

SHAKESPEARE'S SOCIAL WORK

From Displacement to Placement in Twelfth Night

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SURFING WITH SHAKESPEARE

I begin with a dialogue, but not from Shakespeare:

JULIA LUPTON: I love this passage in *Twelfth Night* where the Captain describes the shipwrecked Sebastian tying himself to a broken mast “that lived upon the sea” in order to survive the shipwreck. What does that language evoke for you as a social worker?

ADEN MICHAEL: Actually, that’s very close to an image we frequently use when working with clients in distress. Of course we don’t talk about broken masts. We talk about *surfing*. Surfing involves the surfer, the surf board, and the sea. Surfing requires that you understand and frame limits, and also that you respond to your environment. The water can either drown you or push you to shore.¹

I am sitting at a small table in my house with Aden Michael, who works in mental health crisis management for the City of Los Angeles. We are here to talk about *Twelfth Night*. I want to know how Aden’s work and life experience might help me understand and identify survival and adaptation strategies in a play about real and emotional shipwreck, family separation, and the need to rely on others to forge new attachments and find supportable living and employment situations. In this chapter, I integrate close readings of *Twelfth Night* with insights gained from observing theatrical work, teaching Shakespeare

in community settings, and interviewing non-theatrical specialists like Aden. From my observations of rehearsals and my work with actors at the University of California, Irvine, I have come to respect the ways that theatre performs a kind of “social work” by building disciplines of cooperation and imaginative co-creation for its practitioners while modelling habits of interdependence and responsive judgment for its audiences. These skills and capacities are also at stake in the plays themselves; for example, the dramatic situations of crisis, separation, and survival depicted in *Twelfth Night* reflect the efforts of human adaptation, cooperation, and care in situations of vulnerability and exposure managed by theatre as an art form. What is *Twelfth Night*’s “social work” – that is, how does the play work through acts of sustaining succor, individual and community enskilment, familial repair, and the search for meaningful placement after traumatic displacement? In this chapter, I bring my own expertise as a Shakespeare scholar into dialogue with the knowledges practised by people in other fields in order to better understand what existential life-skills literature and theatre reflect upon, evaluate, and transmit.

I capture this range of functions under the term *capacity building*, which I first encountered in my work running an under-resourced humanities centre. In the non-profit sector, capacity building fosters the skills and knowledges that allow for individuals, organizations, communities, or nations to flourish on their own terms.² Capacity-building techniques include skills inventories and assets mapping, focusing on questions such as what resources do you already have, who are your allies, and how can you work more effectively toward your goals using what is available to you? Capacity building refuses a deficit or pathologizing model by starting instead from “the viewpoint that all communities have assets, skills, and resources ... [but that] people need assistance in the identification of strengths and interferences, and in being able to see how these are not idiosyncratic, but fit into wider patterns created by social forces” (Smyth 2011, 114). How might patterns of capacity building give us a new appreciation of the social work dramatized in works of art and performed by theatre as an institution? And how might we use such insights to build bridges between literary study and other forms of employment that could be meaningful and empowering to college students, colleagues in other fields, and community readers?

Aden Michael was my second interviewee about *Twelfth Night*. My inquiry into Shakespeare’s social work began after a talk I gave

on Shakespeare and Scripture for a local retirement community, where I had spoken on *King Lear* and the Ten Commandments. Afterwards, my host, Sharon Roszia, told me that, in her own long career as a social worker, author, and activist in the challenging field of open adoption, she had encountered similar problems around anger, injury, forgiveness, and acknowledgment, and had arrived at ways of working through these problems that resembled some of the moments I had analyzed in Shakespeare's play.³ I was intrigued. Sharon had suddenly shifted in my relational portfolio from another community rep requesting a fun and informative Shakespeare talk to a colleague and professional with her own fund of knowledge, experience, and wisdom. We met for coffee a week later, and she agreed to set up a meeting with friends and colleagues involved in different aspects of adoption counselling. Together, we read scenes from *Twelfth Night* and *The Winter's Tale* in tandem with worksheets and resources from their professional work.⁴ I went away not only with a wealth of insights into the social and familial dynamics of the plays, but also with a new commitment to seeking out opportunities to read Shakespeare with informants from other walks of life.

