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"Was Is Not Is"

"Give unto them beauty for ashes"
(Isaiah 61.1-3)

Katey Workman

Fiction and Ethics professor Maria Ferrández San Miguel, in her analysis of E.L. Doctorow's *Ragtime*, makes a call for the use of resilience theory as a lens through which to explore literature instead of the more common trauma theory. In the former, negative experiences act as "fuel for transformation," as opposed to the latter, where the negative event defines the character or their narrative. Ferrández San Miguel claims that by using a resilience lens rather than a trauma lens, we permit our challenges to refine us instead of remaining trapped by them. As Shakespeare provides a fertile bed from which the seeds of resilience theory may profitably grow, I will employ the theory in the beloved comedy *As You Like It* to show what resilience looks like. Doing so will help to distinguish what makes an individual go through the transformative process of what was—trauma, to what is—strength. In order to add to the growing body of resilience literature, first, I will identify what contemporary social science has recognized as factors that contribute to resilience outcomes. Second, I will explore how these factors manifest themselves on a thematic level in *As You Like It* by examining the trajectories of resilient characters Rosalind and Duke Senior. In doing so, I expect to prove that social science may have a place within the realm of literature. Finally, I make a case for the evidence of these resilience-predicting factors in the formal elements of Shakespeare's works, and in so

doing, prove that literature has a place in the study of the social sciences. In sum, I will examine the profitable marriage of the two fields.

In literary criticism today, the prevalence of trauma theory leads to the widespread neglect of resilience theory. This preference reflects the pervasive plague in contemporary society to ceaselessly meditate on and even relish past pain. The use of trauma theory involves the study of those events which disrupt or change a person's sense of reality (Root 229), and like much of popular psychology, is informed by the work of Sigmund Freud. Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, and Geoffrey Hartman furthered the use of the theory in literature in the 1990s and it has since only grown in popularity (Mambrol). While this well-established literary perspective acts as a starting place, my assertion is that focusing on those traumatic, life-changing events and their psychological repercussions ensures that victims stay victims. Their wounds are revisited and reopened retelling after retelling instead of being given the chance to heal. They are forced to relive their trauma repeatedly in an attempt at catharsis and hope of abreaction (release of repressed emotion by reliving it). With traumatic experiences as our focal point, those who have suffered gain sympathy, as well they should, but they lose power and the ability to overcome their challenges because either they, or those who make their situations the object of study, are occupied in assuring they are shown compassion they're due rather than focusing on how not to suffer the same crisis again. They insist on keeping themselves, or in the case of scholars, those they study, eternally defined by their trial. Fortunately, stories have the power to solidify our identities (Neimeyer and Levitt 50). Therefore, by sharing our very real trials while seeing them from the perspective of growth, we harness the power of narrative and begin to rewrite our own stories.

I do not suggest anything improper or wrong with a preliminary focus on understanding the original crisis. Coming to terms with a past experience is an essential part of the healing process (Kübler-Ross and Kessler 24). However, it is only the first step in the process of overcoming. Dwelling on the damage is like looking at a demolition but making no plans for reconstruction. Understanding how the wreckage came about, coupled with a perspective on how to make it better in the future, is a principle as applicable to psychology as it is to construction.

I. What is Resilience?

The key to understanding resilience theory is to first understand the construct of resilience. Resilience is a cross-disciplinary concept. Though its origins lie in the realm of physical science, the principle has been applied as widely as community disaster response, older-adult dietetics, and sewing. We will explore the varied applications of the term within various fields, as a sampling will yield a richer understanding of the concept itself.

