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The Many Shades of Anne Boleyn

Honors Thesis

Submitted

in Partial Fulfillment

Of The

Requirements of HON 420

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By

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ABSTRACT

The Many Shades of Anne Boleyn

By: Allison Turner

Mentor: Dr. Catherine Stearn

Anne Boleyn, the second wife of King Henry VIII and the mother to Elizabeth I, is a famous historical figure who has been the focus of many fictional dramas. Mysteries surrounding Anne's looks and her involvement in historical events has created interest that allow historical fiction writers to produce different version of Anne Boleyn on film and in the theater. Multiple of these fictional representation of Anne Boleyn processes feminist ideals that are a result of the feminist wave happening at the time. Though a feminist lens, one can see how the portrayal of Anne Boleyn has varied. This project analyzes the way in which second, third, and fourth-wave feminism have shaped the way Anne Boleyn has been portrayed on television, in film, and on stage.

Keywords and Phares: Anne Boleyn, Second-Wave Feminism, Third-Wave Feminism, Fourth-Wave Feminism, Historical Fiction, Intersectionality

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Introduction

“Good Christian people, I am come hither to die, according to law, for by the law I am judged to die, and therefore I will speak nothing against it” where the last words spoken by Anne Boleyn.¹ After making this speech at The Tower of London on May 19, 1536, Anne Boleyn, Queen of England and second wife to King Henry VIII, was executed for adultery. This event sent shockwaves through England and caused much speculation about the events leading up to the execution. It was just three years earlier that Anne played a major role in Henry VIII’s annulment from Katherine of Aragon and England’s break from the Roman Catholic Church. Anne Boleyn’s rise from commoner to the position of the highest woman in England was very unusual. Despite Anne being a public figure there is very little historical evidence that exist about her. This lack of hard data has allowed authors and screen writers a great deal of freedom to play with historical possibilities. Thus, Anne has often been at the center of a number of historical fictions, both in literal and in film and television. Historical fiction “tak[es] the viewpoint of an historic individual.. [and] imagine that person’s thoughts, motives, emotions, and the minutiae of their lives.”² The Anne Boleyn that is represented on screen is not historical accurate and produced for entertainment purposes. This creative freedom has also allowed historical fiction writers to place their own ideals and social norms of the time upon Anne Boleyn in order to a character audience will recognize.

One view of the way in which Anne Boleyn character has changed throughout

¹ Allison Weir, *The Lady in the Tower: The Fall of Anne Boleyn* (Bath: Paragon, 2010), 527.

² Laura Saxton, “A True Story: Defining Accuracy and Authenticity in Historical Fiction,” *The Journal of Theory and Practice* 24, no. 2 (2020):129. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642529.2020.1727189>.

historical fiction is through a feminist lean. Second, third, and fourth-wave feminism movement have all had their own goals and mission that have changed and created new social norms. These social norms effect the world that the writer of historical fiction literal, film, or theater and thus effecting their writing. By evaluating the fictional representations of Anne Boleyn through each wave of feminism one can see that the fictional portrayals of Anne Boleyn are affected by each new set of feminist ideas which produced these various interpretations of Anne Boleyn's character. Building off the work of the scholar Susan Bordo this project evaluates how the second, third, and fourth waves of feminism has affected how Anne Boleyn is portrayed in historical fiction.

Historian Eric Ives has studied Anne Boleyn and tried to piece together a record of her life is Eric Ives. Anne was born in earth 1501 or 1507 to Ser Thomas Boleyn and Lady Elizabeth Boleyn at Blickling Hall in Norfolk.³ Anne was the child of three with two siblings a sister, Mary Boleyn, and a brother, George Boleyn. In 1512, Anne was sent to the Habsburg court at Mechelen in Brabant where she attended Margaret of Austria.⁴ While Anne was at the Habsurg Court she learned French in the hope that this education would give her the ability to become one of King Henry VIII's wife, Queen Katherine's, important ladies. Along with the French language, Anne would also learn the sophistication of courtly, such as leaning how to and dress fashionably.⁵ The education that Anne was afford was usual even for a woman of her station. Shortly after arriving at the Habsburg Court, Anne would travel to the French Court. In August 1514, Thomas Boleyn wrote to Margaret of Austria to ask for Anne's release from services. This was so

³ Eric Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn: 'The Most Happy'* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004) 3.

⁴ Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*, 19.

⁵ Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*, 20.

Anne could be a lady to Henry VIII's sister Mary Tudor, who was to travel to France to marry the elderly King Louis XII.⁶ However, King Louis XII died eighty-two days into the marriage on January 1, 1515. Mary was then a widow and secretly married Charles Brandon, and they returned to England in April 1515. Anne stayed in France and served the French Queen Claude for nearly seven years.⁷ This resulted in much of her young adult life in France learning to adapt to French court life. Anne's time at the French court influenced much of the way Anne conducted herself throughout the rest of her life.

After spending much of her adolescence in foreign countries, Anne returned to England in 1522. One of Anne's first appearances at the English court was in the court pageant Château Vert on March 1522 where she played Perseverance; Henry VIII also participated in the play.⁸ This pageant was her introduction to the English Court as an adult woman of marriageable age. While this pageant is one of the first meetings between Anne and Henry VIII, it seems that Henry VIII did not start to pursue Anne until 1526. Between 1522 and 1526 Anne was positioned at the English Court as one of Queen Katherine of Aragon's ladies-in-waiting. The Boleyn family started to entertain offers for Anne's hand. From about 1520 to 1522 a union between Anne and her cousin James Bulter the Earl of Ormonde was in talks to end a disagreement over heirship.⁹ However, nothing ever became of this engagement, and Anne, along with her family, began to look elsewhere for marriage matches. Anne was then pursued by Henry Percy, the Earl of Northumberland's, son and Sir Thomas Wyatt. Towards the end of 1525, Henry VIII began to take an interest in Anne and ordered Cardinal Wolsey to stop the talks of a

⁶ Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*, 27.

⁷ Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*, 28-29.

⁸ Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*, 37.

⁹ Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*, 34.

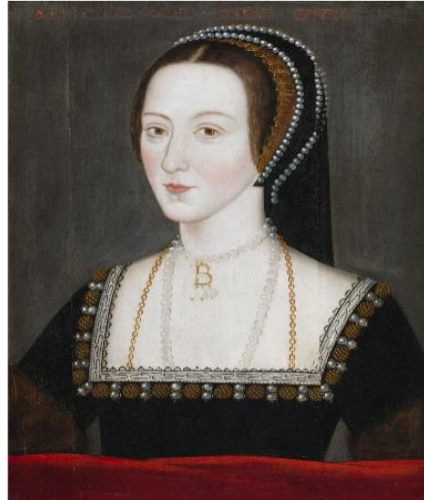
possible marriage between Anne and Henry Percy.¹⁰ These relationships would be brought up during Anne's trial and would also be dramatized in historical fiction for entertainment purposes.

While there are several things, we do know about Anne Boleyn there are many things that are unknown or controversial. For example, Ives discusses a debate over the year of Anne's birth. Over the centuries historians have made arguments for the years 1501 or 1507 being the times in which Anne was born. Ives quotes the scholar Henry Hebert that "evidence from the later sixteenth century and the earlier seventeenth gave modern scholars the choice of a birth date for Anne of either circa 1501 or circa 1507."¹¹ However, there is more evidence that Anne was born in 1501 rather than 1507. For example, scholar Hugh Paget believes Anne was born in 1501 based on a letter written in 1513 in which Anne is in the Brussels Court as a maid of honor which was a position usually held by a 12- or 13-year-old.¹² Without the knowledge of Anne's birth year this creates a six-year range on the age that Anne could have been when meeting Henry VIII. Anne could have been nineteen or twenty to Henry's thirty-four or she could have been older at twenty-five or twenty-six. Anne Boleyn's undetermined age has allowed for historical fiction writers to play around with her because she could be portrayed as young or older.

¹⁰ Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*, 64.

¹¹ Eric Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*, 14.

¹² Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*, 14-15.



