Martyr, Victim, Schemer, or Queen? Debating the Character of Anne Boleyn from Tudor England to the Present Day

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Introduction

"And if any person will meddle of my cause, I only require them to judge the best"
-Anne Boleyn[1]

On the afternoon of May 19, 1536, Sir William Kingston, constable of the infamous Tower of London, penned a letter to Thomas Cromwell. In it, he chronicled the strange behavior of his main charge, none other than the current queen of England, who had been condemned to death several weeks earlier for infidelity, incest, and treason. Kingston described the woman as unlike any inmate he had seen before and recounted a scene from earlier that day:

> This morning she sent for me… and at my coming she said, 'Mr. Kingston, I hear I shall not die afore noon, and I am very sorry therefore, for I thought to be dead by this time and past my pain.' I told her it should be no pain, it was so little. And then she said, 'I heard say the executioner was very good, and I have a little neck,' and then put her hands about it, laughing heartily. I have seen many men and also women executed, and that they have been in great sorrow, and to my knowledge this lady has much joy in death.[2]

Kingston was far from alone in his curiosity about the woman who would die a few hours after the encounter he related in his letter. For centuries after her execution, historians have argued over who Anne Boleyn really was, debating everything from her religious views and level of autonomy to her political alliances and family allegiance. Popular culture has only heightened this split, layering the conflict with image after conflicting image of the woman. Novels, films, and television have alternatively shown Boleyn as a wanton femme fatale, helpless victim, shrewd social climber, religious martyr, and political reformer. The ever-elusive question continues: who was Anne

[1] "Anne Boleyn's Speech at Her Execution, Recorded by Edward Hall," May 19, 1536, https://tudorhistory.org/primary/speech.html.
[2] "Henry VIII: May 1536, 16-20 | British History Online," accessed December 28, 2018, https://www.british-history.ac.uk/letters-papers-hen8/vol10/pp371-391.

Boleyn? The pages that follow explore how people from the 16th century through the present have attempted to answer this question.

The query could be answered literally: the younger daughter of Thomas Boleyn, a lowly nobleman, and his wife Lady Elizabeth Howard. She had an unusually advanced education, under the tutelage of Margaret of Austria, who sparked Anne's lifelong interest in literature, poetry, and music. After her time in the Netherlands, she served as a maid of honor to the queen of France, becoming well-versed in French etiquette and culture, as well as the game of courtly love. After returning to England early in 1522, Anne became a lady-in-waiting to Catherine of Aragon. Dark-haired with brown eyes and olive skin, she could not have been more different from the blond, blue-eyed English ladies of the court. Three years after her arrival, King Henry VIII began his pursuit of Anne. Unlike her sister Mary, she refused his proposition to become a royal mistress. After six years of courtship, Henry formalized a split with the Catholic Church, creating the Church of England of which he was the supreme head, and promptly declared his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. Henry and Anne formally married in January of 1533 and she was crowned queen of England on the first of June of the same year. Three months later, she gave birth to a daughter, Elizabeth, rather than the son she had promised Henry. After three more pregnancies all resulting in miscarriages, Henry had shifted his affections to another lady of the court, Jane Seymour. In order to wed Jane, the king had to find reasons to end his marriage to Anne. With the help of Thomas Cromwell, Henry ordered Anne to be investigated for high treason in April of 1536, with charges including incest and adultery. A month later, Anne was found guilty on all accounts and sent to the Tower of London, where she was executed on May 19, 1536.[3]

[3] Eric Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn* (Wiley, 2004).; David Starkey, *Six Wives: The Queens of Henry VIII* (Vintage, 2004).

Despite countless studies by historians, a complete portrait of this woman— her personality, motivation, and ambitions— has continued to be elusive. Academic depictions of Anne Boleyn portray her as everything from a wily, power-hungry seductress, to an innocent victim entangled in events beyond her control.[4] An examination of scholarly work on this historical figure over the past century reveals varying shades of two dominant and competing interpretations of Anne Boleyn: one, as a religious and intelligent woman with a Reformist agenda, and two, as an unprincipled and manipulative emissary dedicated solely to the advancement of herself and her family. Popular culture has matched this confusion with countless depictions of Anne Boleyn, all of which are based on some form of either of these two discourses. But why is this the case? Why do certain historians and cultural images adhere to the first interpretation of historical evidence, while other agree with the second? The reason for the divide in academic and popular opinion is partly because of which sources historians give credence, and which of their predecessors they find most persuasive. But the full explanation goes much further than this: the basis for this split is fundamentally tied to conceptions of women in the political sphere, and the underlying influences of feminism, reform, and social change that have shaped them.

During the second half of the twentieth century, many historians examined the political intrigue and religious conflict present in King Henry VIII's court. Their collective work includes several scholarly examinations of Anne Boleyn, arguably one of the most fascinating characters in sixteenth-century English politics. More than many other historical figures, Anne Boleyn posits a unique challenge to study because of the severe limitation of primary source material on her personal life. She left behind very few documents: only a handful of her letters and her

execution speech survive. As a result, there limitations have left the door open for many competing interpretations of her life, since historians have had to rely on records about Anne from other members of Henry's court, all of which are steeped in factional bias. Thus, the works on her often contradict one another in surprisingly stark terms, finding little common ground in their interpretations of the historiographically elusive queen.

The most well-known of these is the two-part biography of the ill-fated queen written by British historian, Eric Ives, which depicts her as a politically astute and independent agent in her trajectory at court.[5] After acknowledging the severe limitations of source material that illuminates Anne's personal life, Ives uses the evidence of books she read, such as William Tyndale's *Obedience of a Christian Man and How Christian Rulers Ought to Govern*, and what she chose to promote, such as a commissioned sermon by John Skip, in order to piece together a portrait of a queen who was "more than a seductive voice on a pillow," as he described her in his introduction. He credits her with combining personal ambition with a sincere religious fervor to propel her meteoric rise, presenting Anne as an active agent of the English Reformation rather than simply the passive catalyst that other historians, the public, and Hollywood often view her as. This is especially clear in the second edition of Ives' biography of Anne, in which he further highlights her spiritual beliefs and the conflict that they caused with Thomas Cromwell, one of Henry's central advisors.[6][7] Regarding her death, Ives' gives details the circumstances behind her downfall and execution: not just a failure to produce a living male heir, the tempestuous state of international politics, and Henry's equally tempestuous personality, but also the danger the queen's religious convictions posed to Cromwell in the wake of the Dissolution of the

[5] Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*.
[6] Ives.
[7] Eric Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn: "The Most Happy"* (Wiley, 1986),

monasteries in 1536. He posits Cromwell and Anne as equal in commitment to the Reformation, but opposing in methodology, a portrayal that clearly underlines his view of Anne as a deliberate, ardent proponent of spiritual change in England. Rather than a passive agent who indirectly acted as a stimulus to the Reformation, Ives theorizes that Anne intentionally promoted the cause of Protestantism by sharing reformist pamphlets and books with Henry and encouraging his split with Rome.

Fellow historian David Starkey, who greatly influenced the second edition of Ives' work on Henry's second queen, is another major proponent of this positive portrayal of Anne. Ives specifically mentions Starkey's 1998 work *The Inventory of King Henry VIII* in his acknowledgements, lauding its analysis of Henrician England as a series of social shifts prompted by the queen consort. [8] Both his television documentary, *The Wives of Henry VIII*, and his book, *Six Wives: the Queens of Henry VIII*, firmly espouse the idea that Anne was wedded to the cause of Protestant reform, specifically the eradication of the pope's omnipotent grip on Church policies, which gave her an enormous amount of power and autonomy, particularly in determining policies relating to Henry's split with Rome.[9]

In his argument for her dedication to the Reformation, Starkey focuses on Anne's commission of an inflammatory sermon from her almoner John Skip. Given on April 2, 1536, the highly controversial address not only clarified the queen's reformist religious stance, but implicitly criticized Cromwell for his handling of the Dissolution of the Monasteries. Based on the story of Queen Ester in the biblical Old Testament, Skip detailed how King Xerxes (paralleled as Henry VIII) was convinced by a devious advisor (Thomas Cromwell) to destroy

[8] Maria Hayward, David Starkey, and Philip Ward, *The Inventory of King Henry VIII.* (Harvey Miller, 2011).; Ives, xvii.
[9] *The Wives of Henry VIII* (Bfs Entertainment, 2002).; Starkey, *Six Wives*.

the Jewish population in Persia (the English clergy victimized by the Dissolution) until being dissuaded by his virtuous queen (Anne Boleyn). Using this as an evidentiary basis, Starkey argues that Anne did not necessarily disagree with the Dissolution but felt the proceeds should go to reform and charity rather than the royal treasury, thus displaying the queen's commitment to her spiritual beliefs. Whether or not she was indeed a committed Protestant is crucial to examination of Anne, as it fundamentally corresponds with the extent of her influence on the English Reformation as well as her political acumen and autonomy, all of which form the basis of the first discourse in the historical view of Anne Boleyn, as laid out by Ives and Starkey.

David Loades, author of *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* and professor of history at the University of Wales, also adheres to this historical view of Henry's second wife, though in a less obvious form than either Ives or Starkey.[10] As he examines similar sources as previous historians, namely, letters, documents, enactments of public policy, and popular court opinion at the time, Loades credits her wit and sexual allure with capturing the King's attention. Describing her as "a bold, high-spirited and independent woman who had played politics for high stakes, not as an agent but as a principal…using the weapons with which nature had endowed her: wit, charm, intelligence."[11] Interestingly, these very weapons are what Loades posits as the eventual causes of her fall from favor. This characterization is not in any way negative, however, and a subtle empathy for the ill-fated woman permeates the chapters dedicated to her, as Loades admires Anne's remarkable cleverness and intellectual curiosity in both her involvement in court intrigue and the reformist cause.

[10] David Loades, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* (Amberley Publishing, 2009).
[11] Ibid., 10.

Similarly, historian Diarmaid MacCulloch's biography on Thomas Cromwell showcases his agreement with the positive portrayals of Anne.[12] His book delves deeply into the personality and inner motivations of Cromwell, examining his upbringing, education, letters, and political decisions to trace the career of the man who was almost single-handedly responsible for Anne's destruction. Although MacCulloch paints Cromwell in a more forgiving light than many other authors who have studied Henry's advisor, he also emphasizes the cutthroat nature of Cromwell's orchestration of Anne's death.[13] He attributes to the queen a firm support for the English Reformation, which eventually placed her at odds with her former ally Cromwell and led her to obstruct his rise to power, a move he countered by formulating accusations of adultery that led to her trial and execution. In their broader studies of the personalities and politics of Tudor England, Loades and MacCulloch present Anne Boleyn as both compelling and tragic, genuine in her religious convictions and overtaken by the intrigue and machinations of the court. Both historians' portrayals seem to be motivated by not just the sources and evidence they use, such as her religious involvement and personal library, but also a subtler sympathy for an intelligent, educated woman demonized for her political acumen and intrigue, and condemned for the crime of failing to provide the king with a son.

This sympathetic interpretation of Anne as intelligent, religiously-focused, and politically astute has dominated much of the literature surrounding Henry's second wife, both academic and popular, particularly in the wake of the modern feminist revolution. However, a second view of Anne, one that instead portrays her as devious and self-interested, has gradually made a place for itself in the modern historiographical landscape. This negative view centers on the work of Retha

[12] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cromwell: A Life* (Penguin Books Limited, 2018).
[13] Robert Hutchinson, *Thomas Cromwell: The Rise And Fall Of Henry VIII's Most Notorious Minister* (Orion, 2012).

Warnicke, an American historian and professor at Arizona State University. Warnicke's *The Rise and Fall of Anne Boleyn: Family Politics at the Court of Henry VIII* presents an incredibly unflattering portrait of Anne, in which she appears a venal, unprincipled agent dedicated solely to the advancement of herself and her family, generally indifferent to the religious issues and the Reformation.[14] Interestingly, her book utilizes research into the gender prejudices of the early sixteenth century as a lens through which to examine traditional sources on Henry's second wife, in order to hypothesize the impact such forces may have had on her and her actions.

