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Women's knowledge and musical form: adapting historical identities in *Martin Guerre*

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Abstract

This essay assesses the afterlives in film, theatre, and scholarship of a sixteenth-century legal proceeding in which a Basque peasant named Martin Guerre was subject to identity theft. Focusing on the 1996 West End musical, the essay proposes that the conventions of musical theatre allowed this adaptation to revise earlier versions of the story in response to then-current concerns in historiography, in particular, those of new historicist criticism. It argues that the musical's focus on the female lead's knowledge and consent, informed by the cultural context of the 1990s, constituted a key intervention in the adaptive history of the Martin Guerre story. And it examines the musical's engagement with new historicist ideas about the contingency of early modern identity, noting that the lyrics and structure present a contrast between a contingent identity reliant on property ownership, kinship bonds, and religious community with a more 'modern' identity based on psychological continuity and unique selfhood. In conclusion, the essay proposes *Martin Guerre* as a case study for broader questions about how historical individuals' agency can be represented in adaptation.

Keywords: new historicism; identity; historiography; agency; knowledge; consent; early modern; musical theatre.

The musical *Martin Guerre* opened at the Prince Edward Theatre in London on 10 July 1996 to mixed reviews.[1] It closed briefly in October to accommodate substantial re-writes, and went on to win an Olivier award for 'Best Musical' and run for a total of 675 performances. An extensively rewritten version opened at the West Yorkshire Playhouse in Leeds less than a year after the London production closed, and this version launched a US tour which ultimately never reached Broadway. This essay sketches *Martin Guerre*'s place in the adaptation history of a real sixteenth-century legal proceeding which had, during the 1980s, become a test case for conceptions of historic identity, individuality, and knowledge espoused by new historicist critics—in particular, an approach to early modern texts driven by 'the idea that the individual is inextricably bound and, indeed, formed by a network of social practices . . . governed by the discourses of the hegemonic ideology' (Parvini, 93). Following Defne Ersin Tutan's argument that 'all historical representations are radically adaptive' (576), I suggest that the musical adaptation revised key aspects of the Martin Guerre story in response to then-current questions about the historical contingency of identity and the relationship

between history and literary studies. Focusing on the adaptive history of the musical's female lead, Bertrande, I suggest that the form of the twentieth-century Anglo-American musical enabled an emphasis on Bertrande's knowledge and consent which is missing from most versions of the story. Though *Martin Guerre* represents an atypical case study in many ways and by no means constitutes a feminist adaptation of this historical narrative, I propose that this example provides a useful prompt for rethinking the fractious relationship between history and fiction in adaptation as concerned with questions of knowledge, agency, and consent.

Martin Guerre was a Basque peasant raised in the village of Artigat in south-western France and married at a young age to another villager, Bertrande de Rols.[2] Bertrande would later report that for the first nine years of their marriage Martin was impotent; eventually the couple sought help against a 'curse' which had prevented the consummation of their marriage and conceived a son, Sanxi. Around 1548, Martin came into conflict with his father over the theft of a small quantity of grain and left Artigat. Eight years later, a man claiming to be Martin Guerre arrived in the village, greeted everyone by name, resumed his married life with Bertrande and conceived a second child, a daughter named Bernarde. In 1559, after a conflict about inheritance, his uncle Pierre accused him of being an impostor and persuaded Bertrande to bring this accusation against her supposed husband. The matter came to trial, first at Rieux and subsequently at Toulouse. After hearing evidence on both sides, the judges (including Jean de Coras, whose pamphlet discussing the case is the principal source for all subsequent versions of the story) were at a loss until a one-legged man arrived in Toulouse and was recognized by Martin Guerre's sisters, uncle, and eventually by Bertrande herself as the real Martin. The impostor was identified as Arnaud du Tilh, alias 'Pansette', a peasant from a village sixty kilometres from Artigat. He repented publicly for the imposture in front of Martin Guerre's house and was hanged on 16 September 1560. Following the publication of de Coras' *Arrest memorable du Parlement de Tolose, contenant une histoire prodigieuse de notre temps* the story spread widely and was mentioned by Montaigne in his essay 'Of the Lame'. It inspired a fictionalized adaptation in the nineteenth century by Alexandre Dumas père and various further iterations in the twentieth century.

