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Anne Boleyn Hated and Loved: How Anne Boleyn Was Portrayed During  
the Tudor Era and How the View Has Changed Over Time in the Light of  
Feminism

Bakalářská práce

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. David Livingstone, Ph.D.

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Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci na téma „Anna Boleynová nenáviděná a milovaná: Jak byla Anna Boleynová zobrazována za éry Tudorovců a jak se pohled na její postavu změnil ve světle feminismu“ vypracoval(a) samostatně pod odborným dohledem vedoucího práce a uvedl(a) jsem všechny použité podklady a literaturu.

Ve Štýrském Hradci dne 6.5. 2020

Podpis .....*Majzlíková*.....

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*“Good Christian people, I am come hither to die, for according to the law, and by the law I am judged to die, and therefore I will speak nothing against it. I am come hither to accuse no man, nor to speak anything of that, whereof I am accused and condemned to die, but I pray God save the king and send him long to reign over you, for a gentler nor a more merciful prince was there never: and to me he was ever a good, a gentle and sovereign lord. And if any person will meddle of my cause, I require them to judge the best. And thus I take my leave of the world and of you all, and I heartily desire you all to pray for me. O Lord have mercy on me, to God I commend my soul.”<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Marilee Hanson, “Anne Boleyn's Speech At Her Execution,” English History, February 8, 2015, <https://englishhistory.net/tudor/anne-boleyn-speech-at-her-execution/>.

## Content:

Abstract	
Introduction	5
1. Anne Boleyn's Biography	7
2. Overview of Fictional Representations	12
2.1. Anne Boleyn in Prose	12
2.2. Anne Boleyn in Theatre	14
2.3. Anne Boleyn in Film and TV Series	15
3. A Feminist Approach to Literature and Its Influence on the Change in Anne Boleyn's Character	17
4. Representation of Anne Boleyn in Shakespeare's <i>Henry VIII</i>	20
5. Representation of Anne Boleyn in <i>The Tudors</i>	25
5.1. A Flirtatious Seductress	26
5.2. Malicious Manipulator	28
5.3. Emancipated Woman	31
5.4. A Victim	34
5.5. A Loving Mother	36
5.6. Summary, Alias Anne in the Third Wave of Feminism	36
6. Representation of Anne Boleyn in <i>Wolf Hall</i>	39
6.1. Redoubtable Strategist	39
6.2. Self-made Woman	40
6.3. Dangerous and Unforgiving	42
6.4. Anne Boleyn's Flirtatious Side	43
6.5. Summary	45
7. Conclusion	47
8. Resumé	
9. Bibliography	
Annotation	

## Introduction:

Anne Boleyn, a persona with a big question mark. This historical figure has always drawn attention to herself. As the second wife of Henry VIII., she can be thought of as an independent woman, a femme fatale, devious seductress hungry for power, defender of the Protestant faith and more. The main issue is that the picture of her character is changeable. Anne has been pictured in a diverse scale from a monstrous witch with six fingers to an irresistible beauty, from a naive girl being used by the political figures to a just too much of a strong and clever woman for her time. Did she only use Henry VIII. to get to the highest spot possible or was she deeply in love? Many rumours and stories have been told about her, but is one of them true or is the truth hidden somewhere in the middle? How can we find this out?

All these questions came to my head, when Anne was first introduced to me. I started to seek more, to find the truth. I realised, however, that the more stories about Anne exist, the more Annes with completely different characters appear. So, my first question was still uncovered, and other questions emerged. Is there a pattern of change, which I can trace? What have all the innocent Annes in common and what the despicable ones? Was Anne Boleyn pictured as an independent woman also in the times when a woman's life goal had to be only to breed children and be submissive to her husband? Did her character change over time or had there always been both sides?

The goal of my thesis is to solve these questions and possibly, find the true Anne Boleyn. I would like to analyse Anne's character and life using the available historical data and trace and analyse the changes of her character, especially focusing on the changes after the feminist movements.

First, I am going to introduce Anne's historically accurate life and bring out some descriptions of her character written in her lifetime. This part of the thesis should serve as an outline of Anne's biography and as basic information about the historical background of her lifetime. This should also serve the reader as a guide, which can be used to compare and recognize the inaccuracies in the fiction.

Second, the overview of fictional representations should create a frame of the various representations in prose, drama/theatre and television. It should also give us a hint, if we can trace a change of Anne's character during various eras and especially after the turn of the twentieth century, era of the feminist movement.

I will be then closely analysing Anne's character in Shakespeare's *The Famous History of the Life of Henry VIII*. I chose this play, because it represents one of the two main views of Anne in the seventeenth (continuing to the start of the nineteenth) century, thus the pro-Protestant propaganda. The other reason for selecting Shakespeare is not only simply his popularity and survival into the present, but also his unexpected picture of an innocent Anne.

For Anne's depiction in television, I selected *The Tudors* starring Natalie Dormer as Anne Boleyn. *The Tudors* currently predominates in the public knowledge of Anne and the representation of her given in the series also shapes to the average opinion about her. *The Tudors* creates on one hand an emancipated woman character, nevertheless a sexualized version of women on the other.

The last character analysis applies to Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall*, a modern historical novel. The novel brings us an ambitious, highly independent and clever Anne, who is not as sexualized as in *The Tudors*, but equally sly. Although Mantel follows some gender stereotypes, she still manages to create a woman character, who challenges the male centred society.

The final part of the thesis summarises the major outcomes of the character analysis, the change in the view of Anne Boleyn's character and the influence of the feminist movement on change in her reception.

# 1. Anne Boleyn's Biography

For summarizing Anne's life, I used as my source a biography *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn* written by Eric William Ives, because he always uses a historical source as a proof of the assumptions given in Anne's life. It is important to mention, that coming up with hundred percent accurate facts, regarding Anne's life, has been always challenging (or even impossible). Anne had not only many enemies degrading her, but also several praising admirers, which means, that numerous historical sources need to be taken with caution and every historian must examine their veracity.

Anne Boleyn was born in 1501 to Elizabeth (before Howard, a daughter of the Earl of Surrey) and Thomas Boleyn. She had a sister Mary, who was later Henry's mistress, probably during the 1510s or early 1520s, and a brother George. Mary is considered to be the older sister of Anne Boleyn. With the question of the status of the Boleyn family have emerged rumours, that the Boleyns were merchants. Ives suggests that this assumption is untrue and that Boleyns had a high status from the beginning of Anne's life and did not gain it "from zero" as it is usually believed. Anne left England to educate herself in 1513. She first joined the Habsburg court as a maid of honour to Margaret of Austria. This is how she was supposedly perceived:

As well as absorbing the best education Europe could offer, Anne learned by observation, and learned quickly. People's memories of Anne as she was after some months at Mechelen were still vivid twenty years later – intelligent, self-possessed, wide awake, rapidly coming to grips with the French language and with the sophistication of European courts: 'la Boullant, who at an early age had come to court, listened carefully to honourable ladies, setting herself to bend all her endeavour to imitate them to perfection, and made such good use of her wits that in no time at all she had command of the language.'<sup>2</sup>

There is no direct evidence, how Anne spent the year 1514, but some believe that she stayed in the Low countries. Anne became a maid of honour to Claude, the Queen of France, in 1515 and stayed in France for nearly seven years. Anne had to go back to England in the year of 1521, supposedly to marry James Butler, although this marriage never happened out of various reasons. The first and probably most famous reference to Anne at the English court is when she played Perseverance, one of the eight qualities of

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<sup>2</sup> E. W. Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn: 'The Most Happy'* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2004), 25.

a perfect mistress, at a pageant in March 1522. King Henry played the male lead as one of the eight qualities of a courtier. After this debut, Anne became a maid of honour to Katherine of Aragon, Henry's first wife.

After becoming a maid of honour, Anne's first love affair started with Henry Percy, an heir to the earldom of Northumberland. They fell in love and intended to marry, but their marriage was stopped by cardinal Wolsey, probably having at orders of the king who had his own intentions. The second love affair was with Thomas Wyatt, a famous Tudor poet. It cannot be said with certainty, if their relationship meant a serious love affair or if it was simply a way of flirtation in a courtly love. Many of Wyatt's poems capture events, which happened at that time, however can they be taken seriously? Ives argues that: "Wyatt's poems alone are not enough to support the hypothesis that Anne and Thomas were lovers. They merely suggest that Wyatt became one of a number of Anne's acknowledged courtly suitors, found himself emotionally involved but drew only a limited response."<sup>3</sup> Thus, it cannot be said with accuracy, that Anne and Thomas Wyatt were lovers.

Anne's third and deadly love affair consisted of her relationship with Henry VIII. The first important date is 1524, when Henry stopped sleeping with his former wife. Katherine of Aragon gave Henry only one child, Mary, and suffered many miscarriages. When she reached a certain age, it was not believed that she could conceive a child again. A male heir was, however, for Henry one of the most important foundations to sustain the kingdom. During their marriage, Henry had numerous mistresses, including Anne's sister Mary Carey. Henry decided to legitimize his mistress's son Henry Fitzroy. Ives considers this act as the beginning of Henry's decision that Katherine should be removed.<sup>4</sup> The decision to remove Katherine was not only made of political reasons, but also of Henry's strong faith, that his marriage could have been not supported by God. There is one line in the Bible, which says: "If a man shall take his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing...he shall be without children"<sup>5</sup> Since Katherine had been married to Henry's brother Arthur earlier, it could have been Henry's conviction, that he was being punished by God.

The date when the connection between Henry and Anne started cannot be declared with accuracy. The first proof were the love letters written between December

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 76.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 83.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

1527 and August 1528. Henry's first intention was to have Anne as his mistress, which Anne declined. If she simply did not want to end up as her sister or played a tricky game, which could take her to a higher state one cannot know, but her answer to Henry's request supposedly sounded like this:

I think your majesty, most noble and worthy king, speaketh these words in mirth to prove me, without intent of defiling your princely self, who I find thinks nothing less than of such wickedness which would justly procure the hatred of God and of your good queen against us...I have already given my maidenhead into my husband's hands.<sup>6</sup>

Anne had driven herself out from court for some time to avoid Henry, but not entirely. There were some letters exchanged between them. After some time, Henry realised, that the only chance to be with Anne was to marry her.

There remain many questions, if Anne and Henry even loved each other. Although some hints, which could give an answer, can be found. First, Henry's marriage to Anne was simply disadvantageous, since marrying a foreign princess could give him a bigger security and ally. Ives believes that Anne simply won the king with her personality: "Anne was where she was because of her own character and merits, a self-made woman who saw no percentage in bloodless simpering. Submissiveness had not won the king; Anne's attraction was challenge."<sup>7</sup> Other proof could be their confession of their love in *Book of Hours*:

If you remember my love in your prayers as strongly as I adore you, I shall hardly be forgotten, for I am yours. Henry R. forever.

Anne replied:

By daily proof you shall me find  
To be to you both loving and kind.<sup>8</sup>

An interesting thing is that Anne chose to write her couplet under a picture of the Annunciation, where Mary is told by an angel that she will have a son.

A request to annul the marriage with Katherine was sent to Rome in August 1527 and thus a six years long fight started. The main responsibility for Henry's so-called Great Matter was laid on the shoulders of cardinal Wolsey. However, with time proceeding it became clearer that the case would not end in Henry's favour and Anne

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 85.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 145.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 7.

started to act. She put herself into politics and took part in a group, which goal was to get rid of Wolsey. Wolsey paid the ultimate price for his failure in 1530 and Henry and Anne had to look for other possibilities than the pope's permission. The proposition of solving this problem came, actually, from Anne herself, when she gave Henry Tyndale's book *The Obedience of a Christian Man* with highlighted parts in it, one of them being: "The king is in the person of God and his law in God's law."<sup>9</sup> Anne as a Protestant got this book illegally and even let later others read from it. Even though Henry was a strong Christian, he accepted the idea openly. Henry VIII. was made a singular protector, supreme lord and supreme head of the English church and clergy in 1531. This milestone got rid of the influence of the Roman church and gave the possibility to Henry and Anne to marry. Anne was made a Marquis of Pembroke in the year 1532. She and Henry left for France in the same year and Anne was already treated in France as queen. It is believed that somewhere during their trip they married secretly, since in May 1533, her coronation day, Anne was already pregnant. Anne gave birth to princess Elizabeth instead of the promised son in September 1533. Anne was considered to be pregnant again in 1534, but there are no proofs of a miscarriage or stillbirth, which could be a case of phantom pregnancy and could hint Anne's desperation to have a baby. Things got worse for Anne in the end of January 1536, when she suffered a miscarriage a few days after Henry's jousting accident.