Warnicke looks specifically at the intrigue and family politics that permeated the court for an explanation of Anne's motivation to become queen, evaluating the context of social and religious values. She also analyzes superstitions about witches and the birth of deformed children common at the time, in order to create a new framework with which to explain her downfall after failing to produce a living male heir. She defends highly controversial and largely unsubstantiated theories, going so far as to argue that Anne quite possibly did commit adultery and incest in her desperate attempt to provide Henry with a son, an attempt that resulted in a deformed, miscarried fetus that convinced Henry that Anne was a witch. These conclusions are partly confirmed by the record of Anne's three miscarriages, one of which occurred very late term and possibly could have had physical irregularities that caused its premature delivery. Additionally, since products of incest have been known to be hampered by physical deformity and death, a correlation could be drawn between the queen's multiple miscarriages and potential copulation with someone who shared her genetic makeup. However, there is no conclusive evidence of the birth of a malformed fetus, and most historians agree the accusation of incest was

[14] Warnicke, *The Rise and Fall of Anne Boleyn*.

the result of George Boleyn's wife attempting to rid herself of her despised husband: it was her testimony alone that linked the queen to her brother in an intimate fashion.[15]

Similarly, G.W. Bernard depicts Anne Boleyn in an equally critical light, upending what many academics have accepted as verifiably proven fact.[16] Much of what informs this negative view is his use of sources that support the charges of adultery and treason levered against Anne, which traditionally have been seen by historians such as Ives and Starkey as unreliable. In direct opposition to Ives', Bernard shows her as the aggressor in her and Henry's relationship, with the king's restraint leading them to abstain from sexual intimacy, rather than any intelligent maneuvering on Anne's part. He also sees her as uninvolved in the divorce proceedings, the split with Rome, and the downfall of Cardinal Wolsey, instead attributing to Henry the full measure of influence and responsibility for such policy. Bernard further describes Anne as ultimately unconcerned with Protestantism, her support for the Reformation stemming only from her desire to see Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon dissolved rather than from any sincere evangelical conviction. He even cites the aforementioned commissioned sermon in defense of the English clergy as proof that what appeared to be Reformist support was simply an opportunist move.

This, of course, puts him in direct conflict with both Starkey and Ives' interpretation of Anne's religion, which views her as sincerely evangelical and prominent in prompting reform. Indeed, Ives has directly contradicted Bernard's research in several articles.[17] Much of the conflict between the historians stems from a wide disparity in the use and interpretation of

[15] Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*.; Starkey, *The Wives of Henry VIII*.
[16] Bernard, *Anne Boleyn*.
[17] Eric Ives, "Anne Boleyn on Trial Again," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 62, no. 4 (October 2011): 763–77, https://doi.org/10.1017/S002204691100087X.; Eric Ives. "The Fall of Anne Boleyn Reconsidered." *The English Historical Review* 107, no. 424 (1992): 651-64. http://www.jstor.org/stable/575248.

historical sources. Bernard dissects a wide variety of key texts in his work: Cavendish's *Life of Wolsey,* Sir Thomas Wyatt's verse, Anne and Henry's love letters, and Lancelot de Carles' French poem on the queen's fate. He also heavily uses the Spanish ambassador Chapuys' account of Anne's fall from a favor, a record that has been viewed by Ives and others as unreliable, as Chapuys was a close ally of Catherine of Aragon and despised Anne for replacing her predecessor. Bernard's reliance on such sources has thus led him to drastically different conclusions than many of his peers.

The two conceptions of Anne Boleyn have clashed in the historiographical sphere, their receptive proponents using different evidence to draw different conclusions. Proponents of the Anne-as-schemer view like Bernard and Warnicke agree in their rejection of several interpretations espoused by the Anne-as-reformist apologists Ives, Starkey, and MacCulloch: namely the idea that Cromwell engineered the downfall of the queen, stating that his motivations for orchestrating such a plot hold no weight. Bernard explains Cromwell's admission of his involvement in the affair as mere hubris, a desperate need to be accredited in any court intrigue of note. Bernard also agrees with Warnicke that the queen might very possibly have strayed from fidelity in her marriage to the king, citing De Carles's poem which tells of a noblewoman, most likely the countess of Worcester, who responded to reproach about her extramarital affairs by pointing the finger at Anne. He also indicates the queen's flirtatious behavior with male courtiers as supporting evidence. Bernard does reject Warnicke's hypothesis of a deformed child, which then convinced Henry he had been bewitched, stating that there is no evidence of such a birth and that sixteenth century beliefs dictated that witches caused others to give birth to monstrosities, not themselves.

Clearly there has been extensive research into the life of Anne Boleyn, as historians attempt to form an accurate picture of the unfortunate queen. Sources have been picked apart, biases have been scrutinized, academic rejections of certain points of view and responses to scholarly rejections of those points of view have been published. However, despite all of this historical work on this infamous woman, there has yet to be a comprehensive examination of the evolution of the image of Anne Boleyn, an attempt to trace the identity she has been given throughout the years by both scholars and the public. This thesis explores how Anne has been viewed, by academics and popular audiences, over time, beginning with her rise at Henry's court and ending in the modern day. Placing the work of historians alongside cultural representations such as novels, film, and television, my thesis examines not simply how these depictions have changed, but also what cultural and social factors prompted this evolution. This comparison of both cultural and academic depictions of Anne and analysis of how these depictions have progressed over time sheds crucial light on shifting opinions of women with active roles in public spaces. By examining how the perception of Anne Boleyn in both academia and popular culture has fluctuated and developed over the years, this thesis shows what specific, underlying forces prompted such changes and how they relate to broader perceptions of women in the political sphere.

The following pages utilize sources in popular culture as well as academia. Obviously, the prior is not as concerned with reflecting the historical realities of Anne Boleyn's life as their academic counterparts, however, they do provide a critical look at the norms of the time in which they are produced. Consequently, when examining such cultural materials, this thesis looks not only at which historical sources they are derived from and which view of Anne they reflect, but also the relationship dynamics, visual portrayals of Anne, attitudes toward sex and sexuality,

conceptions of women more broadly, and corresponding depictions of men such as Henry and Cromwell they contain. Approaching these sources as products of the specific culture and time in which they were created enables a thorough analysis of the societal influences that have colored particular perceptions of Anne throughout the past few centuries.

This thesis is structured chronologically and divided into four main chapters corresponding with historical eras. The first focuses on her persona during her rise at court and time as queen. This section utilizes pamphlets, court documents such as Spanish ambassador Eustace Chapuys' records, as well as letters and poems that mention Anne, in order to examine her image both as Henry's paramour and as queen. Massively unpopular with the common people, this chapter demonstrates how in the sixteenth century Anne was vilified as a sorceress who had seduced and manipulated the king. The second chapter examines the progression of her depiction during the forty-four-year reign of her daughter, Elizabeth I. During this time, Anne Boleyn was resurrected as a martyr for the English Reformation, a trend highlighted by sources like John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* and William's Shakespeare's *A Winter Tale*.[18];[19] The third chapter analyzes the eighteenth and nineteenth century, during which Anne was often portrayed in works like Selina Bunbury's *The Star of the Court* as a romantic victim entangled in events out of her control.[20] The last chapter dissects the increasingly complex, competing images of Anne Boleyn by both scholars and popular culture in the twentieth century, looking at the competing historical interpretation by Eric Ives and G.W. Bernard, as well as cultural images of Anne in films and television that sharply increased following the feminist revolution in the 1960's.

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[18] John Foxe, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* (John Day, 1563).;
William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, ed. Stephen Orgel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1632).
[20] Selina Bunbury, *The Star of the Court: Or, the Maid of Honour and Queen of England, Anne Boleyn* (Sagwan Press, 1844).

Chapter 1

Anne at Court

On March 4, 1522, Anne made her debut at the court of Henry VIII. During the Green Castle pageant in honor of the imperial ambassadors from Spain and France, she played the part of Perseverance, dressed in a gown of white silk embroidered in gold. Anne swiftly established herself as one of the most fashionable and accomplished women of the court, and soon a throng of young courtiers were competing for her affection.[1] A few months later, she secretly became engaged to the son of the Earl of Northumberland, Henry Percy. Both the earl and Cardinal Wolsey objected to the arraignment, as Anne's lowborn status made her an unsuitable wife for the son of one of the most powerful noblemen in England. The engagement was broken off, and Anne was temporarily exiled from court. After her return, she again served as a lady-in-waiting to Catherine of Aragon, and by 1526 Henry's obsession with her had begun. Thus, from her earliest days at court, Anne was entangled in scandal and a target for gossip and rumor.

Anne's life did not begin with any such infamy. Born at Blickling in Norfolk, she was the daughter of a well-respected diplomat, Thomas Boleyn. During his years abroad, her father formed connections with many powerful individuals, among them the daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor, Margaret of Austria. As a favor to Thomas, the Archduchess offered young Anne a place in her household, a rare honor. The young girl received an uncommonly advanced education that included arithmetic, grammar, history, literature, falconry, horseback riding, embroidery, dancing, chess, and music. A few months after her arrival, Margaret of Austria wrote to her father, saying that Anne was "so presentable and so pleasant, considering her

[1] Eric Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn: "The Most Happy"* (Wiley, 1986), https://books.google.com/books/about/The_Life_and_Death_of_Anne_Boleyn.html?id=w4B_DwAAQBAJ&source=kp_book_description.

youthful age, that [she was] more beholden to [Thomas Boleyn] for sending her, than [the other way around]."[2] In October of 1514, Anne relocated to the French court, where she served Queen Claude for almost seven years. There, she became fluent in French, and well-versed in art, fashion, poetry, and religious philosophy. It is highly probably that while in France, Anne made the acquaintance of the king's sister, Marguerite de Navarre. Marguerite was deeply concerned with religious reform, with views bordering on the heretical. She may have influenced Anne's later interest in Protestantism, although the extent of her religious convictions remains hotly contested and will be discussed at length in later chapters. In 1521, Anne's father recalled her from France, and she sailed back to England in 1522.

Anne's involvement with Henry was markedly different from that of the king's prior mistresses, due to the peculiar predicament of the royal family at the time. After seventeen years of marriage to Catherine of Aragon and not living male heir, Henry became increasingly worried about the state of the royal succession. Prior to the reign of his father, Henry VII, the country had been submerged in civil warfare amid contesting claims for the throne. Desperate to avoid a similar situation should he be left without a legitimate son, Henry became dubious about the validity of his union with Catherine. Originally the bride of Henry's older brother Arthur, Catherine remained in England after the death of her husband at the behest of Henry VII, who wanted to secure an alliance with Spain. Pope Julius II granted Henry and Catherine a special dispensation to marry, on the grounds that Catherine's marriage to Arthur had never been consummated. By 1526, Henry had come to believe that his wife's inability to produce a living son was a sign of divine displeasure and had begun considering asking the Pope for an

[2] Margaret of Austria to Thomas Boleyn. 1513.

annulment.[3] This gave his courtship with Anne a much different status than his earlier conquests, as Anne no doubt recognized the extent of her potential rise.

Unlike the king's prior lovers, Anne refused to become Henry's mistress. In a letter from 1527, Henry begs Anne to reconsider, writing:

> But if you please to do the office of a true loyal mistress and friend, and to give up yourself body and heart to me, who will be, and have been, your most loyal servant, (if your rigor does not forbid me) I promise you that not only the name shall be given you, but also that I will take you for my only mistress, casting off all others besides you out of my thoughts and affections, and serve you only.[4]

According to Henry's later love letters to Anne, she was not persuaded, and the union appears to have remained unconsummated until shortly before their wedding. Despite this, their relationship quickly became the talk of Europe, especially as whispers of Henry's intention to set aside Catherine of Aragon stirred the court. What became known as the king's "Great Matter" was first referenced in a letter to Cardinal Wolsey in July of 1527.[5] By the following year, it was common knowledge, as Henry focused all of his attention on obtaining an annulment, basing his claim on Leviticus 20:21: "If a man marries his brother's wife, it is an act of impurity; he has dishonored his brother. They will be childless."[6] Catherine refused to yield her place as queen, since her agreement to a divorce would remove her daughter Mary from the line of succession.

Under normal circumstances, the Pope most likely would have granted the annulment, as there was a clear Biblical explanation for the union's invalidity. However, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V had taken Pope Clement VII prisoner following the Sack of Rome in May 1527. Pope Clement had allied with France in an attempt to alleviate his dependency on the Holy

[3] Starkey, 286.
[4] Henry Tudor, May 1527, The Love Letters of Henry VIII. From *Henry VIII's Love Letters to Anne Boleyn*
[5] Richard Sampson, July 25, 1527, Records of the Reformation.
[6] Leviticus 20:21 (KJV)

Roman Empire and Hapsburg Dynasty, a move that Charles V did not take lightly.[7] He responded by invading Rome the following May and taking the pope hostage. As a result, Clement was in an exceedingly precarious and vulnerable position, and consequently refused to risk the Emperor's wrath by annulling Henry's union with Catherine, who was Charles V's aunt. By 1528, Henry decided to take matters into his own hands to dissolve his marriage and tasked Cardinal Wolsey with securing a divorce. Wolsey convened an ecclesiastical court in England with a representative of the Pope presiding, and both Henry and Catherine in attendance. However, Clement refused to allow a verdict to be rendered in England, recalled his representative, and forbade Henry to take any further action before the Church reached its own conclusion on the matter. Wolsey had failed Henry and was subsequently dismissed from public office in 1529, dying in disgrace the following year. In 1530, the queen was banished to the countryside, her official chambers, royal jewels, and ceremonial status given to Anne. Catherine wrote a letter to Charles in 1531:

> My tribulations are so great, my life so disturbed by the plans daily invented to further the King's wicked intention, the surprises which the King gives me, with certain persons of his council, are so mortal, and my treatment is what God knows, that it is enough to shorten ten lives, much more mine.[8]

Catherine was stripped of her royal title and Henry and Anne married in secret on November 14, 1532; Anne's coronation took place the following June.