The story's afterlives in scholarship and in popular culture have been closely interconnected. The social historian Natalie Zemon Davis served as historical advisor to the film *Le Retour de Martin Guerre* (dir. Daniel Vigne, 1982; starring Gérard Dépardieu as Arnaud du Tilh) and subsequently wrote a detailed scholarly account of the case, also titled *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Harvard University Press, 1983). Davis' work drew Stephen Greenblatt's attention to the story for his essay 'Psychoanalysis and Renaissance Culture' (published as part of his monograph *Learning to Curse*, 1990), which placed the Guerre case at the centre of a new historicist re-evaluation of sixteenth-century identity. Greenblatt proposed that identity was contingent on property ownership, kinship bonds, and religious community (*Learning to Curse*, 184), but also suggested that the Guerre case marked an instance of what he had elsewhere argued was 'an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity' during the sixteenth century (*Self-Fashioning*, 2). A critique of Davis' work by the historian Robert Findlay also approached the story as a test case, this time for the role of speculation and imagination in historical writing and, in parallel to the new historicists' interests, the disciplinary boundaries between history and

literary studies.[3] An American remake of the French film, titled *Sommersby*, was released in 1993, transposing the story to the American Civil War. And the French writing team behind *Les Misérables*, Claude-Michel Schönberg and Alain Boublil, pitched a musical adaptation of Vigne's film to their British producer, Cameron Mackintosh.

The musical's history, as outlined above, might be read as a cautionary tale against theatrical hubris. Both of the creators' previous successes, *Les Misérables* and *Miss Saigon*, had dramatized love stories with sprawling casts of characters against backdrops of historical conflict. But while the story of Martin Guerre had been intriguing readers for centuries, it lacked a clear protagonist due to its central conceit of one Martin's substitution for another, and concluding with a public hanging offered a bleak prospect for a rousing musical finale. The proposed solution was to present the story from Bertrande's point of view—an approach which, as I will go on to argue, had significant effects on the musical's engagement with questions of knowledge, consent, and culpability, though the agency afforded to the character in this adaptation was not straightforwardly empowering. Once Mackintosh was satisfied with the story changes, the show opened in one of London's largest theatres, with a cast of thirty-eight and a substantial orchestra, led by the acclaimed director Declan Donnellan. While its chequered history of re-writes and its failure to reach Broadway has led to *Martin Guerre* entering musical theatre history as a disappointment and even a flop, it had modest success in the UK, spawning a small-scale revival in 2007.

Taking cues from the more speculative elements of Davis' book (which suggested tentatively that both Bertrande and Arnaud may have been attracted to Protestantism (48–9)), the musical's creators amplified the role of the Reformation and French wars of religion in the story. In the musical, the end of Arnaud's trial prompts a riot patterned after the St Bartholomew's Day massacre, which took place in Paris twelve years after the real Arnaud du Tilh's execution.[4] The religious tension was a basis for turning the villagers into a zealous mob, prone to groupthink and ferociously invested in the success of Martin and Bertrande's marriage due to their fear that, without a Catholic heir, their families' land might fall into Protestant ownership (the musical omitted the birth of Martin and Bertrande's son Sanxi). To give a voice to this collective hostility, the creators introduced a fictional villain, Guillaume, a rejected suitor to Bertrande. The musical also reimagined Arnaud du Tilh as a heroic character, concocting a version of events where his assumption of Martin's identity was accidental, at least initially—he arrived in the village as a soldier returning from war and his 'Martin' persona was projected onto him by the villagers' frantic desire to establish a patrilineal Catholic order through Bertrande's restored marriage. Distorting the historic Arnaud's deception into a heroic archetype meant that the musical version of the story displaced blame for the imposture onto the chorus, and, to some extent, onto Bertrande.

The narrative choices in the musical that are of most interest to me are its assumptions about Bertrande's knowledge. Following Davis' speculation, the musical imagined that Bertrande was, from the outset, aware of and complicit in Arnaud's imposture. It also adopted as a thematic concern Greenblatt's claim that individual identity in this period was constituted by property ownership and social connections rather than biological or psychological continuity. Greenblatt had written that, during Arnaud du Tilh's trial, what was at issue was 'not Martin Guerre as subject but Martin Guerre as

object, the placeholder in a complex system of possessions, kinship bonds, contractual relationships, customary rights, and ethical obligations' (*Learning to Curse*, 184). This allowed the book and lyrics to probe the question of whether Arnaud 'was' Martin Guerre once he possessed his family, his property, and his position in the Artigat community. The convention of the second act reprise helped to emphasize this question: the musical blurs Martin's and Arnaud's identities when Arnaud sings a reprise of Martin Guerre's eponymous song, while the second act ensemble number 'The Impostors' hints at the contingency of identity across the whole Artigat community. However, the musical excluded Bertrande from this uncertainty. Bertrande's knowledge, located in private, in the home, and in the marriage bed, highlighted a significant exception to the model of historic identity Greenblatt had proposed—that is, though an early modern man might be identified through his networks and property, his unique identity was preserved by the policing of female chastity and marital fidelity.

