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Madame Le Gateau Chocolat sashayed onto the Globe stage during Emma Rice's production of *Twelfth Night* during the Summer of Love 2017. Combining sequins and chest hair, this gigantic drag queen dominated the stage as Feste the clown, portraying the usually manic character as a solemn and maternal guide—a fringe prophet. This production, part of Rice's final goodbye due to the political pressures that often follow unconventional performances, brings to attention (and to criticism) the use and possible misuse of contemporary drag culture within Shakespeare adaptations.

Shakespeare and cross-dressing have a rich historical relationship. Beyond the Elizabethan tradition of men playing all female roles, several of his characters specifically cross-dress in various plays. Shortly after Shakespeare's death, at least partially due to a "steady attack on the practice" by "preachers and polemicists" (Howard 418), cross-dressed acting fell out of favor and women played their own parts (the calls against cross-dressing in acting

were being made long before Shakespeare, as "provocative to sin" [6], as characterized in Phillip Stubbes's *The Anatomie of Abuses*). However, even cross-dressed *characters* (which remained in the script) continued to be reviled, at least in Victorian England, as evidenced by the infamous story of Boulton and Park. After loitering in their costumes following a performance, these two actors were arrested for cross-dressing. The original charge allowed police to search both Boulton and Park, which subsequently led to their incarceration for being gay men. It should be made clear, however, that "Boulton and Park were not arrested for sodomy. Boulton and Park were arrested for crimes of fashion" (Carriger). Of particular interest to my project, however, is not only the negotiation of cross-dressed characters in Victorian adaptations of Shakespeare plays, but how these tensions complicate a claim made by Lynn Voskuil in her revolutionary book on Victorian theater, *Acting Naturally*.

Within the book, Voskuil refutes the assumptions made by performance theorists and post-structuralists that there is a divide between the theatrical and the authentic. Instead, she claims that in Victorian England, "theatricality and authenticity often functioned dynamically together to construct the symbolic typologies by which the English knew themselves as individuals, as a public, and as a nation" (2). Instead of theatricality undermining the authentic experience, Victorians found an authentic mode within theater and theatricalized those things which were most authentic to them (3). So how does this conceptual shift interact with cross-dressing? It was, after all, an identity-bending practice seen not only as inauthentic but as directly signaling deviance. By any means, Boulton and Park were not seen as authenticating themselves through their performance by the authorities who arrested them. Thus, while *theatrical* cross-dressing was permitted, *authentic* cross-dressing was not. An important factor here lies in the two-tiered nature of performance for cross-dressed characters, a factor for which Lynn Voskuil's theory does not fully make room. In the first instance of theatricality, an actor inhabits a character—Portia or Innogen or another. However, there is a second step, wherein the character on stage (Portia) enacts another, ambiguous theatricality (e.g., Balthazar, Fidele). Although this third-tier theatricality was not widely accepted in Victorian times (the implication of authenticity would have been too damaging), paradoxically, when today's ideas of cross-dressing, drag, identity, and culture are taken into consideration and performance, many of these inconsistencies are resolved and Voskui's vision is restored.

In making this argument, I will need to transition through different spaces of temporality. To do this, I take up the banner of Madhavi Menon by calling upon a kind of homohistory, a "straddling [of] chronological periods—[Shakespeare] is the past-in-the-present"; Menon further writes that "by existing in more than one historicist moment at a time, . . . Shakespeare is uniquely positioned to confound this paradigm of temporal difference" (4–5). Although differences exist between Elizabethan, Victorian, and contemporary cross-dressing, Shakespeare is nevertheless a figure whose status in the literary canon allows for what Menon terms a "homotemporal" effect, which folds past and present into each other. I will begin this traipse through history by addressing cross-dressing theory directly as a foundation for further analysis. I will then dive into Victorian reactions to cross-dressed characters as seen in the context of these theories, how these reactions create tension with Victorian character illustrations, and where these reactions and illustrations intersect with the tensions between authenticity and theatricality. Finally, I will relate how these tensions are actually resolved through modern drag ontology and how drag can validate new readings of Shakespeare through performances like Le Gateau Chocolat's.

Cross-dressing has become so culturally interrelated with other concepts of gender and desire that it becomes necessary to take time parsing it out. To begin, cross-dressing is not a sign or signifier of homosexuality, as was seemingly suggested by the Boulton and Park case; however, gender and desire do hold a complex relationship. According to Simone Chess, cross-dressed characters "become subjects of the erotic gaze from both men and women and participate in sexual encounters that are technically heterosexual/opposite sex . . . visually homosexual/same sex . . . and undeniably queer and grounded in a queer heterosexuality" (101). Gender and desire function dynamically together while existing on separate, related spectra. This type of cross-dressing desire will figure into my last section concerning the validity of drag culture in Shakespeare. To add another note, in addition to not signaling homosexuality, cross-dressing also does not correspond to transgenderism or transvestism (themselves different categories), although cross-dressing may factor into both of these choices. Neither of these concepts will feature in my argument, but both are vital to cover at the outset.