Despite her inability to produce a male heir to the throne, the common people adored Catherine. Edward Hall, chronicler of the Tudor reign, cites multiple instances of the public showing the deposed queen support; a network of her allies went so far as to aid her in smuggling letters after Henry forbade her from communicating with anyone, even her daughter

[7] Starkey, *The Wives of Henry VIII* (Bfs Entertainment, 2002).
[8] Catherine of Aragon, "My Tribulations."

Mary. Catherine's ill-treatment and exile caused public opinion of Anne to harden into hatred, long before the king declared his own religious independence. To the public, Catherine of Aragon exemplified womanly virtues of modesty, loyalty, and piety, while Anne personified the vices of the female sex: sexual deviancy, treachery, and manipulation. Henry's split with Rome through the 1534 Act of Supremacy, which led to the excommunication of the country, further fanned the flames of resentment. This revilement of the new queen was not limited to plebeians: both Hall and Spanish ambassador Chapuys mention that the nobility despised her as well because of her low birth.[9] Royal matches were typically made to secure important foreign alliances, and Henry's union with the daughter of a simple baron provoked ire from highborn members of court, such as the Countess of Devon and Henry's longtime friend and advisor, Charles Brandon. Regardless of her official title and bejeweled attire, Anne was mocked as "The Great Whore" and "royal concubine" behind her back. The common people, for their part, believed her to be a witch who had seduced the king through some vile sorcery and blamed Anne for Catherine's banishment, Henry's break with the Catholic Church, the excommunication of England, and the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

This popular perception of Anne as both wanton and manipulative is evidenced by countless sources recording her unpopularity throughout her time at court. Even the king's closest confidants despised her. Cardinal Wolsey, once the most senior advisor to Henry, lambasted Anne as "the night crow…[who] caws into the king's private ear" according to the memoir published by his gentleman's usher after his death in 1530.[10] While it is not surprising

[9] Edward Hall, *Hall's Chronicle : Containing the History of England, during the Reign of Henry the Fourth, and the Succeeding Monarchs, to the End of the Reign of Henry the Eighth, in Which Are Particularly Described the Manners and Customs of Those Periods. Carefully Collated with the Editions of 1548 and 1550* (London : Printed for J. Johnson [etc.], 1809), http://archive.org/details/hallschronicleco00halluoft. Eustace Chapuys, "The Execution & Downfall Of Anne Boleyn," 1536, https://englishhistory.net/tudor/the-execution-of-anne-boleyn/.
[10] Geroge Cavendish, *The Life of Cardinal Wolsey*, Second (London: Thomas Davidson, 1641).

that Wolsey resented Anne, as her affair with Henry and the Cardinal's inability to procure a divorce caused his downfall at court, his characterization of Anne as a crow who "caws" in Henry's ear highlights Wolsey's frustration with what he perceived to be an active role in influencing the king's decisions, a powerful and aggressive role unbecoming of a low-born mistress. Sir Thomas More, childhood friend and confidant of the king, resigned his position as Lord Chancellor after Henry made known his intention to break with the Church in order to marry Anne. He refused to attend her coronation, deeming her a false queen. In 1533, More published *The Apology of Sir Thomas More*, a denunciation of Henry's actions and admonishment to every good Christian to stand firm in the old Catholic faith, an act that eventually led to his arrest and execution for treason.[11] More's antagonistic view of Anne as the driving cause behind the break with Rome plainly shows through both his implied reference to her in his *Apology* and his snubbing of her coronation. More and Wolsey were far from the only members of the king's inner circle who disliked Anne: Henry's own sister Mary Tudor, the queen of France, despised her as well, and supported Catherine's cause at the ecclesiastical court assembled by Wolsey.[12]

The common people's hatred of Anne was widespread and formidable. This was partly because of the ramifications of Henry's creation of the Church of England: Pope Clement VII's excommunication of the country had caused the public to fear for their very souls. Rather than blame the king for this, they viewed Anne, the vile witch, as the reason for such heresy and assumed she had somehow bewitched their monarch into committing this sin. But even before the schism, Anne was loathed by the country because of the fate of Catherine of Aragon and Princess Mary Tudor. Both the queen and her daughter were enormously popular, and as rumor

[11] Thomas More, "The Apology of Sir Thomas More, Knight" (1533).
[12] Eric Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn* (Wiley, 2004).

spread that the king wanted to end his marriage and set aside his current heir in order to wed Anne, the common people's resentment of Henry's new love grew stronger and stronger. Edward Hall, chronicler of the early Tudor period, remarked upon this phenomenon in his records: "Surely the most of the lay people of England, which knew not the law of God, sore murmured at the matter and much the more, because there was a gentlewoman in the court called Anne Boleyn."[13] Many of those that "sore murmured" referred to Anne spitefully as "the Bullen whore," a two-part insult: George Boleyn had years before changed the spelling of the surname from the original "Bullen" to the more fashionable "Boleyn" in an attempt to shift perception of the family. Much of the public refused to acknowledge this change in order to reinforce Anne's lowly background; Catherine in stark contrast was descended from pure, royal lineage, the daughter of Queen Isabel I of Castile and King Ferdinand II of Aragon.

Wolsey's usher-turned-biographer also described this widespread antipathy for Anne after her relationship with Henry became known in the late 1520s. While an ally of Wolsey would understandably have had amble reason to paint the English public as appalled by Anne, his account does match that of other historians at the time:

> And thus the world began to be full of vile rumours not heard of before in this realm... Then began other matters to brew and take place that occupied all men's heads with adverse imaginations, whose stomachs were therewith full filled without any perfect digestion. The long-hid and secret love between the king and Mistress Anne Boleyn began to break out into every man's ears.[14]

Similar evidence comes from Nicholas Harpsfield, a historian and Catholic priest who often criticized Henry throughout his reign, and wrote a manuscript censuring the king's annulment and remarriage entitled, "A Treatise on the Pretended Divorce Between Henry VIII and

[13] Hall, *Hall's Chronicle*.
[14] Cavendish, *The Life of Cardinal Wolsey*.

Catherine of Aragon."[15] He speaks of the all-encompassing interest in the news that the king might rid himself of his beloved queen for his latest mistress, describing both the omnipresent nature of its debate and the revulsion felt for Anne: "Then was there nothing so common and frequent and so tossed in every man's mouth, in all talks and at all tables, in all taverns, alehouses, and barbers' shops, yea, and in pulpits too, as was this matter…highly detesting the same."[16]

Interestingly, common women were reported to have especially hated Anne, as they worried that the king leaving his lawful wife of many years for a younger, more fertile woman would potentially legitimize a similar course of action should their own husbands tire of them. Cardinal Jean du Bellay commented on this in a letter to King Francis I of France in 1529, stating that "if the matter were to be decided by women, [the king] would certainly lose the battle, for [common women] did not fail to encourage the queen at her entrance and departure by their cries, telling her to care for nothing, and other such words."[17] Despite being a close friend of Anne and one of her few allies at court, du Bellay highlighted her rampant unpopularity among women especially in the same letter, remarking that "the people remain quite hardened [against Anne] and would do more if they had more power."[18] Such a description from one of Anne's advocates lends further credibility to sources such as Harpsfield and Cavendish, which having been written by her enemies are thus potentially more biased. In November of 1531 Venetian ambassador Lodovico Falier wrote that Anne had survived an attempt on her life. In a letter to Charles V, Falier described a mob of women who had determined to kill "the king's whore":

[15] Nicholas Harpsfield, "A Treatise on the Pretended Divorce Between Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon" (1558).
[16] Nicholas Harpsfield.
[17] Jean du Bellay, January 25, 1529.
[18] du Bellay. 1529.

> It is said that more than seven weeks ago a mob of from seven to eight thousand women of London went out of the town to seize Boleyn's daughter, the sweetheart of the king of England, who was supping at a villa on a river, the king not being with her; and having received notice of this, she escaped by crossing the river in a boat. The women had intended to kill her; and amongst the mob were many men, disguised as women. Nor has any great demonstration been made about this, because it was a thing done by women.[19]

While religious strife played a role in their frustrations, the root of their anger at Anne goes much deeper. For these women, she represented the ultimate threat, a menace to their very way of life. The mob that tried to kill her in 1531 was far from an isolated incident; another riot occurred in Norfolk the following year, also primarily involving women.[20] Despite the possibility of severe punishment, public protests particularly from women continued, even after Anne replaced Catherine at court. On August 23, 1532, *The London Chronicle* reported that "two women beaten... naked from the waist upwards with rods and their ears nailed to the standard for because they said Queen Catherine was the true queen of England and not Queen Anne."[21] In July of the same year, Spanish ambassador and close confidant of Catherine of Aragon Eustace Chapuys reported in a letter to Charles V that outcry against Anne was so strong, the king was forced to abandon a hunting trip to the north:

> The king was on his way to the northern counties where he intended to hunt ... when he suddenly changed his purpose and came back to town. The causes of his return are variously explained. Some say that for the last three or four days after he started on his journey, wherever he went accompanied by the lady, the people on the road so earnestly requested him to recall the queen, his wife, and the women especially so insulted the royal mistress, hooting and hissing on her passage, that he was actually obliged to retrace his steps.[22]

[19] Lodovico Falier, November 24, 1531.
[20] Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn: "The Most Happy."*
[21] unknown, "Two Women Beaten in London," *The London Chroncile*, August 23, 1532.
[22] Eustace Chapuys, "The King's Journey to the Nothern Counties," July 1532.

As the ambassador was one of Catherine of Aragon's closest allies, his account obviously must be taken with the proverbial grain of salt. However, records of similar events, such as the riots in 1531 and 1532 lend credence to this report.

Hatred of Anne marred her ceremonial coronation as well. Rather than being greeted by cheering crowds as tradition, Anne's barge float down the Thames was met with staunch silence from onlookers.[23] After her coronation, the popular uproar against Anne became so prevalent that Henry insisted Parliament pass legislation to curtail such acts. The 1534 Treason Act stipulated that all those were guilty of high treason who:

> do maliciously wish, will or desire by words or writing, or by craft imagine, invent, practise, or attempt any bodily harm to be done or committed to the king's most royal person, the queen's or the heirs apparent, or to deprive them of any of their dignity, title or name of their royal estates, or slanderously and maliciously publish and pronounce, by express writing or words, that the king should be heretic, schismatic, tyrant, infidel or usurper of the crown.[24]

Two years later, a supporting proclamation was issued that stated that anyone found guilty of violating the 1534 Act "shall not only bring upon themselves the vengeance and indignation of God, to the peril and damnation of their souls, but also give us just cause to proceed against such rebels with our most royal power and force, to the utter destruction of them, their wives, and children."[25] The severity of both the 1534 Act and its addendum both indicate just how prevalent an issue the outcry against Anne must have been in order to warrant such extreme measures.

According to Edward Hall, women were predominately to blame for the slander and insults hurled at the new queen, even after the passage of the 1534 Treason Act. In the spring of 1536, the mayor of York called on the king's justices of peace to investigate "diverse misdemeanors lately committed" in the middle of the night. A group of women had broken

[23] Hall, *Hall's Chronicle.*
[24] "1534 Treason Act" (n.d.).
[25] 1534 Treason Act, Addendum.

the 1534 Act by posting a series of bills and pamphlets that encouraged "debate, dissension and variance" by disparaging the king's marriage to Anne Boleyn.[26] Common women were not alone in maligning the queen; in a letter written in January of 1536, Chapuys told Charles V that the Countess of Devon, Gertrude Courtenay, had informed him that Anne had utilized "some vile witchcraft" in order to ensnare Henry.[27] The following May, a collection of commoners in Norfolk were sentenced to be hung, drawn, and quartered for breaking the 1534 Act by speaking ill of the queen. Public opinion turned even further against Anne, who was blamed for the increasing tyranny of Henry's reign.[28] Despite such widespread hatred, Anne did have a handful of supporters. Although they disliked each other immensely, she and Thomas Cromwell, Henry's lead privy counselor, were bonded by their mutual support of Protestantism. Archbishop Thomas Cramner was another ally; however, such support was fleeting and both men voted against Anne at her trial in order to further their own political paths.

After the death of Catherine of Aragon in January of 1536, Anne, again pregnant after giving birth to Elizabeth in 1533, was painfully aware of the danger should she fail to produce a son quickly. With Catherine dead, the king would be free to remarry without the worry of illegality. After Henry suffered a serious injury during jousting, Anne miscarried, signifying the beginning of the end for the ill-fated queen. Henry had no desire to undergo the strenuous process of obtaining another divorce and within three months, Anne was imprisoned in the Tower of London, sentenced to die on trumped-up charges of treason and adultery. On the morning of May 19, 1536, Anne was beheaded on the Tower green. In her execution speech, she avoided criticizing Henry, most likely to spare Elizabeth and her family any further punishment:

[26] Hall, *Hall's Chronicle.*
[27] Eustace Chapuys, January 1536.
[28] Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn*.