A few months later, Anne started to lose Henry's affection, which began to turn to Jane Seymour. But the ultimate thing, which destroyed Anne were the rumours about her. They stated that Anne committed adultery with numerous men, one of them being her brother. The investigations were held against George Boleyn, Henry Norris, who was Henry's close friend, William Brereton, Francis Weston and Mark Smeaton, who confessed himself guilty, but most likely after a series of torture. Two other men were also interrogated, one of them being Thomas Wyatt, but in the end set free. During the trial, all of the five men including Anne were found guilty. The trial can be considered only as a formality, since the French swordsman, who beheaded Anne, was sent to England from France before Anne was even found guilty. The day before her beheading Anne sworn on her soul's damnation to be innocent. Anne was beheaded on Tower Green on 19<sup>th</sup> May 1536. According to Ives, Anne took the execution with grace.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 133.

There was no public admission of sin, even in general, still less any confession that she had wronged Henry. Anne spoke firmly, 'with a goodly smiling countenance', and soon the news would be all round London that she had died 'boldly', without the acceptance of the morality of the sentence which a truly penitent adulteress should show.<sup>10</sup>

Just eleven days after Anne's death Henry married Jane Seymour.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 358.

## 2. Overview of Fictional Representations

For this part I chose to search the information from Susan Bordo's *The Creation of Anne Boleyn: A New Look at England's Most Notorious Queen* (2013) and Rheta M. Warnicke's "Anne Boleyn in History, Drama and Film". This overview does not contain every fictional representation of Anne but summarizes the main patterns of her representations throughout time in prose, drama and television.

### **2.1. Anne Boleyn in Prose**

Depictions of Anne Boleyn in prose are most extensive in number and therefore the change of her portrayal is most traceable. Since works including different images of Anne have already appeared in the sixteenth century (Nicolas Sander's *The Rise and Growth of the Anglican Schism* or George Wyatt's defending biography of Anne) and continued to appear till present time.

Bordo suggests, that the first depictions of Anne differ according to the faith the author inclined to. "From Chapuys until the middle of the nineteenth century, the Protestant/Catholic divide was the major determinant in how Anne was portrayed."<sup>11</sup> Shortly, for a Catholic, Anne was a heretic and for a Protestant, Anne was a hero. Hateful letters from the Spanish ambassador Eustace Chapuys can be included to the Catholic point of view. As an example of almost sanctifying Anne, John Bank's *Vertue Betray'd: or, Anne Bullen* (1682) can be named. Madame d'Aulnoy's *The Novels of Elizabeth, Queen of England, Containing the History of Queen Anne of Bullen* were secretly criticising the court of Louis XIV. Bordo indicates that Bank's and d'Aulnoy's works are one of the numerous she-tragedies.<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth Bengier wrote *Memoirs of the Life of Anne Boleyn, Queen of King Henry VIII* in 1821 handing Anne influence in the Protestant Reformation and analysing expected gender roles, but also emphatically describing her darker side.

In the Victorian age a strong influence of the moral point of view can be added to the Catholic/Protestant divide. Bordo brings up even history books, which criticize Henry's lust or Anne's ambitions, and describe their downfalls as justified punishments. Lady Maria Callot's *Little Arthur's England* or Lydia Loyd Farmer's *The Girl's Book of Famous Queens* can be used as examples where morals prevail over facts.

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<sup>11</sup> Susan Bordo, *The Creation of Anne Boleyn: A New Look at England's Most Notorious Queen* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), 206.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 124.

The novel *The Favor of Kings*, which depicts Anne's inner life naturally, was written by Mary Hastings Bradley in 1912 and as the first, brought up the theory of Anne being manipulated by her father and uncle. Bordo summarizes depictions of Anne in the twentieth century as: "The paradigm of Anne as a vivacious, high-spirited young girl whose life was profoundly-and tragically-altered by becoming Henry's queen has remained the narrative spine of the twentieth-century novels that are sympathetic to her."<sup>13</sup> Bordo adds that one of the influences of the change could be the new ideology of femininity and Freudian psychology.<sup>14</sup> To novels written in the first half of the twentieth century *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*. from Paul Rival or Francis Hackett's *Queen Anne Boleyn* can be added.

The second half of the twentieth century put Anne's story into the spotlight. Every decade, till the present, numerous new pieces about Anne have appeared. Bordo describes this period as:

But as soon as the war ended, Anne was back full force and with more "pluck" and independence than before. Passive, dependent heroines were no longer appreciated by middle-class female readers... in the years immediately after the war, culture vacillated back and forth between celebrating and condemning the woman who tried to live as an equal with men.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, the visible trace of the influence of feminism can be spotted. Although, some counterexamples can be detected too. For example, Margaret Campbell Barnes's *Brief Gaudy Hour* still shows the old gender division where a teenage girl can be (mildly) rebellious and flirtatious, but a wife must know her place. Norah Loft's *The Concubine* (1963) depicts cynical and proud Anne, who actually commits adultery. This view of Anne being truly guilty belongs to one of the few. On the other hand, as an example of humanizing Anne *Murder Most Royal* written by Jean Plaidy can be used.

The turn of the twenty-first century has brought not only the despicable Anne as in Phillipa Gregory's *The Other Boleyn Girl*, but also the brainy Anne, who is too independent for her time as in Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall*. The modern Anne also does not fear of using her sexuality, which develops to a part of Anne's character, as in *Mademoiselle Boleyn* from Robin Maxwell.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 234.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 137.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 242.

In conclusion, the overview of representations of Anne Boleyn in prose shows Anne with multiple personalities and a certain character development. From being seen in only black and white manner, the scale of portrayals has expanded over time. From adding the question of morality and gender-role division in the Victorian times to a story of a woman suffering from her underlying position in male oriented society, Anne reaches the twenty-first century not only as an emancipated woman, but also as a cunning seductress.

## **2.2. Anne Boleyn in Theatre**

Anne's depiction in theatre differs from a minor role to the main characters. The genres also differ from tragedies to musicals. The plays started to appear from the seventeenth century till the present-day.

The first author, who introduced Anne in drama was William Shakespeare and his *The Famous History of the Life of Henry VIII.*, where Anne is characterised as an innocent Protestant. According to Warnicke, Shakespeare's view of Anne lasted till the mid-nineteenth century play *Anne Boleyn: A Tragedy* created by George Boker, in which Anne gained the trait of ambition. "Boker's view of her as redeemed at her death serves as a transition between the other nineteenth-century plays that treat her as politically innocent and the twentieth-century drama that depict her as an ambitious plotter."<sup>16</sup> Importantly, also works like *The Crown of Thorns* from Anne E. Dickinson influenced by the first wave of feminism appeared, where Anne becomes a strong character uncomprehend by others. *Anne of the Thousand Days* written by Maxwell Anderson debuted in 1948 with fiercely independent, defiant Anne, whose falling in love with Henry is her ultimate downfall. Howard Brenton's *Anne Boleyn* is the significant play of 2010. According to Bordo it: "is the first popular depiction to emphasize Anne's reformist activities as well as her flirtatious side."<sup>17</sup> The final work, a musical created by Toby Marlow and Lucy Moss, *Six* creates probably the most current time adapted picture, which highlights individualism. The six wives compete who had to suffer the most, but in the end realise, that they should rather concentrate on their own story and achievements.

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<sup>16</sup> Retha M. Warnicke, "Anne Boleyn in History, Drama, and Film," *High and Mighty Queens" of Early Modern England: Realities and Representations*, (2003), 248.

<sup>17</sup> Susan Bordo, *The Creation of Anne Boleyn: A New Look at England's Most Notorious Queen* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), 270.

In summary, the depictions of Anne Boleyn in theatre take a similar scope as the ones in prose. Starting Shakespeare, Anne is portrayed as unambitious, innocent Protestant. Her image starts to change in the late twentieth century, when Anne gains the ambitious character and independence. Lastly, Anne's flirtatious side and emancipation get emphasized in the twenty first century.

### **2.3. Anne Boleyn in Film and TV Series**

Comparing the depictions in the film industry and the ones in the theatre and prose, the numbers drop. Since the film industry commenced in the twentieth century, only a hundred years' time transformation can be traced.

Anne started to appear very early in the film industry, firstly in a silent film about Cardinal Wolsey in 1912. The year 1920 brought another silent film, *Anna Boleyn*, directed by Ernst Lubitsch with Anne (Henny Porten) being victimised by predatory Henry. Merle Oberon starred as "exotic" beautiful Anne in *The Private Life of Henry VIII* (1933). Warnicke describes her as: "Oberon portrays a mature, sensual Anne, but she is given no opportunity to play the "ambitious" woman described by her husband."<sup>18</sup> The film adaptation of *Anne of the Thousand Days* (1969) brought Geneviève Bujold a Golden Globe for her beautiful and calculating Anne. The television series *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, starring Dorothy Tutin brought, according to Bordo, "gravity and maturity to the portrayal of Anne."<sup>19</sup> Anne was also played by Helena Bonham Carter in *Henry VIII*. Jodhi May portrayed Anne in *The Other Boleyn Girl*, but the malicious Anne is more popular in the same adaptation played by Natalie Portman. Natalie Dormer created probably the most remembered and popular depiction of Anne in the present, being both seductive and independent, in the series *The Tudors*. Lastly, the TV series adaptation *Wolf Hall* shows also ambitious and feminist side of Anne played by Claire Foy.

The hundred-year time lapse of depicting Anne in television has brought various portrayals, which blend more easily together, and the change in Anne's character becomes less traceable. Previous Protestant praise and Catholic disfiguration is no longer visible. Nevertheless, the change in the mid-twentieth century, in which Anne becomes

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<sup>18</sup> Retha M. Warnicke, "Anne Boleyn in History, Drama, and Film," *"High and Mighty Queens" of Early Modern England: Realities and Representations*, (2003), 249.

<sup>19</sup> Susan Bordo, *The Creation of Anne Boleyn: A New Look at England's Most Notorious Queen* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), 160.

ambitious, seems to be repeating itself. The twenty first century has brought a complex character with more than one side.

### 3. A Feminist Approach to Literature and Its Influence on the Change in Anne Boleyn's Character

Since literature has been a male dominated area and women started to be taken as serious writers later than men, the issue of depicting women in subordinate roles mirrors the gender inequality in society. Women have been often portrayed as passive, illogical, minor characters. Their value has been also often determined only by their biological role or attractiveness. The literature written from a point of view of a woman and by a woman has been lacking throughout time. Even nowadays young women readers struggle to find a heroine to whom they can look up to. Susan Cornillon addresses this issue in her dissertation "Development and Implementation of a Feminist Literary Perspective": "For the most part, women in our culture experience themselves and their lives in terms of and in response to masculine centered values and definitions."<sup>20</sup> It is still a woman's task to recognize the masculine centred values and to question them, since they are still present in our society. This chapter focuses on this issue, defining feminism and introducing the feminist literary approach.