One final ambiguity worth parsing is in cross-dressing's relation to androgyny. Again, although not all characters who cross-dress are explicitly androgynous, there is an interesting and important connection between the

two ideas. According to Dreher, "The concept of androgyny was prevalent in the Renaissance, appearing throughout alchemical lore, poetry, and the visual arts. . . . Androgyny liberates individuals from conventional stereotypes, offering them a wide spectrum of behavior and expression." She relates this androgyny to Shakespeare (apparently an androgynous character himself), and then concludes that "he [Shakespeare] equated androgyny with emotional balance" (116). Thus, cross-dressed characters represent not only a complicated sense of desire, but they can also embody an emotional balance that allows them to stand outside of the gender spectrum and bring wisdom to those within rigid social constructs. These will be important ideas when discussing Shakespeare's characters both in Victorian times and today.

With these ideas in mind, authenticity would require that cross-dressed characters (especially Shakespeare's) inhabit a separate and distinct identity while cross-dressing: Rosalind should *fully become* Ganymede, just as Viola should *fully become* Cesario. But in Victorian representations of these characters, uncommitted modes of desire and androgyny throw out any certainty of actual identity by refusing a full move from character to cross-dressed character. Hereafter, I will refer to the state of the character as the second tier of theatricality (the actor herself being the first tier). The third tier would be, then, the cross-dressed character that the second-tier character portrays while on-stage, such as Balthazar or Fidele. While Voskuil's analysis is completely valid for the second tier of theatricality (actors finding authenticity in the theatricalization of characters), Victorians drew ambiguous lines between the second and third tier of performance, collapsing the authenticity-in-performance of the third tier. The Victorian Innogen tries to authentically become Fidele, but fails, instead falling somewhere in between, ambiguous and with confused desire. This is not to say that such characters do not attempt the step, but the bid often obscures authenticity by losing track of any semblance of real identity for either the second or third tier. I should make clear here that this ambiguous gendering is separate from the androgyny theory that I proposed earlier. Beyond the fact that it was typically seen as a gender-transgression to be androgynous (Green), any androgyny found in these characters generally derives from resistance to gender transformation, not from an intentional move towards "emotional balance." I will refer to characters as *androgynous* if they stand outside of societal constructs in order to be balanced and offer a view of humanity, and as *ambiguous* if they are unintentionally forced outside of gender norms because of a refusal to find authenticity in cross-dressing performance.

Victorian theater seems to refuse authentic cross-dressing in both criticism and performance. In a Victorian review of *Cymbeline* starring Helen Faucit as Innogen, one critic complains that "there is a greater fault of excess in the first part of the representation of womanly fear when, as Fidele, she calls at the mouth of the unoccupied cavern, and runs from the sound of herself had made. Miss Faucit's voice is more often at fault; it fails her whenever she has a violent emotion to express" (Morley). He thus criticizes her for being too female while portraying Fidele, both in "womanly fear" and in vocalization. But his own assessment betrays his paradigm: while his conception that fear is womanly illustrates the gender divisions present in Victorian England, it also shows that the critic is only willing to interpret Fidele's actions through the lens of Innogen. In other words, Fidele's fear does not reveal something authentic about Fidele, but rather is proof of Fidele's lack of Fidele-ity. Similar to this critic, just four years later, another commends Ellen Terry for her portrayal of Portia, who, while dressed as Balthazar, gives an address to the court. He remarks, "A very noteworthy point in the performance was the womanly interest in Shylock—the endeavor to win him, for his own sake, from the pursuit of his grim resolve" (Knight). In contrast to the first example, here Ellen Terry is praised for allowing the female character (Portia) to come out in her performance of Balthazar. In both instances, the critics reveal the prevalence of seeing the character within the cross-dressed character (the inauthentic cross-dressed one) simply as masquerade, as far as possible from authenticity. Actors are placed in an impossible situation of never striking the perfect balance between character and cross-dressed character because ambiguity is denied as a valid position. If they are too male, they are not authentic to their status as women-saviors; if they are too female, they are betraying the character they are meant to be playing. Victorian critics here both condone and condemn the ambiguity evident in cross-dressing performance. They applaud when the character comes out from behind the mask and censure when they try to play both parts. Ambiguity is not seen as a valid position, but instead as inauthentic and betraying true identity.