I later expanded my interview set to students in a summer bridge program to UC Irvine; these students were entering college for the first time and were participating in this co-curricular activity as a form of collective mentoring and skills building. I also interviewed Sam Nasstrom, a young transgender floral artist, who generously connected his experience as a queer designer in the gig economy to Viola's willow-cabin fantasia.⁵ I interviewed actor-activist Lisa Wolpe in the context of her work as a capacity builder engaging with communities of women, gay, queer, and transgender actors. Finally, social worker Brynn Bodi read a draft of this chapter and made additional comments.⁶ My hope is that, through these mutual exchanges of knowledge and insight among readers from different walks of life, we can disclose the plays' multidimensional cultivation of human capacities for attachment, invention, and care in response to abuse, betrayal, and exploitation.

SHIPWRECK WITH SOCIAL WORKERS

Act 1, Scene 2 of *Twelfth Night* launches the play's enterprise of capacity building. The scene lays out the uneven landscape of virtues in Illyria: the special challenges, talents, and needs of Viola; the

virtuous mirror of her situation provided by Sebastian's surfing; and the role of the Captain in helping Viola survive and flourish while also drawing out the capacities of others to mend and patch their shared world. Ships and shipwrecks are always opportunities for Shakespeare to explore what anthropologist of design Tim Ingold (2000) calls a "taskscape," which frames the built environment as a congeries of affordances, traffic patterns, and networked communication. The opening of *The Tempest* explores the ship, and by extension the stage, as a taskscape, insofar as the different members of the crew interact with each other, the stacked and outfitted workspace of the ship, and the tidal challenges of the ocean in order to keep the journey on track. Watching the scene being blocked for our local Shakespeare festival reminded me of the cooperative rhythms required to create theatre. Our director, Eli Simon, was the pilot. He oversaw the work of his cast and looked for larger patterns to clarify the action, but he was also soliciting the actors' own improvisational skills. Rushing en masse from one side of the stage to the other to communicate the effects of a ship being tipped by massive waves; rolling along the floor to express the force of the pitching vessel; hanging onto a central mast that would soon be lowered in a great crash: all of this involved stage design, sound design, fight choreography, vocal work, and stage management. (See Linda McJannet's account in chapter 6 of the virtuoso ensemble work that practitioners of physical theatre have brought to stagings of *The Tempest*.) I was also fascinated to witness how blocking this key scene required the courage, attention, care, trust, and respect of everyone in the room, from the acting ensemble to stage management, who must work together to sustain the fiction of the playworld while keeping each other safe. Rehearsal, I realized, is a *mise en scène* of capacity building.

In the parallel scene in *Twelfth Night*, the storm has already occurred, and Viola and the crew find themselves on shore. There are only two speaking parts, and the choreographic and design requirements are far simpler than in *The Tempest*. Yet it too is a scene of struggle and survival. We might compare Viola's predicament to any number of situations in which capacity-building techniques might be employed by a mentor, advocate, or caseworker – in this case the Captain – helping a client or patient get back on her feet. Aden, herself a refugee from civil war in Eritrea, connected immediately with the image of Viola and Sebastian as young persons displaced and separated by family loss, abuse, deportation, or disaster.⁷ Taking

up less extreme cases of distress, we might think of Viola as a young person seeking an appropriate apprenticeship, like the boy actor who would have played Viola or like any number of aspiring and vulnerable young people, male and female, seeking service in noble households, as Shakespeare might have done in his lost years, or, to bring this into our own circles of advisement, as an English major or graduate student considering different forms of employment. Finally, we might consider casting Viola-Sebastian as a homeless transgender teen who is seeking their place in a world whose norms don't accommodate their sense of self.⁸ In interviewee Sam Nasstrom's words, "I really get how Viola has to engage in queer world-building throughout the play, and how exposed he is when he first arrives in Illyria. I've been there." Orphan, refugee, apprentice, or gender outlier: each of these scenarios offers a possible framework for community staging and collective reading. The point is not to determine one as more fitting than another, but instead to begin to locate rhythms of duress, capacity, and repair that reverberate across a range of situations, vocations, and epochs.

