventually acquired by Philip II of Spain and brought to Madrid in 1582, along with an Asian elephant from Goa. When a man was accidentally killed, the rhino was blamed and was blinded, deprived of its horn, and had its horribly mutilated form immortalised in cheap watercolour souvenirs.[49]

These events confirmed the creature's legendary ability to inflict harm. The claim that a rhinoceros horn could pierce the skin of an elephant comes from Pliny the Elder, who recounts that such a confrontation took place at the animal games of Pompey the Great in 55 BC. The story was repeated in Topsell's *Historie of foure-footed beastes* as follows:

> Elephants are enimies to wilde Bulles, and the *Rhinocerots,* for in the games of *Pompey,* when an Elephant and a *Rhinoceros* were brought together, the *Rhinoceros* ranne instantly and whet his horne uppon a stone, and so prepared himselfe to fight, striking most of all at the belly of the Elephant, because he knewe that it was the tenderest and most penetrable part of the body.

The idea of the rhinoceros and the elephant as natural enemies became a standard feature of the bestiary tradition, with Isidore of Seville's seventh-century *Etymologies* serving as a major authority for the claim. The legend was incorporated into modern natural histories

[46]Ibid., 390.
[47]Leitch, "Dürer's Rhinoceros Underway," 254.
[48]Evelyn's diary entry for 16 June 1670 records how he was "'forc'd to accompanie some friends to the Bear-garden &c: Where was Cock *fighting*, Beare, *Dog-fighting*, Beare & *Bull baiting*, it being a famous day for all these butcherly Sports, or rather barbarous cruelties": *The Diary of John Evelyn*, 1650–1672, 549.
[49]Gschwend, "The Emperor's Exotic and New World Animals: Hans Khevenhüller and Habsburg Menageries in Vienna and Prague," 90–2. For images of the "Marvel of Lisbon," see https://rhinoresourcecenter.com/library/images/marvel-of-lisbon/.

such as Topsell's *Historie*, which also tells of an instance where "A *Rhinoceros* set on by a bear in a publicke spectacle at Rome, did easilie cast him off from the hold he had on his horne".[50] Dürer amplified the creature's well-known ferocity by conferring the 1515 *Rhinoceros* with a *second* horn atop its armoured shoulders. This extra appendage was described by Topsell as "another little horne, not upon the nose, but uppon the wither of the beast, I meane the top of his shoulder next to his necke".[51] The number and position of the horns were a subject of debate for centuries, further complicated by the existence of both single- and double-horned rhinos and by the interchangeable use of the terms unicorn and "monoceros". Topsell considered his source, the fifth-century bishop Eucherius of Lyon, to be mistaken, noting that "the error … lyeth not in the number, but in the place, and that it may appeare that this horne is not a fained thing". Eucherius was likely referring to the double-horned African rhinoceros; yet, by including Dürer's famed illustration, Topsell was able to resolve the debate: "[A]s you may see by the picture", he says, it is "utterly false" that "the *Rhinocerot* hath two hornes in his nose".[52]

While audiences of *Macbeth* may not require every taxonomic detail to get the point, Macbeth's omission of at least one major physical detail from his description—the rhino's famed and much-debated horn—is compelling. By pressing audiences to fill in the gaps based on their own knowledge, aspirations, and fears, the "armed rhinoceros" thus embodies the play's larger concern with the hasty interpretation of signs and symbols. Indeed, *Macbeth* is a play that constantly asks its characters and audiences to supply their own meanings in the face of piecemeal information, from the bleeding gashes of the wounded sergeant in Act 1, Scene 2, to the apparitions of children and armoured heads in Act 4, Scene 1.[53] This demand is heightened by the play's focus on "imperfect" speech-acts, notably the equivocation central to the Witches' prophecies, which, like the play's ambiguous utterances, rely on the audience to complete their meaning. Cutting through the rhino's intricate physiognomy, Macbeth also employs the rhetoric of concision and speed that will hasten the hero's downfall. These accelerating methods comprise much of the play's language and span a range of rhetorical and linguistic constructions, including asyndeton (what George Puttenham cites "in our vulgar [as] the cutted comma … for that there cannot be a shorter division then at every words end"), brachylogy, and other grammatological short-cuts.[54] These techniques also link to the play's own condensation of temporal time, a reminder that Macbeth's "evil progress" is measured by "its relationship to an objective temporal order", according to David Scott Kastan.[55]

Remember the Rhino

Conjuring an implicitly *im*potent beast in Act 3, Scene 4, Macbeth also invites discussion of the play's interest in conventionally "masculine" attributes, conditions which Maria L. Howell