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Ives also explain that there is controversy over what Anne Boleyn actually looked like. There are no authenticated contemporary drawings or paintings of Anne Boleyn for a clearer picture of her features.¹⁴ The portraits that do exist are all posthumous productions. There are primary and secondary accounts of what Anne looked like however they are not free of bias whether positive or negative. Most of the more notorious description of Anne came from Eustace Chapuys, the Hapsburg Ambassador who was pro- Queen Katherine since Katherine was related to the Hapsburgs. Portraits of Anne were also burned by Henry VIII after her execution. Even so, many of the accounts are similar in that Anne was not a traditional beauty but more exotic with an oval face and dark eyes and hair.¹⁵ One of Anne's most negative accounts of her beauty was written by Nicholas Sander. Sander describes Anne as “ha[ving] a projecting tooth under the upper lip, and on her right hand, six fingers [there was also a] large wen under her chin, and therefore to hide its ugliness, she wore a high dress covering her throat.”¹⁶

¹³ Anonymous, *Portrait of Anne Boleyn (1507-1536), 2nd wife of King Henry VIII* Edit this at Wikidata, Painting, National Gallery of Ireland, March 18, 2021, <http://onlinecollection.nationalgallery.ie/objects/8990>

¹⁴ Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*, 41.

¹⁵ Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*, 41-42.

¹⁶ Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*, 39.

Sanders also described Anne as having “black hair and an oval face.”¹⁷ This description is not free of bias or controversy since Sanders, who was a Catholic priest, not only never met Anne but was also had different religious belief that could have led to a negative viewpoint of Anne. Ives also gives George Wyatt's description of Anne Boleyn; however, like Sanders, Wyatt was not born until 1550 which was 14 years after Anne's execution. Wyatt never met Anne and bases his description on other primary sources. Wyatt describes her as a “beauty not so whitely as clear and fresh, above all, we may esteem.”¹⁸ While this account produces a more positive image of Anne, Wyatt does admit that “upon the side of her nail, upon one of her fingers, some little show of a nail” and that “there were said to be upon some parts of her body, certain small moles incident to the clearest complexions.”¹⁹ Positive bias could have effected this description due to Wyatt's religion was Protestant. However, Wyatt's description does still align with Sanders that Anne was pale when he expresses her as being “not so whitely,” which most likely means that Anne at the least had a darker tint to her skin than the other women at court. This darker tint could also be debated since the statement is not clear if it was slight tint to the skin or a darker hue. Also, through describing Anne Boleyn as ‘not so whitely’ this could produce negative connotations of her that are used discredit not only her but her beliefs.

Along with Anne description there is debate over Anne's personality. Another description of Anne is that she was more like a French woman than an English woman. The fashions and attitudes that Anne possessed where influenced by her time at French Court and made her differ from the other ladies at the English Court. Lancelot de Carles

¹⁷ Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*, 39.

¹⁸ Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*, 40.

¹⁹ Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*, 40.

along with a Venetian reported that Anne was beautiful with an elegant figure.²⁰ Based on many accounts Anne's main attractiveness seemed to be in her personality and intelligence. Anne apparently “‘radiated sex’ while also being sophisticated, well-educated, elegant, and independent.”²¹ Lancelot De Carles said, “‘no one would ever have taken her to be English by her manners, but a native-born Frenchwoman.”²² De Carles was a French Ambassador, and this would be a high compliment for him to Anne. Most of these descriptions have the commonality that while Anne was not the beauty standard of her time, she had a personality and allure to her that drew people in. These mystery and controversy combined with the scandal of her trial and execution has led many to speculate about who Anne Boleyn was and her intentions. These speculations have been a catalyst to the different fictional versions of her.

Susan Bordo, the scholar whose book *The Creation of Anne Boleyn: A New Look at England's Most Notorious Queen* has looked at several different literary versions of Anne Boleyn including *Anne of the Thousand Days* (1969), *The Tudors* (2007), and *The Other Boleyn Girl* (2008). Bordo's focus in her book was to look at the different versions of Anne Boleyn that have been produced “‘from the poisonous putain created by the Spanish ambassador Eustace Chapuryr... to the radically revisioned Anne of the Internet generation.”²³ With most historians relying on potential biased sources there is this view of Anne Boleyn that may not be the most accurate, Bordo has explained how these descriptions have influenced how historians and historical fictions writer describe Anne.

²⁰ Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*, 40.

²¹ Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*, 44.

²² Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*, 45.

²³ Susan Bordo, *The Creation of Anne Boleyn: a new look at England's most notorious queen* (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2013), 12.

For example, historian David Starkey writes that Anne was, “like the goddess of the chase, had pursued her rival. She bullied Henry; she wheedled; she threatened; and most devastatingly, she cried. Her arrows pierced his heart and hardened his judgment. It was how she had destroyed Wolsey. Now she would remove Katherine.”²⁴ This quote gives off an essence of an author writing about a fictional character from a third-person perspective instead writing a historical biography that is informative. It is a negative view of Anne that has no historical support. Based on historical accounts and documentation there is evidence that Anne was the second wife of King Henry VIII, that she was Queen of England, and that her trial lacked evidence. Anne was charged with adultery and treason on May 2, 1536, convicted on May 15, 1536, and executed on May 19, 1536. The lack of documentation that historians have on the trial and the multiple possible causes of Anne’s downfall has caused controversies on why Anne fell out of favor. Did Anne fall due to her inability to give the king a male heir, being unfaithful, or was it the result of plots against her? Was it a multitude of factors? Historians disagree on any one explanation for Anne’s fall. Due to there being little historical evidence of Anne’s life and death, historical fictional writers have a lot of leeway to create a story. Which has resulted in a wide range of fictional portrayals of Anne Boleyn.

Bordo's work was produced in 2013, and thus, focuses on the historical fiction portrayals of Anne Boleyn that had been produced up to that point in time and how they matched up to the feminist movements that had already taken place such as second and third wave feminism. Since 2013 Anne Boleyn has been explored in a new respect which is fourth-wave feminism. This new wave in feminism has allowed for Anne Boleyn's

²⁴ Bordo, *The Creation of Anne Boleyn*, 25.

portrayal to be further expanded in the terms of promoting solidarity among women against the patriarchy and extending the conversation of intersectionality. These new developments of Anne have also extended the conversation on whether historical fiction has a responsibility to be historically accurate.

Second-Wave Feminism in *Anne of the Thousand Days* (1969)

Second-wave feminism movement was active from the 1960s to the 1970s. This movement was focused on the inequalities that women faced. The main topics this movement focused on were sexual and reproductive freedom and the abolishment of gender roles that separate men and women.²⁵ For example, one of the major events that took place during the movement was the protestation of the Miss America Pageants. The feminists' protesters saw the pageant as being oppressive to women since the female contestants paraded themselves like cattle to be objectified by the male judges.²⁶ By doing this the female contestants were conforming to patriarchal idea that the only thing women have to offer is their looks for male pleasure. The second wave also incorporates white and non-white women into the movement as well as countries outside the United States.²⁷ However, the movement was still focused on a version of feminism that mainly that mostly catered to white women not minorities. The main goal of second-wave feminism was,

equal education opportunities, equal employment opportunities, equal pay in workplaces, paid maternity leave, birth control, and abortion rights, the establishment of adequate childcare facilities, rights of equal access to political and economic position, and women and children's safety.²⁸

²⁵ Nina Power, "Revisiting Second Wave Feminism in the Light of Recent Controversies," *Identities: Journal for Politics, Gender and Culture* 17, 2-3 (2020):30. <https://doi.org/10.51151/identities.v17i2-3.466>.

²⁶ Haradhan Mohajan, "Four Waves of Feminism: A Blessing for Global Humanity," *Studies in Social Science & Humanities* 1, no. 2 (2022):11. <https://DOI:10.56397/SSSH.2022.09.01>

²⁷ Mohajan, "Four Waves of Feminism," 11.

²⁸ Mohajan, "Four Waves of Feminism," 12.