> 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.[29]

Both Edward Hall and Lancelot de Carle, a secretary to the French Ambassador, describe her last moments as dignified and graceful, her execution speech met with tears from the crowd of onlookers.[30] According to Chapuys, however, Anne's fall from favor was met with widespread celebration from the common people, who desired only to see Princess Mary restored to line of succession.[31]

While there is a degree of variety in sources describing public perception of Anne during her time at court until her execution, with many such records being firmly rooted in bias, the sheer number of corroborating accounts clearly show she was widely hated. However, the reasons for this revilement differed by demographic. The nobility loathed Anne because they viewed her as beneath themselves, a low-born lady who now occupied a position she was not born to and did not deserve. The common people hated her for displacing their beloved Queen Catherine, and for indirectly causing Henry's split with the Catholic Church, and consequently, the excommunication of England and Dissolution of the Monasteries. Men, both common and noble, disliked Anne because of her perceived power and ability to influence the king, something inappropriate for a woman. Women detested her because of the threat she posed to their entrenched family values and marital security. Thus, because of her birth, personality, and

[29] "Anne Boleyn's Speech at Her Execution, Recorded by Edward Hall," May 19, 1536, https://tudorhistory.org/primary/speech.html.
[30] Lancelot de Carle, "An Account of the Queen's Execution," May 1536.
[31] Chapuys, "The Execution & Downfall Of Anne Boleyn."

unconventional path to the throne, Anne represented a danger to multiple segments of the population during her time at court, something distinctly perceivable in a variety of letters, documents, and records from the time.

Chapter 2

Elizabeth's Reign

By the time of her execution, Anne had become arguably the most reviled woman in England. The wanton harlot who had displaced her much-loved predecessor, Henry's second wife, garnered limited sympathy, and the declaration of her daughter's illegitimacy and removal from the line of succession after the annulment of Anne's marriage to Henry provoked no outrage.[1] Just a few days after Anne's execution, which occurred before Elizabeth reached her third birthday, Henry wed Jane Seymour, who accomplished what neither Anne nor Catherine had been able to do: she gave birth to a healthy baby boy in September of 1537, but died of complications in October. After the king's brief marriage to Anne of Cleves, which was followed by an unfortunate union with Catherine Howard, he wed Catherine Parr, who convinced him to restore Elizabeth to the line of succession. Henry passed away on January 28, 1547, leaving the throne to his nine-year-old son Edward, whose reign was presided over by an advisory council and plagued by economic hardship and social turmoil.[2] Since Edward left no heir upon his death, his sisters Mary and then Elizabeth eventually took the throne. This chapter explores the ways in which Anne Boleyn's image was utilized by both Protestants and Catholics to either support or denounce her daughter's claim to the crown during Elizabeth's reign.

Shortly after his fifteenth birthday, Edward fell ill and his advisors drew up a "Devise for the Succession," ostensibly to prevent England from reverting from Protestantism back to Catholicism after his death. The Devise named his cousin Lady Jane Grey as his heir and removed both his sisters Mary and Elizabeth Tudor from the line for the throne.[3] Lady Jane only

[1] Eric Ives, The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn. pg. 120-143.
[2] David Starkey, *Six Wives: The Queens of Henry VIII* (Vintage, 2004).
[3] Tudor, My Deuise for the Succession.

reigned for nine short days, after which the revolt led by Mary deposed the unfortunate queen. Mary rode triumphantly into London on the third of August 1553, with Elizabeth at her side. During her five-year-reign, Mary attempted to convert the country back to Catholicism, burning around three hundred "heretics" and imprisoning her younger sister on suspicion of holding Protestant beliefs. Many influential Protestants, such as writer and theologian John Foxe, chose to leave the country amid such persecution. A few years later, with failing health and two pregnancies that proved to be false, Mary named Elizabeth her heir and succumbed to cancer in 1558. She was buried in Westminster Abbey in a tomb she would eventually share with Elizabeth, underneath an inscription added by James I: "*Regno consortes et urna, hic obdormimus Elizabetha et Maria sorores, in spe resurrectionis"*- "Consorts in realm and tomb, we, sisters Elizabeth and Mary, here lie down to sleep in hope of resurrection."[4]

Elizabeth was twenty-five when she ascended to the throne and ruled England for the following forty-four years, drastically longer than either of her half siblings. On the eve of her coronation she rode through London, greeted with cheers and pageants; the common people embraced her as the image of her late father, Henry VIII.[5] She assembled a group of counselors to help her rule the country prudently and pragmatically. Her first act as queen was the reestablishment of the Church of England of which, like her father, she was the head. However, since she was female, Elizabeth's official title was "Supreme Governor" of the church, an important distinction due to her gender. Despite this, she was considerable moderate in religious matters. Unlike her older sister, Elizabeth had no desire to execute her subjects for their spiritual

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[4] Susan Doran, *Queen Elizabeth I (The British Library Historic Lives*) (NY: NYU Press, 2003).

[5] Somerset, 89–90. The "Festival Book" account, from the British Library

convictions, reportedly saying that she "would not make windows into men's souls."[6] Her reign saw no large-scale persecutions, and became known as the Elizabethan era, famous for the flourishing of English literature thanks to playwrights like Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare, and the seafaring adventures of men like Sir Francis Drake. She also oversaw one of the country's greatest military victories: the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, a feat owed more to luck than skill, but that still served to solidify her greatness as a monarch. Known to history as "Good Queen Bess" and "The Virgin Queen," Elizabeth and her forty-four years on the throne provided much-needed stability for England after the tumultuous preceding decades.

During Elizabeth's reign, the public perception of her mother Anne Boleyn was noticeably different. As discussed in previous pages, Anne had been much reviled during her time as queen, especially following Henry's split with the Roman Catholic Church. By the time her daughter took the throne, however, her persona had begun to take on a fascinating duality amid two factions: Protestants and Catholics. Unsurprisingly, the latter, who still saw Elizabeth as a bastard and aimed to remove her from power, continued and expanded on the older, established image of Anne as a vile, heretical witch. Protestants, who wanted to legitimize Elizabeth's rule and insure the continuation of the Reformation, venerated Anne as a saint. This conflict is rooted in the change in religious sentiment that had taken place in England. By 1558, the Church of England been in existence for decades, and Protestantism had slowly infiltrated the country; by the time of Mary's reign, a large portion of the population had become Protestant. During the Marian persecutions, the cruel burning of "heretics" greatly inflamed anti-Catholic sentiment and prompted the veneration of victims as martyrs of their faith. This increasing trend of reverence for those who seemingly gave their lives for the cause of Protestantism was the

[6] Elizabeth I, *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, First, Elizabeth I (Oxford University Press, 1941).

crucial impetus in the evolution of Anne Boleyn's image among Protestants at this time. Despite the fact that Anne's death was due almost exclusively to her failure to provide Henry will a male heir, her strong association with the Reformation coupled with her execution gave rise to a new idea of her among this faction of the population: a religious martyr. Elizabeth's reestablishment of the Church of England and prosperous reign furthered her mother's veneration by English Protestants.[7]

Arguably one of the most prominent examples of this "martyr" conception of Anne comes from John Foxe. Born around 1516 or 1517, Foxe studied at Oxford, before resigning after his conversion to Protestantism. During Edward's reign, the Bishop of London Nicholas Ridley ordained him as a deacon, after which Foxe became acquainted with John Hooper, future advisor to Elizabeth William Cecil, and most importantly, John Bale. Bale was the Bishop of Ossory, a prominent thinker credited with shaping Foxe's first martyrology. After Mary ascended to the throne, Foxe fled from England with his family, narrowly evading soldiers sent to arrest him. After the death of Mary, he eventually returned home, and on March 20, 1563, published the first edition of his magnus opus *Actes and Monuments of these Latter and Perillous Days, Touching Matters of the Church*, or as it popularly became known, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*. A comprehensive catalogue of Protestant saints and martyrs, the book recounts the oppression of the Catholic Church, particularly in Scotland and England.[8]

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[7] Felicity Heal, "Appropriating History: Catholic and Protestant Polemics and the National Mix," in *The Uses of History in Early Modern England*, ed. by Paulina Kewes (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 2006)

[8] Felicity Heal, "Appropriating History: Catholic and Protestant Polemics and the National Mix," in *The Uses of History in Early Modern England*, ed. by Paulina Kewes (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 2006) <- don't need to double space notes

Foxe dedicated a chapter of his work titled *Oration to Saint Anne Boleyn* to praising Anne as a "godly lady and queen." According to him, Anne was remarkable for her piety and character, traits that were evident from her time as queen until her speech praising Henry the morning of her execution:

> There was at this time in the king's court a young woman, not of ignoble family, but much more ennobled by beauty, as well as being the most beautiful of all in true piety and character, Anne Boleyn, whom the king greatly loved, as she well merited, and took as his wife and queen. For this reason, I must not omit from this history the happy name of Boleyn, of most auspicious memory. The entire British nation is indebted to her not only for the restoration of piety [and] the Church but also for many other important reasons. The chief of these other reasons is that the fabourable moment [of reformation], cast aside, has been raised up again by Elizabeth, daughter of King Henry by this same Anne Boleyn, and the cursed plague of Roman lordship has been expelled. If only the freedom of the English Church, brought about this first time by Anne, had lasted longer and she had been able to enjoy longer life!. ...And truly I do not investigate the cause of her death which was decided by others, I wished only to note her dying words for their singular faith and complete modesty towards her king.[9]

Foxe does not stop his complementary narrative here, but further describes her as "worthy and Christian," "bountiful" to the poor, and a "zealous defender of the faith." In his words:

> Godly I call her, for sundry respects, whatsoever the cause was, or quarrel objected against her. First, her last words spoken at her death declared no less her sincere faith and trust in Christ, than did her quiet modesty utter forth the goodness of the cause and matter, whatsoever it was. Besides that to such as wisely can judge upon cases occurrent, this also may seem to give a great clearing unto her, that the king, the third day after, was married in his whites unto another. Certain this was, that for the rare and singular gifts of her mind, so well instructed, and given toward God, with such a fervent desire unto the truth and setting forth of sincere religion, joined with like gentleness, modesty, and pity toward all men, there have not many such queens before her borne the crown of England. Principally this one commendation she left behind her, that during her life, the religion of Christ most happily flourished, and had a right prosperous course.[10]

Clearly, Foxe heavily attributes the Reformation in England to Anne's influence. He also credits her in helping men like Hugh Latimer and Thomas Cranmer become bishops. Interestingly, Foxe

[9] John Foxe, *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online* or *TAMO* (1570 edition) (Sheffield: HRI Online Publications, 2011)

[10] Ibid.

also proposes his own theory as to the reason behind Anne's execution; he claims that her death was the result of a vicious conspiracy among Catholics who saw her as a threat to their faith: "some secret practising of the papists here not to be lacking, considering what a mighty stop she was to their purposes and proceedings, and on the contrary side, what a strong bulwark she was for the maintenance of Christ's gospel, and sincere religion, which they then in no case could abide"[11] Similarly, Protestant writer and publicist Edmund Bohun attributed the saintly Anne's downfall to "the inveterate malice of the popish clergy" in his book *The Character of Elizabeth*, published in 1692.[12]

Thus, according to Foxe and Bohun, Anne, a saintly woman and virtuous queen, was martyred because of her strong faith and support of the Reformation. Nowhere in Foxe's chapter is Anne's rampant unpopularity mentioned, or the accusations of adultery and treason for which she was tried. Foxe concluded his ode with a unique showing of evidence that Anne must be a saint- the success of her daughter Elizabeth as queen:

> Furthermore, to all other sinister judgments and opinions, whatsoever can be conceived of man against that virtuous queen, I object and oppose again (as instead of answer) the evident demonstration of God's favor, in maintaining, preserving, and advancing the offspring of her body, the lady Elizabeth, now queen, whom the Lord hath so marvellously conserved from so manifold dangers, so royally hath exalted, so happily hath blessed with such virtuous patience, and with such a quiet reign hitherto, that neither the reign of her brother Edward, nor of her sister Mary, to hers is to be compared; whether we consider the number of the years of their reigns, or the peaceableness of their state. In whose royal and flourishing regiment, we have to behold, not so much the natural disposition of her mother's qualities, as the secret judgment of God in preserving and magnifying the fruit and offspring of that godly queen.[13]

[11] Ibid.
[12] Edmund Bohun, "The Character of Queen Elizabeth," January 1, 1693, https://www.amazon.com/character-Queen-Elizabeth-Edmund-Bohun/dp/B0039YQD3M.
[13] Ibid.

In other words, the triumphs of Elizabeth's reign were due to the divine favor and sainthood of her mother. Through Foxe's work, Anne's action and behavior are described as the pinnacle of Protestant sincerity, piety, and devotion.