De Coras' account of the trial is anxious to absolve Bertrande of complicity in Arnaud's imposture (and thus, of adultery). Both in the main narrative of his account and in the long, digressive 'annotations' in which he reflects on the implications of and classical precedents for various aspects of the case, de Coras maintains that Bertrande was chaste, honest, virtuous, and 'deserved some excuse for this error', having 'no consent, no will, and no malice' in her offence against her true husband.[5] The fictionalised de Coras played by Roger Planchon in the 1982 film is less confident. The film's opening shot shows de Coras arriving in Artigat to adjudicate between the Guerres before the narrative moves back in time to Martin and Bertrande's wedding. Framing the narrative from de Coras' point of view positions him as a detective figure for this unusual courtroom drama, and thus makes de Coras the audience's point of view character for the mystery. As a result, the film puts the question of what Bertrande knows at the centre of its plot. At the film's precise midpoint, Bertrande (Nathalie Saye) admits to de Coras that she did have some doubts about her returned husband's identity, but insists that they have already been resolved. In the penultimate scene before Arnaud's execution, de Coras accuses Bertrande of being Arnaud's accomplice from the beginning, which she neither admits nor directly refutes. Moreover, the film's structure is designed to keep the audience, along with both de Coras and Bertrande, in a state of uncertainty about the identity of Dépardieu's character. There are no scenes of Arnaud's life or preparations before arriving in Artigat. The young Martin (Stéphane Peau) and the adult Martin who appears at the end of the film (Bernard-Pierre Donnadieu) are played by different actors, so the audience is not equipped to recognize Martin upon his return. The DVD case, in a judicious alignment of title and star power, bears a summary beginning 'Based on a true story from sixteenth-century France, Martin Guerre (Dépardieu) . . . abandons his family to fight in a war'—a misdirection which further primes audiences not to recognize the imposture before the characters do.

Bertrande's knowledge remains central to the narrative in Davis' book. But where the film maintains uncertainty around the question of what she knew, Davis argues that

> the obstinate and honourable Bertrande does not seem a woman so easily fooled . . .. By the time she had received [Arnaud] in her bed, she must have realized the difference . . .. Either by explicit or tacit agreement, she helped him become her husband. (44)

Quoting from Étienne Pasquier's *Les Recherches de la France* (1621) the folk wisdom that 'there is no mistaking "the touch of the man on the woman"', Davis associates knowledge with touch and intimacy—an association which counters the early modern dramatic staple of the 'bed trick', in which the darkness of the private chamber makes sexual partners interchangeable and enables deception and violation. Bed tricks are found in Shakespeare's *All's Well that Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure* and in Middleton and Rowley's *The Changeling* and Rowley's *All's Lost by Lust*, as well as in Plautus' *Amphitryon*, which is among the classical references upon which de Coras draws in order to comprehend Arnaud's deception. Like de Coras, Davis is acutely aware of the story's fundamental tension between complicity and consent, and she reaches the opposite conclusion: for Davis, Bertrande's marriage bed was a site where truth was exposed, and thus her participation in the adultery and the associated imposture was consensual. Davis' argument is convincing but unprovable: she argues on the basis of the (sexual) knowledge and the pragmatism of the early modern peasant woman. Greenblatt agrees that Davis' conclusion is plausible, noting that 'this certainly seems to have been Martin Guerre's own bitter conclusion' (*Learning to Curse*, 179). De Coras quotes the returned Martin telling Bertrande 'for the disaster that has befallen our house, nobody is to blame but you' (86).[6]

Robert Findlay's review for *The American Historical Review* took Davis to task for her 'twentieth century reinterpretation', which he felt was not justified by the sources. He countered Davis' use of proverb in her account of sexual anagnorisis with another bit of proverbial wisdom also traceable in early modern France: 'de nuit tous chats son gris' (all cats are grey in the dark, 559), an epigrammatic statement of sexual interchangeability derived from Plutarch. Findlay resists Davis' pragmatic characterization of Bertrande as 'a creature of utter calculation' (560), and prefers to conclude that she was the victim of Arnaud's deception, arguing that 'her sense of loyalty . . . nicely explains her behaviour throughout' (562), and lamenting that 'Bertrande de Rols now suffers the posthumous fate of being refashioned into an assertive and principled champion, the shrewd and ardent companion of a man who transformed himself for her . . . a sort of proto-feminist of peasant culture' (570).