Beyond critics' hegemonic views of rejecting authenticity, the actual representations of cross-dressed characters during this period also seem to show a remarkable amount of ambiguity in their representations. Drawing from a compilation of Shakespeare's plays published in 1886, filled with illustrated engravings of Shakespearean scenes and photographs of Shakespearean actors, the third-tier cross-dressed characters are hardly even

disguised ("Clarke"). Six separate illustrated engravings of Innogen dressed as Fidele keep her long blonde hair flowing past her shoulders, and often blowing up in the wind. In one image, her tunic is cut well above that of her disguised brothers, while in another one, she is cross-gartered. In an image of Rosalind dressed as Ganymede, hair flows down past the shoulders as well, with the Orlando of the same engraving series with cropped hair above his ears. In fact, six other images of Rosalind show long hair, one flowing well past her elbows. Furthermore, her tunic is draped in folds and ruffles, in contrast to Orlando's straight tunic (this is also true of the Innogen described earlier). A few images of Viola and one of Rosalind show a corseted body shape. An important reminder here is that all of these images are engravings of scenes, not photographs of actual performances; in a production of *As You Like It*, it would not make sense to rid Rosalind of hair, since she would need it for another performance; however, in unstaged iterations, the representations could potentially be more free. In each case I have described, Victorian female characters trying to inhabit the third tier end up resembling their second-tier selves much more than they resemble the fashion of male representations within the same images. This refusal to incorporate full male fashion, opting instead for female traits, substantiates this ambiguity.

So representations (even fully conceptualized ones) portray cross-dressed characters as ambiguous, while critics condemn both ambiguity and full gender transformation, preferring characters more authentic to their pre-cross-dressed selves. This illustrates an inherent anxiety with authenticity while the characters are cross-dressed; after all, a full identification with the opposite gender would be seen as deviant. Thus, the tensions between criticism and illustrated representations show an inability to maintain authenticity-in-performance, and instead relegate truly cross-dressed characters the identity of the original self—Innogen over Fidele, and Viola over Cesario. Put another way, if it is true that the "trial scene [of *Merchant in Venice*] is a masterpiece of dramatic construction, a play within itself," as one critic puts it (Halliwell-Phillipps 346), then we would suspect Portia's playing of Balthazar to be authentic in and of itself. But the hesitancy present behind Portia's full inhabiting of Balthazar in these representations proves the ontological validity of Portia as actor and the inauthentic theatricality of Balthazar as character. Once again, the step from the second to third tier of theatricality is inhibited by social concerns concerning cross-dressing (and thereby gender and desire), paralyzing the character in ambiguity.

Paradoxically, these tensions of theatricality, authenticity, androgyny, and ambiguity are resolved in the context of modern drag culture (even though modern scholars and theater practitioners typically buy into the authentic/performance dichotomy that Voskuil writes against). This resolution is not only due to the increased social awareness and acceptance of new ideas of fashion, gender constructs, and desire, but more importantly to the philosophical constructs that arise from drag culture.

Drag culture, originating out of the drag balls of the 1980s, became its own subset of American culture, with a modern lexicon and linguistic markers to call its own, and has since spread throughout the world (Simmons). This culture has become even more mainstream in Western media with the help of TV shows like RuPaul's *Drag Race*, documentaries like *Paris Is Burning*, and even Broadway musicals like *Kinky Boots*. One of the most notable aspects of this growing drag culture (the most pertinent to the discussion raised here) is the idea of "realness." "Realness" within drag circles refers to the idea of a drag performer experiencing and inhabiting the reality of the performed character regardless of her constructed nature. This claimed yearning for truth and honesty (perhaps authenticity?) in performance echoes Voskuil's Victorian construct. Of course, this conception is not without its problems. One scholar notes how "drag queen performances possess a duel role of undoing heteronormative gender ideals while also reinforcing the current heteronormative social image of a woman" (Greaf). While subverting gender's constructed nature, drag queen performances simultaneously support the "real," or authentic (by this point, stereotypical or strawperson) representation of women. "Realness," in this light, becomes a complicated reinforcing of the social order for females while allowing men to play around with gender constructs. However, this is neither the only sense of "realness" nor the only way of being real.