The scene begins with Viola's sense of profound spatial and existential disorientation: "What country, friends, is this?" (Shakespeare 2008, 1.2.1).⁹ In drama, but also in life, physical space is always also moral space, a term developed by Charles Taylor (1989, 29) to describe how the zones of human action are always alive with intentionality and a sense of direction as we struggle to make decisions about what matters and to move toward goals that promise meaning. The special space of theatre, in which everything that appears on stage is there by design and every action is fraught with consequence, calls attention to the moral dimension of all human space. Taylor's *moral space* is the ethical transcription of and supplement to Ingold's *taskscape*, inviting me to bring together design studies, philosophy, and social work in a virtues- and capacities-based approach to literature and drama. Viola wants to know where she is, geographically, but she is also seeking orientation and direction in an ethical sense. "What country, friends, is this?" means, what norms and customs apply here? How do they relate to my own history and values? Is this a place of "friends" and "friendship" – that is, will I be able to cultivate the social attachments I need to survive and flourish?

The Captain is her caseworker, or her mentor, or her godparent. He belongs to both ship and shore: "for I was bred and born / Not three hours travel from this very place" (1.2.20–1). She pays him a

bit of money: he is not a guardian angel or a good Samaritan, but rather a capable working man who sees this noble girl's welfare as part of his larger responsibility to his downed ship and their common world. They consider the fate of Sebastian: she thinks he has died at sea ("What should I do in Illyria? / My brother, he is in Elysium" [1.2.2–3]), but then allows herself to hope: "Perchance he is not drowned. What think you sailors?" (4). The Captain responds, "It is perchance that you yourself were saved" (5), injecting the theological language of providence into the romance language of mere luck or fortune and giving just a little ballast to her faintly voiced expression of hope.

Virtue language abounds in the Captain's description of Sebastian's efforts in the sea:

I saw your brother,
Most provident in peril, bind himself –
Courage and hope both teaching him the practice –
To a strong mast that lived upon the sea. (1.2.10–13)

This is a powerful emblem of virtue: providence now shifts from that hint of divine supervision to an attribute of Sebastian himself, able to look out (*pro videre*) for his own survival. He is "taught the practice" by two linked virtues, courage and hope. Courage belongs to classical virtue ethics, where it is often depicted as the meta-virtue that enables all the others by promoting action, actualization, and self-disclosure.¹⁰ Hope, on the other hand, hails from St Paul's three theological virtues, hope, faith, and charity. Aden Michael understood this immediately: "Hope feeds courage," she explained to me, "and together they allow other forms of knowledge that a person might have to become active in the world." In Aden's work with severely distressed households, hope and courage, she told me, "can make the difference between succumbing to social forces and managing their impact."

Coming from her decades of experience working in adoption and foster care, Sharon Roszia was struck by Shakespeare's canny emphasis on the bond between brother and sister in this scene. In families that have been sundered and reconfigured by adoption, the search for birth siblings is much stronger than the search for birth parents, because these lost brothers and sisters attract less anger and resentment and are thus more available as conduits of hope and

courage. The reality, however, as social worker Brynn Bodi commented, can lead to more pain: reunions with siblings “often end in great disappointment and further questions of identity because in many cases, the birth siblings are still with the birth parents.” *Twelfth Night* investigates the fantasy structure of the family romance, and indicates some of its fault lines, but remains within what social workers, borrowing from anthropology and psychoanalysis, call “magical thinking.”¹¹ The problems Shakespeare poses are very real, but the solutions he provides are less so.