It is believed, that starting the end of the eighteenth century the feminist movement has emerged. E.D. Hirsch defines the feminist movement in his book *A First Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* as:

The women's movement is an effort to secure legal, economic, and social equality for women. It is also called the feminist movement. The women's movement began in the nineteenth century, when reformers sought, among other things, to secure property rights and voting rights for women.<sup>21</sup>

The feminist movement has developed through time and its history is usually divided into three waves. Jocelyn Nichole Murphy defines them in her thesis "The role of women in film: Supporting the men -- An analysis of how culture influences the changing discourse on gender representations in film" as:

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<sup>20</sup> Susan Cornillon, "Development and Implementation of a Feminist Literary Perspective" Electronic Thesis or Dissertation (Bowling Green State University, 1975), 28.

<sup>21</sup> E. D. Hirsch, William G. Rowland, and Michael Stanford, *A First Dictionary of Cultural Literacy: What Our Children Need to Know* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996), 114.

The history of the feminist movement saw the first wave in the in the late 1800s through the '20s, the second wave in the '60s and '70s, and the third wave of feminism, as well as post feminism, emerging in the mid-1980s (Coleman, 2009). Post-feminism has several definitions based on the group identifying with, or defining it, but most definitions see it in some way or another as a response to the end of feminism, or as anti-feminist ideology (Coleman, 2009).<sup>22</sup>

Every wave deals with new issues regarding woman inequality.

Also, women's writing has changed through time and had to deal with new issues. For instance, women had to gain the right to earn money first and then strive for an equal payment. And so, women's writing has also changed step by step. Elaine Showalter summarizes the change into three phases of women's writing in *A Literature of Their Own*. In the first phase, women often wrote under male pseudonyms and usually did not criticize a woman's underlying place in society. The second phase brought major works, which criticized oppression of women and the gender imbalance. In the last phase, women no longer tried to defend their value and believed to be taken as authentic writers.<sup>23</sup>

With the growing awareness of the dominance of male perspective and its inequality, the feminist criticism started to appear. Michael Delahoyde, a professor of English at Washington State University, defines feminist criticism as:

Feminist literary criticism, arising in conjunction with sociopolitical feminism, critiques patriarchal language and literature by exposing how these reflect masculine ideology. It examines gender politics in works and traces the subtle construction of masculinity and femininity, and their relative status, positionings, and marginalizations within works.<sup>24</sup>

Cornillon defines a job of a feminist critic as: "...to expose the prejudice affecting the portrayal of women in literature. This prejudice expresses itself in three ways: in criticism, in authorial judgements, and in literary conventions."<sup>25</sup> With feminist criticism

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<sup>22</sup> Jocelyn Nichole Murphy, "The role of women in film: Supporting the men -- An analysis of how culture influences the changing discourse on gender representations in film" (2015), 9.

<sup>23</sup> Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelist from Brontë To Lessing* (Princeton, NJ: Univ. Pr., 1977), 3-37.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Delahoyde, Feminist Criticism, accessed April 29, 2020, <https://public.wsu.edu/~delahoyd/feminist.crit.html>.

<sup>25</sup> Susan Cornillon, "Development and Implementation of a Feminist Literary Perspective" Electronic Thesis or Dissertation (Bowling Green State University, 1975), 107.

pointing out the gender inequality and stereotypes in literature and increase of women's writing, the change in portraying women in literature has become quite evident.

I believe that the change in Anne's character is influenced by the feminist movement. The first portrayals of Anne tend to polarize her either into a saint-like figure or a scheming witch. They follow the gender stereotype of seeing a woman either as a good wife/mother, or as a concubine and nothing in between. The faith of the author determines, if the image is positive or negative. The first portrayals of Anne lack complexity and follow gender stereotypes of its time. The portrayals of the Victorian era bring the prescribed moral code of how women should behave, which was created by male dominated society. A woman, who lets herself to be seduced by a married man, has ambitions, and even tries to prioritise them, needs to be rightfully punished.

It is not until approximately mid twentieth century, when Anne fully gets the trait of ambition, which is pictured in a positive way. She speaks her mind, strives for the reform, stands against the greediness of the Catholic church and wants to emancipate herself. Most of the works view Anne as an active character, who is aware of her power and sexuality. She falls, not because she is rightfully punished or dies a martyr's death, but because she challenges the patriarchal society and signifies a threat to its dominance.

In summary, it becomes evident, that women getting their right to vote, to gain salary, and increasing the chance of equality goes hand in hand with Anne raising her image in literature and becoming a complex female character. The raising voice of feminism has changed the view of historians, fiction writers and dramatists. I dare to say, that Anne Boleyn has become over time a feminist character. A young woman, who is trying to find her worth and identity can understand Anne's struggle.

#### 4. Representation of Anne Boleyn in Shakespeare's Play *The Famous History of the Life of Henry VIII.*

William Shakespeare's late play of five acts traces historical events from the beheading of duke Buckingham to the birth of princess Elizabeth. It does not show Anne's fall and beheading, only her rise. The play was written and performed in the start of the seventeenth century, approximately eighty years after Anne's death. In these times, Anne's daughter, Elizabeth I., was already about 10 years dead and the Stuarts were on the throne. It is believed that the reign of Stuarts influenced the writing of the play, because of political reasons. Camille Wells Slight explains this issue in her article "The Politics of Conscience in All Is True (or Henry VIII)" as: "Produced at a time of wide spread nationalistic and Protestant fervour, the play interprets in the reign of Henry VIII as the legitimating origin of Stuart England."<sup>26</sup> The play is also considered not being entirely written by Shakespeare. Austin Brereton discusses in the introduction of the play: "It has been abundantly proved that at least one other author, John Fletcher, had a share in the writing of the play."<sup>27</sup>

Studying Anne's character becomes quite hard in this play, since Anne only acts in three scenes and speaks in two, firstly in the fourth scene in the first act and secondly in the third scene in the second act, where she finally holds a longer conversation. In her last act, the fourth act and the first scene, Anne is crowned the Queen of England. Her momentary appearance in the play suggests that Anne is not the character, who moves or changes the actions. She is passive and mostly only reacts to other characters, but never takes action herself. Brereton describes her as:

The "beautiful, frivolous sensualist," Anne Bullen, is but the outline of a character. "Virtuous and well-deserving," "a gallant creature and complete," the combination of beauty and honour, she may be, but there is little to show it in the play. She is shallow, cunning, and weak, although she is meant to be attractive.<sup>28</sup>

The overall view of her character suggests that she becomes the Queen of England only because she is extremely beautiful and simply at the right place in the right moment. She catches the king's attention, who stricken by her beauty decides to divorce his former wife and breaks with the Roman church. Also Brereton agrees, that lust is considered as

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<sup>26</sup> Camille Wells Slight, "The Politics of Conscience in All Is True (or Henry VIII)," *Shakespeare Survey* 43 (1991), 59.

<sup>27</sup> William Shakespeare and Austin Brereton, *King Henry VIII*. (London: Collins, 1900), v.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, viii.

the main reason for the divorce: “It asserts that the motive for the king’s desire for the divorce is his passion for Anne Bullen, despite the true state of the case, Henry hardly having seen Anne at the time that he commenced the proceedings.”<sup>29</sup> Thus, Anne cannot take any credit for the change and the reformation. She is only seen as a desirable object by Henry, since he calls her “a dainty one” the first time he sees her.

Comparing the women in the play, therefore Queen Katherine, Anne Boleyn, an old Lady and lastly a Patience, a woman to Queen Katherine, it is visible that Katherine embodies the biggest character. As an outsider she does not betray her ideals and stays true to her morals till the end. In the scene, where she is placed on trial, she stands up to Wolsey and proceeds through her difficult situation as a true heroine. Katherine performs in the first act the second scene, second act the fourth scene, third act scene first and fourth act the second scene. In all of them, she holds a conversation and is sometimes given powerful monologues, thus she appears in the play two times more than Anne. A number of times she is praised by numerous characters and even by Anne Boleyn herself. The only circumstance, which puts her down is her infertility. Katherine falls and loses her status making place for Anne, who gives birth to Elizabeth. It seems that a value of a woman is in this play determined by her fertility. Still if we compare Katherine’s actions to Anne’s, it is Katherine, who deserves the status of a strong woman. The only Anne’s strength or rebellious behaviour is that she is not a Catholic. This is described by Wolsey: “...I know her for/ A spleeny Lutheran ; and not wholesome to/ Our cause, that she should lie i’ the bosom of/ Our hard-ruled king.”<sup>30</sup> In the sixteenth century it was not save, even for a high born noble, to declare their faith to be Protestant. Thus, this is the only thing in which Anne steps out from her shell of a weak innocent beauty.

Anne firstly appears in the first act in a scene in a hall in York Place where a banquet is held by Cardinal Wolsey. She enters the scene with other ladies and gentlemen getting ready to entertain the king. In the scene, lord Sands is ordered to sit between Anne and another lady. He immediately chooses Anne Boleyn to start the conversation with and after a while he starts to flirt with her: “O, very mad, exceeding mad, in love too; / But he would bite none; just as I do now, / He would kiss you twenty with a breath.”<sup>31</sup> Lord Sands kisses Anne Boleyn after this “description” of his father. In this short conversation, Anne accuses lord Sands of being a “merry gamester”, but also

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 136.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 73.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 26.

immediately stops him, when he goes too far. Shortly, the king arrives to the banquet with other gentlemen and has to choose a lady for a dance. The king chooses Anne Boleyn without any hesitation and proclaims: “The fairest hand I ever touch’d! / O beauty, / Till now I never knew thee!”<sup>32</sup> after the dance Henry immediately asks the lord Chamberlain about her and adds: “By heaven, she is a dainty one. Sweetheart, / I were unmannerly, to take you out / And not to kiss you. A health, gentlemen! / Let it go round.”<sup>33</sup> Soon, Wolsey suggests moving into the next room, since the dancing makes the king a little heated and the first act ends.

In the third scene in the second act, Anne starts the scene and is its main focus. In the start Anne pities Queen Katherine’s fate and poses she would not be a queen. She is persuaded by an Old Lady and later Lord Chamberlain that she would be a good match for the king and that she is worthy of the title. The whole scene seems to view Anne as an innocent woman unable to scheme. When Lord Chamberlain enters, he simply persuades her that the divorce is a good thing and inconspicuously lifts her qualities:

You bear a gentle mind, and  
heavenly blessings  
Follow such creatures. That you may, fair lady,  
Perceive I speak sincerely, and high note’s  
Ta’en of your many virtues, the king’s majesty  
Commends his good opinion of you, and  
Does purpose honour to you no less flowing  
Than Marchioness of Pembroke; to which title  
A thousand pound a year, annual support,  
Out of his grace he adds.<sup>34</sup>

With this statement he is also hinting that Anne is probably the one the king wants to choose to be the next queen. Anne simply thanks and answers that only prayers and wishes is all she can return to the king. One could argue that Anne plays a game of lies and wants to seem innocent, but secretly is only pretending, since this is a classic conviction of her character. Nevertheless, the Lord Chamberlain is hinting us otherwise as he is leaving the scene and speaks aside to himself: “I have perused her well ; / Beauty and honour in her are so mingled / That they have caught the king; and who knows yet /

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 47-48.

But from this lady may proceed a gem / To lighten all this isle?...<sup>35</sup> This statement guides us to a belief, that Anne's character is not cunning at all, but pure.

In her last appearance in the play, Anne simply passes over the stage in order and state as a true Queen of England. She is later only described by three gentlemen, who are talking about the coronation. Her beauty is again elevated, and the third gentleman describes her even as a saint figure: "At length her grace rose, and with / modest paces / Came to the altar; where se kneel'd, and saintlike / Cast her fair eyes to heaven and pray'd devoutly; / Then rose again and bow'd her to the people..."<sup>36</sup>

Lastly, one could as usually assume, that Anne will be the bad character who tries to manipulate the other, but on the contrary Wolsey holds this position. The more I studied her description in this play the more I realised that Anne is only an innocent beauty, who charms the king and gives birth to the main heroine of the play, princess Elizabeth. One could still argue, that when she is pitying the queen, that she does not really mean it or that she can play the scheming game just as well as anybody else, since after the talk with an old lady she asks her to not speak to anyone about their conversation. But when we take a closer look at other characters, Shakespeare (or also Fletcher) makes it quite clear who is good or bad. For instance, nobody could doubt that cardinal Wolsey is the bad guy maybe even a devilish character. Or, the duke of Buckingham, who is in the play a noble man and beheaded because of Wolsey's deeds. However, most of the historians agree, that Buckingham was a conspirator who could injure Henry's position to the throne if he would not be executed. In most parts of the play, it is made loud and clear what intentions a character has or if it is playing a false game. For example, throughout the play, when Shakespeare wants the audience to know that a character has secret plans, he makes the character to speak aside to itself. And Anne never does that, in her short appearance she is always clear and honest in what she has to say.