Other records from prominent Protestants reflect similar portrayals of Anne during Elizabeth's time as queen. William Latymer, an evangelical clergyman, also had a personal connection to Anne— he had been her chaplain during her time as queen. He was a devoted reformer who in 1535 had been arrested for bringing forbidden books written by William Tyndale into the country. After Elizabeth became queen, Latymer wrote a biography of her mother's life that framed Anne as a saint, *A briefe treatise or cronickille of the moste vertuous ladye Anne Bulleyne late quene of England*.[14] He dedicated the text to her daughter, presenting Anne as an exemplar queen to be emulated and asserting that he hoped she would follow in the spiritual footsteps of her mother: "to maytayne Christes true pure and syncere religion, to the honour of [Elizabeth's] crowne."[15] The motivation is clear: this portrayal of Anne is meant to legitimize and support the reestablishment of the Church of England by Elizabeth.

His text mirrors Foxe's depiction of Anne very closely in several other respects. Like Foxe, he credits Anne with ensuring the establishment of Reformist bishops like Latimer and Cranmer. Both Foxe and Latymer also comment of Anne's ownership of an English Bible, that she encouraged her ladies to read. Latymer also glowingly describes her charitable efforts in distributing food and alms to the poor, saying she strove to help the "poore nedie and impotente

[14] Felicity Heal, "Appropriating History: Catholic and Protestant Polemics and the National Mix," in *The Uses of History in Early Modern England*, ed. by Paulina Kewes (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 2006)

[15] Latymer, "William Latymer's Cronickille of Anne Bulleyne," in *Camden Miscellany, Camden Fourth Series, Volume 39* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1990)

house holders over charged with children," clear evidence of her tender-hearted piety.[16] He also portrayed Anne as uniquely powerful, organizing prayer book distribution, helping with charitable initiatives, promoting religious men, and lecturing important councils. He even went so far as to attribute to her "the titill and name of a prince," an odd masculinization of Anne in order to underline her power, something interestingly paralleled in Elizabeth's own self-characterization, the famous example of which is her claim to have "the heart and stomach of a king" regardless of her female anatomy.[17]

Yet another Reformist clergyman who promoted this saintly image of Anne Boleyn was John Aylmer, a preeminent religious scholar and Bishop of London. A strong supporter of Elizabeth, he famously responded to Scottish theologian John Knox's denunciation of female monarchs *Blast against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* with his own tract *An Harborowe for Faithfull and Trewe Subjects*.[18] He was also a close colleague of John Foxe and helped him translate *Actes and Monuments of these Latter and Perillous Days, Touching Matters of the Church* into Latin. Like his associates, Aylmer was highly complementary of the legacy of Elizabeth's mother, saying in 1559:

> Was not quene Anne, the mother of this blessed woman [i.e. Elizabeth], the chief, first, and only cause of banyshing the beast of Rome, with all his beggarly baggage? Was there ever in England, a greater feate wrought by any man then this was by a woman? I take not from kyng Henry the due praise of broaching it, nor from that lambe of God King Edward, the finishing and perfighting of that was begon, though I give hir hir due commendacion ...the croppe and roote was the quene, which God had endewed with wisdom that she coulde, and given hir the minde that she would do it.[19]

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Anne McLauren, "Gender, Religion, and Early Modern Nationalism: Elizabeth I, Mary Queen of Scots, ad the Genesis of English Anti-Catholicism," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 107, No. 3 (June 2002).

[19] Dowling, "William Latymer's Cronickille," 42.

Again, Anne was attributed wholly with accomplishing the split with the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformation of England. Protestant Bishop John Bridges went even further than this, explicitly calling Anne a saint in his work, *The Supremacie of Christian Princes ouer all Persons throughout theor Dominions, in all Causes so wel Ecclesiastical as Temporall*; he states that Anne's execution "made hir a sweet sacrifice to God and a most holy martyr."[20] A similar sentiment comes from the 1577 *Holinshed's Chronicle*, a collaborative description of British history that referred the reader to Foxe's work on Anne, lest the author not commend Anne enough:

> I might rather saie much than sufficientlie inough in praise of this noble queene as well for hir singular wit and other excellent qualities of mind, as for hir fauoring of learned men, zeale of religion, and liberalitie in distributing almes in reliefe of the poore, I will refer the reader vnto master Fox his volumes of Acts & Monuments, where he...ouerthrowth the sinister iudgements, opinions and oniections of backstoiters against that virtuous queene.[21]

In this respect, Protestants like Foxe, Latymer, and Aylmer are far from alone in their utilization of the image of Anne Boleyn as a way to comment upon Elizabeth during her reign: for their part, Catholics weaponized Anne as a way to disparage and delegitimize her daughter. This intensified in 1570, after Pope Pius V issued *Regnans in Excelsis*, a papal bull that stated Elizabeth was a heretic, deeming her "the pretended Queen of England and the servant of crime." The bull excommunicated her and any who might obey her decrees: "We charge and command all and singular the nobles, subjects, peoples and others afore said that they do not dare obey her orders, mandates and laws. Those who shall act to the contrary we include in the like sentence of

[20] Ibid.

[21] Raphael Holinshed, *The Holinshed Chronicles*, 1587 edition, Volume 4, The Holinshed Project, 940

excommunication."[22] Though Rome had been concerned about Elizabeth's ascension to the throne, this decree was not issued until eleven years after her coronation, mostly because there were a considerable number of Catholic suitors vying for her hand in marriage, Phillip of Spain, Mary's widower, among them. When it became clear that she would not wed someone who would return England to Catholicism, however, Pius V acted through this declaration.[23]

The most notable example of a negative account of Anne Boleyn during Elizabeth's reign comes from Nicholas Sanders' *De Origine ac Progressu schismatis Anglicani*, or, *The Rise and Growth of the Anglican Schism*. Born to a staunch Roman Catholic family, Sanders was ordained as a priest and worked in the employ of the Polish Cardinal Stanislaus Hosius in his efforts to eradicate heresy in northern Europe. After Elizabeth took the throne, Sanders was forced to relocate to Rome for the duration of his life, where he supported multiple plots to overthrow the queen and restore Catholicism to his native country. Published in 1571, his manuscript *De Origine ac Progressu schismatis Anglicani* recounted the struggle of English Catholics. It also includes an unflattering description of Anne Boleyn:

> *Anne Boleyn was rather tall of stature, with black hair, and an oval face of a sallow complexion as if troubled with jaundice. She had a projecting tooth under the upper lip, and on her right hand six fingers. There was a large wen under her chin, and therefore to hide its ugliness she wore a high dress covering her throat. In this she was followed by the ladies of the court, who also wore high dresses, having before been in the habit of leaving their necks and the upper portion of their persons uncovered. She was handsome to look at, with a pretty mouth, amusing in her ways, playing well on the lute, and was a good dancer.*[24]

As Sanders would have been just a child when Anne went to the executioner's block, this description is obviously not based from first-hand witness. Rather, it is clearly a deliberate,

[22] As quoted in Henry M. Shires, "The Conflict between Queen Elizabeth and Roman Catholicism,". Pg?
[23] Ibid. pg?

[24] Nicholas Sanders, *Rise and Growth of the Anglican Schism*, trans. David Lewis (London: Burns and Oates, 1877)

negative framework through which to view the queen's mother- physical features like extra digits and moles had long been seen as the hallmarks of a witch's appearance.[25] Witches were often thought to be hampered by physical abnormalities as a sign of their evil nature and Sanders' inclusion and implied interpretation of these details would have been instantly discernable to readers: Anne was no saint, rather a witch.

Sanders also attributes to Anne a history of wanton behavior and sexual promiscuity, claiming that she was well known for "shameless behavior" during her time at the French court. According to him, the sole reason Anne adhered to "the heresy of Luther" was "to make her life and opinions consistent."[26] His repeated insistence that she was mired in sexual sin does not stop at his denunciation of Anne's own supposed conduct; Sanders goes so far as to claim that she was actually the daughter of Henry VIII himself, conceived from a torrid affair between her mother Elizabeth Howard and the king while Thomas Boleyn was serving as an ambassador abroad. While there is no historical evidence that this was the case, this rumor became very prominent in Catholic writings during Elizabeth's reign.[27] The lurid allegation magnifies the perceived depravity of Anne and Henry's union, one that was incestuous and punished as a result. The proposed revelation that Henry had in fact fathered Anne had direct repercussions for Elizabeth: as a child of incest, she was an atrocity both to God and to nature itself. Or as Sanders described it: "that evil thing which banished [Catholic truth] out of the land."[28]

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[25] "Anne Boleyn: Witch, Bitch, Temptress, Feminist | Books | The Guardian," accessed April 3, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/may/11/hilary-mantel-on-anne-boleyn.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Eric Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn: "The Most Happy"* (Wiley, 1986), https://books.google.com/books/about/The_Life_and_Death_of_Anne_Boleyn.html?id=w4B_DwAAQBAJ&source=kp_book_description.

[28] Ibid.

Several of Sanders' Catholic contemporaries seized on this theory in their attempts to legitimize the overthrow of the queen. Catholic Cardinal of England William Allen cited Sanders' assertion in his 1588 call to English Catholics to rebel, *An admonition to the nobility and people of England and Ireland concerning the present wwarres made for the execution of his Holines sentence, by the right and mightie Kinge Catholike of Spaine*. Allen denounces the king's "incestuous copulation" before attacking Elizabeth as "an incestuous bastard, begotten and borne in sinne, of an infamous courtesan Anne Bullen."[29] Similarly, Pedro de Rivadeneira, a Jesuit priest and historian, repeated Sanders' description of Anne and claims of her incestuous parentage in his 1588 *Historia Eclesiastica del Scisma del Reino de Inglaterra*. The work was published in Spain to provide justification for increasingly aggressive, war-mongering actions by Phillip I against England; reiterating the bastardy and immorality of the English queen was an obvious way to validate military campaigns to overthrow her.[30] Catholics like Sanders, Allen, and Rivadeneira agreed with Foxe and Latymer that Anne was the root cause of the split with Rome. For them, however, this cemented her image as an agent of corruption and heresy. Sanders scoffed at the Protestant admiration of Anne, writing that "all English Protestants...honour this incestuous marriage as the well spring of their gospel, the mother of their Church, and the source of their belief."[31] Abominable from her very conception, Elizabeth's

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[29] William Allen, *An admonition to the nobility and people of England and Ireland concerninge the present vvarres made for the execution of his Holiness' sentence, by the highe and mightie Kinge Catholike of Spaine. By the Cardinal of England* (1588) EEBO, ix

[30] María Cristina Quintero, "English Queens and the Body Politic in Calderón's "La cisma de Inglaterra" and Rivadeneira's "Historia Eclesiastica del Scisma del Reino de Inglaterra," *MLN*. Vol. 113, No. 2, Hispanic Issue (March, 1998), 271

[31] Nicholas Sanders, *Rise and Growth of the Anglican Schism.*

mother was the pinnacle of sexual depravity and spiritual damnation, and thus Elizabeth was an illegitimate queen who had to be removed.