[50]Topsell, *The historie of foure-footed beastes*, 42.
[51]Ibid., 597.
[52]Ibid.
[53]See Fahey, *Metaphor and Shakespearean Drama: Unchaste Signification*, 78.
[54]Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie*, 178.
[55]Kastan, *Shakespeare and the Shapes of Time*, 92.

identifies as opposite to the "bestial" state into which Macbeth descends under the sway of toxic ambition.[56] Howell notes that "Macbeth's masculine virtue is not innate, but rather is induced by a substance external to him",[57] with Lady Macbeth's provocation in Act 1, Scene 7 ("Was the hope drunk / Wherein you dressed yourself?", 35–6), suggesting that he finds the courage to act only when under the influence of drink. It is notable, then, that in the moments before Macbeth confronts his spectral foe, a ceremonial toast is raised:

> … Give me some wine, fill full.
> *Enter GHOST*
> I drink to the general joy o'the whole table,
> And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss— (3.4.86–88)

While it can awaken courage, alcohol also rouses the dead, and precipitates a slide toward base, animalistic tendencies, as seen in the chamberlains' fall into a swinish stupor in Act 1, Scene 7 (64–9). Toxic drink imagery saturates the play, as the hero tropes, early on, the cyclical backlash of ill deeds in drink-related terms: "This even-handed justice / Commends th'ingredience of our poison'd chalice / To our own lips" (1.7.10–12).

Macbeth's "poison'd chalice" inverts contemporary, real-world use of rhino horn, used to cure various ailments and as a famous prophylactic against poison. These attributes, according to Bruno A. Martinho and António Manuel Lopes Andrade, "attracted the interest of princes and high-ranking nobility",[58] and are epitomised by the ostentatious "Covered Cup" (c. 1611), commissioned by Emperor Rudolf II who, incidentally, had vied to obtain the "Marvel of Lisbon" several years before. Fashioned from carved rhino horn, warthog tusks, and silver gilt, the cup features an iconographical scheme of beetles, snakes, and lizards, alongside the motif of the walrus, whose tusks were often straightened and fraudulently sold as unicorn horns.[59] Although there are no surviving records of the "medical or ceremonial applications" of rhino cups such as these, Andrew Morrall notes that "quite apart from functioning as objects of curiosity … they would have been used on occasions of state".[60] An inscription affirms the more specific purpose of the "Covered Cup" by promising the user protection against assassination by poison.[61] Elite collections were replete with natural curiosities such as these, with snake tongues, toadstones, and bezoar stones also coveted for their prophylactic powers. Topsell touted the special credentials of rhino parts in *The Historie of foure-footed beastes*:

> the Kings and mighty men of *India* use to drinke, adorning it for that purpose with sundry bracelets, precious stones, and works of gold, holding for truth that all those which drinke in those hornes, shalbe freed from annoyance of incurable diseases, as convulsions, the falling evill, and deadly poysons.[62]

[56]Howell, *Manhood and Masculine Identity in William Shakespeare's* The Tragedy of Macbeth, 14.
[57]Ibid.
[58]Martinho and Andrade, "In Search of the Unicorn's Virtue in a Rhino Horn Cup: Consumption of Rhino Horns and the Production of Knowledge in Early Modern Lisbon," 580.
[59]Stark, "Mounted Bezoar Stones, Seychelles Nuts, and Rhinoceros Horns," 89.
[60]Morrall, "The Power of Nature and the Agency of Art: The Unicorn Cup of Jan Vermeyen," 27.
[61]Stark, "Mounted Bezoar Stones, Seychelles Nuts, and Rhinoceros Horns," 88–9.
[62]Topsell, *The historie of foure-footed beastes,* 32.

Future founder of the East India Company, Sir James Lancaster (1554–1618), also noted during his voyage to Malaysia in October 1592 that the horn was "highly esteemed of al the Moores in those parts as a soveraigne remedie against poison".[63] A symbol of sovereignty and paranoia, the rhino horn cup embodies the horror that often waits on princes.

The rhino horn's reputed ability to detect poison melds with its association with the unicorn, a conflation traceable to the creatures' shared Latin name——and their striking bodily form. Certainly, the "unicorn horns" that were trafficked into Europe at this time, and that found their way into the collections of pontiffs and kings, were the horns of more legible beasts, including various species of rhino and deer, the Arctic narwhal, and walrus. The monitoring of fakes, assisted by the establishment of official drug-testing in India and a system of quality-control at the port of Lisbon, made trading these items illegal in certain contexts, and buyers were willing to pay "twenty ten times its weight in gold" for an authentic specimen, with Thomas Dekker wryly stating in *The guls horne-booke* (1609) that a single horn could fetch the same price as "halfe a City".[64] Several years after Ganda's unfortunate and untimely embarkation at Genoa, horns of several "unicorns" began cropping up at the Holy See.[65] Pope Clement VII gifted one such horn to his niece Catherine de' Medici on her wedding to King Francis I of France in 1533. Legend of the beast's prophylactic powers is also reflected within the heraldic devices of the d'Estes of Ferrara, with the distinction between healing and harm somewhat blurry in this case.[66] In the Medici's grotto at the Villa di Castello, some of the animal figures were adorned with real horns and antlers, while the unicorn sculpture, carved wholly from marble, took pride of place in this "strange menagerie", "its gleaming white mak[ing] it outshine all the others".[67]