Androgyny also plays an important role in modern drag culture, this time in the sense that I described above—intentional and distanced. This can be strongly seen in none other than Le Gateau Chocolat herself as a part of Emma Rice's *Twelfth Night*. She wore sequin dresses (midnight blue and gold), her face was painted in an over-the-top bravado common in drag, and she had a wig in the ilk of Diana Ross. But she also had a full beard. And chest hair. And sometime during the performance, the wig came off, revealing a completely shaved head. This androgyny is far from the tenuous Victorian negotiation between the script's call to full "realness" and the critics and audience's social pressure of gender norms. This even goes beyond

Dreher's "balance" between male and female traits, for this is not a character in the process of transitioning from one gender norm to another. This is a category completely outside of either, an amalgamation of opposite sides of the spectrum to show the inconsistency of gender itself and to present a third option: pure androgyny, devoid of gender tensions. This places her outside of gender itself, along with its obligations and expectations. This is androgyny "realness," authentic androgyny.

Drag culture attempts to satisfy the mono-istic authenticity-in-theatrics by fully committing to "realness" in gender or in androgyny, which rivals the ambiguous and anxious choice of gender presented in Victorian representations and criticisms of Shakespearean cross-dressing. However, there is a significant difference here. In Victorian modes of Shakespearean representation, I mentioned the two-step process of theatricality: characters inhabited the first tier while the second tier was muddled and undercut authenticity. No such two-tiered system functions in modern drag culture. The performer enters theatricality only once—as the drag queen. But in doing so, she exhibits an authenticity that certainly could be used in Shakespearean productions during this second instance of theatricality. This functions elaborately in Rice's production, and not only in the figure of Le Gateau Chocolat.

A drag queen's presence necessarily draws attention to costuming and gender, which play intersecting roles for several characters in *Twelfth Night*. This is seen most obviously in Viola, one of the second-tier cross-dressing Shakespeare characters I have been discussing. Viola's choice to disguise herself in the traditional costume of a man embroils her in a desire triangle between herself, Orsino, and Olivia. Olivia is enamored by the costumed Cesario (only because he/she is costumed as such), while the hidden Viola is in love with Orsino, in turn in love with Olivia. These complex elements of desire, referenced above, are dependent on costuming and gender "realness" between each pair, showing the importance and complexity of cross-dressing and authenticity.

Other characters also enact second-tier theatricality, not through cross-dressing, but still with gendered simulations. For example, Malvolio dons flamboyant yellow, cross-gartered stockings in an attempt to woo Olivia. Could we see this costume choice in the sense of authenticity, of "realness"? Or might Malvolio fall into the same trap as the Victorian illustrations, not quite committing enough to his project, trying to portray all in ambiguity? How would a reading of the character differ in either case? Feste, likewise, also receives another costume—another identity—in the course of the play,

while portraying Sir Topas (*Sister* Topas, in the case of Le Gateau Chocolat). And once again, the question is asked: is Sir Topas authentic in the third tier of theatricality? What would it mean either way? (The third-tier celibate Sir Topas is particularly striking in the contexts of cross-dressing, androgyny, and desire, but that is something I will not go into here.) A drag queen's presence within the play requires these questions of any character who chooses to create a new identity through costume. But beyond simply her presence, her committed androgyny creates particular meaning within the play.

But why Feste? The character's status as clown already allows him to stand outside society to offer a unique perspective to those within the structure. As I have shown, Chocolat's characterization as an androgynous drag character furthers this role. But the character also stands outside of conceptions of desire. Other characters are allowed to love in the play, as long as they commit to one ideal of gender or another. Cesario still receives love despite the hetero-normative environment that would claim to constrain such a relationship (even if he does need to don his "maiden weeds" to claim it in the end). Desire is only allowed to function for those in specified places within society. However, for those on the fringe, who do not fit neatly into categories—queer characters, such as those who are committedly androgynous—desire is not even an option. Le Gateau Chocolat, then, as Feste, becomes a champion of sexual and gender (as well as other) minorities. As a black drag queen, she can stand for those who do not have a place that is readily accepted, for those who are not societally relegated love, attention, and affection. Le Gateau Chocolat gives illumination to the tension between pariah, desire, and gender, and allows for a reconsideration of both androgynous and asexual figures and their roles within literature, while lending validity to the authenticity-in-theatricality exhibited by Viola and others who dress in second-tier costume and identity.

Drag culture has a place within Shakespeare studies. This is not only true in reformulating ideas of society and disenfranchisement, but also in terms of rethinking the possibilities and illuminating the tensions of cross-dressing. This second point can be seen most vividly in contrast to the Victorian era, in which cross-dressing was simultaneously allowed onstage but prosecuted off of it. These tensions have always shaped cross-dressing in theater, and pose problems to current scholarship concerning Victorian theater. To be able to navigate paradigms of cross-dressing and gender relationships in any age, drag culture should be taken into consideration as a powerful modern form of authenticity and theatricality.

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