Clearly, the image of Anne during Elizabeth's time as queen was intensely polarized along Protestant and Catholic lines. However, there are other perceptions of her from this period that are not so steeped in religious bias. One of these is William Shakespeare's play *A Winter's Tale*, originally published in the First Folio in 1623, although most critics believe it was written in 1610 or 1611. The play is widely believed to be an allegory for the trial and execution of Anne Boleyn, with historians like Eric Ives seeing Perdita and Queen Hermione as the counterparts to Elizabeth and her mother. The plot centers around two kings and childhood friends, Leontes, King of Sicilia and Polixenes, the king of Bohemia. The latter visits Leontes for a period of nine months, after which Polixenes decides to return home, even though his friend begs him to extend his stay. In an effort to persuade him, Leontes send his wife Hermione to speak with Polixenes, and the queen manages to convince him in a few short speeches. Hermione's easy success in her task mystifies Leontes, who begins to suspect that the pregnant queen and his friend been having an affair and that the unborn child was fathered by Polixenes. Leontes makes an attempt on his friend's life, but after receiving a warning, Polixenes manages to escape to Bohemia.[32]

Enraged, Leontes publicly charges his wife with adultery, declaring the child she carries a bastard. Hermione is thrown into prison and gives birth to a daughter, Perdita. Her loyal lady-in-waiting Paulina takes the baby girl before Leontes, hoping that seeing his young child will soften his heart and lead him to free Hermione. The king merely grows increasingly irate, however, and commands Paulina's husband to abandon the baby in the wilderness. He then orders his queen

[32] William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, ed. Stephen Orgel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1632). Acts 1-5.

publicly and humiliatingly put on trial for adultery and treason. Hermione proclaims her innocence, and requests that the nearby Oracle be consulted to discover the truth. Despite the Oracle stating emphatically the queen is innocent and no heir will inherit the throne until the discarded princess is found, the king refuses to believe that his wife is blameless. News arrives that the king's son fell ill and died after hearing of his mother's humiliation, and upon hearing of this, Hermione faints and dies of a broken heart. Horrified at what he has done, Leontes pledges to duration of his life attempting to atone for his actions which have caused the death of his son, the loss of his daughter, and the demise of his queen. Eventually, Perdita, who has been raised as a common shepherd girl, falls in love with the son of Polixenes and is reunited with her father, who restores her royal status. Polixenes and Leontes reconcile and through a miracle, Hermione is restored to life.[33]

Many elements of *The Winter's Tale* closely parallel the downfall and execution of Anne Boleyn and the illegitimization of her daughter. The accusations of adultery against Anne, even at the time, were widely seen as unfounded, a transparent way for Henry to easily rid himself of his burdensome wife.[34] Comparably, the allegations against the queen in *The Winter's Tale* are clearly false, the product of Leontes' jealousy and irrationality. The public trial that Hermione is forced to undergo is a mirror of the prosecution of Anne, with the same charges of adultery and treason. After Anne's conviction, Henry commanded Parliament to pass an act that declared Elizabeth "illegitimate ... and utterly foreclosed, excluded and banned to claim, challenge, or demand any inheritance as lawful heir ... to [the King] by lineal descent."[35] Elizabeth was not restored to line of succession until Henry's last wife, Catherine Parr, convinced the king to place

[33] Shakespeare.
[34] Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn: "The Most Happy."*
[35] The Act of July 1536

both Elizabeth and Mary back in line for the throne. Similarly, after accusing Hermione of infidelity, Leontes claims that their daughter is the result of his wife's affair and thus a bastard. Smaller details from the play reflect events from Anne's downfall as well. Hermione eloquently maintains her innocence throughout her trial: Anne steadfastly decried the accusations against her as lies, signing her last letter to Henry as "[his] most loyal and ever faithful wife."[36] Small details from the play reflect the historical record of Anne's downfall as well. One of the most famous stories describes Anne carrying an infant Elizabeth before Henry, begging him for the sake of their daughter to let her live.[37] This clearly mirrors Paulina taking Perdita before Leontes on command of Hermione, in an attempt to assuage his vindictive ire. Lastly, in *The Winter's Tale* the Oracle declares that Leontes will have no valid heir until the restoration of his true successor Perdita: in a similar vein, Elizabeth was arguably the only one of Henry's children to successfully reign.

The character of Hermione, an evident parallel for Anne Boleyn, is highly sympathetic. Throughout the play, she maintains her dignity, despite the vile accusations her husband hurls at her. She is described as beautiful and virtuous, a paragon of integrity and female purity. At the end of *The Winter's Tale* she is miraculously resurrected. This literary portrayal of Anne paints her as a blameless victim, highlighting the unfair tragedy of her death. While this depiction does not contain the outright label of martyrdom seen in the work of Foxe and Latymer, the restoration of the queen to life could be read as a divine intervention. The play's framing of the restoration of Perdita to her rightful, royal place as the only way to ensure peace in the realm is

[36] Anne Boleyn, "'From My Doleful Prison the Tower.' Anne Boleyn to Henry VIII," *Kenneth Harper Finton* (blog), May 6, 1536, https://kennethharperfinton.me/2017/05/02/anne-boleyns-letter-to-henry-viii/.
[37] Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn: "The Most Happy."*

also a decidedly pro-Elizabeth stance, unsurprising given Elizabeth's patronage of Shakespeare's work.

By the time of Elizabeth's reign, the character and historical memory of Anne Boleyn became increasingly polarized, a tool for both Protestants and Catholics argue their respective side and to comment on their current queen. In many ways, she became synonymous with the break with the Roman Catholic Church and the rise of the English Reformation, something that gave rise to her portrayal as a religious figure. Each side used Anne as a way to frame current religious discourse. Protestants portrayed her as a brave, reformist martyr, who legitimized Elizabeth as a ruler. Catholics illustrated Anne as a wanton witch, a connection that validated attempts to remove her daughter from the throne. Both of these images, although in disparate ways, contribute to Anne a remarkable amount of autonomy and power in her decisions and actions, as well as the responsibility for the English Reformation. Contrastingly, her cultural depiction seen in sources like Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* is as a romantic victim, entangled in events out of her control- a view of Anne that would dominate popular imagination for the next three centuries.

Chapter 3

Perceptions of Anne from the Seventeenth century to the Nineteenth Century

As the previous pages have detailed, perceptions of Anne Boleyn from her time at court through Elizabeth's reign had been dominated by religious bias, which had paradoxically attributed to her a surprising amount of autonomy and agency. Both Catholics and Protestants, however much they differed in opinion, agreed that Anne was largely responsible for the break with Rome and English Reformation. However, by the turn of the seventeenth century, a new version of Anne had gradually gained prominence, both in her native England and also abroad. This new Anne was not the powerful, strong player at Henry's court of previous eras. Rather, she became sentimentalized as an innocent victim, entangled in events far beyond her control. Depending on the time period, the driving force behind her fall from favor was presented as either a Catholic plot or the temperamentality of her husband. Either way, though, Anne was depicted as a woman in over her head, someone whose rise to prominence and subsequent demise happened entirely because of others. This image of Anne was prevalent in various aspects of popular culture from the end of the 17th century well into the 19th century, appearing in novels, plays, and operas. Although Anne featured in the literary imagination much less prominently during this time than she had during Elizabeth's reign, the following chapter details how and when this weakened perception of her gained prominence.

From the late 16th century on, plays and novels concerning historical figures, especially past royalty, became increasingly popular in Europe, many of which romanticized Henry's second wife. The first noticeable example of this particular conception of Anne is found in

William Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale*, written in either 1610 or 1611.[1] As detailed in the preceding chapter, this play is seen as an allegory for Anne Boleyn's downfall. However, Anne's parallel, Hermione, is in no way a strong player in her own right. Rather, her fate is completely the result of the irrational whims of a jealous husband. Throughout the play, Hermione is romanticized as a victim. Similarly, in Shakespeare's play *Henry VIII*, which first premiered in 1613, Anne was also demoted to the background, a character with little to no autonomy.[2] The storyline focuses on the king's divorce from Catherine of Aragon and split from the Roman Catholic Church. Despite this, the play focuses heavily on Henry, and Anne seems to have been included almost as an afterthought. She appears in just three scenes, in only two of which she actually has dialogue. In fact, her number of lines, fifty-eight, pale in comparison to that of Catherine of Aragon, who has close to four hundred. Indeed, Anne is more or less a background character, her rise from a lady-in-waiting to queen a result of Henry's decisions, not her own actions.

Interestingly, the majority of these sources from the Elizabethan period and James I's reign place the blame for Anne's downfall at the hands of some Catholic conspiracy in order to absolve Henry of guilt for his second wife's trial and execution. The reason for this is fairly obvious: the royal claims of both Elizabeth and by extension James were entirely dependent on the legitimacy of Henry VIII's decisions. Moreover, James I believed intensely in divine right kingship. Though he did think monarchs could err, he wouldn't have taken too kindly to a negative portrayal of Henry VIII. Thus, in his play *Henry VIII*, Shakespeare, writing under the

[1] William William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, ed. Stephen Orgel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1632). ← cite specific version of the play—whichever one you are using to make this argument. If you can quote or point to a specific act that depicts Anne in this light, even better.
[2] William William Shakespeare, *Henry VIII* (John Cawthorn, 1809).

patronage of James, found another reason for Anne's demise. He did this via a handful of lines between two Catholic characters. Cardinal Wolsey and a Catholic bishop, Gardiner, conspire against Anne because of the threat she poses to their faith. However, even they do not believe that it is Anne herself who is the danger, but rather the men she is connected to and whose rise to power she may unwittingly help. As Gardiner phrases it, "it will ne'er be well.../ Till Cranmer, Cromwell and also she/ Sleep in their graves."[3] Anne is relegated to the background, the bulk of the menace to the Catholic faith attributed not her, but Cromwell and Cranmer, both of whom are much more important characters in the drama than she. Clearly, even to her enemies, this Anne is not a formidable, autonomous player to be dealt with, but rather a vehicle through which actual power in the persons of Cromwell and Cranmer may be exercised. Anne remains a passive pawn, not an active participant.

This trend is apparent in another play from this period, *When You See Me, You Know Me* by Samuel Rowley.[4] First performed in 1605, this firmly pro-Protestant drama centers on the rise of Henry VIII's son Edward while exploring the age of England in the wake of his father's split with the Catholic Church. However, no strong, reformist Anne is seen here. Despite the play's overt support for the Reformation, she is wholly absent from the narrative, only mentioned briefly in a conversation by Bishop Gardiner and Cardinal Wolsey, who are discussing who Henry will take next for a bride:

> I fear, false Luther's doctrine's spread so far,
> Least that his highness, now unmarried,
> Should match amongst that sect of Lutherans.
> You saw, how soon his majesty chose
> To scorn the pope, and Rome's religion,

[3] Ibid, 5.1.29-32
[4] Samuel Rowley, *When You See Me, You Know Me* (1605), ed. and introduction by Karl Elze (London: Williams and Norgate, 1874).

When queen Anne Bullen wore the diadem.[5]

Clearly, in this passage Henry is depicted as entirely responsible for the Anglican Schism, with Anne being nothing more than a background character at the time of his decision. Again, she is viewed not as an autonomous, powerful queen, but simply a passive side note in Henry's reign.

By the early Stuart period, marked changes had begun to take place in the manner in which historical figures like Henry VIII were discussed. Since there was no longer the issue of legitimizing Elizabeth, writers could take a more critical approach to her father's faults.[6] Sir Walter Raleigh, a prominent explorer, poet, and courtier, commented on these increasingly harsh portrayals of Henry, writing that "if all the pictures and patterns of a merciless prince were lost in the world, they might all again be painted to life out of the story of this king."[7] This new freedom to assess Henry's flaws led to a reexamination of what had caused to Anne's downfall. Rather than being solely a result of a Catholic conspiracy, her trial and execution began to be attributed to the caprice of her volatile husband. For example, historian and Bishop of Llandaff Francis Godwin wrote in his *Annals of England* that:

> I say, you shall easily be persuaded with mee,
> that the insatiable Prince glutted with the saiety of [Anne],
> and out of the desire of variety seeking to enjoy another [Jane],
> did more willingly give eare to the treacherous calumnies of the malicious Popelings,
> than either benefitted an upright Judge, or a loving husband.[8]

While Godwin did mention the treachery of the Catholics, or "popelings" as he called them, he also clearly held Henry accountable for condemning Anne in order to wed Jane Seymour.

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[5] Ibid, 15-16.
[6] F. Smith Fussner, *The Historical Revolution: English Historical Writing and Thought 1580-1640* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), 97-98.
[7] Sir Walter Ralegh, *The History of the World, Volume I (1614)* (Edinburgh, 1820), xiv-xv.
[8] Francis Godwin, *Annales of England*, 142.

Similarly, William Camden, noted historian and topographer, denounced Henry for "giuing himself to new Loues, to distrusts, to wrath, to murder, and to blood; to make way to his new Loue Jane Seymor, he accused Anne...[of] haue[ing] defiled his Bed."[9] Here Camden accused Henry of intentionally framing Anne for adultery in order to rid himself of an unwanted wife in favor of Jane Seymour. While both Camden and Godwin embraced a critical view of Henry, their accounts still attributed almost no power to Anne. They still portrayed her as the innocent, hapless victim seen in the work of Shakespeare and Rowley, the only difference being that the prevailing puppeteer behind her fate was now Henry, rather than simply scheming Papists. Anne, then, was a casualty of the king's ever-fluctuating passions. While the authors did still characterize Anne as pious and virtuous, she was no longer credited as the driving force behind the Reformation. Rather, it was again Henry, with his temperamentality and precariousness, who wholly was attributed with the break from the Catholic Church. This denunciation of Henry for Anne's trial and execution was not limited to historical writings. *The Novels of Elizabeth, Queen of England; Containing the History of Queen Ann of Bullen,* a novel penned by the French author Marie- Catherine de Barneville, also centered on Henry as the cause of Anne's tragic end. One of the fictionalized biographies of historical figures that had become very popular in Europe at this time, *The Novels of Elizabeth, Queen of England* described how Anne's fate was purely a result of the king's unpredictability and wantonness:[10]

"[After Anne's arrest] immediately were published some of the Reasons, which the King said he had to complain a|gainst the Queen, whereupon she was severely examined, but nothing could be found capable to condemn her. She looked up|on this as a return of the same fortune that had raised her to that height, and saw that it was the King's inconstancy alone that had caused it."[11]

[9] Camden, *Annales*, 24.
[10] Madame d'Aulnoy, *The Novels of Elizabeth, Queen of England; Containing the History of Queen Ann Bullen,* trans. by Spencer Hickman (London 1680), EEBO
[11] Ibid, 105.