In summary, Anne represents only a shadow of a character in the Shakespeare's play, since she does not have an opportunity to show her true and full character. She might be humble and true, but not strong. Her uniqueness lies only in her Protestant faith. She is praised by others to be a marvellous beauty, but the only marvellous thing she does is giving birth to Elizabeth I. and this is, when her life mission apparently ends and, according to Shakespeare, also the famous life of king Henry VIII.

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 48.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 93.

## 5. Representation of Anne Boleyn in *The Tudors*

Showtime's TV series *The Tudors* is currently possibly the most popular show, which has influenced the view of Anne Boleyn in the twenty-first century. It traces Henry's reign from about 1520's till his death. The show focuses on his relationships and intrigues of the court. Being described by the critics as "a Hollywood "fairytale"" or "a porno-style historical semi-drama quite obviously not aimed at the serious television watcher"<sup>37</sup> brings a lot of controversy or even a negative review to the show. However, Michael Hirst, the creator of the show, "had never claimed the series was 100 percent historically accurate."<sup>38</sup> The story is often spiced up to entertain and shock the modern viewer. Although, the adding up to the story to make it more entertaining for the viewer could tell us something about the viewpoint in our times and what is expected from a female character in the modern film industry. William Baxter Robinson, the author of *History, Fiction, and "The Tudors": Sex, Politics, Power, and Artistic License in the Showtime Television Series*, states:

As new generations of creative minds respond and add their voices to the "chain of representations" of the past, they both reflect the values and preoccupations of their own time and, almost invariably, stake their own territory through a reinvention of well-worn narratives and characters.<sup>39</sup>

It seems that *the Tudors* took the social values and issues from the sixteenth century and added the ones from the twenty-first century to it.

We can read more and more criticism on the modern industry for sexualising female characters or making them flat and *The Tudors* is a perfect example for this problem. Even Natalie Dormer, the actress portraying Anne Boleyn, shared her concerns about the character:

...a woman can be complex, can have ambitions, good looks, sexuality, erudition, and common sense. A woman can have all those facets, and yet men, in literature and in drama, seem to need to simplify women, to polarize us as either the whore or the angel. That sensibility is prevalent, even to this day.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Susan Bordo, *The Creation of Anne Boleyn: A New Look at England's Most Notorious Queen* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), 159.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> William Baxter Robinson, *History, Fiction, and "The Tudors": Sex, Politics, Power, and Artistic License in the Showtime Television Series* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 78.

<sup>40</sup> Susan Bordo, *The Creation of Anne Boleyn: A New Look at England's Most Notorious Queen* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), 161.

This statement precisely summarizes not only Anne, but I dare to say, all the women characters in the series. When watching the show, we see on one side standing the religious Katherine, women in More's family with pure and innocent Jane and on the other stand the loose objects, who usually end up in Henry's or Charles Brandon's bed plus mean girls like Anne.

Luckily, when researching *The Tudors*, I have found in Anne not only a cunning ambitious femme fatale, but also a complex character (especially in the second season). When analysing her personality, I have noticed five main assets: a flirtatious seductress, mean cold manipulator, emancipated woman, a victim and lastly a loving mother. One could argue that those many assets create already a complex female character; however, her complexity gets sometimes lost in the stereotypical other woman.

### **5.1.A Flirtatious Seductress**

In the first two episodes of the first season Anne's sister, Mary, is expected to cease king's (Jonathan Rhys Meyers) attention. However, she fails to keep it for a longer time and Anne is being sent from France to England to continue with the quests. Her father, Thomas Boleyn (Nick Dunning), is sure, that Anne will succeed: "Perhaps you could imagine a way to keep his interest more prolonged? I daresay you learned things in France, how to play his passions? There's something deep and dangerous in you, Anne. Those eyes of yours are dark hooks for the soul."<sup>41</sup> So, the first thing we learn about Anne is that she has already gained experience flirting and knows how to play the game. This reputation is also supported in the start of the second season, when Anne is having a private talk with king Francis asking him to not share the secrets about her behaviour and romances at the French court.<sup>42</sup> The show also owns to the story of Anne lying about her virginity and formerly having a relationship with Thomas Wyatt (Jamie Thomas King). We discover that Anne lied, when Thomas laments after the execution of other men, who supposedly committed adultery with Anne, that it is only him, who is guilty of the charges.<sup>43</sup>

In the first half of the season, we can see her game in action as she is looking deeply into Henry's eyes, when their paths "coincidentally" cross. But then at court, Anne is laughing with others and pretends, that king's attention is the last thing she is interested

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<sup>41</sup> "Simply Henry" (2007). *The Tudors*. Cr. Michael Hirst. Season 1, Episode 2. Showtime.

<sup>42</sup> "Tears of Blood" (2008). *The Tudors*. Cr. Michael Hirst. Season 2, Episode 2. Showtime.

<sup>43</sup> "Destiny and Fortune" (2008). *The Tudors*. Cr. Michael Hirst. Season 2, Episode 10. Showtime.

in. After learning from her sister's mistakes, Anne does not accept the first gift from the king, but returns it with an explanation of being unworthy of the gift and promises the king, that she'll be thinking of him, finally, she signs the letter as a "loving servant of the king". This tactic of allowing Henry to get closer and then pushing him away, Anne uses for most of the time. Susan Bordo summarizes Anne's tactic in her book *The Creation of Anne Boleyn: A New Look at England's Most Notorious Queen* as:

Throughout that first season, Anne entices, provokes, and sexually manipulates her way into the queenship, allowing Henry to get to every base except home, driving him mad with pent-up lust. "Seduce me!" she orders Henry, and a moment later we see her stark naked; a few episodes later, she taunts him to find a piece of ribbon that she has apparently hidden inside her vagina.<sup>44</sup>

From being an innocent flower, who denies the king and gets offended, when the king asks Anne to become his mistress, Anne turns into a lustful seductress in a very short time. Anne's flirtatious behaviour continues also in the second season of the series, where she is already married to Henry. Bordo describes it as:

When Henry presents her, newly anointed as the Marquise of Pembroke, to Francis and his court, she performs a Salome-style dance that makes one wonder just which historical series is one watching. At home, her bold flirting, confiding, and cuddling with Mark Smeaton makes the later charges of adultery with him quite plausible...<sup>45</sup>

It seems that Anne does not only uses flirting to get to Henry, but that it is also part of her nature.

Another thing, which adds to Anne's flirtatious reputation are her looks. As Robinson writes: "... Anne Boleyn is dressed in a more sensual style than Henry's other English queens, which may be an allusion to her French taste."<sup>46</sup> So Anne often stands out with her looks. Her dressing style usually highlights her cleavage, but to her defence, for most of the young female characters does in the show. Yet, if we compare her with for example Katherine, the differences in the dressing style are massive. Anne is wearing red or wine-coloured dresses quite often and red is traditionally considered a colour representing love, passion and seduction. This colour grants Anne to be spotted as first

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<sup>44</sup> Susan Bordo, *The Creation of Anne Boleyn: A New Look at England's Most Notorious Queen* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), 185.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> William Baxter Robison, *History, Fiction, and "The Tudors": Sex, Politics, Power, and Artistic License in the Showtime Television Series* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 78.

and stand out in the crowd. Other repeating patterns are also the dresses with colours of spring and flowers, which could represent fertility and new life as Anne often makes Henry sure, that she will grant him a son.

Overall, Anne represents rather a loose flirt with a scandalous past full of secret romances. She has a reputation of party and dance lover and can be often seen laughing and flirting with others in a cheerful mood. She can play the game of seduction so well, that she even makes the unattainable Henry madly fall in love with her. Anne knows she is beautiful and uses it to serve to her advantage.

## **5.2 Malicious Manipulator**

The ambition winning over heart, the she-devil, scheming woman, careless, cruel... these are also words, which illustrate Anne's character. Anne surprises with how far she can go to get things. She does not hesitate to use her sex-appeal (as pointed out in the previous chapter) or wit to manipulate other. In addition, if somebody gets hurt in her way to the top, does not bother Anne at all.

*The Tudors* suggests that her relationship with Henry has started only because of her (and her family) ambitions and want of a higher status. Anne alone confesses that she: "did not care for the king"<sup>47</sup> in the beginning. Anne's cold heart and preference of ambitions is also shown in the third episode, where she breaks the relationship with Thomas Wyatt in an insensitive way. Thomas asks Anne: "And will you leave me thus? And have no more pity of he that loves thee? Alas your cruelty!" Anne ends the conversation with a threat: "Never ask of me, and never, if you value your life, speak of me to others."<sup>48</sup> and walks away without ever looking back.

Getting to Cardinal Thomas Wolsey (Sam Neill), the one who had to take care of the divorce, but in the end failed and paid the ultimate price for it. Anne Boleyn takes a huge part in making Wolsey's fall happen. Every little mistake Wolsey makes Anne whispers into king's ears and presents it as an act against him. But why Anne wanted to destroy someone, who had to be responsible for the divorce she so much longed for? It is because, Wolsey represented everything, what Anne's family wanted to destroy. He was an archbishop living in luxury and misusing his high status, he was a Catholic and as king's close friend and Lord Chancellor he stood in a way to Boleyn's family. For Anne's game to be successful, she had to start inconspicuously. She shared a few worries

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<sup>47</sup> "True Love" (2007). *The Tudors*. Cr. Michael Hirst. Season 1, Episode 6. Showtime.

<sup>48</sup> "Wolsey, Wolsey, Wolsey!" (2007). *The Tudors*. Cr. Michael Hirst. Season 1, Episode 3. Showtime.

about Wolsey. Naturally, they look like worries one has about his friends. Is he really able to complete this task alone? Is it not too much for his abilities? These questions were not taken by the king too seriously, but when one failure followed by another, they started to reappear in the king's head. Wolsey's status of king's true and loyal friend began to decay. In one particular scene, he is coming to share the bad news to Henry and Anne as a child who got a bad grade at school. Anne also likes to humiliate Wolsey by naming a dog after him. As the king could only wait, and the divorce went on much longer than he thought, Anne still kept asking questions, which were pointing more and more at Wolsey. From worrying about a friend, she went to asking, whether he was the one responsible for the whole unsuccess of the divorce with Katherine (Maria Doyle Kennedy). "What if someone is deliberately stalling? Delaying things, making excuses. ... No. No, someone else, someone much closer to you."<sup>49</sup>, she answers the question, if the mysterious delayer is Cardinal Campeggio (John Cavanagh), a cardinal sent from Rome to adjudicate on "The Great Matter". She seals everything with showing her new motto to Henry, "Ainsi sera, groigne qui groigne.", which she translates, "That's how it's going to be, let them grumble!"<sup>50</sup>. As her planted seed of doubt worked and after Wolsey tried to switch sides to Katherine's, his destiny was sealed. Anne did not have so much work with striking her final hit:

Now when you know the truth you must act against him. He and his fellow priests and prelates think that they can control Your Majesty's realm. That they are higher than you. And by taking an instruction from the pope was not Wolsey acting as an agent of a foreign country? The presumption of the pope thinking he could tell you, you, what to do?!<sup>51</sup>

Ironically, she is holding and playing with cards in this scene. She is the one calling the shots, mixing the cards as she is mixing the traditions and people holding to them and deciding, which one is going out and, which one stays.