I am less interested in the unanswerable question of who is right about the historical Bertrande's knowledge than in the way that her knowledge comes to represent the methodological, disciplinary, and perhaps gendered incompatibility of Findlay's and Davis' approaches. Findlay is suspicious of Davis' borrowing of 'the term "self-fashioning" from a recent work on Renaissance literature'; he finds the term 'pervasive and tendentious . . . a modish way of seeing sixteenth-century peasants' (564), and he is sceptical of the exchange between literary studies and history which Greenblatt in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* advocated for. He also rejects the way Davis plays with the blurred identity of 'Martin Guerre'—an idea which, as I have shown, interested Greenblatt as well as the creators of the film and musical. Suggesting that Davis' work abandons the duties of the historian to dally with literary criticism, Findlay also looks askance at her admission of 'romance' among her characters' motivations (564), hinting at the unstable boundary between historical biography and historical novel. Though Findlay maintains a tone of scholarly detachment throughout, I perceive a parallel between his preference for a 'loyal' over a 'proto-feminist' Bertrande and his

frustration with Davis' (disloyal?) querying of established sources and her advocacy for female agency in sixteenth-century France.

The musical *Martin Guerre* sustains uncertainty over Bertrande's knowledge only for the length of the dance number in which 'Martin' is welcomed home, in which the two leads do not exchange a word. As soon as they are left alone—in the intimate space in which Davis locates early modern women's knowledge—they move into a duet ('Tell Me To Go'), which opens with Arnaud's offer to leave ('this can't go on/I should be gone/tell me to go') and whose bridge allows Bertrande to speak in soliloquy or perhaps prayer: 'Oh Lord, who is this man/Can I trust what I've heard?'[7] The musical theatre conventions of the love duet, in which each performer has a solo verse before singing together in harmony, and the sung soliloquy, in which (as in early modern dramatic soliloquy) a character's inner thoughts are addressed directly to the audience, are here ideally positioned to accentuate Bertrande's agency and the consensual nature of the relationship between the two characters. The lyrics to the final section of 'Tell Me To Go' are unabashedly romantic, borrowing a 'somewhere' motif from *West Side Story* (and perhaps encouraging an indirect link with that work's source material in *Romeo and Juliet*): 'somewhere/where I hope to find someone/still I find myself near you/if I hear you say the words/I'll go'. The emphasis on romantic connection means that the musical discards ambiguity around Bertrande's knowledge and highlights her free choice of Arnaud, but the agency it offers her is limited. At this point in the narrative, Bertrande's agency is entirely defined around her freedom to choose a male romantic partner, and other aspects of her identity which she has been wrestling with in private—her religious belief, her property, and her position in the community—are resolved by the restoration of her marriage, albeit with a different husband.

The musical's use of the convention identified by Lehman Engel as the 'I want' song foregrounds agency and knowledge, but also highlights the limitations on the characters' freedom to choose.[8] The 'I want' song 'discloses a main character's primary motivation' early on in a musical, and often brings the audience into the character's confidence (Laird, 34). Characteristically of its somewhat maximalist 1996 iteration, *Martin Guerre* affords 'I want' songs to all three protagonists (though Arnaud's is delivered in duet with Martin). Martin sings his eponymous solo as he resolves to leave Artigat. The song's conceit is heavy with dramatic irony: the young Martin projects his own identity onto the fantasy figure of the future version of himself—stronger, more knowledgeable—who will eventually return to the village: 'Look, it's Martin Guerre/back from the war/not like before/on this I swear'. Arnaud's introduction as a soldier fighting alongside Martin in the song 'Here Comes the Morning' uses a vague figurative conceit of sunrise and sunset to hint at his desire for the belonging and peace he will find, briefly, in Artigat ('the sun paints its last silhouette/with luck by the time that it sets/you'll be home').