A very small number of depictions of Anne are found in popular culture in the years after James' reign. Either because of mounting tensions between the Crown and Parliament, or because of her fading cultural relevance, she seems to have effectively faded from the literary and artistic imagination during this time. However, by the late seventeenth century, concerns about Catholicism and the preservation of the Church of England began to grow. Charles II had no legitimate, male heir take power. As a result, the crown would pass to his younger brother, James, who had refused in 1673 to swear an oath refuting papist practices and married Catholic Mary of Modena. With James II poised to take the throne, England was faced with its first Roman Catholic monarch in over one hundred years.[12] This increased fear about the dangers of Catholicism bled into writings from the time, many of which revived the image of saintly, innocent Anne in order to defend a Protestant England. Although in some ways a continuation of the Reformist narrative seen during Elizabeth's reign, this Anne was portrayed as much more passive than her predecessor, although she was still conceptualized as a martyr.

One of the examples of this type of appearance in the theatrical realm during this period is *Vertue Betray'd*, a play written by John Banks and first performed in 1682. The drama centers around the idea of Anne as an ill-fated victim, exploring how a vast array of enemies, all of whom are Catholic, conspired to ensure her downfall. This play was written amid a larger trend in English theater, a trend Elizabeth Howe described as the "she-tragedy," which saw virtuous female protagonists suffer from a lack of agency, battered by their surroundings and events outside their control.[13] *Vertue Betray'd* is a perfect example of this genre, recounting Anne's demise through this new theatrical lens. Anne is duped by her wily father into marrying Henry,

[12] John Miller, *Popery and Politics in England*, 73
[13] Elizabeth Howe, *The First English Actresses: Women and Drama 1660-1700* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1992), x; 110

having been told that her beloved, Henry Percy, has wed another woman.[14] After uncovering the falsehood, Anne attempts to serve Henry as best she can as virtuous and dutiful wife.

Shortly after her coronation in the play, however, Cardinal Wolsey and Elizabeth Blount, one of Henry's former paramours, together scheme against her, framing her for adultery with a court musician, Mark Smeaton, and her brother George. Ensnared by the plots of her enemies, the hapless Anne is imprisoned and swiftly executed.[15] Before her death, she speaks to Elizabeth, promising that her daughter will one day right the wrongs committed against her and defeat Catholicism in England, saying:

Thou, little Child,
Shalt live to see they Mother's
Wrongs o're paid
In many blessings on thy Womans State.
From this dark Calumny, in which I set,
As in a Cloud;
thou, like a Star, shalt rise,
And awe the Southern World:
That holy Tyrant,
Who binds all Europe with the Yoak of Conscience,
Thou shalt destroy,
and quite unloose his Bonds,
And lay the Monster trembling at thy Feet.
When this shall come to pass,
the World shall see
Thy Mothers Innocence reviv'd in thee.[16]

Anne's words to Elizabeth confirm her daughter's mission to preserve the Church of England and Protestant Reformation. Importantly, although Anne is the protagonist of the play and plainly showcased as a martyr, she is still a passive character whose rise and fall is caused

[14] John Banks, *Vertue Betray'd*, 5.
[15] Ibid, 324-357.
[16] Ibid, 5.1. 447-458.

completely by others. She weds Henry and becomes queen only because of the conspiracy of her family, and her downfall is manufactured by Catholic rivals at court. Clearly, despite the religious connotations of her depiction, many still viewed Anne the romantic victim of events beyond her control. The drama was remarkably popular, performed multiple times in different iterations in the following decades, signifying the prevalence of this particular image of her.

There were scattered examples of Anne's perception in popular culture in the following two centuries, all of which utilized this victim persona that had become so prominent by this time. Among these is *Anna Bolena*, a tragic opera penned by Italian composer Gaetano Donizetti that was first presented in 1830. One of four operas that Donizetti wrote and set in the Tudor period, it premiered in Italy and was later performed in London, New York, and New Orleans, eventually travelling to over twenty-five cities across Europe. The opera begins after Anne's coronation, with members of the court whispering that the queen's position is endangered, as Henry's fickle heart has fallen for Jane Seymour:

> Oh, how swiftly the lightening
> descends on her head!
> Perhaps, poor woman,
> there is stored up for her
> greater shame and pain…[17]

Clearly Anne is a pitiable figure, victim of her husband's ever-wandering eye, an object of sympathy for everyone who sees her situation. The next scene sees Henry proposition Jane Seymour, saying that soon she will have no rival:

> Honour! Yes: you [Jane] will have it and such
> that in the world there is no equal;
> my splendour will pour out over you completely
> only on you.
> Seymour will have no rival,
> as the sun has no rival.[18]

[17] Gaetano Donizetti, "Anna Bolena," (1830), https://imslp.org/wiki/Anna_Bolena_(Donizetti%2C_Gaetano). p. 1
[18] Ibid, p. 5.

Henry's words this early in the drama lay out the inevitable path of Anne's downfall; he has tired of her and wants another; therefore, his ill-starred wife is doomed. The next act of the opera sees Anne accused of adultery after her page, Mark Smeaton, steals her locket. Henry seizes upon the opportunity to ride himself of his tiresome wife and orders execution. Throughout the drama, Anne has no power whatsoever: her fate is completely out of her own hands, the result of the passions of the men around her.

Another instance of this romanticized conception of Anne as a powerless victim is found in the 1844 novel *The Star of the Court, the Maid of Honour and Queen of England, Anne Boleyn*. Written by Selina Bunbury, a prolific Anglo-Irish novelist during the ninetheenth century, *The Star of the Court* is a "secret history," a forerunner genre to modern historical fiction. Secret histories purported to tell the "true story" behind the lives of historical figures, presenting a sentimentalized view of the past. The Victorian perception of the female role as passive and meek pervades the book, furthering the all-ready existent idea of Anne as lacking all autonomy. This is apparent from the very beginning of the work: in her dedicatory address, Bunbury described her view of the ideal position of a woman:

> A women's true happiness consists in shining, like the soft planet of night, in a borrowed radiancy, meekly reflecting the rays she receives from a higher source, and content to be seen and admired by the few who love to watch and bless her…her position is one of retirement and meekness…in the character, history, and fate of poor Anne Boleyn you will, I think, find verified all that I have said.[19]

Throughout the novel, the author characterized Anne as weak and submissive, an idealized picture of a wife and queen who was heartbreakingly doomed by the actions of others. Her fate is romanticized as a tragedy, the worst that can befall an innocent woman in a man's world.

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[19] Selina Selina Bunbury, *The Star of the Court: Or, the Maid of Honour and Queen of England, Anne Boleyn* (Sagwan Press, 1844)., v.

By the advent of the seventeenth century, cultural images of Anne Boleyn had undergone a marked change from the Elizabethan period. During the reign of her daughter, Anne had been weaponized by both Protestants and Catholics to either legitimize or criticize the queen. While very different in content, both of these Anne Boleyns were commanding and authoritative, the instigation behind the split with Rome and English Reformation. This was could not be more different from the Anne Boleyn found in writings from the next few centuries. While in some sources she retained her martyr-like qualities, she was no longer a woman in control of her own destiny, a powerful player at Henry's court. Rather, she became a romantic victim, swept up in the contrivances and plots of others. Perhaps this was because with Elizabeth no longer on the throne, there was no reason to depict her mother as a strong, autonomous character. Whatever the reason, the idea of Anne as a tragic, powerless figure would dominate literary and historical depictions of her for from the seventeenth century through the nineteenth century. It was not until halfway through the twentieth century that the feminist revolution facilitated a reimaging of her role, bringing the concept of a shrewd, autonomous Anne back into the cultural and historiographical imagination.

Chapter 4

Anne from the Twentieth Century to the Present

From the end of Elizabeth's reign until well into the twentieth century, Anne continued to be portrayed as a victim, her fate a result of powerful players around her rather than her own actions. As described in the preceding chapter, this depiction shaped both historical narratives and popular culture and reflected the dominant perception of women at the time as passive and docile. This began to change in the wake of the second wave of the feminist movement in the second half of the twentieth century, which prompted a reimagining of many prominent female historical figures, Anne among them.[1] Historians during this time began to reexamine the complexities of Henry VIII's court as a political institution, a move that gave rise to two competing versions of Anne Boleyn, both of which frame her as intelligent and autonomous. The first, promoted by historians like Maria Dowling, Eric Ives, and David Starkey, presents Anne as an active and sincere proponent of the Protestant Reformation in England. The second, heralded by scholars like Retha Warnicke and G.W. Bernard, considers her a purely self-interested and manipulative opportunist. Both of these conceptions of Anne have in turn spawned countless articles and think pieces and have had significant influence on cultural depictions of her in the modern era. This chapter analyzes these images of Anne by both scholars and popular culture in the twentieth century to present day. The first section looks at the competing historical interpretations of her motivations and personality, hotly debated by historians like Ives, Starkey, Bernard, and Warnicke. The latter part of this chapter examines cultural images of Anne in a selection of popular films, novels, and television from the late 1900's and 2000's.

[1] Antje Schrupp, *A Brief History of Feminism* (MIT Press, 2017).

The latter half of the twentieth century saw a second wave of feminist thought sweep through the Western world. Unlike the first wave of feminism, which focused predominantly on obtaining legal and political rights for women, the second broadened the movement to include issues of sexuality and more implicit forms of gender disparity.[2] As mentioned above, one of the many impacts of this feminist movement was a renaissance in the perceptions of famous women in history, a shift in thought that began to give these figures dynamic personalities and ambitions, a new sense of independence and power.[3] At the same time, historians were beginning to delve into the latent political and sociocultural complexities of the Tudor court. Together, these two forces saw a reexamination of Anne Boleyn: her motivations, ambitions, alliances, and religious beliefs. This quickly led to a divergence in historical interpretation, a split aided by the dearth of personal materials left behind by Anne that has forced historians to pick which outside sources from her time at court they use to conceptualize her. Since the majority of these sources are extremely polarized and steeped in factional bias, as seen in Chapter One, the selection of which pieces of historical evidence these scholars chose to form the basis of their perception of Anne consequently led to two very different, rival ideas of who she was.

The first conception of Anne is as a sincere Protestant who was an active agent in both her rise at court and the Reformation, using her increased position to advocate for a cause in which she truly believed. Maria Dowling, a British historian whose work focused on the humanist movement in the age of Tudor England, was the pioneer of this school of thought. Her research specifically cites the following 1534 letter to Anne from evangelical theologian Thomas

[2] Schrupp.
[3] Linda J. Nicholson, *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory* (Psychology Press, 1997).; Mari Mikkola, "Feminist Perspectives on Sex and Gender," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Winter 2017 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2017), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/feminism-gender/.

Alwaye, who was prosecuted for purchasing and distributing forbidden English bibles and other Protestant texts:

> When extreme need began to compel me, right honourable lady, to make me friends by whose means I might be released out of my miserable thraldom, I could not find one in all this realm in whom I had any hope or looked for any comfort until your gracious ladyship came unto my remembrance. But anon I remembered how many deeds of pity your goodness had done within these few years, and that without respect of any persons, as well to strangers and aliens as to many of this land, as well to poor as to rich: whereof some looking for no redemption were by your gracious means not only freely delivered out of costly and very long imprisoning, but also by your charity largely rewarded and all thing restored to the uttermost, so that every man may perceive that your gracious and Christian mind is everywhere ready to help, succour and comfort them that be afflicted, troubled and vexed, and that not only in word and tongue, but even after the saying of St John, do so.[4]

She cites this, in addition to John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* and William Latymer's biography of her time as queen, as evidence that Anne was widely known to be sympathetic to and an advocate for Protestants and their religious beliefs. Indeed, Dowling writes that she "was regarded as a reformer by her own servants and associates, and ... in both her private life and public policy, she was a fervent and committed evangelical," positioning her as a direct influence on the Reformation in England.[5]

Eric Ives, author of a comprehensive two-part biography on Anne first published in 1986, is also an ardent supporter of this historical interpretation, crediting her with combining her private aspirations with a genuine reformist conviction to drive her meteoric rise at Henry's court. Ives asserts that Anne "played a major part in pushing Henry into asserting his headship of the church… being the first to demonstrate the potential there was in the royal supremacy for that distinctive English element in the Reformation, the ability of the king to take the initiative in

[4] B.L., Sloane MS 1207 (Petition of Thomas Alwaye). As quoted in "Maria Dowling, "Anne Boleyn and Reform," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 35, no. 1 (January 1984): 30–46, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022046900025938.
[5] Dowling.

religious change"; as an "active promoter of the gospel, Henry's second wife promoted evangelical reform principally in terms of promoting reforming clerics."[6] Ives, like Dowling, harkens back to Foxe's Book of Martyrs and Latymer's *A briefe treatise or cronickille of the moste vertuous ladye Anne Bulleyne late quene of England*. Specifically, he refers to Foxe's claims that Anne "was a special comforter and aider of all the professors of Christ's gospel and her life being also directed according to the same," sentiments echoed by Latymer's description of Anne's work with the poor and insistence that the clergy be held accountable for their actions.[7] Additionally, both Dowling and Ives refer to Foxe and Latymer's statements that Anne was responsible for the appointment of several Protestant bishops.