Writings contemporary with the first performances of *Macbeth* were highly cognisant of the risks of mistaking rhinos for unicorns. John Guillim's *A Display of Heraldrie* (1610) stresses the importance of distinguishing clearly between the two beasts in his blazon of the unicorn sejant:

> There is another *Beast* of a huge *strength* and *greatnesse*, which hath but *one Horne*; but that is growing out of his *Snout*, whence he is called *Rhinoceros*, and both are named *Monoceros*, or *one Horned*: it hath been much questioned amongst *Naturalists*, which is that is properly called the *Unicorne*: and some have made doubt whether there bee any such *Beast*, as this or no. but the great *esteeme* of his *Horne* (in many places to be seene) may take away that needlesse scruple.[68]

Guillim's testimony relies on the many horns exhibited as specimens in curiosity cabinets and banquet tables, and thus falls short of confirming the unicorn's existence as a

[63]Gentilcore, *Healers and Healing in Early Modern Italy*, 103; Foster, ed., *The Voyages of Sir James Lancaster to Brazil and the East Indies, 1591–1603* ("The First Voyage, 1591–94," 14).
[64]Lavers, *The Natural History of Unicorns*, 94; Dekker, *The guls horne-booke*, sig. C2v; see Martinho and Andrade, "In Search of the Unicorn's Virtue in a Rhino Horn Cup: Consumption of Rhino Horns and the Production of Knowledge in Early Modern Lisbon," 590.
[65]See Beaven and Lloyd, "Cardinal Paluzzo Paluzzi degli Albertoni Altieri and his collection in the Palazzo Altieri: The evidence of the 1698 death inventory, Part II," 6.
[66]See Mertz, "Unicorns of Ferrara," accessed 26 February 2025, https://www.reneedevoemertz.com/visual-writer/2019/12/4/unicorns-of-ferrara. Amongst these images are those completed by Taddeo Crivelli and Girolamo da Cremona for the illuminated *Bible of Borso d'Este*, commissioned in 1455 and used to model several frescoes and carvings of the Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara.
[67]Châtelet-Lange and Franciscond, "The Grotto of the Unicorn and the Garden of the Villa di Castello," 52.
[68]Guillim, *A Display of Heraldrie*, 134.

tangible, living species. Topsell, meanwhile, included a woodcut image from Gessner's *Historiae Animalium* (1551–1558) to corroborate his account and, following his source, was mindful of the risks of confusing rhinos and unicorns, dedicating several pages of his translation to expounding the differences between the two beasts:

> There be some that have taken this *Rhinoceros* for the *Monoceros* the *Unicorn*, because of this one horn, they are deceived, taking the general for the special, which is a note of ignorance in them, and occasion of errour unto others.[69]

Misreading animals like this is clearly a sign of folly for the natural historians. It is a trap that Macbeth hopes to sidestep in his catalogue of "hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs" in Act 3, Scene 1 (lines 94–6), which he invokes to flatter and fawn on his would-be assassins as a higher breed of men. By robbing the assassins of a complete "human response", however, Macbeth's beastlier side is revealed.[70] This misstep introduces another "structural parody" within the play, fulfilled in Macduff's denunciation of the hero as a demonic "hell-hound" (5.8.3).

While the Florentine and Ferrarese princes were busy augmenting their family's heraldry with horned creatures, James III of Scotland (1451–1488) issued coins bearing the Scottish royal arms (themselves known as "unicorns"), and conferred armorial collars bearing this emblem to a number of foreign emissaries, a practice continuing into the next monarch's reign.[71] Unicorns, of course, are central figures in Scottish heraldry, but were not, according to Katie Stevenson, an apposite emblem for signifying "strong military leadership".[72] Instead, drawing on its role as an emblem of Christlike sacrifice, the unicorn came to convey the obedience expected of the king's loyal subjects both at home and abroad.