These goals also influenced the media of the time, and this can be seen through the portrayal of Anne Boleyn in the 1969 movie *Anne of the Thousand Days*. Through Anne's attitude and the society displayed in the movie the audience is able to get a visual representation of second-wave feminism ideals.



The portrayal of Anne Boleyn in *Anne of the Thousand Days* is influenced by second-wave feminism. Throughout the movie Anne, who is portrayed by actress Geneviève Bujold, is a young eighteen-year-old English woman who has just returned to England from France. The movie opens with Anne dancing with Henry Percy at the English Court and the couple seems to be enamored with each other. Henry VIII, played by Richard Burton, is seen to be taken by Anne, and this leads Henry VIII to stop Anne and Henry Percy's possible engagement. Once Anne is informed of her engagement being broken off to Henry Percy since the King is interested in her becoming his new mistress she rebels and states that she will not go to his bed even if he punishes her family and

²⁹ Billy Rose Theatre Division, *Geneviève Bujold as Anne Boleyn in the motion picture Anne of the Thousand Days*, Photograph, New York Public Library Digital Collections, 1969, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/a4acd16a-d4d7-2e20-e040-e00a18066b71>

Henry Percy for the defiance. Anne continues this defiance throughout the movie and has a defiant attitude to the position she has been placed in and her inability to choose what future she wants.

One of the ways Anne in *Anne of the Thousand Days* represents second-wave feminism is by being open about her sexual experiences. For example, when Anne and Henry Percy are discussing their future marriage in the scene ³⁰:

Anne Boleyn:	When we bed together, shall I be your first?" -
Henry Percy:	I...
Anne Boleyn:	Speak out. Well, I'll say it frankly as they do in France. In England, we make muddy mysteries of such things as if they were crimes. We don't come out of a rainbow at 17 and there's no use pretending we do. You may ask me whatever you like.
Henry Percy:	Are you a virgin?
Anne Boleyn:	No.
Henry Percy:	In France?
Anne Boleyn:	Yes. And long before. When I was little, I was playing with a boy, and he threw me down...

Throughout the film there does not hold too sixteenth century attitudes about women's sexuality, instead exhibits twentieth-century women's values. The second wave of feminism, also focused on the inequities that women faced in everyday society. In the sixteenth century women were expected to be chaste and pure. Men and women were held to a double standard when it came to the idea of participating in sexual intercourse. Men have the ability to have meaningless sexual intercourse and it does not affect their reputation. While women are expected to stay chaste and pure to have a good reputation. A double standard is "an instrument of patriarchy, buttressed by law, which recognized, in historian Keith Thomas's words, 'the property of men in women . . . whose function

³⁰ *Anne of the Thousand Days*, directed by Charles Jarrott (Hal Willis Productions, 1969), (20:38 21:11), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YYv-v5UpeE>

was to cater to the needs of men [and whose] first qualification was chastity.”³¹ The historically accurate representation of Anne Boleyn would have been she be a chaste woman that did not have sexual experiences outside of marriage. Anne would have also been aware with her education and the expectations of the time to imply or say she was not a virgin to anyone, especially to her future husband. This was the norm for Anne growing up in a patriarchal society. A patriarchal society is as “a structural system in which men dominate women through labour relations, political power, male violence, sexuality and culture.”³² In this type of society, women are expected to obey the men in their lives which can be a long list from fathers, uncles, brothers, kings, and even sons.

Early modern English society operated on an orderly system that had a hierarchy that was patriarchal. The family model in this society is a microcosm of how society at large is organized. In the family model, “the head of the household had power over his subjects, the family, and responsibility for them, in the same way as the monarch has over his [kingdom].”³³ Due to this hierarchy, every person from the King to the lowest peasant has a role. This orderly system was the work of God, and therefore, if individuals did not abide by the roles, then the system would not work which resulted in a breakdown of society. Women's role in the early modern England period was to obey. William Whatley, who was an English Protestant clergyman whose book of marital advice, *A Bride Bush (1617)*, explains that a woman has two duties as a wife, “the first is to acknowledge her inferiority, the next to carry herself as inferior.”³⁴ Women in this time

³¹ Betty S. Travitsky, “Husband-Murder and Petty Treason in English Renaissance Tragedy,” *Renaissance Drama* 21, no. 1 (1990): 173. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41917264>.

³² Laura Gowing, *Gender Relations in Early Modern England* (United Kingdom: Pearson Education Limited, 2012), 29.

³³ Gowing, *Gender Relations in Early*, 29.

³⁴ William Whately, “A Bride Bush, 1617,” in *Lives and Voices: Sources in European Women's History*,

period were seen as lower than men which created gender stereotypes and norms how women should act and how men should act. Men and women were not considered equal and therefore, their attitudes and activities were not viewed in the same light. Moreover, in a patriarchal society, “men are the norm against which everything else is measured.”³⁵ This creates a double standard among men and women where most of the time men are free to do as they please while women are more restricted in their activities. For example, during this time period, a woman committing adultery is viewed as a larger sin than a man committing adultery. William Gouges, a clergyman during the sixteenth century who wrote behavior handbooks, stated, “a woman's adultery is more dishonorable than a man's since she dishonors her husband, causes greater injury in hurting her superior husband, dispossesses her husband's children with bastards, and offends every woman's principal virtue—honor, that is, chastity.”³⁶ Therefore, historical Anne would not have been open about her sexual experiences outside of marriage and would have instead wanted to be viewed as chaste. This behavior towards sex that Bujold's character of Anne portray in the movie is most likely a result of twentieth century idea and a result of second-wave feminist movement that women should have a right to sexual freedom.

Another way that this portrayal of Anne Boleyn represents second-wave feminism is by defying gender stereotypes. By the middle of the movie, Anne realizes that she will not be able to marry Henry Percy and may as well take advantage of the king's affection for her. Anne finds that she enjoys the power and the position at court that having the

ed. Lisa DiCaprio and Merry L. Wiesner. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001), 220.

³⁵ Gowing, *Gender Relations in Early*, 4.

³⁶ Ira Clark, “The Marital Double Standard in Tudor and Stuart Lives and Writing: Some Problems,” *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England* 9, no. 1 (1997): 39.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/24322146>.

king's favor affords her. For example, Anne in one scene states, “Power is as exciting as love, I discover. And who has more of it than the King?”³⁷ As was earlier talked about in patriarchal society men are the ones that hold authority in most situations. Women's position in society is to obey and this creates an environment where men hold power and women very rarely hold any sort of power. If women do hold any power, it is usually within the family unit over the “children or servants, when her husband [is] not present.”³⁸ Meaning the power that women held was restricted to that of being caretakers. Women were seen as nurturers that looked after the children as well as the household.³⁹ The power that Anne displays in the movie is politically charged instead of purely domestic. Anne her favor with the king to convince him to listen to her opinions and make decisions based on those opinions. This power is not something that Anne only believes to hold but is believed by others in court. For example, Cardinal Wolsey and Thomas Cromwell speak on her power over the king in scene:⁴⁰

Thomas Cromwell:	She almost reigns. She entirely rules. And I believe gives... nothing for it. She could prove powerful.
Cardinal Wolsey:	Thomas, this is a man's world. The seat of power does not lie between a woman's legs.

However, the movie is quick to remind the audience that Anne is a woman in a patriarchal society where she has no power outside her beauty and sexuality. In one scene Henry states, “You have a taste for power. It's very common. I've seen it many times.

³⁷ *Anne of the Thousand*, (43:41)

³⁸ Norman Jones, *Being Elizabethan: Understanding Shakespeare's Neighbors* (Massachusetts: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2020), 33.

³⁹ Jean B. Miller, “Women and Power,” *Women & Therapy* 6, no. 1-2 (1987): https://doi.org/10.1300/J015V06N01_01

⁴⁰ *Anne of the Thousand*, (44:20-44:30)

You don't get it for nothing. You have to pay.”⁴¹ The movie does not only focus on Anne's resistance to gender stereotypes or freedom of sexuality but also demonstrates the patriarchal system that is trying to keep Anne and other women oppressed. Anne uses her sexual power over the king to obtain Queenship with the promise that she would give the king a son that would be legitimate and in front of the king's other children for the throne. However, Anne is unable to give the king a son, and thus, the sexual power that Anne had over the king and the court dwindled. This results in Anne being left vulnerable to attacks from her potential enemies, and Anne is charged with adultery and treason.