Bertrande's 'I want' song is still more enigmatic, and a good example of the ambitious but rather tangled themes and motifs which made the 1996 version of the musical struggle to find an audience. 'When Will Someone Hear' establishes Bertrande's isolation after Martin's abandonment, but does not straightforwardly suggest that she is pining either for him or for a preferable romantic partner—instead, it sketches two of the qualities that Davis locates in the historical Bertrande: the crisis of religious faith

which prefigures her conversion to Protestantism ('faith that once was clear/[. . .] all that I've begun, all that I believe/is just another broken dream') and fierce independence ('and don't think I'm that little girl/they wanted me to be/they don't know me now/fighting to be free'). The assertion that the speaker is not a little girl was deeply conventional for young female protagonists, particularly in the 1990s (at the peak of 'Girl Power' and after Disney's *Little Mermaid*, in 1989, had protested 'I'm 16 years old, I'm not a child anymore'). But the fictional Bertrande's sense of alienation from her community takes on new significance in connection with the show's new historicist interest in the ways identity is constituted by social, cultural, and political connections. In this respect, it arrives at an awkward confluence of the expressions of female agency typical of 1990s popular culture, and a re-inscription of early modern relational dynamics: without her husband, Bertrande's place in the community and thus her identity has become unmoored. While it will be superficially secured by the arrival of a man to fill the space in the network of kinship, property, and labour relations which is reserved for 'Martin Guerre', the trial's secondary question of whether, if Arnaud is guilty of imposture, then Bertrande is guilty of adultery shows that the flexible performance of identity is largely a privilege reserved for men.

Martin Guerre, the musical, is an adaptation of a film based on historical sources, but also an adaptation of a historian's reflections on her role as historical advisor to that film, while remaining subject to the generic conventions and commercial pressures of musical theatre. The film was the source text insofar as it was the version of the story most likely to be familiar to the audience and thus, as Linda Hutcheon notes, to 'offer ready-made name recognition for audiences, thereby relieving some of the anxiety for Broadway producers of expensive musicals' (5). The musical places Bertrande's knowledge at the centre of its adaptive strategy—her knowledge is the key difference that sets it apart from the film and from de Coras' original source, and it is deeply entwined in conventions of the musical such as the soliloquy, love duet, and 'I want' song, thus driving the formal adaptation between media. The lyrics that concern Bertrande and Arnaud's love story repeatedly emphasize the idea that to love someone is to know them and to recognize their unique humanity. In the act one finale, 'All I Know', this alignment of love and knowledge is made particularly insistent—in duet, the couple proclaim 'all I know/is the touch of love/that changes all I know'.

At odds with this, however, is the other recurring motif in the lyrics—that of land. References to land repeatedly figure Bertrande, alongside her family's property, as something to be possessed: territory disputed between men. For the chorus of Artigat villagers, what matters is not recognizing Martin Guerre and understanding his humanity, but identifying Martin Guerre as the heir to property in the village. The opening chorus number 'Working on the Land' establishes the sovereignty of land, its hold over Artigat's peasant population, and the existential threat represented by the land passing to Protestant ownership ('the next in line's a Protestant/she must have an heir soon/don't you understand?'). The finale song (discarded in the later versions of the musical) is titled 'The Land of the Fathers', and reaches its crescendo when Martin declares 'we have only one duty/we belong to the land'. Bertrande's hand in marriage is debated in the opening number in a way that makes it clear that to possess her is to possess the land

(or at least, to consolidate the land owned by her family with that owned by the Guerres to ensure a Catholic succession).

In this respect, the twentieth-century musical revises a conventional early modern metaphor where a woman stands for land to be occupied, possessed, and husbanded. For example, the conclusion of Shakespeare's *Henry V* shows the king consolidating his conquest of French territory by wooing the French princess, Catherine: he assures her, 'in loving me you should love the friend of France; for I love France so well that I will not part with a village of it, I will have it all mine' (5.2.173–4). Early responses to colonial ventures in the Americas often imagined the 'virgin' land as a woman to be wooed, tamed, or raped—John Donne's elegy 'To His Mistress Going to Bed' employs the reverse metaphor, addressing his mistress as 'my America, my new found land/ My kingdom safeliest when with one man manned' (80–1). In Donne's metaphor, the idea of a woman as territory raises the fear of male interchangeability—the riches of America are subject to competition between men, and if the poem's speaker does not stake his claim, there is a risk that someone else will step into his place. In *Martin Guerre*, figuring Bertrande as 'the land' has a similar effect—her desirability makes her a site for male competition and male fears of substitution. The lyrics' opposition of knowledge and land stands for the core conflict of the narrative in this adaptation, between an understanding of identity which recognizes the humanity of the individual (in romantic terms), and an understanding of identity which is constituted by bonds of kinship, property ownership, and religious community. This central conflict generates a text that is both more progressive than previous adaptations of the Martin Guerre case in its insistence on agency, but which also ultimately treats Bertrande as an object disputed between men. Simply put, she knows that Arnaud is not her husband, but allows him to possess her and shape her identity anyway. At the end of the musical, Arnaud is exposed and killed, and Bertrande chooses to exile herself from Artigat rather than resuming her life with Martin Guerre as her historical counterpart did. Having lost the husband that she chose, her place in the community and her identity are lost as well.