Rhinos also, interestingly, assumed new symbolic importance under James VI and I in the newly united Anglo-Scottish kingdom. In 1617, the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries commemorated the Stuart dynasty with an emblem showing a rhinoceros flanked by two golden unicorns. A rhino also made an important appearance in the Drapers' Company's production of *Porta Pietatis, or, The Port or Harbour of Piety*, performed as part of the 1638 Lord Mayor's show. In the second pageant, an Indian arrives astride a "huge *Rinoceros*" to greet the newly appointed Lord Mayor of London, Sir Maurice Abbot, Governor of the East India Company. The Indian delivers a thirty-line speech in heroic couplets, likening the spectacle to a Roman triumph, where the "prime and choisest" spoils of imperialism would be put on display. The pursuit of free trade is marked by predatory acts of "piercing" and "skowering", while the rhino is a defender of "innocent heards and flocks," who "armes his crest" only in just defence against "Beasts of prey, who rend and teare." [73]

The 1638 pageant marks the second known appearance of a rhinoceros on the English stage, the first being Thomas Middleton's *The Triumphs of Truth* (1613) which features a rhinoceros ridden by the personification of Envy eating a human heart. Things have shifted by Heywood's era, with the rhino's famed ferocity tempered with depictions of

[69]Topsell, *The historie of foure-footed beastes*, 462.
[70]Hartwig, "Macbeth, the Murderers, and the Diminishing Parallel," 39–43 (39, 42).
[71]Malden, "Anselm Adornes and the Two Collars," 6–12; Stevenson, "The Unicorn, St Andrew and the Thistle," 8–9.
[72]Stevenson, "The Unicorn, St Andrew and the Thistle," 11.
[73]Heywood, *Porta Pietatis, or, The port or harbour of piety*, sig. B3r.

its gentleness and submissive behaviour, mirrored in other sources such as Plancius′ double hemisphere map, mentioned above. It would be several decades before a real rhinoceros landed on English shores of course, but even if a rhino had been available for the pageant, Heywood and his collaborators could not have trusted a live specimen to pull off such a feat. Abram Booth′s drawing of the Lord Mayor′s Show of 1629 (which included the device of an Indian boy riding an ostrich) helps to furnish details of the events of Heywood′s play, which also called for the device of Proteus, who ″sitteth or rideth upon a moving Tortois″ (sig. A4r). The instruction that the 1629 ostrich be ″cut out of timber to the life″ and painted silver is especially helpful for recreating the 1638 pageant within the mind′s eye.[74] Heywood′s partnership with the Drapers′ Company also suggests that the rhinoceros of *Porta Pietatis* would have been richly attired and very likely bore the trappings of empire,[75] thereby evoking the East India Company′s wealth in key trades such as leather, silk, spices, and gold. As well as signalling ″the rising fortunes of the trade in exotic commodities″, Heywood′s rhino and its Indian rider have been recognised by Amrita Sen as representing a new influx of Asian migrants into London.[76] This demographic is certainly suggested by the rhino′s more overtly ″Eastern″ counterparts in *Macbeth*: the ″Hyrcan″ (or Caspian) tiger and the ″rugged Russian bear″. Though the Asian presence in Jacobean London was comparatively less prominent than that of the new influx of Scots who accompanied James VI and I into England upon his accession,[77] these new, and indeed feared, populations of migrants fell under the ″all-encompassing category of ′black′″.[78] Macbeth′s triad of Eastern beasts thus points not only to a global traffic in curiosities and its implications for those in pursuit and possession of power, but also to a nation undergoing radical redefinition through migration. For David Sterling Brown and Jennifer Lynn Stoever, Macbeth also embodies a kind of foreignness that ″must be purged in order for Scotland′s renewal to be possible under its new King, Malcolm″.[79] As noted above, the tiger, bear, and rhino form a symbolic triptych of creatures drawn from eastern lands. This unusual trinity echoes the difficult politics of the 1603 Union of the Crowns for, while integrating the lion and unicorn into the new coat of arms proved comparatively straightforward, the six different flags proposed in the year associated with the composition of Shakespeare′s *Macbeth*, 1606, reveal the difficulty of combining the St George′s Cross with that of St Andrew in a way that was fair to both nations.

While the unicorn is often regarded as the emblematic symbol of Scottish royalty, the lion rampant had, in fact, been the dominant feature of the Scottish coat of arms since at least the thirteenth century. The symbol probably originates in the reign of the real-life Malcolm III of Scotland (reigned 1058–93).[80] Lions were also central to the historical power struggles of the archipelago. Edward II of England (reigned 1307–27) famously owned a pet lion, which travelled with him on a custom-built cart during his first military

[74]See Hill, *Pageantry and Power: A cultural history of the early modern Lord Mayor′s Show: 1585–1639*, 163.
[75]The map also assists in recreating this particular aspect of the pageant: the female figure representing Asia is dressed in fine attire and wields a censer emanating incense smoke [Figure 2].
[76]Sen, "Locating the Rhinoceros and the Indian," 33, 43.
[77]In particular, see Floyd-Wilson, "English Epicures and Scottish Witches," 131–61.
[78]Sen, "Locating the Rhinoceros and the Indian," 42.
[79]Brown and Stoever, "Blanched with Fear: Reading the Racialized Soundscape in *Macbeth*," 40.
[80]Shenton, "Edward III and the Symbol of the Leopard," 70.