Anne's malice is however mostly shown in her treatment of Katherine and her daughter Mary. Anne does not carry any pity for Katherine's situation and adds to Katherine's misery by disgracing her. For Anne Katherine is a nemesis, which needs to be utterly destroyed. For example, she is wearing the jewels from Henry proudly in front of her. After being questioned from whom the necklace is, Anne ignores the question for

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<sup>49</sup> "Truth and Justice" (2007). The Tudors. Cr. Michael Hirst. Season 1, Episode 8. Showtime.

<sup>50</sup> "Truth and Justice" (2007). The Tudors. Cr. Michael Hirst. Season 1, Episode 8. Showtime.

<sup>51</sup> "The Death of Wolsey" (2007). The Tudors. Cr. Michael Hirst. Season 1, Episode 10. Showtime.

a while and answers only after being commanded to. Anne proudly tells the truth and adds: "I love his majesty. I believe he loves me." After being told that that the king will tire of her eventually, she answers boldly: "And what if he does not?"<sup>52</sup> With this statement, the queen loses her nerves and orders Anne to get out. Anne again waits for the second command, calmly bows down and slowly walks away. As it becomes clearer that the queen will not prevail, Anne walks through the courtroom wearing purple, the colour of royalty, and stops next to queen's ladies in waiting and adds loudly for everybody to hear: "You know, I sometimes wish that all Spaniards were at the bottom of the sea...I care nothing for Katherine. I would rather see her hanged than acknowledge her as my mistress."<sup>53</sup> She calls Queen Katherine without her title and puts her deliberately bellow her and is not afraid to make a statement about wishing death for Katherine. In the end, Anne walks away with her head held high, her classic posture, which she keeps till the end of her life.

In the second season, Anne's hate for Katherine ascends to extreme. She quarrels with Henry, when she finds out that Katherine is still making his shirts and screams that she cannot stand three people in her marriage. And when Henry beats up a messenger from Katherine, Anne answers, that he should not apologize for his behaviour and sighs about how things could not be different. On Christmas, when Henry gets a present from Katherine, Anne consulates him to not let her spoil everything. Later on, Anne starts to think that she needs to get rid of Katherine and her daughter in order to get a son and tries to manipulate Henry: "I want to conceive a son. A son to be the living image of his father. But I can't." "Why?" "As long as they're alive, I can't conceive a son." "What are you saying?" "Katherine and her daughter." "Are you saying you want me to kill them?"<sup>54</sup> Anne leaves the answer to the king. When Katherine dies, Anne only pleasingly smiles hearing the news and whispering to herself that now, she is truly a queen.<sup>55</sup> Anne also makes jokes with her brother about Mary's death, when she is ill.

### **5.3. Emancipated Woman**

Anne as a character does not only represent a bad side. One of the things that attracts viewers to stand on her side is her strength, fearlessness and revolutionary

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<sup>52</sup> "True Love" (2007). The Tudors. Cr. Michael Hirst. Season 1, Episode 6. Showtime.

<sup>53</sup> "The Death of Wolsey" (2007). The Tudors. Cr. Michael Hirst. Season 1, Episode 10. Showtime.

<sup>54</sup> "Matters of State" (2008). The Tudors. Cr. Michael Hirst. Season 2, Episode 7. Showtime.

<sup>55</sup> "Matters of State" (2008). The Tudors. Cr. Michael Hirst. Season 2, Episode 7. Showtime.

thinking, which she does not fear to show to others. None of the other queens dare to address political matters as her. Natalie Dormer even describes her as:

...that rare phenomenon, a self-made woman. But then, this became her demise. The machinations of court were an absolute minefield for women. And she was a challenging personality, who wouldn't be quiet or shut up when she had something to say...So she stood out— fire and intelligence and boldness— in comparison to the English roses that were flopping around court. And Henry noticed that. So all the reasons that attracted [Henry] to her, and made her queen and a mother, were all the things that then undermined her position. What she had that was so unique for a woman at that time was also her undoing.<sup>56</sup>

Anne often stands out from other ladies by speaking up her mind even though she is often put into a tough position as a woman. Anne constantly challenges, what is expected from her and fights to stand her ground. One perfect example appears, when we see her sitting at a round table with her brother George Boleyn, Charles Brandon and lord Norfolk discussing their plan on destroying Wolsey. When her uncle confesses, that he toadied to the king by agreeing with him that Wolsey has many talents, the disapproval of the group is visible, though only Anne talks about it directly, even with an instructive tone: “And what did you say?... You did what? I cannot believe this. Have you not spoken yourself of the terrible vengeance he would exact on all of us if he ever again had the power? (raising her voice) Or perhaps you don't think vengeance to be one of his many talents.”<sup>57</sup> She throws her handkerchief on the table and ignores her uncle's stabbing eyes.

Even though, Anne has to fight to gain respect and is being often told to just shut up and do what she is told, she does not stop to fight for, what she thinks is right. Anne does not hesitate to quarrel with Cromwell about the dissolution of the monasteries, when she tells him:

‘Yet some religious houses received good report. Is that not also true? I also hear that all the wealth and assets of the monasteries are to be transferred to the King's treasury...But surely some of that wealth could be put to better uses... For endowments to charitable and educational causes, which even Wolsey did.’

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<sup>56</sup> Susan Bordo, *The Creation of Anne Boleyn: A New Look at England's Most Notorious Queen* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), 161.

<sup>57</sup> “The Death of Wolsey” (2007). *The Tudors*. Cr. Michael Hirst. Season 1, Episode 10. Showtime.

‘Madam, I am surprised to hear you question the king’s policy, which your father and brother wholeheartedly support.’<sup>58</sup>

Other time, she accuses Henry of not being truthful, when he is having mistresses. When she is told to hush with king’s raised hand Anne strictly says no.

More important to say is, that Anne Boleyn was Protestant and Henry Catholic. His strong catholic belief is illustrated in the first half of the first season, where he, for example, denounces Martin Luther and is declared a “Defender of the Faith” by the pope. On the other hand, Anne criticises the greediness of the Catholic Church and wants to press for the change. Even if she is aware of the danger it could bring her, she is not scared to read forbidden books and to spread her belief further. In the series, she is first befriended with Thomas Cromwell (James Frain), who gives her *The Obedience of the Christian Man* written by William Tyndale, which was illegal to hold in that times. Also, when Anne becomes queen, she lets her staff read from Tyndale’s English Bible. Anne wants to be known as the protestant queen and is shown being involved in politics the most from the rest of the other queens of England. We can also see her giving alms to the poor and washing their feet. She is even described as a humble helper by sir Norris: “As a reformer myself, I know all the good works you do without ever seeking any praise but always deserving it.”<sup>59</sup> With such big differences between Henry VIII’s and Anne Boleyn’s beliefs, one can just wonder, how she managed to change king’s opinion for 180 degrees. After all, in the final episode of the first season we hear him say this to the Holy Roman Ambassador Chapuys (Anthony Brophy):

If only the pope and his cardinals could set aside their vain pomp and ceremony and start living according to the precepts of the gospels and the early fathers. ... You see your eminence, when Luther attacked the vice and corruption of the clergy, he was right. ... The need for the reformation in the Church is a manifest. The emperor has a duty to promote it. As do I in my own domain.<sup>60</sup>

*The Tudors* makes no coincidence in the rapid change of Henry’s religious opinions and his relationship with protestant Anne. It almost seems like, in every word Henry says, stands Anne’s opinion behind. Everything was hidden under consciously used words with a perfect timing. Thus, it seems like Anne was probably following the

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<sup>58</sup> “Matters of State” (2008). *The Tudors*. Cr. Michael Hirst. Season 2, Episode 7. Showtime.

<sup>59</sup> “Matters of State” (2008). *The Tudors*. Cr. Michael Hirst. Season 2, Episode 7. Showtime.

<sup>60</sup> “The Death of Wolsey” (2007). *The Tudors*. Cr. Michael Hirst. Season 1, Episode 10. Showtime.

old saying: if you want a man to do something for you, you have to make him believe that it was his idea in the first place.

When it started to become clear, that the pope will not grant the king his annulment, he realised that had to find another way. Anne steps into the scene, when Henry's authority (and surely his ego) is hurt. She simply asks, if the king will allow her to speak honestly and starts to bring up some ideas. "There are some who on good authority care not for the pope. These writers say that the king is both emperor and pope absolutely in his own kingdom."<sup>61</sup> The king is naturally interested. This scene represents a crucial moment in the show. By this time, the viewer knows that there are others at court of protestant belief (as for example Cromwell or Anne's father and brother), but nobody even tries to speak about their case to the king. Hence, Anne is the first one to make this dangerous move and starts to have a huge influence on changing the church of England.

One episode later, which is the last one of the first season, Henry is heatedly reading the book, which Anne showed him. Anne is simply sitting on a chair with a calm expression on her face and nods to every word the king reads out loud. After Henry finishes reading, which supports the idea of him being the only one authority, Anne adds another statement, "And there are more books like it. Books, which detail the abuses of power, privileges, the greed of the clergy in your Majesty's realm. Books, which Wolsey deliberately kept hidden from you."<sup>62</sup> The king allows Anne to show them to him and promises her a change of everything being different. After this conversation, the previously cited conversation of the king with Chapuys happens. Anne did not open the door only for herself, but also to other Protestant members of the court too.

The biggest respect Anne gets in the end of her life in the final episode, when she is accepting her faith. She suddenly realises, that she lost her game by failing to give a son. But as we know from two episodes further, Anne does not believe that she is the only one to blame. She walks to the scaffold with a calm expression in her face, when her nemesis Charles Brandon kneels with the whole crowd and Cromwell begs in a church for forgiveness. It was more Anne's standing up against the system and misconceptions that got her to lose her head and the overall view of her end could be

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<sup>61</sup> "Look to God first" (2007). The Tudors. Cr. Michael Hirst. Season 1, Episode 9. Showtime.

<sup>62</sup> "The Death of Wolsey" (2007). The Tudors. Cr. Michael Hirst. Season 1, Episode 10. Showtime.

taken as a fall of a woman, who was to ahead of her time than of the cunning femme fatale.

#### **5.4 A Victim**

Anne Boleyn as a victim? Well yes. It is firmly believed that Anne was falsely charged guilty and end up as a victim of a set up gossip, which served Henry to exchange Anne for another queen. And so, it is in *the Tudors*. Additionally, next to the false accusations of adultery, most of the guilt for her tragic end carries her father and partly uncle. The show suggests that Anne did not even think about being Henry's future wife and had to sacrifice her relationship with Thomas Wyatt to fulfil her quest. The quest stands for getting Henry's attention and obtaining it to get her family status and wealth as high as it can get. The influence of her father cannot be historically proven but is somehow expected, since it was usually the parents, who decided who their children will marry. This side of Anne makes us feel more compassionate to her faith and character.

The control of Thomas Boleyn over Anne is demonstrated by many cues. It is Thomas Boleyn, who is firstly introduced as a member of Boleyn family ironically playing chess with the king. Not by an accident, are the games at court often compared to a game of chess. He loses the game by checkmate. It also seems like a huge coincidence, that Thomas Boleyn loses his most precious figure by not guarding it properly and this small detail probably directs the viewer to the expected end. Another representation shows the second episode, when Anne comes to see her uncle, lord Norfolk, and her father. She kneels and kisses her uncle's hand, who is affirmatively nodding to her father who takes the lead. He lets her stand up by giving her his hand. Suddenly, he grabs a falcon, an animal, which was used as her representation<sup>63</sup>, and starts to pet it as he is explaining her the task to seduce Henry and keep his attention. In the end, he strokes Anne's cheek the same way he petted the falcon. As the falcon is tamed and cannot do what it wants, same Anne must accept her task without any protest.

Even though Henry is from the beginning captivated by Anne and Anne's seducing skills are told to be high-ranking, her father is still playing a huge part in guiding Anne, what her next steps should be. One of the evidences is telling her to put herself in Henry's way during a feast.<sup>64</sup> Anne also has to show all of her letters to her father or

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<sup>63</sup> E. W. Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn: 'The Most Happy'* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2004), 221.