At the end of the movie, Henry offers to let Anne live if she agrees to an annulment. However, if Anne agrees to the annulment her daughter, Elizabeth, would be labeled a bastard. Anne wants Elizabeth to be Queen, so Anne decides that she will die for the marriage to not be annulled. As Anne explains to Henry,⁴²

Anne Boleyn:	I was unfaithful to you with all of them. With half your court! With soldiers of your guard, grooms, stablehands. Look, for the rest of your life, at every man that ever knew me and wonder if I didn't find him a better man than you!”
Henry VIII:	You whore!
Anne Boleyn:	But Elizabeth was yours. Watch her as she grows. She's yours. She's a Tudor. Get yourself a son on that sweet pale girl if you can and hope that it will live. But Elizabeth shall reign after you. Yes! Elizabeth, child of Anne the whore and Henry the bloodstained lecher, shall be Queen. You've asked for death, and you shall have it. So be it. Only what I take to my grave, you take to yours. And think of this, Henry. Elizabeth shall be a greater queen than any king of yours. She shall rule a greater England than you could ever have built. Yes! My Elizabeth shall be Queen. And my blood will have been well spent.

⁴¹ *Anne of the Thousand*, (47:35-47:40).

⁴² *Anne of the Thousand*, (2:16:54-2:17:05).

This scene while wildly historically inaccurate does show how Anne's fiery personality is present until the end. Anne does not let the thought of being executed scare her from expressing her opinions or having the last word. Even though the writers of this movie clearly did not understand that the annulment would have happened even if Anne did not agree with it, in fact, it was "two days before her execution, her marriage to Henry was declared null and void by Henry's lawyers, and Elizabeth was bastardized."⁴³ However, the scene does reinforce that Anne has more modern virtues such as defiance to male authority. However, the movie also demonstrates how patriarchal societies contain such threats. While her behavior is portrayed as heroic it is also tragic as it unintentionally leads to her death. This scene also shows Anne's priorities have changed throughout the movie since at the beginning of the movie Anne wanted love, in the middle Anne wants power and security, and in the end, Anne wants to protect Elizabeth and get the last word. While her priorities have changes Anne is still fiery and dedicated to her opinions and beliefs.

Third-Wave Feminism in *The Tudors* (2007) and *The Other Boleyn Girl* (2008)

The third-wave feminism happened from the 1990s to the 2000s and was coined by Alice Walker.⁴⁴ These third-wave feminists were the daughters and granddaughters of the first and second wave feminist and they wanted to have a feminist movement that focused on the issues of their modern world. Third wavers believed that there needed to be a new wave of feminism for the new generation that dealt more with media like television and social networks. This wave of feminism incorporated more social issues such as body positivity into the movement rather than just focusing on political issues like first and

⁴³ Bordo, *The Creation of Anne Boleyn*, 334.

⁴⁴ Mohajan, "Four Waves of Feminism," 13.

second-wave feminism. Many third-wave feminists viewed the first and second waves of the feminist movements as judgmental and rigid. For example, “Naomi Wolf refers to second-wave feminism as ‘victim feminism’ and portrays it as ‘sexually judgmental, even antisexual,’ ‘judgmental of other women’s sexuality and appearance,’ and ‘self-righteous.’”⁴⁵ This movement had a focused on reclaiming femininity and to demonstrated that there are different types of feminism then the ones defined by second-wave feminism. In this new wave any woman could be a feminist, and there was not a need to give up feminine ideas such as beauty and being a wife in order to be a good feminist.

During the third-wave feminist movement there was also a societal belief among many that there was not a need for a third wave of feminism due to women technically having equal rights due to the first and second-wave feminist movements. Third-wave feminists wanted to extend the definition of feminism to include more women. Essentially, “third-wave feminism ‘respects not only differences between women based on race, ethnicity, religion, and economic standing but also makes allowance for different identities within a single person’”⁴⁶ This third wave allowed for more minorities to have a voice in the feminist movement and demonstrated how societal expectations of what a woman should be divided women. The portrayal of Anne in *The Tudors* and *The Other Boleyn Girl* is a representation of third wave feminist ideas.

Natalie Dormer's portrayal of Anne Boleyn in *The Tudors* shows how a society's expectations can force women into certain roles. This portrayal of Anne is influenced by

⁴⁵ Claire R. Snyder, “What Is Third-Wave Feminism? A New Directions Essay,” *Signs* 34, no. 1 (2008): 179. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/588436>

⁴⁶ Snyder, “What Is Third-Wave Feminism?,” 180.

the third-wave feminist idea that the second wave was not inclusive to all women. *The Tudors* through the portrayal of Anne Boleyn demonstrate how societal ideas can influence the idealistic roles of people in society and how going against these roles can lead to negative consequences. Anne in *The Tudors* is portrayed as a smart and sophisticated woman with a witty flirtatiousness that gives off an air of seduction. For example, in season one episode two called “Simply Henry” Anne Boleyn is called back from France by her father, Thomas Boleyn, and uncle, Thomas Howard after her sister Mary Boleyn no longer has King Henry VIII's attention through being his mistress. Anne’s father and uncle want her to become Henry’s new mistress so they to continue to gain favor. Anne is hesitant at first but is pushed into the decision due to her family's insistence. The scene expresses the position that Anne is in and how she must obey:⁴⁷

Thomas Boleyn:	Sweet Anne.
Anne Boleyn:	Yes, Papa.
Thomas Boleyn:	You know why you're here?
Anne Boleyn:	No, Papa. In Paris, no one explained.
Thomas Boleyn:	Good, it's better that way.
Anne Boleyn:	What's happened?
Thomas Boleyn:	His Majesty is tiring of his French alliance. It seems he's also tiring of your sister. He no longer invites her to his bed.
Anne Boleyn:	Poor Mary.
Thomas Boleyn:	Poor us. When she was his mistress, all our fortunes were made. Now, most likely they will fall. Unless...
Anne Boleyn:	Even if he had me, who is to say he would keep me? It's not just Mary. They say that all his liaisons are soon over. He blows hot, he blows cold.
Thomas Boleyn:	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 like dark hooks for the soul.”

⁴⁷ *The Tudors*, “Simply Henry,” Showtime, (52:27-53:43), April 8, 2007
<https://www.showtime.com/episode/127658>

This scene shows how a patriarchal society has influenced Anne to obey her father and gain favor for the family by seducing the king. As discussed in the explanation of *Anne of the Thousand Days* the expectation for women of the sixteenth century was that of obedience. Dormer's portrayal of Anne does not go against gender stereotypes of the time by rebelling against her father and uncle by not pursuing the king. Instead, Dormer's version of Anne obeys her father and uncle and pursues the king. This shows how women are used by a patriarchal system and do not have many choices of their own. However, this scene also shows how this Anne goes against a gender stereotype of the time by being sexually experienced, but this is again not likely her choice since her father hints that it could be used to grab the attention of the king.

Anne throughout the first season does achieve catching Henry VIII's attention. At first, Anne seems to conform to the patriarchal society and obey her father and uncle through using the attention of the king to help elevate her family in court. However, over the course of the relationship between Anne and Henry VIII, there seems to be a formation of mutual respect and trust that leads Anne to form an attachment. This attachment is noticed by her father, and uncle and Anne is reminded of her place in the plan. The following scene from season one episode six,⁴⁸

Thomas Howard:	Well, the king is plainly in love with you. Don't you see, niece? It makes a man, any man, extremely vulnerable.
Thomas Boleyn:	How do you like your charge, sweetheart?"
Anne Boleyn:	I...At first, I confess, I did not like it so much. I did not care for the king. But now, I... Now I...
Thomas Howard:	Anne. It would be wise for you not to be fooled by your own masquerade. It is your duty to use his love...to our advantage in supplanting Wolsey.