campaign in Scotland in 1303.[81] His son, Edward III of England (reigned 1327–77) also employed the emblem of the leopard, a creature often conflated with lions in medieval heraldry, and which "had a profound effect" on the Scots enemy.[82] Eager to test the lion's exemplary courage, James VI of Scotland and I of England also arranged a series of feline combats in the Tower of London, though the spectacle failed to live up to expectation.[83]

The emblem of the lion carried an inherent tension: monarchs who assumed or inherited the emblem of the lion were tasked with balancing the lion's renowned ferocity with its reputation for mercy and protection. The lion with which Malcolm is historically linked makes a brief but telling appearance in Act 4, following the prophecies of the armed head and bloody child. The third and final apparition—"*a child crowned, with a tree in his hand*"—foretells of Macbeth's adoption of a leonine pride and indifference until the final hour at Dunsinane:

> THIRD APPARITION: Be lion-mettled, proud, and take no care
> Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are.
> Macbeth shall never vanquished be, until
> Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill
> Shall come against him. (4.1.89–92)

To be "lion-mettled" may serve as both Macbeth's strength and his undoing. As Nicole Mennel has shown, "the unjustified imitation of the lion's ferocious nature can lead to tyrannical rule", yet failing to harness its force when the situation demanded it brought graver consequences to rulers.[84] By fixating on the implausibility of the child's second claim that "Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill / Shall come against him", Macbeth commits another fatal misstep that ignores the quieter forces of the wood:

> That will never be.
> Who can impress the forest, bid the tree
> Unfix his earth-bound root? (4.1.91–4).

In dismissing these words, Macbeth forfeits an emblem (or *impresa*) that could well augment his dynastic claims.

Thus far, the "armed rhinoceros" in Act 3, Scene 4 has been read primarily in terms of its corporeal bearing. The introduction to *A Display of Heraldrie* (1610) by pursuivant of arms John Guillim reminds us, however, that early modern conceptions of "arms" reached beyond physical armour and "warlike instruments" and must therefore be taken chiefly "in a metaphoricall sense":

> for that they doe assume a borrowed name (by way of figure called *Metonymia subjecti*) from the Shields, Targets, Banners, Military Cassockes, and other Martiall Instruments, whereupon they were ingraven, embossed, embrodered or depicted … *Armes* then, as they are here meant, may be thus defined: *Armes* are tokens or resemblances, signifying some act or quality of the bearer. … So also they doe occasion their spectators to make serious inquisition whose they are, who is the owner of the house wherein they are set up, of what Familie their bearer is descended, and who were his next[85]

[81]Johnstone, *Edward of Carnarvon, 1284–1307*, 86.
[82]Fudge, *Brutal Reasoning*, 60.
[83]Ibid.
[84]Mennell, "The Lion King: Shakespeare's Beastly Sovereigns," 231.
[85]Guillim, *A Display of Heraldrie*, 2.

These elaborate signs invited careful contemplation from spectators who might question whether the symbols shown upon "Shields, Targets, Banners, Military Cassockes, and other Martiall Instruments" mirrored the qualities of those who bore them. Guillim later explains that "it is rather a dishonor then a praise for a man to beare a *Lion* on his *Shield*, if he beare a *Sheepe* in his *Heart*, or a *Goose* in his *Braine*".[86] The use of animal bearings came under tighter regulation under the College of Arms, with Guillim among the heralds participating in the spread, and often contradiction, of information about heraldic beasts and their symbolism. Kathryn Will explains that heraldic authors, including Guillim, Henry Peacham, and Gerard Legh, "preyed upon the vanity and competitiveness of their readers, creating distinctions and sowing doubt where none might otherwise have existed". Heraldry thus became "more like a business", with professional reputations at stake "in distinguishing good heraldic designs from bad ones", with animals often at the centre of "disputes over what constituted legitimate heraldry".[87] Feline creatures, such as leopards and lions, were often prone to misunderstanding because of their ambiguous representation in bestiaries and heraldic manuals.[88] The confusing anatomy of the rhino raised similar concerns, particularly regarding the number and placement of its horn, which was a key site of epistemological debate and power-play in this period, as we have already seen. Will also explains that, to counter the growing social and material diffusion of animal *impresa*, a shield-bearer's gentility was more often thought to reside in the manner and skill with which its "animal components had been rendered" and in the ability to "call a panther a panther or distinguish a good lion from a bad one".[89] In light of these contemporary shifts and challenges, the third apparition's injunction that Macbeth be "lion-mettled" is a fraught charge, pressing Macbeth to distinguish authentic heraldic power from its counterfeit double.