The concept of resilience seems first to appear in the discussion of textiles—"The ability [of fibers and fabrics] to recover from deformation" (Dillon 207) and "the rapidity and extent to which wool springs back to its original size and formation after hand compression" (Winson 386). The physical sciences use the term resilience to describe the trait of a spring: "the ability to store energy and deflect elastically under a load without breaking or being deformed" (Gordon qtd. in Norris et al 127). The image evoked is powerful. Ecologists discuss resilience in terms of ecosystems under duress that exhibit a "positive adaptation in response to adversity; it is not to absence of vulnerability, not an inherent characteristic, and not static" (Waller 292). Social scientists apply these principles to groups of people, for instance: "a community's capacities, skills, and knowledge that allow it to participate fully in recovery from disasters." They also apply it to individuals, for example: "the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances" (Masten et al. 426). Applications may even reach a municipal register: "a sustainable network of physical systems and human communities, capable of managing extreme events; during disaster, both must be able to survive and function under extreme stress" (Godschalk 2003). Indeed, some argue that resilience is inherent to our DNA, as "it accounts for our success to survive and thrive in utterly adverse conditions during evolutionary times" (Konner qtd. in Ferrández 148). However, the degree to which resilience is an agentive process versus an inherent evolutionary product is still under debate (Waller 292). Whichever the case, for a person to be resilient, in essence, means to have experienced difficulty and to have made it through and to be stronger on the other side. Merely possessing positive traits or outcomes cannot alone qualify as resilience. Nor is resilience simply experiencing hardship. For a narrative to represent true resilience, an individual needs first to experience difficulty and to emerge on the other side of the difficulty with positive outcomes.

The concept of resilience is broad in its disciplinary applicability and is therefore unsurprisingly broad in the factors that contribute to it. The following is only a sampling of the many factors that make possible the development of resilience: social or family support or the support of the community (Root 245; McKim 260), positive emotionality (in other words the tendency to react positively to things), spirituality, optimism, sublimation (redirecting one's energy), being needed by others, past experiences of overcoming, experiences of self-reliance and survival in challenging environments, achievement orientation (Mayer and Faber qtd. in Ferrández 148), empathy (Denhardt and Denhardt 335), finding humor in the situation (Rutter qtd. in Connor and Davidson 77), mindfulness (Thompson 220), etc. Each of the aforementioned qualities is linked to helping individuals not only survive but thrive in the face of difficulty.

Resilience theory is the legitimate child of two star-crossed subjects—literary analysis and social science. It is the application of the concept of resilience to literature. The reason this marriage of subjects works is because each offers benefits that the other does not possess. The benefit of using literature as a case study in resilience rather than, say, reading a meta-analysis of psychological research on the topic, is that literature affords a more accessible emotional dimension. And such an emotional appeal means that the central message (in our case: how does one overcome difficulty and develop resilience?) becomes internalized and personalized. Stories engage the senses and offer a sort of mental rehearsal, making both visceral reaction and mental retention more likely, thus rendering the process of learning most effective. A branch of psychology, called narrative psychology, confirms this thinking. Experts Robert Neimeyer and Heidi Levitt explain that narratives are the optimal study subjects because of the “ubiquity of storytelling” (64). Stories are central to human interaction—they “instruct, inform, entertain, and challenge” (Neimeyer and Levitt 47). They are not only omnipresent but ever-useful in human coping endeavors. More will be said on this later.

Shakespearean actor Stephen Wolfert, as well as trained clinicians, have caught on to this beneficial coupling and are finding fresh and creative ways to help people work through their difficulties. There is a growing phenomenon of treating trauma by mimetic induction—in other words, acting things out. In this exercise of one's therapeutic imagination (Ali 7), war veterans, convicts, and those from disadvantaged backgrounds find psychological succor in the process of reading, acting, and performing literature and

theatre. When we read a story or play or narrative of whatever kind, we are free to engage with the text to the extent we can or that we choose, or we can leave it alone if or when the material becomes too intense for our sensitivities. We are allowed to go through what the characters do—but from the safety of our own circumstances. We can disengage when needed and analyze as we see fit.

Now, in an attempt to see whether social science principles can be profitably applied to literature, I will apply the resiliency predicting traits of social support, sublimation, humor in the face of stress, optimism, a necessity to help dependents, and empathy to Shakespeare's *As You Like It*.