<sup>64</sup> "Wolsey, Wolsey, Wolsey!" (2007). *The Tudors*. Cr. Michael Hirst. Season 1, Episode 3. Showtime.

uncle and is regulated on how she should proceed: “Now he is your servant? With some subtle care and a lure of your flesh, he may become something even closer.”<sup>65</sup> It is suggested, that Anne has to share every detail of her affair, even if she does not like it. Her displeasure of these circumstances is shown, when she does not want to share what is on her mind with her brother anymore, because he would not keep a secret.

The show also displays that the fall of Wolsey was planned mainly by Thomas Boleyn and lord Norfolk. It is made clear, that the plan is to get close to the king using Anne’s influence on him and then destroy Wolsey. They meet with Anne and teach her how important it is to succeed. “It is your duty to use his love to our advantage in supplanting Wolsey...The cardinal stands between us and everything. And it is now in your power to do him a great hurt. And we expect you to do so.”<sup>66</sup> Anne listens to this order with a child-like devotion and does not question anything.

The evidence of the abusive relationship between Thomas Boleyn and his children is shown mostly in the end of the second season, when the things start to slowly crumble. When Thomas Boleyn talks to Anne about her quarrel with Cromwell, he ruthlessly grabs her hand. But few seconds later, he starts laughing with her, when she tells him, that she is pregnant again. The same scene repeats, when he is strictly instructing Anne in every detail, what she has to do to gain king’s trust again and grabs her wounded finger and presses forcefully the wound to make Anne listen to him. Lastly, when he is interrogated in the Tower, he safes himself by agreeing on Anne being guilty and sacrifices both of his children.

In summary, Anne ends as a victim of her father’s greedy ambitions to get his family as high as he can. Her value gradually declines to an object for producing babies. Anne is not also a victim of her father, but also a victim of a masculine world, where a woman’s value likened to giving birth and nothing else.

### **5.5 A Loving Mother**

A new side of Anne comes to life, when Anne gives birth to her daughter Elizabeth and becomes an attentive mother. Despite desperately wanting a son, Anne loves Elizabeth unconditionally and wants the best for her. Her face always shines when she sees her again and she eagerly asks about her condition, when she is paying her a

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<sup>65</sup> “Arise, My Lord!” (2007). The Tudors. Cr. Michael Hirst. Season 1, Episode 5. Showtime.

<sup>66</sup> “True Love” (2007). The Tudors. Cr. Michael Hirst. Season 1, Episode 6. Showtime.

visit. Anne takes securing Elizabeth's future as her duty and tries fervently to find her the best match. When Anne's life is coming to an end, Elizabeth is her final occupation as she is asking bishop Cranmer to take care of her as a last favour.

### **5.6 Summary, Alias Anne in the Third Wave of Feminism**

Bordo often calls Anne of *The Tudors* series a multidimensional character. Anne can be kind and righteous, but also brutally heartless, when she wants to cut-throat her enemies. She flirts, seduces and does not care to rip Henry's clothes off in a forest, but is also devoted to matters of church, charity and education. She does not fear to share her mind and say "no", when trying to be shut, however she is subordinate to her father's wishes and sacrifices her self-interest or happiness for them.

Still, her portrayal can feel rather disappointing and senses rather as a warning than a picture you want to praise, since the show follows a lot of gender stereotypes. One of them is that a powerful ambitious woman is an evil woman. A lot of times I was asking myself why has to be Anne so cruel, yes she schemes as others at court, but from all of the characters Anne stands out with her cruelty by wishing death to her enemies and celebrating, when her death full wishes come true. Paula Budzyńska discusses this issue in her article "Anne Boleyn's Image(s) in The Tudors" as:

Firstly, gender scholars could say that it is due to the fact that modern culture is rather male-centred and "[i]mages of strong, publicly competent women are still hard to come by (...), while images of women who are evil because they possess too much power are fairly easy to find" (Ryan 132), which means that a woman can be depicted in culture as evil if she is powerful and, as a result, poses a threat to male identity. It seems to be fully applicable to the image of Anne Boleyn in *The Tudors* since the more power she gains, the more cruel she becomes, especially to her rival, Catherine, and Princess Mary.<sup>67</sup>

Anne's cruelty is rather questioning and the cause of it seems to be the unacceptance of a strong woman in a male-centred society.

Secondly, why does Anne (with all other female characters) have to be so sexualised?

As Robinson describes:

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<sup>67</sup> Paula Budzyńska, "Anne Boleyn's Image(s) in The Tudors" *CURRENTS. A Journal of Young English Philology Thought and Review* 2 (2016), 64-65.

In that vein, *The Tudors* conflates women's identities with their sexual desirability (as imposed), basing the latter on physical appearance. Women's bodies are fully commoditized; the series' sexually desirable female characters are objects of art with all their value aesthetic, in line with the idea that women's self-worth rests on men's determination of their identities as premised upon a sexualized "beauty."<sup>68</sup>

Adding to that, *The Tudors* depict women either good with no sexuality or bad with sexuality. As Anne is a numerous time called "a whore" because of her open sexuality.

Numerous authors including Robinson state that the source for the negative portrayals of Anne could be the writings of Chapuys and Foxe from the sixteenth century, which are taken too seriously by various writers.

While we have precious little on which to base our understanding of the "real" Anne...Dormer's "gendered" perspective on Anne's "challenging personality" as both the source of her appeal and a major cause of her downfall is shared by Eric Ives and David Loades, neither of whom identify as feminists. That the court was a "minefield" for women who refused to stay in their proper place is undeniable. And that Anne's reformist leanings had a significant intellectual influence on Henry "behind closed doors" is far better supported by the evidence than G.W. Bernard's denial that she played any role other than that of the prize to be won through the successful resolution of Henry's Great Matter.<sup>69</sup>

It is probable, that Michael Hirst took some parts of the rumours, which were created by Anne's enemies and took them as a part of her nature.

As Anne of the sixteenth century tries to fight the gender stereotypes of her time, also the modern Anne must fight hers. Even though Anne has many negative aspects, she still inspires and gets to be respected and understood as a woman character. Maybe, the problem, which image of Anne Boleyn in the serious represents has become more important than the actual portrayal of her.

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<sup>68</sup> William Baxter Robinson, *History, Fiction, and "The Tudors": Sex, Politics, Power, and Artistic License in the Showtime Television Series* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 313.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, 91.

## 6. Representation of Anne Boleyn in *Wolf Hall*

The historical novel *Wolf Hall* written by Hilary Mantel, a British novelist, is with its sequel *Bring Up the Bodies* one of the latest portrayals of Anne. Mantel won the Man Booker's Prize for both of her novels. The main character of Mantel's series is Thomas Cromwell, which means that all the events and characters are filtered from his view. *Wolf Hall* traces events from Cromwell's childhood till More's execution. Its sequel, *Bring Up the Bodies*, pictures the continuing Anne's fall and Mantel lets the reader to decide, if he/she believes, the charges made against Anne were true.

The picture of Anne is filtered through numerous characters, which makes the reader question, if the view can be trusted as objective. Anne represents a secondary character in the novel. Nevertheless, Mantel calls her, as also Cromwell, an ambiguous character, and states that Anne is for Cromwell a worthy opponent. "He believed, he must destroy Anne before she destroys him."<sup>70</sup>, declares Mantel in one of her interviews. Bordo suggests that Mantel "follows the old stereotype in her portrayal of Anne as a scheming predator."<sup>71</sup> Cromwell describes her eyes as always calculating and compares them to cat eyes, which adds to the picture of predator.

Although the novel is written from a man's perspective, Cromwell precedes most of the men characters with his view on women. He acknowledges the unjust of their unappreciation and does not underestimate their power. He lets, for instance, his daughter to learn Greek and has many thoughts on how things could be, if women had the same respect and value as men.

### **6.1 Redoubtable Strategist**

Cromwell is from the beginning warn by others of Anne's strategic mind and the danger, which could her friendship bring. Even her sister Mary advices Cromwell, that if he would ever get a job from Anne, he should "turn around and walk the other way."<sup>72</sup> It is Mary, who essentially shares information about Anne's character with Cromwell. "Anne knows everything about people who work for the cardinal. She asks questions and

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<sup>70</sup> "Hilary Mantel Talks about Anne Boleyn," YouTube, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ohx2Lec6dtko>

<sup>71</sup> Susan Bordo, *The Creation of Anne Boleyn: A New Look at England's Most Notorious Queen* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), 205.

<sup>72</sup> Hilary Mantel, *Wolf Hall* (London: HarperCollins, 2009), 140.

writes the answers in a book.”<sup>73</sup> ... “Anne is always writing letters, or writing in her little book. She walks up and down, up and down. When she sees my lord father she holds up a palm to him, don’t dare speak...”<sup>74</sup> Mantel’s Anne represents a brilliant tactician. Since she considers cardinal Wolsey to be one of her enemies, she wants to know every detail and makes sure not to forget anything. Mary’s statement suggests that she is spending a great deal of time thinking of a perfect strategy. In addition, Anne proves herself of being a quick thinker too. For a numerous times Anne makes a winning argument or a quick remarque, which can hit its target’s weak spot perfectly. When she, for example, leads a conversation with Charles Brandon, who tries to take Anne down throughout the novel, Anne quickly strikes back against his comments, and humiliates him.

Anne looks at him, lid half-lowered. ‘My lord Suffolk, is your lady wife ready for the journey?’ Suffolk reddens. ‘My wife is a former Queen of France.’ ‘I am aware of it. François will be pleased to see her again. He thought her very beautiful. Though of course, she was young then.’<sup>75</sup>

After this remark, Brandon bursts out with anger and needs to be told by the king to go away. Anne’s cleverness and wit seem to command her decisions and actions, since Cromwell does not see her to show any weaknesses or sensitive emotions. He describes her as: “... Anne is not a carnal being, she is a calculating being, with a cold slick brain at work behind her hungry black eyes.”<sup>76</sup>

Throughout the novel almost every of her step is calculated and represents a well thought piece, which will help her to get to the top. She knows her enemies well by gathering every information and making sure not to forget it. Anne can also improvise well and stay calm when being attacked by her opponent’s remarks.

## **6.2 Self-made Woman**

In *Wolf Hall* Anne Boleyn is a master of her own fate and actively reshapes the course of the plot. Being underestimated at start by the male characters, she quickly raises herself to the top and wins not only respect, but also envy from the others.

Mantel’s Anne does not follow the expectations of others and creates her own rules. She questions the male dominance and considers herself equal to men. She for

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 137.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 139.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 392.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 350.

example critiques the way of one's priest preach, in which she is compared to Jezebel. "... I am the means which Satan attacks the man, whom he was not bold enough to attack, except through me. Well, that is their view of the situation. My view is that there are too many priests with scant learning and smaller occupations..."<sup>77</sup> In this statement Anne questions the mass, negative view of her as a woman with power and the priest's understanding of the Bible. She also takes sarcastically the belief of women being the handler of Satan.

Cromwell also notices that Anne does not let her father or uncle to manipulate her. He declares: "They think they are fixing her tactics, but she is her own tactician, and able to think back and judge what has gone wrong..."<sup>78</sup> Throughout the novel, Anne is often not accompanied by men and does not let men to speak for her. She even orders her uncle to leave when he is trying to push his ideas to her. She almost never asks for an advice and if she is given one, it is still her, who makes the final decision.

One of the major rarities is the king's respect and valuation of Anne's opinion. Cromwell even advises the king to ask about Anne's opinion when he is indecisive. "Because now is the time to become the ruler you should be, and to be sole and supreme head of your kingdom. Ask Lady Anne. She will tell you. She will tell the same." "She does," the king admits. "She says we should no longer bow to Rome."<sup>79</sup> In this scene, Anne's opinion represents the most valuable counsel for the king. She is also let to read the bills before they go up to the parliament, debates with Cromwell about politics and actively tries to reshape the course of actions, as she gives advices to Henry and takes a huge impact on Cromwell's rise.