Shakespeare typically melds classical and religious virtues into a composite unity that looks both outwards to the social plane of human effectivity and upwards to a framework for value that, however authored or authorized, is not simply manufactured by human beings but at once sustains and transcends them by beckoning beyond them. (Is it hope for Viola’s survival that buoys Sebastian up among the waves?) Courage and hope, the Captain tells us, taught Sebastian to bind himself to the mast. In this image stretching back to Odysseus and forward to Aden Michael’s urban surfers, Sebastian uses practical reason (prudence, *phronesis*) to harness affordances in the environment that supplement his physical strength. (When Viola refers to her own wit later in the exchange [line 57], she means *phronesis*, not a sense of humour.) Like “Arion on the dolphin’s back,” Sebastian merges with his mast, becoming a mobile assemblage able to float in the rough waters. “Hold[ing] acquaintance with the waves,” he survives by shifting his relationship to the environment from a hostile to a friendly one, engaging in a conversational give-and-take not unlike the play of theatre itself. Here Taylor’s moral space, composed of “webs of interlocution” (2016, 36), dovetails with Ingold’s taskscape, composed of “the constitutive acts of dwelling” that mould land into landscape (2000, 158).

The Captain sketches what I call a virtue ecology, a scene of individual intelligence, prowess, and forward thinking (“courage and hope”) beset by both good and bad fortune and extended into the environment through acts of attention and respect. In Aden’s gloss, hope is a form of “spiritual perception that allows us to see beyond our current predicament and discern possibilities that might be sustaining.” Hope and courage allow Sebastian to transform fragments from shipwreck into tools for survival: he experiences the mast as “living” upon the sea because he skilfully intuitively discerns its potential to save him. In the terms developed by Russell Bodi in his contribution to

this cluster of essays, Sebastian's outlook transforms a zero-sum game in which the drowning man fights the waves to his death to a non-zero-sum game in which the skilled athlete participates in a shifting ecology of forces.

The image of Sebastian's efforts heartens Viola: "Mine own escape unfoldeth to my hope." As Aden put it, "The captain sees virtues in Sebastian, and she enacts those virtues in their conversation." Together, they begin to seek the outlines of a plan. What follows is a discussion of possible placements for our orphan/refugee/apprentice: should she serve Olivia or Orsino? Learning that Olivia has also lost a brother, Viola is attracted to the idea of seeking her patronage:

O that I served that lady,
And might not be delivered to the world
Till I had made mine own occasion mellow,
What my estate is. (1.2.37-40)

Viola identifies service to the "virtuous maid" who has "abjured the sight / And company of men" (1.2.32-7) with the opportunity for retreat and repair. This is Viola's first articulation of an attitude toward time that will later bear the name of Patience, countering Sebastian's more activist courage with stoical definitions of courage as fortitude and endurance. Her phrase "delivery to the world" merges her birth from the sea with the sense of a message or communiqué to be "delivered," in the manner of a letter, speech, or sermon, through her words and actions.

The Captain informs her, however, that Olivia is not accepting placements at the moment: "she will admit no kind of suit, / No, not the Duke's" (1.2.41-2). Viola decides to serve Orsino instead, conducting what career counsellors would call a skills-inventory: "I'll serve this duke. / Thou shalt present me as an eunuch to him. / It may be worth thy pains, for I can sing, / And speak to him in many sorts of music / That will allow me very worth his service" (51-5). She then restates her approach to time: "What else may hap, to time I will commit; / Only shape thou thy silence to my wit" (56-7). Here she alights on the plan to dress as a boy, but the term she uses is "eunuch." Drawing on the association between castrati and music, the image of the degendered persona, lacking the digit of connection, supports her yearning for quiescent repair, at once mournful and expectant. When Viola later compares her hidden state to "Patience

on a monument,” there is a whisper of Hermione in Viola’s desire to withdraw from circulation, to lick her wounds. Dressing as a boy will in fact allow Viola more mobility, speech, and action than she would have enjoyed as a girl, but the assumed identity is designed to protect her from direct exposure to unwanted attention and attachment even as she builds connections between the two households and their principals.