II. Shakespeare as a Case Study of Resilience Theory: Thematic Level

It seems clear to me that the marriage between the concept of resilience and the works of William Shakespeare may be of enormous mutual benefit. Shakespeare, in his works, provides us with not only the depth of human experience that facilitates a study of human behavior but the breadth to give the study variety and universal applicability. Shakespeare's worthiness to provide the subjects for this qualitative case study is affirmed by scholars such as Harold Bloom who, risking hyperbole, entitled his book, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*, asserting boldly that Shakespeare's comprehension of humankind is unparalleled. And yet, what resilience theory offers us now is the chance to broaden even Shakespeare's scope by using empirical social science as a new and yet untired perspective from which to analyze, and hopefully enhance, his iconic literature.

However, some may reasonably question the viability of using a Shakespearian comedy as the object of our study on trauma and resilience instead of one of his tragedies. In part, this is explained in what was previously mentioned—in order to be considered resilient one must not only experience difficulty but come out stronger post-crisis. Shakespeare's tragedies end in death, while the comedies end with felicitous resolution. If what Wilde suggests in his *Decay of Lying* is true—that life does reflect art—most would elect, and resilience scholars might prefer, to have their lives reflect a comedy rather than a tragedy (10).

Additionally, as we attempt to use the examples offered in literature as a template after which to model our own real-life resilience, one may still wonder, why use a comedy which is full of fantastical elements? With attacks

by lions, love (and marriage) at first sight, cross-dressing, a setting devoid of factual historical or geographical references, etc.—how could something so unrealistic inform real life? The answer is in the story's appeal. Siding again with Wilde's claim that life reflects art, it may be that any work so delightfully attractive (thanks in large part to those fantastical elements) draws readers into the art. Readers may be so drawn to the work, in fact, that aspects of life may begin to reflect aspects of the work in many respects. In this sense, both Touchstone and D.J. Palmer may be on to something when they conclude that "the truest poetry is the most feigning"—often we find truths, realities, in the most fabricated or unnatural settings (Palmer 40).

The play houses many characters who experience hardship and get through it, making it difficult to choose which characters to focus on. However, for their centrality to the plot and likability which makes their resilience trajectories more memorable, we will discuss only two: Rosalind and Duke Senior.

Rosalind

Despite Shakespeare professor and ecofeminist Catherine Diamond asserting early in her essay that Rosalind "suffers no hardship and is not responsible to anyone but herself" (91), Diamond seems to contradict herself when later she states, "Rosalind is able to utilize her full being to convert whatever obstacle fate throws in her way into a positive benefit for someone: she not only evades negative consequences but finds a way to prosper" (94). This latter description is as good a definition of resilience as any—not only surviving but thriving. If we are assuming then, along with Diamond's later definition, that Rosalind is indeed resilient, we must also assume that she did in fact suffer from hardship from "fate thrown" obstacles (94).

When we first meet Rosalind, we immediately learn she is depressed about her father's recent banishment. "I show more mirth than I am mistress of . . . Unless, you could teach me to forget a banished father, you must not learn me how to remember any extraordinary pleasure" (Shakespeare 1.2.3–5). Her father, Duke Senior, was obviously a "good father" (1.3.227) and of a more loveable personality than her uncle, Duke Frederick. The latter's "rough and envious disposition" is evident in his unprovoked ejection of Rosalind from the court (1.3.30–1). The difficulty of these two primary trials is clear in her despair expressed just after:

CELIA. Be not more grieved than I am.

ROSALIND. I have more cause. (Shakespeare 1.3.81–82)

Later, Rosalind is hurt when her own father does not recognize her when they meet in the Forest of Arden (Shakespeare 3.4). These trials alone—losing family and losing home—would be hard to endure for anyone, even more so within the short span of time allotted by the theatre.

Thus, we can feel confident that Rosalind *has* experienced hardship, and that evidenced by her winning her love and seeing her family reunited, she overcomes it as the “most admirable personage in all of Shakespeare” (Bloom 207). But how does she overcome? Among others that may also apply, three characteristics of a resilient individual come to the foreground: social and family support, sublimation, and humor in the face of stress.