The reference to "mettle" is also a nod to the practice of tincturing, a form of augmentation which encompassed the use of precious metals, colours, and fur, the manipulation or absence of which was also central to debates over rightful arms. Peacham notes in *The Compleat Gentleman* (1622) that "they say (though not generally true) where there is wanting colour or mettal, it is false armorie".[90] Wrenching exotic beasts from their origins with a conspicuously "unlineal hand" (3.1.62), Macbeth also acts in a manner, to quote Guillim, "repugnant or contrarie to *Nature*":

> Besides, it is one thing to beare a living creature in colour or in action divers from *Nature*; and another, to beare him repugnant or contrarie to *Nature*: for the former may be borne commendably, but this latter sort of *Bearing* is holden disgracefull, or rather is condemned for *false Armes*, and therefore not worthie of *Bearing*.[91]

As illustrated above, Macbeth overlooks the rhino's complex physiognomy, reducing its rich "particulars" into an ambiguously furnished form: a disservice to the rhino's storied textual and visual history. This potential degradation comes full circle at the play's end, when Macbeth is branded a "monster" by his mortal enemy, Macduff:

[86]Ibid., 122–3.
[87]Will, "When is a Panther Not a Panther? Representing Animals in Early Modern English Heraldry," 84.
[88]Ibid., 85.
[89]Ibid., 79.
[90]Peacham, *The Compleat Gentleman*, 144.
[91]Guillim, *A Display of Heraldrie*, 123.

> yield thee, coward,
> And live to be the show and gaze o'th'time.
> We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
> Painted upon a pole, and underwrit,
> "Here may you see the tyrant" (5.8.23–7)

It is worth noting that heraldic writers, including Guillim, "propagated the myth that subtle marks of degradation" could be affixed to or removed from one's arms as "punishment for misdeeds causing anxiety for marginally gentle readers who had acquired their devices recently or under questionable pretenses".[92] Macbeth's untimely memorial fittingly befalls one who has violated a system in the midst of careful standardization at the time. Traitors, however, suffered a more exacting "abatement", as Guillim explains:

> By this inglorious subversion of the *Escocheon*, the dignitie thereof is not blemished only in some points … but is essentially annihilated in the whole … if a Gentleman of *Coat-armour* hath issue divers Sons, and commiteth *Treason*, he hath forfeited his *Coat-armour* for ever … *For that the memorie of them may utterly be extinguished*.[93]

More a knave than a gentleman or king, Macbeth is laid to rest as a common man and, like Polonius, enjoys "No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones, / No noble rite, nor formal ostentation" (*Hamlet*, 4.5.206–7).

These events give further context to Macbeth's own insistence to be properly armed and (re)membered for the final hour at Dunsinane:

> MACBETH: I'll fight, till from my bones my flesh be hacked.
> Give me my armour.
> SEYTON: 'Tis not needed yet.
> MACBETH: I'll put it on.
> Send out more horses; skirr the country round,
> Hang those that talk of fear. Give me mine armour. (5.3.32–6)

Amidst hurried talk of Lady Macbeth's sickness, Macbeth submits a third, frantic request to "Come, put mine armour on; give me my staff" (5.3.48) before the process is halted and reset by a sudden change of thought: "Pull't off, I say" (5.3.54). The faltering physical activity that command the scene provides "necessary stage bustle [and] has little about it of epic solemnity" that a Pyrrhus might bear,[94] drawing out the anagnorisis (as Caroline Spurgeon once put it) "that Macbeth's new honours sit ill upon him, like a loose and badly fitting garment, belonging to someone else".[95] Macbeth's next moments on stage see this ritualistic process resume once more, as he finds himself at the full mercy of the forest:

> "Fear not, till Birnam wood
> Do come to Dunsinane", and now a wood
> Comes toward Dunsinane. Arm, arm, and out.
> If this which he avouches does appear,
> There is nor flying hence, nor tarrying here.
> I 'gin to be aweary of the sun,

[92]Ibid., 79, 94.
[93]Guillim, *A Display of Heraldrie*, 35–6.
[94]Ibid., 262.
[95]Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery*, 325.

> And wish th'estate o'th' world were now undone.
> Ring the alarum bell. Blow wind, come wrack,
> At least we'll die with harness on our back. (5.5.43–51).[96]

In this last, defiant outburst against nature, Macbeth resembles less a man and more a horse in mail, outfitted unceremoniously for his own butchering, beheading, and hideous mounting.