In her work on capacity building in both ancient philosophy and contemporary international development work, philosopher Martha Nussbaum (1986) writes that repeated injuries to trust, desire, and expectation require extensive periods of hibernation and repair, especially when they harm people of good will, who are more likely to expose themselves to disappointment and betrayal than others who are more protective of their own interests.¹² That sense of damage may colour the declaration of trust that begins Viola’s final speech to the Captain: “There is a fair behaviour in thee, captain, / And though that nature, with a beauteous wall / Doth oft close in pollution yet of thee / I will believe thou hast a mind that suits / With this thy fair and outward character” (1.2.43–7). The judgment indicates a certain caution on Viola’s part; she is young, but not naive, somewhere between the “little tiny boy” and the “man’s estate” shut “‘Gainst knaves and thieves” in Feste’s final song of innocence and experience (5.1.368–86). Her reference to pollution may point to some longer history of betrayal, abuse, or abandonment, the original sin that may have gotten the twins on that boat to nowhere in the first place. In any case, the word *eunuch* throws a faint sexual wash over Viola’s “blank history” (2.4.107), while the figure of fraternal twins weaves the kind of gender complexity that Sebastian reveals when he tells Antonio that he is “yet so near the manners of his mother” (2.1.30). Whatever longer weather pattern has driven them to Illyria, Viola’s devotion to her brother may have already been a survival strategy, a positive version of the two spent swimmers of *Macbeth* “that do cling together / And choke their art” (1.2.8–9).

Viola’s need to correlate and evaluate the Captain’s behaviour with his intentions, conducted as she herself plans to assume a disguise, reveals the precocious canniness of a damaged child but imputes some depth to the Captain as well. As Aden put it, “Viola practices vigilance when she evaluates the Captain’s trustworthiness, and then gives him the gift of her trust: ‘I *will* believe you.’” Aden hit on an insight developed by philosopher of management Sverre Raffnsøe

(2013), who argues that when we trust someone (by delegating a task, accepting their judgment, or acting on their recommendation), we allow them to extend their capacities while also building our own. Without trust, the world is harsh and lonely, and our skills are severely truncated. Although he is more lightly drawn than passionate Antonio, the Captain's knowledge of both shore and sea implies a worldly acquaintance with human failings and social disaster. According to Aden Michael, sometimes the best social workers are those that have themselves suffered the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune; in Aden's words, "As an immigrant from a war-torn country, I relate to my clients. I know what it means to be displaced, to be oppressed, to see the turmoil that war has caused."¹³ If I were staging the play and wanted to recruit the Captain from a contemporary virtue ecology, I might look for inspiration to the work of Cedric Sturdevant, a project coordinator at My Brother's Keeper, a nonprofit in Jackson, Mississippi. Sturdevant serves a growing group of rural African-American men with HIV-AIDS.¹⁴ Sturdevant embraces these impoverished, depressed, scared, and outcast men as his brothers because he has rehabilitated his own injured life from the same set of punishing circumstances. The virtue ecology tended by Sturdevant is shaped by poverty, racism, and homophobia; the life of a virus and its management in the institutions of public health; the uses and abuses of Christian teaching; and the human capacity for mutual care, trust, and connection.