Despite the familial loss and betrayal which she experiences, Rosalind is blessed with family support in the form of her cousin Celia. In Act 1, Scene 3, Duke Frederick exiles Rosalind, and it is Celia who intervenes: “Now I know her. If she be a traitor / why, so am I” (lines 61–62). When the Duke persists, Celia declares, “Pronounce that sentence then on me, my liege; I cannot live out of her company” (Shakespeare 1.3.74–75)—refusing to leave her wronged cousin’s side. Critics like Julie Crawford searching for fresh feminist readings of the play comment on their cousin relationship as homoerotic and potentially incestuous (103). While there is ample evidence of a tight bond between the women, I am inclined to side with Harold Bloom who is skeptical of a homoerotic Rosalind, as “her sexual desires entirely center upon Orlando, a Herculean wrestler and by no means a diffident young man” (208). What I *do* think Crawford gets right is the capacity of that familial bond (they are “dearer than sisters” (1.2.222)) which acts as protection against threatening outside forces (109).

Second, Rosalind is gifted at sublimation—modifying a natural impulse or sentiment into something productive (Gay 1992). While initially upset at being banished to the forest, and assuming the guise of a man for self-protection, Rosalind quickly turns her considerable energies to the acquisition of land (Shakespeare 2.4) and, more importantly, the love lessons of Orlando (3.3). The acquisition of land is a shrewd and proactive move, one that is contrasted by her travel fellows (Celia complains; Touchstone whines). It is also more productive than Orlando’s first attempt at finding comfort in the forest where he accosts the peaceful (and unrecognized) Duke Senior

and company. Orlando enters with force, threatening violence in the case of non-compliance. So, while Orlando indeed keeps busy rather than sitting around waiting for his luck to change (which certainly merits a measure of praise), accosting peaceful forest-dwellers would likely not fall under the sublimation tenet: finding a “higher” or more socially acceptable activity (Deri 1939). And, in the case of the love lessons, Rosalind loses no time in beginning to train the young Orlando in the ways of love. The love that Rosalind teaches him is more substantial than that sensual style of Audrey and Touchstone, more realistic than the whirlwind courtship of Celia and Oliver, but more fantastical than the unrequited love of Silvius to Phoebe. And though her love is distinctly different from theirs, in another act of sublimation, Rosalind also turns to helping Silvius and Phoebe begin to love each other, believing it in the best interest of both parties. Rosalind chooses to channel her frustrations at Silvius and Phoebe into the more productive task of uniting them, and she expended her sexual tension with Orlando toward preparing him for marriage rather than wallowing that they cannot yet be together.

Third, Rosalind has the ability to find humor in the face of stress. Though Jacques and Touchstone are the characters primarily credited with the play’s humor, it is Rosalind alone whose unique employment of humor helps her to overcome challenges. Rosalind’s humor is more subtle and cheeky than the crassness of Touchstone and more optimistic than that of the melancholy Jacques. However, this supremacy of wit never leads to arrogance over her companions—she jokes around with Touchstone (Shakespeare 1.2) and converses cleverly with Jacques (4.1). Her lightness has the dual ability to add levity to the situation as well as address serious matters. When chastising Orlando for showing up an hour late of his promised time, she says, “I had as lief be wooed of a snail . . . ay a snail, for though he comes slowly, he carries his house on his head—a better jointure, I think, than you make a woman. Besides, he brings his destiny with him” (4.1.42). Rosalind achieves at once a stinging rebuke of Orlando’s unacceptable behavior and the avoidance of melodrama by metaphor, which makes Orlando’s participation in the exchange less intimidating, and also the hit to his pride less direct. Rosalind’s playfulness is also clear in the love lessons with Orlando as she plays Ganymede playing Rosalind. She coyly drops hints of her true identity, but carefully maintains her façade, evidently well enough to keep Orlando duped and intrigued.

Duke Senior

The Duke has unquestionably suffered hardship as well. He is banished to the woods, which, depending on the production, may entail harsh living conditions—The Royal Shakespeare Company’s 2009 production depicts Arden as wintry and frozen. However, even in the productions which show Arden as a charming refuge (*As You Like It* 2013; 2019), one can assume being banished there would prove a challenge not only because the Duke is used to court life, but because of the manner in which his banishment was accomplished. His younger brother Duke Frederick betrayed him, usurped his political power, and attempted to slander his name in public by unjustly calling Duke Senior a “traitor” before exiling him to the forest. How is Duke Senior, then, able to “translate stubbornness of fortune into so sweet a style,” as Amiens praises (Shakespeare 2.1.1)? Just as with *Rosalind*, many traits may apply, but three characteristics of a resilient individual are particularly evident: optimism, necessity to help dependents, and empathy.