⁴⁸ *The Tudors*, "True Love," Showtime, (03:44-04:52), April 25, 2023.
<https://www.showtime.com/episode/127662>

Thomas Boleyn: 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.

This scene shows how Anne's father and uncle view her as only a pawn to get what they want. They do not value Anne's opinion only that she does as she is told to get rid of Cardinal Wolsey. Throughout season one Anne and Henry seem to fall deeply in love with each other and build a relationship of trust and respect. This leads to Henry breaking away from the Roman Catholic Church to create the Church of England, so he can grant himself a divorce from Katherine of Aragon to marry Anne. Marriage would allow Anne and Henry to have legitimate children and secure Anne's position as Henry's wife and queen. These events lead Anne to believe that she and Henry have a positive a true partnership where she is not being controlled and can instead be in control of her own life. In season two, episode seven Anne goes against the Tudor patriarchal system on the belief that Henry VIII does value her for more than just what she can give him,⁴⁹

Thomas Boleyn: Anne, I did not bring you up to have opinions or to express them or to quarrel with those closest to the Crown.
 Anne Boleyn: But I am closer to the Crown! I am the King's wife!
 Thomas Boleyn: And you should remember how you got there!
 Anne Boleyn: I know how I got there. And it was not all you. It was not all you or Norfolk or George or any other man you want to name! It was also me. He fell in love with me. He respected me...and my opinions.

Through this scene, the audience can see that Dormer's portrayal of Anne will obey the patriarchal society and conform to gender stereotypes when she feels that she has no other choice. However, once Anne feels safe, she expresses her opinions and rebelliously

⁴⁹ *The Tudors*, "Matters of State," Showtime, (52:43-53:21), May 11, 2008. <https://www.showtime.com/episode/131335>

rejects gender norms that previously dictated her actions. However, this rebellion does not last long and by the end of season two Anne is reminded of her position in this patriarchal society.

Anne is forced to reconfirm to the patriarchal society in season two, episode six once she and Henry fight due to Anne wanting Henry to be truthful to her about how many mistresses he has. In the following scene, Anne realizes that she is still in a patriarchal system in which she must obey her husband.

Anne Boleyn:	No. You told me...you always told me that we should be truthful with each other. You said it was the definition of love.
Henry VIII:	Then here's the truth: you must shut your eyes and endure as your betters have done before you.
Anne Boleyn:	How can you say that to me? Don't you know I love you a thousand times more than Katherine ever did!
Henry VIII:	And don't you know that I can drag you down as quickly as I raised you? ⁵⁰

This scene demonstrates that in Anne must conform to the role of a submissive within the patriarchal society or she will be in danger. However, by this point Anne's enemies have realized that she is in a vulnerable position and began to plot against her. *The Tudors* season two ends with episode 10 named "Destiny and Fortune" and in this episode, Anne is executed for the crimes of treason and adultery. Anne's punishment for not conforming to the patriarchal norms and providing Henry with a male heir result in her paying the price with her life.

The Tudors expresses third-wave feminist traits by showing how patriarchy controls women. Anne throughout the show does not have any real power against the

⁵⁰ *The Tudors*, "The Definition of Love," Showtime, (47:20-47:51), May 4, 2008.
<https://www.showtime.com/episode/131334>

patriarchy which is at first made up of her father and uncle and then later her husband. Slowly Anne starts to believe that she has a voice and opinions that can be expressed. However, these opinions seem to only be accepted when she is conforming to what her husband wants. When Anne is unable to give Henry a male heir, she is vulnerable to attacks and thus ends up executed for not conforming to her patriarchal role as mothers to sons. Anne also invokes a sense of femininity through the use of a mask. According to the article “Anne Boleyn's Performance of Femininity: *The Tudors*” the mask that Anne wears is an, “effective instrument of social action” since “Anne understands that other types of social action (legal, cultural, economic and political) are limited and not easily accessible to women.”⁵¹ Anne uses this mask of femininity to fit into patriarchal system idea of what a women is in order to manipulate the men around her and achieve the things she wants.

The show production sets a dangerous precedent about how women's sexuality is used on screen. With second and third wave feminism having a focus on women having more freedom to their sexuality there seems to be a question of when a woman being sexually active is freeing and when it becomes over-sexualization which therefore becomes oppressive. Bordo explains that one of her biggest problems with *The Tudors* was “the show’s pandering to soap-opera tastes is that it inevitably led to recycling the image of Anne Boleyn as the seductive, scheming Other Woman.”⁵² Anne is not the only character over-sexualized in the show, on the contrary, the show creates an idea that the English court was full of people having sex all the time. Michael Hirst the writer and

⁵¹ Chiara Barristi, “Anne Boleyn's Performance of Femininity: ‘The Tudors.’” *Anglistik* 28, no. 2 (2017): 117. <https://angl.winter-verlag.de/data/article/7375/pdf/91702010.pdf>

⁵² Bordo, *The Creation of Anne Boleyn*, 458.

creator of the show explains that the reason the show has so much sexual activity is that he believed this is what audiences want to see.⁵³ Natalie Dormer the actress that plays Anne Boleyn did not like this and thought it was not a good move for her character. Dormer fought for a better representation of Anne and by the end of season two Anne's character had grown from being more than just sexy. Throughout season two Anne's character was able to evolve and become more than two-dimensional she was “still sexy, but brainy, politically engaged and astute, a loving mother, and a committed reformist.”⁵⁴ *The Tudors* portrayal of Anne Boleyn shows her as a woman that is at the beginning helpless to the patriarchal, but through the schemes and the use of her sexual flirtatiousness can gain the power to make her own decisions. However, Anne can only go against the patriarchy for so long before it becomes her downfall. Overall, the show when viewed through a third-wave feminist lens can represent how a patriarchal society or a society that holds a certain expectation for women can create a double standard between men and women where most of the time women are restricted and punished for not conforming.

While *The Tudors* displayed the effects of the patriarchal society that can affect individual women, *The Other Boleyn Girl* displays how a patriarchal system keeps women from coming together to change the system. In *The Other Boleyn Girl* Anne's sister Mary is the focus of the film. Anne, who is portrayed by Natalie Portman, and Mary, who is portrayed by Scarlett Johanson, are compared, and contrasted throughout the film. Mary is seen as docile and calm, while Anne is willful and stubborn. This is shown through the actresses' appearances, with Mary being blonde and Anne being

⁵³ Bordo, *The Creation of Anne Boleyn*, 360.

⁵⁴ Bordo, *The Creation of Anne Boleyn*, 462.

brunette. Mary and Anne's father Thomas Boleyn sees great potential in Anne to acquire a grand match that would elevate the family. In Mary, Thomas sees a pretty girl that does not have a heart for politics. In the opening scene of the movie, these ideas are made clear.⁵⁵

Thomas Boleyn:	I received a formal request for marriage today for Anne. From the Carey family.
Elizabeth Boleyn:	But that's wonderful.
Thomas Boleyn:	I turned it down.
Elizabeth Boleyn:	What?
Thomas Boleyn:	And offered them, Mary, instead. Anne's too good for William Carey. She can do better than a merchant's son."
Elizabeth Boleyn:	You underestimate Mary.
Thomas Boleyn:	Not true. I think she's..the kinder of the two. Quite possibly the fairer. But to get ahead in this world, you need more than fair looks and a kind heart.

This scene shows how patriarchal ideas about women's looks, nature, and ability affect Mary and Anne's lives through demonstrating how the girls are only viewed in a way that they could be beneficial to the family not as individuals with thoughts and opinions.

Thomas Boleyn does not want to waste Anne's talents on a match that does not increasingly affect his family and would much rather offer Mary since he does not believe that she will have much to offer the family in terms of political advancement. Even though Thomas is valuing Anne, he still does not value her as his daughter or as a person but rather as what she can do for him. It is clear from the start of the movie that the girls only value is their ability to aid their families through their sexuality.