Rebecca Lock originated the role of Bertrande in the 1996 production. Speaking on the podcast *The Show Show* in April 2021, she highlighted the musical's departure from the central dramatic tension of the film version, commenting: 'personally I think that it's flawed . . . in the show, you see that he isn't Martin Guerre, so there's no real [jeopardy], because you know'. Subsequent versions of *Martin Guerre*, particularly the 2007 revival, retreated from the idea that Bertrande's knowledge should be made explicit, instead replaying the 1982 film's dramatization of uncertainty. Though these versions maintained narrative tension absent from the 1996 musical, they re-introduced ambiguity around Bertrande's consent to share her marital bed with Arnaud. In doing so, later iterations eschewed the original version's ambitious adaptive strategy which had centred ideas of knowledge and had developed the Martin Guerre story's role as a test case for historiographic theories about individual identity and agency in the sixteenth century, instead offering a more straightforward musical adaptation of Vigne's film.

Martin Guerre's fractious relationship to earlier texts and historical evidence highlights the question of how adaptation can afford and deny agency to real individuals from the past. Using the conventions of musical theatre to explore the ramifications of Bertrande's knowledge, the musical continues Davis' recuperative task, affording agency to the

fictional Bertrande even though we cannot confirm whether her historical counterpart had the same knowledge. To revise Greenblatt's model of early modern identity as a placeholder in a relational system, 'Bertrande' across all adaptations is identified by her place as Martin's wife, as heiress to property, and as a citizen of Artigat. The musical uses the romantic hyperbole typical of the form to invest its own version of Bertrande with knowledge and free will, but it also reaffirms the patriarchal structure of early modern marriage through the metaphor of land husbandry. It offers a female protagonist who can satisfy 1990s conceptions of female power, but it compromises the feminist potential of this adaptive strategy by cleaving to what Neema Parvini calls the 'anti-humanist' bent of new historicism (93), portraying the individual caught in a network of hegemonic power structures which they do not have the agency to contradict. *Martin Guerre* is one among many examples of historical adaptations which attempt to make the gender dynamics of the past palatable to modern audiences by treating a female protagonist as a sole voice of dissent against inequality in her society. In this respect, though *Martin Guerre* is a striking example of a recuperative adaptation, its success is limited, because while it rebuilds the narrative around the conceit of Bertrande's knowledge and agency, it does not interrogate the tension between Bertrande's agency and her status as a possession of her husband and an extension of *his*—disputed—identity.

NOTES

[1] Tellingly, Matt Wolf wrote for *Variety* that 'everyone involved seems caught in the crossfire of a show about identity that has no identity of its own'.

[2] The facts of the Martin Guerre case as summarised here are based on Natalie Zemon Davis' account of events, which in turn is based on the sixteenth-century report by Jean de Coras.

[3] Duncan Salkeld's summary of new historicism highlights its capacity to '[seek] out different, occasionally surprising, conjunctions of historical and literary vocabulary as they render power visible and enable marginal or unheard voices to emerge' (61).

[4] Jean de Coras converted to Protestantism two years after he sat in judgement over the Guerre case and was killed in the aftermath of St Bartholomew's Day in 1572.

[5] 'Nous disons qu'il n'y a point de consentement, n'y de volonté, et que malences ne se commettent point sans propose deliberé, et intention de mal faire singulièrement un adultère, ou autre espèce de paillardise. Cette femme ici comme nous discourrons amplement en lieu plus propre, meritoit pour raison de cet erreur, quelque excuse' (de Coras, 20).

[6] '[D]u desastre, qui est advenu à notre maison nul a le tort que vous'.

[7] Lyrics from *Martin Guerre* are quoted from the 1996 cast recording. The English lyrics are by Edward Hardy and Stephen Clark. Since the 1996 cast album was recorded in the period when the show itself was undergoing re-writes, the album lyrics are not entirely identical either to the version of the show that initially opened in July, or to the rewritten version established by October.

[8] Engel is credited with coining the term, and discusses aspects of the phenomenon in *The American Musical Theater*.

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