Anne also wants to stay educated and is told to be often seen reading a book. She supposedly has scriptures in French and lets her staff read from it. Also Mantel pictures her as giving the Tyndale's English Bible as first to Henry. Anne is also reading passages from Protestant books to him to show him her point of view on the matter.

Mantel creates a highly emancipated Anne, who is either respected or envied by men. She does not let herself to be manipulated and stands her ground. She advises the king and gets actively evolved in politics. She wants to stay educated, even if it is not required or wished. Overall, she breaks the gender norms of her time.

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 362.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 344.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 277.

### **6.3 Dangerous and Unforgiving**

Not only Anne's cleverness and emancipation represent a threat, but also her unforgiveness and fiery mind. Anne is known in the novel for her sharp tongue and explosive character. She also does not forgive Wolsey for his disrespect and attempt to take her down, which leads to his utter destruction. Mantel's Anne is manipulative and uses others to get what she wants.

Anne is known to be ambitious and harsh to her enemies. As her sister tells Cromwell about her ambition to be with the king: "Anne says she will have him and she cares not if Katherine and every Spaniard is in the sea and drowned. What Henry wants he will have, and what Anne wants she will have..."<sup>80</sup> This statement represents the first warning, which proves itself to be true as the plot of the novel continues. Anne behaves heartless also to princess Mary and orders the staff of her household, that she cannot eat alone unless she sits below her daughter.

Anne's unforgiveness denotes her treatment of Wolsey and, also her sister. As Wolsey realises, that he needs to get Anne on his side, Anne lets him treat her gifts and exchanges with him friendly letters, but does not help him to achieve his cause of divorcing Henry with Katherine and lets him gladly fail. This fact does not surprise the reader, since Anne and Wolsey were known to be enemies, nevertheless, when Anne's sister Mary marries a man of lower birth and has a baby with him without the family's permission, Anne does not show any compassion to her sister and harshly utters: "... well, he has made a false move there, for he will never come to court again, nor will she. She can crawl on her knees to me. I care not. She can starve."<sup>81</sup> Anne deprives her sister of her status and lets her leave the court without any farewell. As Cromwell witnesses this situation, he describes Anne's behaviour: "She looks haggard, and she cannot stay still; you wouldn't trust her near a sharp knife."<sup>82</sup> Anne does not look back at her decisions and will not forgive anyone.

Everybody who belongs to Anne's close circle, needs to be wary of Anne's explosiveness. Anne quarrels often and with anybody. Her ladies know that they can be slapped, if they do anything daring, when Anne is having a bad mood. The situation, when Anne reads the proposition of the bill of succession can exemplify her choleric behaviour. "Anne the queen takes the draft out of Henry's hand. She shakes it in a

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 137.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 595.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

passion. She is angry with the paper, jealous of the ink.”<sup>83</sup> Anne causes a scene and soothing explanations do not calm her. Cromwell closes his eyes and begs the God to give him strength. As the quarrel continues Cromwell glances sparkle in Anne’s eyes. The situation calms down, when one of the lords, ashamed by Anne, furiously leaves. The focus moves to the bill against the false prophets and Anne adds: “When you write your bill against the false prophetess Barton, put More in it, beside Fisher.”, When the king shakes his head, that this would not run through the parliament, Anne states: “But it will frighten him.” ... “I want him frightened. Fright may unmake man. I have seen it occur.”<sup>84</sup> This statement proves, that Anne has experience in taking down her enemies. She later shares with Cromwell, that: “she will have no peace till Fisher is dead, till More is dead.”<sup>85</sup> In the end of the novel Anne achieves her goal, since More ends on the scaffold and Fisher gets executed.

To conclude, Anne and her fiery behaviour can turn things upside down. She behaves recklessly and impulsively. If somebody gets on her list of enemies, Anne will not stop till her enemy is utterly destroyed. She knows no mercy towards anybody, even her family. In *Wolf Hall* Anne signifies a dangerous character, which is to be reckoned with.

#### **6.4 Anne Boleyn’s Flirtatious Side**

Mantel has decided to depict Anne as flirtatious, however Anne uses flirt mostly as a strategy to get an advantage. It is suggested, she also likes to have power over others, since she steps into a relationship with Thomas Wyatt even if she does not want to be with him. Thomas Cromwell sees also Henry to be more in love in their relationship, since he makes a lot of effort to do what Anne wants. The court shares scandalous rumours about her, but they are never made plausible. On the other hand, Anne tries to keep her relationship with Henry on a discreet level.

In the novel, Anne’s virginity is often questioned, although mostly only by her enemies. Mantel shapes her relationship with Thomas Wyatt in which Wyatt is being desperately in love with Anne. On the other hand, Anne seems to only be amused by it. Wyatt confesses to Cromwell:

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 537.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 541.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 630.

I was sick to my soul to think of any other man touching her. But what could I offer? I am a married man, and not the duke or prince she was fishing for, either. She liked me, I think, or she liked to have me in thrall to her, it amused her. We would be alone, she would let me kiss her, and I always thought ... but that is Anne's tactic, you see, she says yes, yes, yes, then she says no.<sup>86</sup>

Wyatt depicts Anne as choosing only advantageous relationships and following her ambitions more than her heart. The other relationship, which Anne had with Harry Percy, before being with Henry lets supposedly Percy mad with love. It seems, that Anne takes love only as a sport and does not care to hurt others.

Mantel depicts Anne as extremely desirable; she enjoys flirting and likes to use it to serve her advantage. In one particular scene, Anne lures King Francis to gain an impact over him.

When Francis comes back with his brother king to Calais, it is Anne who leads him out to dance after the evening's great feast. There is colour in her cheeks, and her eyes sparkle behind her gilded mask. ... You can see his jaw drop; you can see him begin to drool. She entwines her fingers with his, and leads him to a window seat. They speak in French for an hour, whispering, his sleek dark head leaning towards her; sometimes they laugh, looking into each's other eyes.<sup>87</sup>

After this scene Anne needs to be taken away from Francis by her uncle, who is sent by a jealous Henry. Cromwell however does not see Anne as loose. He states that if Anne's flirting with other men, it is mostly out of tactical reasons.

Anne's relationship with Henry seems like a true love. Cromwell sees them doing almost everything together. Henry respects Anne and lets her to be involved in the matters of the state, which is not expected of a woman to do in that time. Sometimes, he is even called to be Anne's dog by others, since he gives up a lot for her. They are seen to quarrel and make up a numerous time. Their affair is always followed and discussed at court, yet they try to keep it private. "Christmas comes, and the king, with Queen Katherine, keeps it at Greenwich. Anne is at York Place, the king can come upriver to see her. Her company, the women say, is exacting, the king's visits are short, few and discreet."<sup>88</sup> Anne does not rush with the relationship and wants to have a deeper bond

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 349.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 408.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 169.

with Henry. Nevertheless, if is this decision seems to be made more of tactical reasons than love.

In summary, Anne takes her beauty as part of her strategy and uses flirt to get what she wants. She seems to have a cold heart, since her previous relationships end with desperate men having a broken heart. Her relationship with Henry appears to be intense, yet still Henry happens to be the one, who is more in love.

## **6.5 Summary**

Mantel creates a strong ambitious character; whose cold heart lets her easily stamp over her enemies. She represents a dangerous opponent to her enemies, since she is extremely clever, unforgiving and furious. Despite her fiery character, her every step is being calculated in order to serve her strategy. Her independence and fire attract Henry, but also serves as her downfall.

She has her spites, she has her little rages; she is volatile and Henry knows it. It was what first fascinated the King, to find someone so different from those soft, kind blondes who drift through men's lives and leave not a mark behind. But now when Anne appears he sometimes look harassed. You can see his gaze growing distant when she begins one of her rants, and if he were not such a gentleman he would pull his hat down over his ears.<sup>89</sup>

Nevertheless, the biggest consequence for her end at the scaffold stays her inability to produce a male heir to the throne. Mathangi Ventakesh argues in her research "Herstory in History – Women Characters in Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies*" ends victimised by Henry and the gender stereotypes: "...Mantel explicates the tendency of the Tudor age which constricts the royal women to the sphere of their bodies and only on condition of fulfilling their biological role..."<sup>90</sup> Mantel's Anne is aware of this fact and starts to break down in *Bring Up the Bodies* after her miscarriage.

Anne depicts an unordinary woman, since she tries to stand as an equal next to men and shares her unordinary opinions openly. This creates a lot of enemies, which want to take Anne down. She wants to stay educated and is often seen reading. She has

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<sup>89</sup> Hilary Mantel, *Bring Up the Bodies* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2012),44.

<sup>90</sup> Venkatesh Mathangi, "Herstory in History – Women Characters in Hilary Mantels *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies*" *International Journal of Advance Research and Innovative Ideas in Education* 3, no. 5 (2017), 1201.

courage to be openly Protestant and owns the biggest influence on changing Henry's belief and sharing Protestant texts with him.

In love, Anne chooses to value her ambition and strategy over feelings. She enjoys flirting and is aware of her beauty. She uses this as an advantage to get further to her goals. She does not hesitate to manipulate her partners and has also a reputation of a heartbreaker.

## 7. Conclusion

Anne Boleyn stays even in the twenty first century an enigma. When searching for her biography, one discovers, that many historians disagree about who Anne was and that their theories about Anne's life and character differ. Some depict her as a victim, some as a manipulative seductress and some as an emancipated woman. Her life remains full of rumours, assumptions, praise, and attacks on her personality. This issue cannot be surprising, since as Bordo states: "Even before the execution, Henry had begun the business of attempting to erase Anne Boleyn's life and death from the recoded legacy of his reign."<sup>91</sup> Nevertheless, Henry's attempt to erase Anne, hateful letters from Ambassador Chapuys or Foxe's *The Rise and Growth of the Anglican Schism* can hint to the fact, that Anne was a worthy opponent and quite an untypical woman.

When reading Eric Ives's biography of Anne, I created a picture of Anne as being influential and emancipated for her time. I believe, she saw an opportunity to exchange places with Katherine of Aragon and grabbed it as hard as she could. Anne was far from being innocent, however nor a flirtatious predator. It was her last miscarriage and strong personality, that sent her to the Tower rather than being guilty of adultery. I felt pity for Anne's harsh end and admired her bravery. If my belief is the right one or if I aspire to create a role model, I will probably never know. Nevertheless, Ives proves the Chapuys and Foxes attacks being false and inclines to the theory of Anne losing her life mostly for not belonging to the submissive role of a woman created by patriarchal society in the sixteenth century.

Depictions of Anne Boleyn have appeared from the sixteenth century till present. The portrayals, which were divided by the Protestant and Catholic belief governed the prose and drama till approximately the middle of the nineteenth century. The question and degrading of Henry's and Anne's morals were also discussed. The twentieth century called for a new Anne. The advancing change in literature under feminist voices desired a complex strong female character. From either extremely pious or evil, Anne started to become multidimensional. She gained ambition, emancipation, cleverness and power.

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<sup>91</sup> Susan Bordo, *The Creation of Anne Boleyn: A New Look at England's Most Notorious Queen* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), 7.

Shakespeare's Anne in one of his late historical plays *The Famous History of the Life of Henry VIII*. represents a proper example of the Protestant/Catholic divide. Shakespeare pictures Anne in the best way possible as an incorrupt member of the righteous Protestant belief. Her greatest achievement stands for giving birth to Elizabeth.

Moving to the twenty first century the reader can choose from a scale of Annes. Anne of the television series *The Tudors* embodies a multifaceted character. Being firstly written by Michael Hirst as only a flirtatious beauty and getting a more serious spot in the second season, Anne's character had to develop throughout the two seasons of her appearance.<sup>92</sup> The marginalization of women characters in the first season and the overall stereotyping of women to either an angel or a prostitute makes one realise that the post-feminist era is still a question of a far future. Although Anne becomes more reformist, political and emancipated throughout the two seasons of her appearance in the show, she stays predominantly viewed as a sex object. She had supposedly numerous romances at the French court (probably including the King Francis too), and with Thomas Wyatt. She teases Henry into madness, which helps her to gain power over him. The major guilt for her downfall is taken by her manipulative father, Thomas Boleyn.