First, the Duke is overtly optimistic. He experiences challenges but elects to see the opportunity or beauty in the situation. Trauma researchers show that optimism is among the strongest predictors of resilience, in fact, and is an even greater predictor of positive outcomes than the traumatic experience itself (Segovia et al.). Duke Senior exemplifies this: “Are these woods not more free from peril than the envious court? . . . And this our life, exempt from public haunt, Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, Sermons in stones, and *good in every thing*.” (Shakespeare 2.1.15–17; emphasis added). Instead of focusing on the comforts of the court now out of reach, he sees and intentionally emphasizes the positives of his difficult situation. He does not mope about missing out on the intrigue of public life or find terror in trees, boredom in running brooks, or sadness in stones, as he might have done, frankly, as might have been anticipated of someone accustomed to cushy court life. His intentional optimism allows him to see the beauty that already exists around him, whether or not he elected to be there in the first place. And his optimism is contagious, as his company seems to be in as upbeat a mood as he is.

Second, he is burdened with the necessity to help dependents. Our resilience research informs us this can help one remain resilient because care for others will motivate you to action and even help you forget your own troubles. Like *Rosalind* says to *Celia*, “I will forget the condition of my estate

to rejoice in yours" (Shakespeare 1.2.11). The Duke is banished to Arden with some people from his court, as the stage directions for Act 2, Scene 1 make clear: "Enter Duke Senior, Amiens, and two or three other lords dressed like Foresters" (Shakespeare 1706). As the benevolent leader of his outcast group, the Duke does not simply send the others to do his bidding, but works alongside them: "shall *we* go and kill us venison?" (2.1.21). He calls them his "co-mates" and "brothers in exile" (2.1.1). Taking care of individuals gives him purpose and helps him to think less of his personal trial.

Third, The Duke shows empathy. When the misunderstanding Orlando enters the forest-refuge scene with threats of violence for want of food, the Duke does not react with requited hostility. Whereas Jacques responds with sarcasm, Duke Senior says gently and calmly, "Art thou thus boldened, man, by thy distress? Or else a rude despiser of good manners, That in civility thou seem'st so empty? . . . What would you have? Your gentleness shall force more than your force move us to gentleness . . . Sit down and feed, and welcome to our table" (Shakespeare 2.7.101–104). His calmness disarms Orlando, and his gentle wit sounds more like amused avuncularity than the distress of someone finding themselves on the wrong end of a sword. With characteristic patience, the Duke first understands why Orlando would be acting the way he is (because of his distress) and then fills his need (sit down and feed). Indeed, The Duke and his company are able to understand fully where Orlando might be coming from, having just been uprooted to the forest themselves ("True is it that we have seen better days . . ." (Shakespeare 2.7.119)). This empathy, and its ensuing collectedness, helps the Duke survive this near-violent encounter with Orlando and wins him friendships which contribute to making bearable the life of exile.

III. Shakespeare as a Case Study of Resilience Theory: Formal Level

Having established the thematic foundation for resilience in *As You Like It*, this section will explore how the formal elements of the play further the case for *As You Like It* as a resilience narrative. I hope to demonstrate the utility of literature in illustrating principles of social science, namely self-regulation through rhythm and breathing, sublimation and humor-finding through theatrical performance, and cognitive reappraisal demonstrated through metatheatricity.

It is impossible to separate an interpretation of a play from the theatrical and performance choices made by its crew and cast. The inflection an actor lends to a particular line may change the meaning of their words entirely. For example, Katy Stephens leverages the following short lines in such a way that deepens Rosalind's character:

ROSALIND. I met the Duke yesterday, and had much question with him.