Shortly after the movie starts, Mary and William Carey do get married and seem to be happy with the future idea of a quiet life out in the country. Anne and Mary's uncle, Thomas Howard, receive word that the King is looking for a new mistress and believe

⁵⁵ *The Other Boleyn Girl*, directed by Justin Chadwick (2008), (01:33-02:20), <https://www.showtime.com/movie/3509011>

that this person could be Anne. Anne is called in to talk to her uncle and father to go over the plan of capturing the king's attention and the importance of her doing this for the family. Anne is excited at the prospect of being the king's mistress since she sees it as an opportunity to gain power and obtain advantageous marriage. Earlier in the movie, Anne had set her eyes on Henry Percy, the Duke of Northumberland's son, who was already engaged. Anne is presented to the king, and they are set to go hunting together. However, during the hunt, King Henry gets hurt due to Anne's desire to continue the hunt even in bad weather conditions. Thomas Howard believes the king is angry with Anne's role in his injury and believes the king will not take her as a mistress. Consequently, Howard decides to send Mary into the room to tend to the king's wounds and hopefully catch the king's attention, which Mary achieves. The king wants to keep Mary close, and offers her husband William a position at court and elects Mary and Anne to be some of the Queen's ladies-in-waiting. Once at court Mary is welcomed into the King's bed and becomes his mistress. In the following scene, Mary's family is talking about how she must act around the king.⁵⁶

Thomas Howard:	She must be well-read, know her music, excel in company, and she must be clean.
Thomas Boleyn:	Anne will see to it.
Elizabeth Boleyn:	See to what? Mary is already all of these things? Thanks to the education I have given her. And for what? That she may be traded like cattle for the advancement and amusement of men?
Thomas Howard:	Sister, you may leave us also.

This scene shows several ways in which patriarchy affects women in this movie. Mary is the focus since Thomas Howard sees her as a way to further their family at the court and thus Mary must be certain things. Thomas Howard does not care that Mary has these

⁵⁶ *The Other Boleyn*, (37:12-37:38).

skills for herself but has them so she can be of use to him and his goals. Anne is expected to see that Mary can do all these things and Lady Elizabeth, Anne, and Mary's mother, is told to leave when she questions Thomas Howard.

Shortly after Mary becomes the mistress of the King, Anne is secretly married to Henry Percy. Since Henry Percy was already engaged this could ruin both Anne's reputation and the Boleyn family's political standing at court. Due to this Mary tells her father to hopefully fix the situation. During this confrontation, Anne and Henry Percy are told that they are no longer married, and that Anne will be sent to France so that the issue will be forgotten and to punish Anne for her going against her family wishes. Mary and Anne get into an argument over this, which results into growing mistrust between the sisters. Before Anne leaves for France her mother Lady Elizabeth tells her,⁵⁷

“Observe the ladies of the court. See how they achieve what they want from their men, not by stamping their little feet, but by allowing the men to believe that they, indeed, are in charge. That is the art of being a woman.”

Anne's mother is telling her how the patriarchal society works and how she must conform, but also manipulates the system to get what she wants. Shortly after Anne's departure to France, Mary falls pregnant with the king's child and has complications where she must start her lie in. This means that she is not able to be around the king every day or perform sexual intercourse. Due to this Mary's father and uncle become worried that Henry's time away from Mary will cause him to become interested in another lady at the court which will cause the family to lose favor. This results in bringing Anne back to the English Court to grab the King's attention and have her focus his attention on Mary. Lady Elizabeth writes to Anne to come return home on orders from her uncle Thomas

⁵⁷ *The Other Boleyn*, (43:11-43:32).

Howard to keep the king's attention on Mary and do no more. Anne is again given an order by the men in her life and used as a tool instead of being seen as a person. Henry starts to develop feelings for Anne throughout Mary's confinement. Anne still holding ill-feeling towards her sister over the Henry Percy incident takes this opportunity hurt Mary. When Mary gives birth, Henry is focused on winning Anne's affection, so Henry promises Anne that he will not ever see Mary or Mary's child ever again if that is what makes Anne happy. Anne agrees, leading to a confrontation between the sisters,⁵⁸

Mary Boleyn:	Take care. Because he'll only do to you what he's done to me.
Anne Boleyn:	You should not have given yourself so lightly. These are the consequences.
Mary Boleyn:	I gave myself to a man I loved. And he loved me."
Anne Boleyn:	A man's love is worthless. Our mother succumbed to love. Look what it got her. A feeble husband. Love is of no value without power and position. If I give the king a son, he will not bear the name "bastard."
Mary Boleyn:	What you suggest is treason. He cannot marry you. He has his queen.
Anne Boleyn:	Who cannot produce a male heir.
Mary Boleyn:	You reached too high as always.

This scene shows how a patriarchal system, where men are the authority, cannot only tear women apart but also how it keeps women in a submissive role that does not allow them to come together to change the system. Mary and Anne are both victims of a patriarchal society, and therefore, when one conforms to it, and it affects the other it causes a rift in their relationship. That they blame each other instead of blaming the patriarchal system. Anne in this scene is cold toward Mary and embodies the same methods of the patriarchy to punish Mary.

⁵⁸ *The Other Boleyn*, (1:06:42-1:07:34).

Later in the film, Anne convinces the king to annul his marriage so they can get married and have a legitimate son together. Henry starts to consider this decision when he gets word from Mary Talbot asking for a divorce from Henry Percy. This event brings to light that Anne and Henry Percy were already married. This causes Henry to become angry and untrusting of Anne; however, he does trust Mary. This results in Mary being brought back to court to convince Henry that Anne did not consummate the betrothal with Henry Percy. Due to Mary's testimony Anne and Henry get married, and Anne is crowned queen. Shortly after this, Anne gives birth to a girl named Elizabeth, and Henry is not happy and starts to pull away which then escalated when Anne later miscarried. The miscarriage results in Henry pulling away Anne fears that she will be replaced the same way Katherine of Aragon was which results in a need for a child. Anne asks her brother George to have sexual intercourse with her to produce a child that could pass as Henry's. Mary does not agree with this situation and starts to head back to the family home. Even though George and Anne do not go through with the plan, George's wife Jane Parker sees and goes and tells Norfolk and then the king about what she saw. Once the king learns of these events Anne is taken to the Tower to await trial. Anne is found guilty by the court which not only includes her uncle but also Henry Percy as a member of the jury. Some of the same people that placed Anne in this situation are the very ones that condemn her to execution. Mary races back to court to convince Henry not to kill Anne, and he seems to agree. However, during Anne's execution, Mary gets a letter from Henry explaining that Anne needs to die for him to marry Jane Seymour and have a male heir and that even his affection for Mary could not change his mind. Henry then orders Mary to never return to the court if she values her life. Mary does, however, in an unusual

burst of rebellion return to the court against Henry's orders one more time to honor the wish of her sister to raise Elizabeth with own her children. Elizabeth, historical never went to live with Mary and this just show that this scene was added to make a point of Mary's attitude at the end of the movie.

Overall, both *The Tudors* and *The Other Boleyn Girl* demonstrates third-wave feminist ideas by showing how a patriarchal society not only keeps women in the position of submission, but also how it stops women solidarity. While in both productions the societal expectations do affect some of the men's decisions, however, the main group of people affected are women. Women in these fanciful interpretations of history are affected at all points such as education, marriage, and sexuality. In *The Other Boleyn Girl* Mary and Anne's relationship suffers from the constant competition. The movie also talks about how women have no option against the patriarchal situation that women are placed in. All the women in this movie face situations in which they must conform to decisions made for them in this movie and the consequences of those decisions. Mary conforms to the patriarchal norms and seems to live out the rest of her life in peace in the country with her new husband, William Stafford, and her children. *The Tudors* portrayal of Anne Boleyn shows a woman that at first conforms to the plans of her family, then she slowly becomes powerful and comfortable and rebels which leads to her demise. *The Tudors* and *The Other Boleyn Girl* are historical fiction that take historical figures and events and builds a story around them. While some of the scenes depicted on screen may have happen, much of what is shown is fictional and made for entertainment.