Literature and theatre are laboratories and gymnasiums for inquiry into and exercise of human capacity in its communicative and skilled dimensions. Considering *Twelfth Night* as a work of capacity building invites us to consider the Captain as a caseworker with his own waterlogged baggage, Viola as a talented and charismatic but damaged young person, and their dialogue as an intake assessment. *Who are you, what brought you here, and why are you so alone? Who in this virtue-poor community can best employ, shelter, or foster you? What are your skills and talents, and what are your emotional needs and legal disabilities? What can we do together to create the conditions in which you can best build or rebuild your capacities? And why should you trust me?* This is an exercise in *placement*: orientation in an unfamiliar locale, followed by a taking stock of knowns and unknowns and an inventory of skills, conducted in partnership with a guide who himself embodies some history of moral luck, and culminating in a decision to take up residence and employment in a

particular situation designed to shelter the protagonist and advance her fortunes.¹⁵

PLACEMENT IN SHAKESPEARE'S SOCIAL WORK

I became attuned to the word *placement* and its possible relevance to Shakespeare's social work in my focus group on adoption and foster care. One contributor to our conversation had herself been a teen mother forty years ago, was reunited with her daughter in their adulthood, and is now the grandmother of biracial children adopted by her birth son and his husband. When I referred to her as having "given her daughter up for adoption," she stopped for a moment and then quietly replied, "We say, 'I *placed* her.'" That gentle correction was momentous for me: the word communicated the complex calculus of forfeit and benefit assumed on all sides of the adoptive transaction and the dark opal of affects that issue from this difficult nativity.¹⁶ My informant was articulating a "non-zero-sum game" framework for her multi-generational story of childhoods and motherhoods in transition.¹⁷ From a dramaturgical standpoint, placement involves blocking, initiated in rehearsal by a director (captain/coach) working in concert with actors who are finding their ways into their roles. From the perspective of the taskscape, placement enlists the affordances of the setting, conceived as both the geographical locale and the institutional opportunities and inhibitions on growth experienced by different players on the scene. Thaisa and Marina in *Pericles*, Helena in *All's Well*, and Rosalind and Celia in *As You Like It* are among the characters of Shakespeare who undergo some version of this placement script. Other capacity-building patterns in Shakespeare might include abiding, incubating, and healing (the kind of sheltering in place that Viola desires from her employment); therapeutic conversations that clarify intentions, expose delusion, and disclose personhood (exemplified in the great scenes between Viola and Olivia, between Feste and Olivia, and between Viola and Feste); and role-playing and trust games (explored in both failed and successful forms in the gulling of Malvolio and the stage fighting between Sir Andrew and Sebastian/Viola).

And then there are the questions for the thought experiment itself. What capacities does reading for placement build for and with *Twelfth Night*? To be worth pursuing, the effort should deliver more than a new thematics. Instead, this approach aims to disclose

recurrent patterns and techniques of social and psychic damage and repair that resonate across the ensemble of settings in which Shakespearean drama unfolds. The work of the theatre proceeds precisely by building the capacities of its many players. Forms of enskilment such as voice work, fight choreography, and expressive movement are always more than technical, since they engage the full person in linguistic, respiratory, affective, imaginative, and athletic exchanges. Each actor, moreover, has found their way to theatre through a range of social cuts and inclusions that combine the affirmative (“Hey kid, you can act!”) with the demoralizing and the damaging (“Freak, geek, or queer?”). For every actor, theatre became a *place*, a home for creative work and a shared creative identity, what Hamlet calls “a fellowship in a cry of players” (3.2.28), by virtue of a *placement*, a process of seeking and finding, of losing and gaining, and of aiding and abetting.

Acclaimed actor-activist Lisa Wolpe shared with me that performing Viola at nineteen opened her up to the possibilities of what a person can be and do; she later found that acting Malvolio, Hamlet, Shylock, and Richard opened up even more. Wolpe worked with psychologist Carol Gilligan in an all-female multicultural theatre group called the Company of Women before founding the Los Angeles Women's Shakespeare Company; Gilligan's (1982) work on women's moral voices and comportments, issuing from the intersection of theatrical enskilment and psychology, resonates with many aspects of my project on Shakespeare's virtues. Wolpe now works on site with different groups of actors around the world, directing them in productions that leave them better trained and more able to make theatre on their own. Her career represents the potential of theatre to be a capacity-building enterprise for actors, ensembles, and communities.¹⁸