He asked me of what parentage I was; I told him of as good as he, so he

laughed and let me go. But what talk we of fathers when there is

such a man as Orlando? (Shakespeare 3.4.30)

In the last sentence, she speaks with overenthusiasm so as to cause both Celia and the audience to redirect their focus from Orlando to the recent run-in with Duke Senior. Katy Stephens speaks the lines in a way that makes clear the pain caused by Rosalind's exchange with her father, but, in order to side-step the vulnerability this exposes, she quickly changes the topic to a lighter one (Stephens). This is but one example of what makes theatre such an interesting object in our search for resilience on a formal level because it means that we have as source material not only the printed words but every production ever performed of a Shakespeare play.

The first formal feature that *As You Like It* and others of his plays possess that contribute to resilience is that the verse of Shakespeare's writing possesses a rhythmic quality that requires regulation. This regulation may have therapeutic and healing qualities. Stephan Wolfert, founder of the nonprofit De-Cruit: Treating Trauma through Shakespeare and Science, had served in the army for six years when he saw a friend killed right in front of him: "I lost it . . . I was in an absolute drunken stupor. I went off the deep end" ("CryHavoc: Stephan Wolfert"). While AWOL, Stephan found his way to a Montana theatre production of *Richard III*. He said, "This play had such a profound impact on me that I ended up leaving the army and going to graduate school for acting" ("CryHavoc: Stephan Wolfert"). With only Wonder Bread, peanut butter, and a cooler of beer, Stephan began to change his life, using Shakespeare as a way to deal with the trauma of war in productive ways. When asked why he believes Shakespeare seems to have a unique impact, he mentions thematic relevance: "His plays are infused with the veteran's experience" ("CryHavoc: Stephan Wolfert"). So it is the content

that is helpful, yes, but also the plays' formal elements: rhythm. Wolfert described:

Iambic pentameter is actually helpful for the veterans who come to De-Cruit . . . when we work with the veterans, they'll try to share an experience that has them so buttoned up that I'll see them physically shut down. I'll hand them a Shakespeare speech, not only does the Shakespeare poetry provide a language for the many emotions, not only that but he puts it in iambic pentameter—perfect human rhythm that helps regulate our emotions so that we can continue to share them out-loud. So, with every line of verse . . . we keep speaking and breathing, speaking and breathing. It keeps us present in the moment and physically in our bodies which are the two things that go first when we remember traumatic experiences. We tend to dissociate, but he forces us to stay in there. (“CryHavoc: Stephan Wolfert”)

The rhythm of Shakespeare's verse imposes a measure of regulation, which though external, serves to help control and regulate internal impulses. So when veterans, or whomever it is performing Shakespeare, feel the beginnings of dysregulation as the result of their trauma, they can rely on the steadiness and regularity of the rhythmic verse to proceed and conquer their dysregulation. Wolfert goes on to explain why the breath control required in delivering lines, especially those of Shakespeare, proves so important for military veterans in particular:

The military uses breath and heartbeat to wire us for war. When we learn to fire the weapon . . . only part of the breath is for an accurate shot. The other part is to keep us from thinking about who or what we're shooting. The manual teaches us to breathe in, exhale, breath out, squeeze the trigger between the heartbeats, then take a breath in, acquire the next target. They use breath as part of the rhythm of firing. We use breath as part of the rhythm for marching and singing cadence. We use breath as part of the rhythm for nearly everything that we do. So, it's a natural segue into Shakespeare to say, okay, let's use breath, and rhythm and heartbeat and unpack all this stuff that's going on inside of our heads and inside of our bodies. And there happens to be some brilliant poetry that expresses exactly what we're going through. (“CryHavoc: Stephan Wolfert”)

And so aside from the thematic relevance of many of Shakespeare's works to traumatized war-veterans, the breath control honed in practicing and performing Shakespearean theatre can be used to practice self-control, focus,

and conquering nerves, just as it was used to help soldiers get “wire[d] for war” in the first place (“CryHavoc: Stephan Wolfert”).