Thus clad, Macbeth stands in stark contrast to another armed presence of the English stage: the Ghost of Old Hamlet,

> Armed at all points exactly, cap-à-pie,
> Appears before them and with solemn march
> Goes slow and stately by them; thrice he walked
> By their oppressed and fear-surprised eyes
> Within his truncheon's length, whilst they, bestilled
> Almost to jelly with the act of fear.[97]

Armed head to toe and bearing the blunt-force weapon of a "truncheon", the Ghost provokes a terrified response in onlookers; a virtual dissolution and reconstitution of the human form into sinister side-dish of "jelly", a substance derived from boiled animal bones, skin, hooves, and horns. A similar logic operates in *Macbeth*, where the protagonist—"cabined, cribbed, confined" (3.4.22)—by his own fears becomes the very meal his table seems to lack. Like Macbeth, Hamlet too thinks with animals: "Well said, old mole, canst work i'th' earth so fast?" (*Hamlet*, 2.1.161), cutting the impressive figure of Ned Alleyn down to the size of a subterranean critter with one fell swoop. In this instance, the animal exemplifies Fudge's argument that animals reinforce human supremacy even as they reveal its underlying vulnerability. Banquo's ghost is certainly scarier than any ferocious natural creature Macbeth can summon; yet, when placed alongside the figure of Old Hamlet, he emerges a more frightening spirit, or indeed actor, than to have ever stalked the boards before him.[98]

Our Rarer Monster: The Unicorn

Thus far, this article has examined the rhino's role in early modern culture, its function in the performance of power, and its resonance with *Macbeth*. Drawing on a range of sources—from early modern bestiaries, heraldic manuals, and visual culture to various performance contexts such as banqueting rituals, pageantry, and bloodsport—I show the implications of Macbeth's summoning of a rhinoceros in Act 3, Scene 4, a creature marked by ongoing debate that offers telling insight into Macbeth's designs on power and his retributive fall. Finally, attention must be paid to the historical conflations of rhinos and unicorns at a moment when the latter's symbolism shifted dramatically, as it came to stand alongside England's lion in the 1603 Union of the Crowns. While lions featured in Scottish heraldry from the time of the eleventh-century King Malcolm III, the unicorn did not secure its place in Scotland's royal coat of arms until the fifteenth-century reign of James III, whose choice stemmed from the creature's

[96]On the symbolism and staging of this scene, see Black, "*Macbeth*: The Arming of the Hero," 253–66.
[97]*Hamlet*, ed. Thompson and Taylor, 1.2.197–202.
[98]On Ned Alleyn's tragic "stalking", see Stern, "Performing Genre: Tragic Curtains, Tragic Walking and Tragic Speaking."

associations with strength, purity, and self-sacrifice. Jane Beale's work assesses a range of medieval sources that largely derive from the *Physiologus*, portraying the unicorn as a fierce yet tameable beast whose legendary taming by a virgin reinforced the creature's allegorical likeness to Christ.[99] Variations on the legend, including a number of thirteenth-century Arabic commentaries on the *Physiologus*, also tell of the unicorn suckling at the virgin's breast until lulled to sleep, or of being led to its death by the maid's intoxicating scent.[100] The "mystical hunt for the unicorn" motif, as it is often termed, persisted throughout the centuries and was immortalised in several works of art, notably Domenico Zampieri's fresco *The Maiden and the Unicorn* (c. 1602) at the Palazzo Farnese in Rome, and the late fifteenth-century "Unicorn Tapestries" held at the Met Cloisters in New York. Drawing on Isidore of Seville's sixth-century *Etymologies*, Gerard Legh's *The Accedens of Armory* (1562) describes how the maiden adopted (or was "set" into) a sexually connotative position inside the wood, the unicorn's usual "haunt":

> and shee openeth her lappe, to whom the Unicorne, as seeking rescue from the force of the hunter, yeldeth his head, and leaveth all his fiercenes, & resting himselfe under her protection, sleapeth, untyll he is taken, and slayne.[101]

Guillim provides similar information, while also emphasising the unicorn's martyrological associations in his blazon of the Farringdon Arms in *A Display of Heraldrie*:

> the *Unicorne* is never taken alive … the greatnesse of his mind is such, that he chooseth rather to die then to be taken alive: where in (saith hee) the *Unicorne* and the *valiant minded Souldier* are alike[102]

Lady Macbeth may well have the whiff of a witch about her, but in her curiously "unsexed" state, she also acquires the qualities of the maiden who, in unicorn lore, charmed the hunter's quarry with a uniquely alluring scent. Approaching the castle in Act 1, Scene 6, the king and his entourage are "wooed" by mixed visual and olfactory messages:

> KING: This castle hath a pleasant seat, the air
> Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
> Unto our gentle senses.
> BANQUO: This guest of summer,
> The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,
> By his lov'd mansionry, that the heaven's breath
> Smells wooingly here (1.6.1–6)