Thinking about placement in these multiple frames, from social services to dramaturgy to moral space, expands our sense of what kinds of circumstances, both historical and contemporary, *Twelfth Night* might articulate and transmit. Placement concerns the templates and scripts by which we seek orientation, meaningful employment, and new attachments. For teachers and administrators, placement describes how we help others connect to the worlds we share and how we can amplify our efforts at institution building through organizational intelligence and the gift of delegation. By turning to resources such as social work, long-form journalism, and

design and organizational studies to explore how and with whom displaced persons conduct their searches for orientation, belonging, and meaningful employment, we can also build the capacities of Shakespeare studies in a changing higher education, public humanities, and vocational landscape.

NOTES

- 1 Aden Michael, interview with the author, 29 July 2017.
- 2 See, for example, Deborah Eade (1997). Capacities (or capabilities) are at the centre of Martha Nussbaum's (2011) moral philosophy and public policy work.
- 3 Sharon Roszia, interview with the author, 6 June 2017.
- 4 I was honoured to have as my reading partners Deborah N. Silverstein and Sharon Kaplan Roszia, authors of the 1982 article "Seven Core Issues in Adoption," which has been distributed on many adoption web sites as "Adoptees and the Seven Core Issues of Adoption" (Roszia and Silverstein 1999). See also Melina and Roszia (2010).
- 5 Sam Nasstrom, personal interview with the author, 7 December 2017. Our focus was on the willow-cabin passage.
- 6 Brynn Bodi, LMSW, has extensive experience working with families, children, and teens in home-based, boarding-school, and court settings around issues that include adoption, mental health, and homelessness. She currently works in a private-practice outpatient setting serving teens, adults, families, and couples.
- 7 See the *Los Angeles Times* story "Losing Gloria" (Presser 2017) for the survival strategies of young people whose families are split by deportation.
- 8 On homelessness, adaptation, and survival among LGBTQ youth, see Aviv (2012), a piece of literary journalism that resonates with many Shakespearean themes.
- 9 All subsequent quotations from the play refer to this edition.
- 10 See Tillich ([1952] 2000).
- 11 Brynn Bodi, personal communication, 30 December 2017.
- 12 Nussbaum (1986, 337) glosses Aristotle on the internal damage wrought by bad luck: "A sick person can be quickly healed ... What does take time and repeated good fortune to heal is the corruption of desire, expectation, and thought that can be inflicted by crushing and

prolonged misfortune ... It takes a long time for the bereaved person to form new and fruitful attachments.”

- 13 Social worker Brynn Bodi qualified Aden's claim: a social worker's own experience with trauma can lead to “lack of boundaries and over-identification (often seen with substance abuse clinicians or ones dealing with sexual trauma). However, if the social worker has done their own therapy and resolved their struggles individually, they have a great chance of demonstrating levels of empathy and understanding that many other providers could not provide for those specific issues.” Personal communication, 30 December 2017.
- 14 For more on Cedric Sturdevant, see Villarosa (2017).
- 15 On placement, placement drift, and placement “pathways” (“the flow of children in and out of the child abuse and child welfare systems”) see Usher, Randolph, and Gogan (1999). On employment placement and the maintenance of poverty, see Hasenfeld (1975).
- 16 Roszia and Silverstein (1999) identify “seven core issues in adoption” and argue that adoptee, birth parent, and adoptive parent all undergo variants of these crises in attachment: loss, rejection, guilt/shame, grief, identity, intimacy, and control.
- 17 As social worker Brynn Bodi pointed out to me, at stake here was more than a political correction of a received phrase: instead, my exchange with this birth mother points to the critical role of language in narrating a life story that allows for growth and repair: “The mom saying ‘we say “placed”’ is really saying ‘I feel less guilt and shame by using this word.’” Brynn Bodi, personal communication, 30 December 2017.
- 18 Interview with Lisa Wolpe, 26 January 2018. See also Stein (2016).

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