Wolfert is not the first to address the connection between military and poetic meter specifically nor the first to discuss the mutually beneficial connection of literature in bringing about social science phenomena generally. Meredith Martin discusses the capacity of early English poetry to ignite patriotism, citing an early poetry review claiming that Thomas Davis’ poem “My Native Land” (1867) “could animate the impulses—the pulses, even—of the Irish peasantry, infusing their veins with nationalist blood and bringing the country to life and glory” (106). Nor is Wolfert the first to explore the specific tandem of trauma and poetry. World War I poets, including Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, were taught to narrate traumatic experiences in order to “move through” them (131). More will be said on narrative therapy hereafter, but an important way that these doctors applied their concept of narrative therapy was with poetic meter. Martin describes how, after the trauma individuals had experienced in war, “Meter as a stable category was illusory. To recover from trauma, through a method of therapy provided by the very idea of ‘meter’ that had betrayed them, was to acknowledge the collective agreement—sometimes manifest as an individual desperate need—to believe in meter’s stability anyway” (132). So meter was a grounding force—a return to convention obliterated in wartime. Further, trauma for some World War I veterans manifested itself as a linguistic disorder—stammering or aphasia. Martin remarks, “success of ‘ordered activities’ was particularly remarkable for linguistic disorders. Rhythmically controlled time became an empowering practice for patients adept at composing metrical verses; composing in meter, for many patients trained in poetic craft, was a new kind of therapeutic activity” (131).

Apart from the relatable content and regulated style of Shakespeare’s written word, Wolfert talks about the benefit of participating in the theatrical medium as particularly therapeutic as well. He speaks of the similarity between theatre and war: terror, fear, and camaraderie, in particular. He expresses that both war and theatre are extreme pressure situations in which people experience a fight or flight response. What theatre provides, however, is a “container of enough security where they know they won’t die, and so are allowed to jump in” (“CryHavoc: Stephan Wolfert”). Rosalind herself is an embodiment of the healing nature of acting—she finds strength and freedom as she dresses as the boy Ganymede in the forest. She and Celia

hope to be free from physical danger, “I’ll put myself in poor and mean attire, / and with a kind of umber besmirch my face / the like do you, so shall we pass along / and never stir assailants” (Shakespeare 1.3.102), hoping her manly appearance might fend off any would-be attackers (Diamond 92). Taking on the persona of a man, she feels the responsibility to be brave, saying that “doublet and hose ought to show itself courageous to petticoat. Therefore, courage, good Aliena” (2.4.6). We have already proved that the drive to care for others is a component of resilience, but taking on the role of protector seems to endow Rosalind with bravery she did not think was hers before. Finally, dressing up and acting the part of a man grants Rosalind a couple of allowances described by ecofeminist Catherine Diamond thusly: “To avoid unwanted male attention, she first disguises herself as male, but once exiled to the forest, she does not stop at protection, for she then uses her androgynous disguise to get close to her unwary prey” (Diamond 92). Rosalind is enabled to become close to Orlando and to prepare him for a committed relationship in a way that might have otherwise been impossible. Dressed up, Rosalind finds herself free from social bounds that may have previously inhibited her (Garber 104).

The idea of resilience is again supported by the text in its use of meta-theatricality. *As You Like It* is highly self-referential. Shakespeare loves calling attention to theatre and verse within his own plays and verses—think the play-within-a-play in *Hamlet*, *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and *Love’s Labour’s Lost*. However, *As You Like It* may be the Bard’s best example of meta-theatricality. Various characters draw attention to the idea of play, appearing aware that they are in one. Duke Senior says, “Thou seest we are not all alone unhappy. This wide and universal theatre presents more woeful pageants than the scene wherein we play” (Shakespeare 2.7.135–138). The Duke’s comment sets the stage perfectly for perhaps the best known meta-theatrical moment in Shakespeare, Jacques’ “All the world’s a stage” (2.7.138–165). He asserts,

JACQUES. All the world’s a stage,
 and all the men and women merely players.
 They have their exits and their entrances,
 and one man in his time plays many parts,
 his acts being seven ages.

As he describes the stages of man, Jacques makes his most audacious assertion—that our lives are lived for show. We are all actors playing different roles at different times.