On the other hand, Mantel's Anne does not need to be sexualised. Her greatest asset is her tactical mind. Anne of *Wolf Hall* can be as cruel and unforgiving as the Anne of *The Tudors*. Yet, her unforgiveness can be more understandable, since her nemesis Katherine of Aragon and her associates do not represent pure righteous souls as in *The Tudors*. "These people want me dead."<sup>93</sup>, Anne states. She has to fight and manoeuvre in order to survive and maintain her position of the Queen of England. Mantel's Anne stands only for herself and never lets anyone to manipulate her. Whereas Hirst's Anne is willing to take sacrifices for her family. Both Annes want to stand as equal to men, reform the greedy Catholic church and are prepared to take risks in order to achieve their goals.

Overall, the representation of Anne has changed under the light of feminism. She has become more active, emancipated, aware of her sexuality and ambitious. Yet, she still must stand against the gender stereotypes. Nevertheless, this fight embodies the continuing fight of a woman of the twenty-first century and therefore lets the modern woman reader to aspire to what Anne is trying to overcome. The progress of feminist criticism has not only changed the view on Anne in literature, but also in non-fiction,

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 182.

<sup>93</sup> Hilary Mantel, *Wolf Hall* (London: HarperCollins, 2009), 441.

since the theory of a reformist Anne, who actively tries to reshape history and is victimized by the male dominated society of the sixteenth century has become prioritised.

## Resumé

Anna Boleynová, druhá manželka Jindřicha VIII., byla popravena 19. května 1536 za zločin cizoložství. Podle různých pramenů šla vstříc konci svého života statečně. Společně s Annou bylo také popraveno pět mužů, z nichž jeden byl Annin bratr. Avšak, za příčinu poprav je nyní považováno její selhání porodit syna a vzpurná povaha nežli údajné cizoložství. Anna, vzdělaná na habsburském a francouzském dvoře, byla ženou, která měla ucelený názor a nebála se ho dát najevo. Jako protestantka také kritizovala katolickou církev. Její emancipovanost, sarkasmus a šarm okouzlili Jindřicha VIII. Jeho předchozí manželka, Kateřina Aragonská, byla již ve věku, kdy nedokázala porodit děti. Za dlouholeté manželství s Jindřichem dokázala Kateřina králi darovat dceru Marii, ovšem žena nebyla považována v šestnáctém století za schopného panovníka. Úkolem tehdejší ženy bylo pouze porodit děti a být submisivní k příkazům svého dominantního mužského vzoru. Aby se Jindřich mohl oženit s Annou, musel se první rozejít s Kateřinou Aragonskou. Neochota papeže zajistit Jindřichovi rozvod vyústila k rozchodu s římskokatolickou církví. Svatba s Annou a její korunovace přinesla tudíž také reformu církve a Jindřichovi absolutní moc. Anna byla královnou Anglie pouze tři roky. Stejně jako její předchůdkyně Kateřina, nezvládla darovat Jindřichovi vytouženého syna a její místo nahradila Jane Seymourová.

Anna Boleynová byla už i za jejího života zobrazována v různých světlech. Arcibiskup Cranmer v ní viděl poctivou reformátorku, kdežto v očích ambasadora Chapuyse byla nestvůrnou čarodějnici. O její pravé identitě se vedou nadále debaty, a to jak v historických biografiích, tak ve fikci. Cílem mé bakalářské práce je pokusit se o rozluštění záhadného charakteru Anny Boleynové, jehož znázornění se měnilo postupem času v literatuře, dramatu i filmu. Mým dalším cílem je tedy stanovit příčinu změny v zobrazování Anniny postavy. Předpokládám, že tuto změnu zapříčinil příchod feminismu a kritika marginalizace žen v literatuře.

V mé první kapitole se zabírám biografií Anny Boleynové. Jako pramen jsem se rozhodla použít biografii Erica Ivese *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*. Jedná se o jednu z nejrozsáhlejších biografií moderní doby. Ives se snaží každou jeho teorii doložit historickými fakty a také přidává svou argumentaci, která se snaží vyvracet protichůdné teorie ostatních historiků. Ives také patří do skupiny historiků, kteří považují Annu za

emancipovanou, a tudíž zpochybňující mužskou dominanci, což se selháním porodit syna způsobil její pád.

Fiktivních děl ohledně Anina života existuje mnoho a objevují se neustále nová. Druhá kapitola tedy slouží k vytvoření shrnutí zobrazování Aniny postavy postupem času od šestnáctého století do současnosti. Tato kapitola také dokazuje, že různé časové úseky vykazují podobné znaky ve znázornění Annina charakteru.

Třetí kapitola slouží jako stručné objasnění feminismu a feministické literární teorie. Předpokládám totiž, že tyto směry mají vliv na změnu zobrazování Aniny postavy. Díky feministickému hnutí se začala postupně zvyšovat rovnost mezi postavením ženy a muže ve společnosti. Postupná kritika marginalizace žen v literatuře a nárůst psaní děl ženami a ženskými hrdinkami vedlo k emancipaci Anniny postavy. Až na malé výjimky, Anna se stává aktivní postavou, silnou a nezávislou ženou. Její ambice, reformátorství a sexualita jsou také vnímány pozitivněji.

V dalších třech kapitolách se již zabírám analýzou Anniny postavy v konkrétních dílech, a to v Shakespearově dramatu *Král Jindřich VIII.*, které zažilo svou premiéru v sedmáctém století, televizním seriálu *Tudorovci* a historickém románu Hilary Mantelové *Wolf Hall*. *Tudorovci* a *Wolf Hall* představují díla dvacátého prvního století. Především seriál *Tudorovci* považuji za zrcadlo dnešní doby a také příklad stále se nacházející genderové stereotypizace.

Shakespearovo opatrně napsané historické drama *Jinřich VIII.* vyobrazuje události od popravy vévody z Buckinghamu až po šťastný konec, a to narození Alžběty I. Anna Boleynová zde představuje pasivní vedlejší postavu, jejíž krása svedla Jindřicha VIII. Shakespeare zobrazuje Annu jako nevinnou krásku, která nestojí o moc a post královny. Anniny hlavní přednosti jsou její krása, protestantská víra, čistota a porození Alžběty, jejíž narození přislíbilo hojnost celé zemi.

Seriál *Tudorovci* přináší již komplexní ženskou postavu. Anna, vytvořená rukou Michaela Hirsta, dokáže být ambiciózní manipulátorka, emancipovaná žena, reformátorka, svůdnice, milující matka, ale také oběť svého mocichtivého otce a strýce. Silná sexualizace a stereotypizace ženských postav v seriálu zrcadlí problémy dvacátého prvního století.

Hilary Mantelová přináší ve svém historickém fiktivním románu *Wolf Hall* Annu jako ambiciózní taktičku, která představuje nebezpečného protivníka pro své nepřátele. Její Anna dokáže přechytračit ostatní a nemilosrdně udeřit. V ostatních vyvolává respekt

nebo nenávist. Nicméně, ani jedna z jejích brilantních strategií jí nepomůže, pokud nedokáže porodit mužského dědice trůnu.

Závěr mé práce se snaží objasnit můj celkový úsudek. Dle mého názoru Anna Boleynová nebyla pouhou nevinou dívkou zapletenou do Jindřichovi snahy získat větší politickou moc. Přestože jako žena žijící v šestnáctém století neměla mnoho prostoru a hodnoty, Anna byla vzdělaná a ovlivněná silnými reformátorkami. Jako protestantka žijící v silně katolické Anglii neměla lehkou úlohu. Svými názory, sarkasmem a netypickým charakterem Jindřicha doslova okouzila a omotala si ho kolem prstu natolik, že ji několik let dobýval. Avšak právě její vzpurná povaha a nesplněný příslib syna se Anně nakonec stali osudnými. Jindřich *VIII.*, zkušený manipulátor, nechal rychle a nečekaně Annu zatknout jen pár dní poté, co potratila. Anna však přistoupila ke svému zániku statečně a její řeč se stala nezapomenutelnou. V jejím zobrazování v dílech se dají najít vlivy dob, ve kterých bylo určité dílo vytvořeno. Po příchodu feminismu se čtenáři nespokojili s pouhým vyobrazením žen v podobě anděla nebo ďábla a toužili po silné ženě, ke které by se dalo vzhlížet a vnímat ji jako silného hráče. Avšak i dnešní se doba se nedokáže vyhnout určité stereotypizaci ženských postav. I když se dvacáté první století vyznačuje určitým pokrokem, je nadále potřeba bojovat proti genderové nerovnosti.

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## Anotace:

**Příjmení a jméno:** Majzlíková Adéla

**Katedra:** Katedra Anglistiky a Amerikanistiky

**Název práce:** Anna Boleynová nenáviděná a milovaná: Jak byla Anna Boleynová zobrazována za éry Tudorovců a jak se pohled na její postavu změnil ve světle feminismu

**Vedoucí práce:** Mgr. David Livingstone, Ph.D.

**Počet stran:** 51

**Rok obhajoby:** 2020

**Klíčová slova:** analýza postavy, Anna Boleynová, Tudorovci, feminismus, šestnácté století, Jindřich VIII., Shakespeare, Hilary Mantelová

## Abstrakt:

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na analýzu postavy Anny Boleynové, druhé manželky Jindřicha VIII. Má bakalářská práce nastiňuje biografii Anny Boleynové a její zobrazení ve fikci. Detailní analýza postavy se zaměřuje na tři stěžejní díla, a to Shakespearovo drama *Jindřich VIII.*, historický román Hilary Mantelové *Wolf Hall* a televizní seriál *Tudorovci* vytvořený Michaellem Hirstem.

Dále se má bakalářská práce zabývat změnou vykreslování Annina charakteru postupem času, zvláště změnou pohledu na její postavu po vlnách feminismu. Tudiž má práce také sledovat vliv feministického hnutí na pojetí Anniny postavy. Stručně řečeno, má práce poskytnout biografii Anny Boleynové, shrnutí jejího zobrazení ve fikci, vliv feministického hnutí na zobrazení její postavy a analýzu postavy ve třech dílech. Závěrečná část mé práce shrnuje výsledek mé analýzy a vyvozuje, jestli a jak se zobrazení jejího charakteru změnilo po vlnách feminismu.

## Annotation:

**Author:** Adéla Majzlíková

**Department:** Department of English and American Studies

**Title:** Anne Boleyn Hated and Loved: How Anne Boleyn Was Portrayed During the Tudor Era and How the View Has Changed Over Time in the Light of Feminism

**Supervisor:** Mgr. David Livingstone, Ph.D.

**Number of pages:** 51

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**Key words:** character analyses, Anne Boleyn, Tudors, feminism, sixteenth century, Henry VIII., Shakespeare, Hilary Mantel

## Abstract:

This bachelor thesis focuses on a character study and analysis of Anne Boleyn, the second wife of Henry VIII. An outline of Anne Boleyn's biography and her representation in fiction is also included in this thesis. The major focus of Anne Boleyn's character study is on the works of Shakespeare's *The Famous History of the Life of Henry VIII.*, Hillary Mantel's *Wolf Hall* and the TV series *The Tudors* created by Michael Hirst.

The other part of the thesis focuses on the change in Anne Boleyn's character over time, especially the change of her view after the feminist waves. Therefore, the thesis also traces the influence of the feminist movement in Anne Boleyn's perception. Thus, the bachelor thesis provides Anne Boleyn's biography, outline of her representation in fiction, influence of the feminist movement in the change of her character and a detailed characteristic in three major works. The final part of the thesis summarises the whole analysis and concludes how and if the perception of her character has changed in the light of feminism.