Fourth-Wave Feminism in *SIX: The Musical* (2017) and *Anne Boleyn* (2021)

Bordo's research was published in 2013, but since then there is an argument that society has moved into a new fourth wave of feminism that continues to affect the fictional portrayals of Anne Boleyn. Fourth-wave feminism continues the conversation brought up in the Third Wave and Second-Wave Feminism movement.⁵⁹ This movement started around 2012 and extends the conversation about intersectionality inside the feminist movement and focuses on global issues rather than the just ones in the United States. This movement also used social media more to express messages across the globe with what is referred to as hashtag feminism.⁶⁰ The topics of discussion that the fourth wave of feminism focused on are “(i) blurred boundaries across waves; (ii) technological mobilization; (iii) interconnectedness through globalization; and (iv) a rapid, multivocal (i.e., humorous, angry, sad, reflexive) response to sexual violence.”⁶¹ This wave is currently happening so there is less scholarly work written about this movement than the third and second-wave feminism; however, it does seem that the goal of this movement is to promote women's solidarity regardless of race or nationality.

The *Anne Boleyn* AMC+ mini-series displays fourth-wave feminist traits by not only allowing for diversity on screen but also through a continuous display of women fighting against the patriarchy. Anne is portrayed by Afro-English actress Jodie Turner-

⁵⁹ Diana C. Parry, Corey W. Johnson, and Faith-Anne Wagler, “Fourth Wave Feminism: Theoretical Underpinnings and Future Directions for Leisure Research,” in *Feminisms in Leisure Studies: Advancing a Fourth Wave*, ed. Diana Parry. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019), 5.

⁶⁰ Tegab Zimmerman, “#Intersectionality: The Fourth Wave Feminist Twitter Community,” *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture, and Social Justice* 38, no. 1 (2017): 60
<https://journals.msvu.ca/index.php/atlanis/article/view/4304/54-70%20PDF>

⁶¹ Diana C. Parry, Corey W. Johnson, and Faith-Anne Wagler, “Fourth Wave Feminism: Theoretical Underpinnings and Future Directions for Leisure Research,” in *Feminisms in Leisure Studies: Advancing a Fourth Wave*, ed. Diana Parry. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019), 5.

Smith which allows women of color to feel represented on screen in roles that are traditionally given to white or white-passing actresses. The decision to cast a woman of color as Anne Boleyn was met with much controversy which added to a debate: is historical accuracy important in historical fiction? If it is, to what extent? Is there only concern about historical accuracy when the idea of what people in history are supposed to look like is challenged? According to some historical accounts, Anne Boleyn had a darker skin tone and was not as pale as the other ladies of the court. However, all the versions of Anne addressed in this paper so far have been pale which is historically inaccurate. Furthermore, Natalie Dormer's portrayal of Anne in *The Tudors* has blue eyes instead of dark eyes and there was no controversy over her casting. Yasmine Hachimi in the article "'A beauty not so whitely': Anne Boleyn and the Optics of Race" expresses how, "anachronism [is] so often used as an excuse to deny the existence of people of color in the Tudor period... if the skin color is 'right,' other attributes (brown eyes, black hair, full lips etc.) are not remarked on."⁶² Jodie Turner-Smith's portrayal of Anne Boleyn displays the fourth-wave feminist trait of allowing minorities inside the feminist movement to have voices and have a chance to have parts that in the past may not have been available to them.

The Anne in this show also fights against the patriarchy by becoming powerful. Whereas *Anne of the Thousand Days*, *The Tudors*, and *The Other Boleyn Girl* focuses on Anne's journey to become queen, the AMC+ version focuses on Anne's story as queen consort. For example, Anne's main goal is as a religious reformist. Anne during the first

⁶² Yasmine Hachimi, "'A Beauty Not So Whitely': Anne Boleyn and the Optics of Race," *The Scholar and Feminist Online* 18, no.1 (2022.)
<https://sfoonline.barnard.edu/a-beauty-not-so-whitely-anne-boleyn-and-the-optics-of-race/>

episode tries to change Henry's mind about what to do with the monasteries in the following scene:⁶³

Anne Boleyn:	The monasteries have become corrupted?
Henry VIII:	Hotbeds of vice were Cromwell's words
Anne Boleyn:	Cromwell is a brilliant accountant. But he isn't a visionary like you. This could be the chance to create a legacy. Something our people will remember.
Henry VIII:	Cromwell won't be happy.
Anne Boleyn:	Mm-hmm. We will have to train him better. Even the tamest of lapdogs can bite if left unschooled.
Henry VIII:	Well, he's not the only one whose bite is to be feared.

This version of Anne is more politically involved than previous versions. The show does incorporate Anne's miscarriage and her trial, but they are not the result of sexual scandal, but rather on the religious reforms that she wanted to put into place. However, once again Tudor patriarchal norms try to reassert themselves over Anne, trying to reduce her role to reproduction. This is shown in this scene from episode one,⁶⁴

Thomas Cromwell:	Your influence lies in your belly not your brain.
Anne Boleyn:	But you know I will never cower before you.

Thomas Cromwell is stating that Anne's only real power is her ability to give the king a son. Eventually, Anne is not able to produce a son, and this leads to her downfall. Once more, Anne going against patriarchal norms gets her executed.

This portrayal of Anne Boleyn also touches on this issue of intersectionality. Intersectionality inside the feminist movement "means 'giving voice' and recognition to women who are discriminated against as a consequence of racism and sexism and for whom the feminist movement (and other social and political movements and protest

⁶³ *Anne Boleyn*. "Episode 1," AMC+, (5:46-6:26), December 8, 2021.

<https://www.amcplus.com/pages/anne-boleyn>

⁶⁴ *Anne Boleyn*. "Episode 1," (16:21-16:24).

groups) does not adequately account for or acknowledge.”⁶⁵ Racial injustice has been a long-standing problem. Jodie Turner-Smith's portrayal of Anne Boleyn not only allows for representation on screen but also provides insight into how intersectionality happens. Anne is described as a woman of darker skin when the ideal version of beauty was a fairer complexion. This raises questions about the description of Anne and if there was a possible influence by her circumstances or if her looks influenced the way she was viewed.

The portrayal of Anne Boleyn in *SIX: The Musical* displays fourth-wave feminism through intersectionality and women's solidarity. At the beginning of the musical each of Henry VIII's six wives competes to see which one of them has the “saddest story and was treated the worst by Henry VIII.”⁶⁶ Each wife has their solo at the beginning of the show that expresses their own personality. Anne who is portrayed by Andrea Macasaet, who is of Filipino Canadian descent, presents an attitude that is carefree and does not seem to be taking the contest seriously. Anne's solo is:

“I'm that Boleyn Girl and I up next see, I broke England from the Church... yeah, I'm that sexy why did I lose my head? Well my sleeve may be green but my lipstick's red.”⁶⁷

Anne solo is playful which does not seem to be competitive. Later in the musical “Anne Boleyn, in a rare, thoughtful moment, points out that they have been victims of a

⁶⁵ Beccy Watson, “Thinking Intersectionally: Fourth Wave Feminism and Feminist Leisure Scholarship,” in *Feminisms in Leisure Studies: Advancing a Fourth Wave*, ed. Diana Parry. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019), 60.

⁶⁶ Valerie Schrader, “Examining the ‘Histo-Remix’: Public memory, Burkean Identification and Feminism in the Musical *Six*,” *Studies in Musical Theatre* 14, no. 3 (2020): 274. https://doi-org.libproxy.eku.edu/10.1386/smt_00041_1

⁶⁷ Toby Marlow and Lucy Moss, *SIX: The Musical* (Cambridge: Concord Theatricals, 2017), 4.

patriarchal system that defines them only by their marital status. This patriarchal framework can turn women into virials.⁶⁸ This realization results in the scene,⁶⁹

All:	We don't need your love cause we're so much more than:
Aragon:	Divorced
Boleyn:	Beheaded
Seymour:	Died
Cleves:	Divorced
Howard:	Beheaded
Parr:	Survived
All:	WE'RE SIX!"