Confusing martlets with house-martins and swallows was a common blunder in this period,[103] the consequence of which is visited, in turn, upon the lines' two speakers: Duncan and Banquo. As Julia Reinhard Lupton notes, "the picture of the birds' fragile architecture is riddled with the irony of its own latticed voids. (Duncan after all will very soon be murdered in his own 'pendant bed')".[104] Enticed by the offerings of a

[99]Beale, "The Unicorn as a Symbol for Christ in the Middle Ages," 154–88.
[100]These ideas also sparked much debate amongst the commentators, though it was generally agreed that the hunter's decoy could just as effectively be a beautiful woman or even a prostitute to achieve the same effect. See Contadini, *A World of Beasts: A Thirteenth-century Illustrated Arabic Book on Animals (the Kitāb Na't al-Ḥayawān) in the Ibn Bakhtīshū" Tradition*, 93.
[101]Legh, *The Accedens of Armory*, sig. Miiiv.
[102]Guillim, *A Display of Heraldrie*, 135.
[103]Daly, "Of *Macbeth*, Martlets and other 'Fowles of Heauen'," 24–5.
[104]Lupton, "*Macbeth*'s Martlets: Shakespearean Phenomenologies of Hospitality," 368.

seemingly generous host, we also have the king's chamberlains who, plied with "wine and wassail" (1.7.64–69), are lulled into a "swinish sleep" and bereft of "the receipt of reason" (66–7). Only Duncan, however, earns the honour of a verbal epitaph: his "silver skin laced with his golden blood, / And his gash'd stabs … like a breach in nature" (2.3.113–14). In this brief catalogue of the king's mutilated corpse, Macbeth employs heraldic conventions from which the art of blazoning derives. As Guillim explains in *A Display of Heraldrie*, "The more compendious your *Blazon* is, by so much is it holden the more commendable. … First to beginne with the field, and then proceed to the blazon of the Charge if any be".[105] To adopt Guillim's phraseology, "He beareth *Argent*, and *Or*, several *Voids* together": substantial breaches of the heraldic system, which forbade combining metallic tinctures and allowed no more than one central void in an escutcheon.[106] The grotesque "abatements" visited upon the royal corpse and coat of arms come full circle for Macbeth in Macduff's conferral of a monstrous tyrant's device at the end of the play.

Exit, Minus a Bear

History is replete with pretenders whose lives were tragically ended as a consequence of their meddling with the heraldic system. Like Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1516–1547), whose appropriation of the royal arms of Edward the Confessor led to his unfortunate beheading on Tower Hill, "aloneness" is also the Macbeths' "stock-in-trade".[107] Yet A. C. Bradley observed some time ago that, in his state of isolation, the hero never loses our sympathy:

> There remains something sublime in the defiance with which, even when cheated of his last hope, he faces earth and hell and heaven. Nor would any soul to whom evil was congenial be capable of that heart-sickness which overcomes him when he thinks of the "honour, love, obedience, troops of friends" which "he must not look to have".[108]

Perhaps some of that sympathy also lies in his abandonment by his creaturely companions; mocked and maimed, they return only to strike with the proverbial horn at the hero's final hour. It is ironic that Shakespeare's plays seem to invite us to butcher and wrench them from their origins in order to make sense of the world as we understand it today. Perhaps to indulge in this kind of analysis is to navigate the same traps that Shakespeare repeatedly lays for us in the Scottish play: we hastily unpick ambiguous half-signs and symbols to solve problems of our own making, which ultimately yield only partial answers. The idea that Shakespeare might offer insight into our own ecological and political struggles is compelling and has captivated the attention of many scholars. Yet many voices beyond Shakespeare's speak out against the injustices of animal abuse in this period. Evelyn vividly details the immense suffering endured by the London rhinoceros of 1684, a situation he found as disdainful as the cockpit and other "butcherly Sports".[109] When poor Ganda arrived, stuffed and mounted, at the Papal

[105]Guillim, *A Display of Heraldrie*, 6.
[106]Ibid., 39, 49.
[107]Burrow, Review of *Henry Howard, The Poet Earl of Surrey. A Life*.
[108]Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy: Lectures on Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth*, 305.
[109]*The Diary of John Evelyn*, 1650–1672, 549.

See, Pope Leo X appeared as distressed by the animal's death as by the many lives lost aboard the ship that had brought her to Italian shores. Those brief sparks of sympathy, and even hope, for these creatures, of course, do not outweigh the history of suffering they have endured and continue to experience today. It is perhaps no coincidence that the word "rhinoceros" is such a rare phenomenon within the Shakespearean canon. Easy to overlook and seldom mentioned, the beast has been consigned to little more than an editorial footnote, despite provoking both curiosity and fear. Through remembering the rhino and its affinities with the empires of knowledge and power, heraldry and bloodsport, we may better understand the repercussions of exploiting these animals.

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