This meta-theatricality achieves two helpful ends: first, it argues that we all inhabit a narrative. By claiming that we are all characters in our own dramas or comedies, Jacques and Shakespeare help us begin to see that perhaps the events that occur in our lives can all be circumscribed to a personal meta-narrative. This allows us to see others as parts of our story and see even small events as meaningful moments in a narrative, potentially all leading up to something greater. This is a paradigm employed by narrative psychologists in helping treat trauma patients (Neimeyer and Levitt; Martin 131). By training individuals to analyze both process (internal, external, and reflexive) and structure (who, what, when, where, why, so what) of the micro-narratives they tell regarding isolated experiences, individuals become more able to find meaning and create an identity from them. Strung together, these meaningful micro-narratives create a more meaningful “macro-narrative” which lends coherence to an individual’s sense of self (Neimeyer and Levitt 48).

Secondly, what Jacques achieves in all his meta-theatrical musing is another key factor of resilience—cognitive reappraisal. Cognitive reappraisal means reframing a situation, to think of it in another way, especially in order to alter its emotional impact (Feder et al. 36). Take, as an example, being reprimanded by an employer. Though potentially painful, the individual may choose to see this criticism as a pathway towards improved performance and thus feel differently about the interaction. Ferrández clarifies: “In the context of traumatic stress, [cognitive reappraisal] may imply changing one’s assessment to a more positive interpretation of the event” (161). In other words, cognitive shifts, triggered by these meta-theatrical speeches with double meanings and multi-layered implications, provide good practice for the viewer to think about what they are experiencing from multiple perspectives. This practice concretizes neural pathways and may make it easier for the viewer to then employ these skills, which are helpful to resilience, in their own lives.

Shakespeare scaffolds cognitive reappraisal for his audience. At the end of the speech comes Jacques’ melancholy bottom line: “Last scene of all, / That ends this strange eventful history, / Is second childishness, and mere oblivion / Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything” (Shakespeare

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2.7.162–165). Upon finishing his nihilistic perspective of the end of human days, what happens next is significant:

(Re-enter ORLANDO, with ADAM)

DUKE SENIOR. Welcome. Set down your venerable burthen,
And let him feed.

ORLANDO. I thank you most for him.

ADAM. So had you need:

I scarce can speak to thank you for myself.

DUKE SENIOR. Welcome; fall to: I will not trouble you

As yet, to question you about your fortunes.

Give us some music; and, good cousin, sing.

...

DUKE SENIOR. If that you were the good Sir Rowland's son,

As you have whisper'd faithfully you were,

...

Be truly welcome hither . . .

Good old man,

Thou art right welcome as thy master is.

Support him by the arm. Give me your hand,

And let me all your fortunes understand. (Shakespeare 2.7)

This exchange foregrounds Duke Senior, himself not a young man. Here he shows us that age does not leave one “sans everything” as Jacques asserts—he still possesses joviality, generosity, and goods enough to share with the newcomers. In so doing, he gains both their respect and companionship—getting more than he gives away. Adam, the pronounced “old man” of the play (Shakespeare 2.3.56), is not left “sans everything” either. Instead of wasting away (as Jacques might have predicted), he is carefully attended to by his loyal quasi-son Orlando, given support and encouragement by these strangers in the woods. On behalf of the audience, Shakespeare is reappraising the end of man's stages. Instead of leaving us with the hopeless brand of melancholy Jacques adores, Shakespeare helps us to see man's seventh scene

as one of companionship and fulfillment. And simultaneously he illustrates what the social scientists assert—that family, friends, and community play a crucial role in an individual’s ability to be resilient.

In closing, life always has been, and always will be, difficult. Some individuals suffer traumatic experiences that are foundation-shaking. These individuals may find solace and healing by focusing not on the trauma itself but on using their experiences and their stories in order to grow stronger—“*was is not is*” as Celia teaches (Shakespeare 3.4; emphasis added). Shakespeare is a master storyteller whose stories illustrate resilience. Since life reflects art, searching for these resilience narratives in his works becomes not merely a pastime but a crucial coping mechanism. Likewise, each of us is the author of our own stories. By consuming art rich with examples of resilient characters, our lives will eventually reflect the patterns that we see and three things are achieved: social science is enlivened, literature is enriched, and most importantly, individuals are healed. Lives can, like Isaiah attests, turn *to beauty from ashes*.

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