This shows women's solidarity and that the value of women is much more than their connection to men.

SIX: The Musical differs from the previous portrayals of Anne Boleyn since this project is musical theater instead of a film or television production. In this production there is a less adherence to a sense of historical accuracy due to it being a musical being a clear sign that this production is not supposed to be an exact reenactment of history and to be taken as fact. In *Anne of the Thousand Days*, *The Tudors*, *The Other Boleyn Girl*, and *Anne Boleyn* there is an attention to the dress, location, and speech of the characters. In contrast *SIX: The Musical* has “each queen wears a stunningly studded contemporary outfit with accents in a colour that represents her.”⁷⁰ The music uses “drums, guitars and keyboards to provide a Brit-pop sound.”⁷¹ The musical takes a creative license and retells the story of Henry VIII six wives in a modern way, but uses the past as a springboard to reimagine these characters, whereas the other films and television use history as a way to authentic and give creditability to their stories. *SIX: The Musical* in

⁶⁸ Schrader, “Examining the ‘Histo-Remix,’” 285.

⁶⁹ Eithan’s Piano Journey, “SIX The Musical - FULL SHOW LIVE - Broadway,” *YouTube* video, (1:18:21-1:18:37)). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubD_Qo6gOJU&list=WL&index=298.

⁷⁰ Schrader, “Examining the ‘Histo-Remix,’” 279.

⁷¹ Schrader, “Examining the ‘Histo-Remix,’” 279

contrast is not presenting itself as history, but rather a fictional version of history. The previous films and television show seem to deliberately sully the line separating history from fiction.

This creative license is taken in several other historical fiction plays like *Hamilton* (2015). *Hamilton* is a musical that focuses on founding father Alexander Hamilton. The Broadway play employed color-conscious casting. Color consciousness casting can be defined as “casting requires casting directors and producers to accept that the country is growing in diversity, and the stage should reflect the changing demographic make-up of the United States.”⁷² While the process that is regularly used in casting is color-blind casting. Color-blind casting does not focus on race and is instead just about casting the best actor for the role.⁷³ *Hamilton* while having a diverse cast also incorporates hip-hop music which allows the audience to know that the events portrayed are most likely not historically accurate. Lin-Manuel Miranda the writer and director Tommy Kail of *Hamilton* has stated, “is the story about America then, told by America now.”⁷⁴ However, much like the *Anne Boleyn* series, this diversity has been met with controversy. While there has been a push for the inclusion of minorities in entertainment not only in main roles but also side roles to create a cast that a higher majority of audience can relate to there is also a question of when this incorporation is positive for those minorities. According to author Lyra D. Monteiro in the article “Race-Conscious Casting and the Erasure of the Black Past in Lin-Manuel Miranda’s *Hamilton*,” while the cast in

⁷² Kristin B. Hopkins, “There’s No Business Like Show Business: Abandoning Color-Blind Casting and Embracing Color-Conscious Casting in American Theatre,” *Harvard Journal of Sports & Entertainment Law* 9, no. 2 (2018): 134.

<https://discovery.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=d920836a-e136-303b-9dab-bd6e0fabdc85>.

⁷³ Hopkins, “There’s No Business Like Show Business,” 134.

⁷⁴ Marvin McAllister, “Toward a More Perfect *Hamilton*,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 37, no. 2 (2017): 281. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/90006299>.

Hamilton is diverse the characters are still telling a version of history that is white-washed by focusing on the founding fathers. Instead, there is a push for producing historical fiction that already has diverse historical figures to tell a story that more accurately history of what minorities went through in the past.⁷⁵ These are the conversation that is discussed when diversity in historical fiction is brought to light.

While Hamilton focuses on making historical figures diverse, the Netflix series *Bridgerton* also incorporates diversity into historical fiction by casting a diverse cast for the fictional roles. The show presents a diverse set of characters in a time period that in past production has been predominately represented by an all-white cast. The show also does not talk much about a racial divide between the character other than in one scene between the characters Lady Danbury and The Duke of Hasting where Lady Danbury states, “Look at our queen; look at our king; look at their marriage; look at everything it is doing for us, allowing us to become. We were two separate society divided by colour until the king fell in love with one of us.”⁷⁶ This scene hints at a potential racial divide in how it was very short. Again, this shows the inaccurate record of racial discrimination in history.

With each new wave of feminism historical fiction has become more diverse. This can be seen in Anne Boleyn varieties over the years. In the 1960s Anne was a fiery feminist, in *The Other Boleyn Girl* she was a jealous sensual woman obsessed with power to make her own way in the world, and in *The Tudors*, she was a woman that wants be

⁷⁵ Lyra D. Monteiro, “Review of Race-Conscious Casting and the Erasure of the Black a Past in Lin-Manuel Miranda’s *Hamilton*, by The Public Theater,” *The Public Historian* 38, no. 1 (2016): 96. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26420757>.

⁷⁶ Önder Kulak, “How to Rewrite History on the Screen: *Bridgerton* (2020),” *ViraVerita E-Dergi* 15, no. 1 (2022): 177. <https://doi.org/10.47124/viraverita.1090758>

respected. In the 2020s Anne has begun to shift again in the look of her character. In *Anne Boleyn*, Anne is played by an Afro-English actress and in *SIX: The Musical* she is played by several women of color. Anne's personality has not seen much change from the feisty feminist power hungry version, but her appearance has changed to allow for more diversity on screen. However, there is a concern that historical fiction could result in an inaccurate version of history. For example, the scholar Thea Tomi, explains that in the act of trying to remember Catherine Parr by redoing her tomb, there is also a choice of forgetting since the tomb was refurbished in the Victorina period which resulted in the new tomb having Victoria aspects that were guided by Tudor architecture.⁷⁷ This raise concerns that in the effort to remember Anne and explain her story in an interesting new way that will be entertaining to audiences, there is a need to make her relatable to newer generations which might create a version of her that is not true to her as a historical figure.

Entertainment like *SIX: The Musical* and *Anne Boleyn* reflects fourth-wave feminism due to this production promoting solidarity among women but also allowing for more diversity on screen. *SIX: The Musical* focus is women's solidarity since the musical while being a modern take on historical events introduces the idea the six wives of King Henry VIII's stories are not only important due to their being connected to King Henry VIII. Instead, *SIX: The Musical* introduces the idea that each of the wives is more than their connections to King Henry VIII; and therefore, they do not need to compete to see

⁷⁷ Thea Tomaini, *The Corpse as Text: Disinterment and Antiquarian Enquiry, 1700-1900* (Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2017), 527.

who has the saddest marriage. *SIX: The Musical* does not seem to question or reinvasion history instead it is about using history to reimage the present in hopes of changing the future. *Anne Boleyn* allows for an example of a strong female lead that defies gender stereotypes and adds to the conversation of diversity in historical fiction.

Conclusion

Through an evaluation of the portrayal of the fictional representations of Anne Boleyn through each wave of feminism, one can see that the fictional portrayals of Anne Boleyn are affected by each new set of feminist ideas which produced these various interpretations of Anne Boleyn's character. Second-wave feminism affected the portrayal of Anne's character in *Anne of the Thousand Days* in Anne's fiery personality and attitudes toward sex. Third-wave feminism affects the portrayals of Anne in *The Tudors* and *The Other Boleyn Girl* representing how a patriarchal system can put women at a disadvantage. Fourth-wave feminism affects Anne's portrayals in *Anne Boleyn* and *SIX: The Musical* by extending the conversation of intersectionality and allowing for diversity on screen in historical fiction.

The research and ideas presented in this paper allow for larger conversation on not only how historical fiction is influenced by history but also how historical fiction can influence societies view of history. Anne Boleyn is not the only historical figure that has been altered through her portrayals in historical fiction. This project focuses on how history can be reshaped through a feminist lens; however, it also allows provides insight on the goals of historical fiction.

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