David Starkey, whose input has been credited by both Dowling and Ives in their respective work's acknowledgements, supports the interpretation of Protestant Anne as well. Starkey's 2001 television documentary series on Tudor England, *The Wives of Henry VIII* and his subsequent book, *Six Wives: The Queens of Henry VIII,* present evidence that Anne was a staunch champion of religious reform throughout her time at the royal court. Particularly, he presents her as focused on the elimination of papal control over ecclesiastical policies and supports the idea that Anne was almost wholly responsible for the break with Rome. While Starkey does touch on the work of Latymer and Foxe in his reformist-Anne argument, he also highlights a sermon she commissioned that was given by almoner John Skip in April of 1536 to show how Anne was in fact personally involved in royal decisions about the religious matters at hand. The lecture addressed the Dissolution of the Monasteries and used the biblical story of Queen Esther to demonstrate Anne's disagreement with how the wealth garnered from this

[6] E. W. Ives, Anne Boleyn (Oxford, I 986), pp. 302-3, 3 I 3;' Stress, faction and ideology in early-Tudor England', Historical journal, XXXIV (i99i)
[7] John Foxe, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* (John Day, 1563). V, 60.

disbanding was used. With this as his evidentiary basis, Starkey argues that Anne did not necessarily disagree with the Dissolution but felt the proceeds should go to reform and charity rather than the royal treasury, thus displaying the queen's commitment to her spiritual beliefs and political actions taken on their behalf.

Starkey also presents a plethora of other evidence to back the conceptualization of Anne as a dedicated Protestant: her ownership of Tyndale's translation of the Bible into English and other works by both Tyndale and another Protestant author, Simon Fisher, a French bible and other French reform books, and an illuminated Psalter that gave the text in a new, radical French translation.[8] Starkey further mentions a statement from Louis de Brun, the French teacher in residence in England, who presented Anne with a French treatise on letter writing as a holiday gift in January of 1530 and applauded her reading habits. Brun told Anne that "one never finds you without some French book in your hand...such as Translations of the Holy Scriptures...And principally, last Lent and the one before last...I always saw you reading the salutary Epistles of St Paul that contain the complete teaching and rule of good living according to the best moral principles."[9] According to Starkey, her possession of various Protestant texts paired with the image of her presented by Foxe and Latymer provide solid proof that she was indeed a genuine evangelical, as "there is every reason to think that these activities of Anne's were sincere."[10] Thus, Ives, Dowling, and Starkey together present a reading of Henry's second wife as a Protestant with deep-rooted convictions who used her elevated position to prompt the Reformation.

[8] David Starkey, *Six Wives of Henry VIII*. p 239.
[9] Ibid, 241.
[10] Ibid, 370.

The second perception of Anne that has arisen in academia during the latter half of the twentieth century is markedly different, presenting her as a self-interested opportunist, who only associated with as Protestantism a convenient vehicle for advancement, rather than out of any authentic religious faith. G.W. Bernard, a British historian who specializes in the Reformation of the 1530s, is a firm advocate of this interpretation. In his work, Bernard describes Anne as ultimately indifferent about Protestantism and evangelical reform, her support for the Reformation a result only of her desire to see Henry's union with Catherine of Aragon disbanded and the title of queen made available. In his words:

> It has become fashionable to characterize Henry VIII's second queen, Anne Boleyn, as evangelical in religion and as a patron of reformers. But this rests on the later testimony of John Foxe and of one of Anne's chaplains, William Latimer. Contemporary evidence of Anne's activity, under critical scrutiny, turns out to offer a different impression, as does an analysis of episcopal appointments in the early 1530s. A remarkable sermon preached by John Skip, the queen's almoner, a few weeks before her death, casts further doubt on the claims for Anne's reformist zeal.[11]

Unlike Dowling and Ives, whose work heavily uses Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* and Latymer's *A briefe treatise or cronickille of the moste vertuous ladye Anne Bulleyne late quene of England*, Bernard dismisses these documents as pure propaganda designed to rehabilitate Anne Boleyn's image during her daughter's time on the throne, a goal that prompted them to misconstrue Anne's religion.

As evidence of the doubtful veracity of Foxe's text, Bernard cites the case of London merchant Richard Hunne and others executed during the Marian suppression. Foxe had included in his text the names of many of those who had been burned at the stake amid the repression of

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[11] G. W. G. W. Bernard, "Anne Boleyn's Religion," *The Historical Journal* 36, no. 1 (1993): 1–20. The Historical Journal, Vol. 36, No. 1 (March, 1993), pp. 1-20.

heresy Mary Tudor ordered in the last few years of her reign, including about a dozen commoners who were put to death in the town of Kent. Other historians have demonstrated that Fox deviated from the truth in his descriptions of these apparent martyrs, "present[ing] as true protestants and co-religionists men and women who were nothing of the kind."[12] Thus, Bernard concludes, it is reasonable to assume that the reliability of Foxe's description of Anne as a pious Protestant is also in doubt.

He also casts suspicion on the account of William Latymer used by Ives and Dowling, and to a lesser extent, Starkey. Bernard quotes the modern editor of Latymer's life, who observed that Latymer had "deliberately suppressed all material relating to Anne which is not consistent with [his] portrait of a pious and solemn reformer" and that "the author's aims of rehabilitating Anne and advising Elizabeth led him to wander somewhat from the truth on occasion."[13] Bernard presents as a test of Foxe and Latymer's reliability the way in which both men described Anne's life during her time at Henry's court. He marvels at the fact that both writers portrayed her household of ladies-in-waiting as pious and devout, saying:

> It is striking that both described her household as a centre of pious and godly living. Foxe's account stressed how there was no idleness among her ladies and gentlewomen and how she 'of her own accord would require her chaplains plainly and freely to tell whatsoever they saw in her amiss'. Latymer's *Life* similarly emphasized the high standards that Anne set for her household. She told her council 'you are commended to be men of greate honestye modestye wysedom and experience such as wholy embrace vertue and vtterly deteste and abhore vice': they should show it 'by your vertuous conuersacion and gouernemente.'. They should watch out that her servants 'frequente noo ynfamous places of resorte ne yet that they keape noo companye with evil lewde and vngodly disposed brothers'.

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[12] P. Collinson, 'Truth and Legend: The Veracity of John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs'*, in A. C. Duke and C. A. Tamse, eds., *Clio's mirror: Historiography in Britain and the Netherlands, Britain and the Netherlands*, viii (I985), 3 I-54, esp. 36-7, 39, 42-3.; S. J. Smart, 'John Foxe and "The Story of Richard Hun, Martyr"', Journal of Ecclesiastical History, xxxviI (I 986), I--I 4; S. J. Smart", "Favourers of God's Word", 'John Foxe's Henrician martyrs', University of Southampton M.Phil. thesis, 1988.

[13] Dowling, 'Latymer's Cronickille'. p 43.

Bernard continues with Foxe and Latymer's description of her charges to her household's ministers, and her apparent acknowledgement of the example she and her attendants should set for watching subjects:

> She told her chaplains that she had carefully chosen them to be ' the lanterns and light' of her court. She knew that princes as on a stage play chief parts to the admiration of inferior subjects, 'and wee ourselves are not altogether ignorante of the necessarye charge requyred in so high a personage not founde wantones, not pampered pleasures not licentious libertie or tryfling ydilnes but vertuous demeanour godly conuersacion sobre communicacion and integritie of lyf'.[14]

Bernard follows these descriptions of a virtuous household of modest, unassuming women with accounts from Henry's court that reported much different behavior. For instance, Sir Edward Bainton, the queen's chamberlain, told her brother in June 1533 that "Yf any of you that bee now departed have any ladies that ye thought favoured you, and somewhat wold moorne att parting of their servauntes, I can no whit perceyve the same by their daunsing and passetyme they do use here but that other take place, as ever hath been the custume."[15] Bernard uses this account of Anne's household as pleasure-loving and flirtatious to expose the falseness of the narrative espoused by Foxe and Latymer, which consequently calls their description of a zealous Protestant Anne further into question.

Bernard also dismisses Anne's possession of works by Tyndale as proof of her reformist intentions, stating that her interest in them more likely stemmed from their anti-Wolsey bent. He also deconstructs Ives' argument that the evangelical, illuminated manuscripts embellished with her coat of arms prove her Protestantism, stating that while "these works stress the saving role of faith in Christ and say little of the role of the sacraments…there is little to suggest that Anne

[14] G. W. Bernard, "Anne Boleyn's Religion." The Historical Journal, Vol. 36, No. 1 (March, 1993), pp. 1-20.
[15] P[ublic] R[ecord] O[ffice], SPI/76, fo. I95 (J. S. Brewer, J. Gairdner and R. H. Brodie, eds., L[etters and] P[apers,foreign and domestic, of the reign of Henry VIII] (I862-I932), vi, 6I 3), cited by Dowling in "Anne Boleyn and Reform."

shared such belief."[16] Bernard goes so far as to say that there is no way of knowing whether she even read or understood these texts and that any "religious" action Anne undertook publicly as queen, such as alms-distribution, was likely just a "search for popularity."[17] He concluded that the historical data put forth by Ives, Dowling, and Starkey to frame Anne as Protestant are mere "scraps of evidence of isolated instances of possible interest, intervention, protection or patronage…with little to clinch the case that Anne's motivation must have been the furtherance of reformed religion…there is no evidence of any consistent and sustained policy; no dialogue, no debates, no conferences of divines."[18] He concludes by attributing any reformist patronage on Anne's part to vested interest in clergy who desired a break with Rome that would, by extension, clear her path to the throne.

Lastly, Bernard cites the report of the Tower Constable William Kingston during Anne's imprisonment to make the case that in her last days she revealed herself to be deeply wedded to traditional Catholic conventions. According to Kingston, Anne said "Jesu have mercy on me" and "and kneled down wepyng a great pace," and then requested him to petition the king that she might have the sacrament in the closet in her chamber so that she might pray for mercy. Later, Kingston reported that Anne "hathe meche desyred to have here in the closet the sacraments."[19] Bernard concludes that whatever her politically-motivated affiliations and connections, Anne obviously remained Catholic at heart, as seen in her adherence to the sacraments in her final days. His 2010 book *Anne Boleyn: Fatal Attractions* restates these claims and couples them with the suggestion that this same underhanded pragmatism that prompted her patronage of reformers

[16] G. W. Bernard, "Anne Boleyn's Religion." The Historical Journal, Vol. 36, No. 1 (March, 1993), pp. 1-20.
[17] Ibid. p 7.
[18] Ibid, 10.
[19] BL, Cotton MS, Otho C x fo. 229 (Ellis, Original letters, I ii. 54; LP, x, 793). As cited in Maria Dowling, "Anne Boleyn and Reform."

could easily mean that the allegations of adultery against Anne were true, actions she took in a desperate bid to produce a healthy son.[20] He bolsters this claim of her infidelity by quoting a poem by French author Lancelot de Carles that tells of a noblewoman, most likely the countess of Worcester, who responded to reproach about her extramarital affairs by pointing the finger at Anne. Thus, by deconstructing evidence presented in favor of the Anne-as-reformist view and citing sources indicating the contrary, Bernard solidifies an interpretation of Anne as a pure opportunist, who merely used the Reformation to further her own goals and would have taken any action necessary to maintain her grip on power.

Ives has vehemently attacked Bernard's conclusions, particularly in his scathing review of Fatal Attractions, published shortly after the book's release in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*. He argues against Bernard's conception of her faith and clarifies the term 'evangelical' he himself used to describe Anne- a term Bernard attacked as false. Ives states that:

> Historians use the term 'evangelical' simply to describe an individual who is sympathetic to an agenda of real spiritual experience, the priority of faith, access to the Bible, and reform of abuses and superstition… this was the religious atmosphere in the court of Queen Claude of France… Anne Boleyn's religion belongs in the context of early French reform.[21]

In regard to Bernard's theory that Anne had little to do with the Reformation and simply supported it to further her own agenda, Ives counters that it is highly unlikely she could have attained the position she did without being personally involved in the split with Rome. He also addresses Bernard's allegations that Anne more than likely did commit adultery during her time as Henry's queen, commenting that "Bernard's method is to take evidence which he accepts appears to be in Anne's favor, and construct alternative interpretations one after another."[22]

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[20] George Bernard, *Anne Boleyn: Fatal Attractions.* Yale University Press. (2010).
[21] Eric Ives, "Anne Boleyn on Trial Again," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 62, no. 4 (October 2011): 763–77, https://doi.org/10.1017/S002204691100087X. The Journal of Ecclesiastical History, (October 2010).
[22] Ibid, 2.

As to Bernard's use of Lancelot de Carles' poem to support the idea that Anne was unfaithful, Ives states that de Carles' claims obviously "congruent with what Cromwell circulated on the diplomatic network, seeing as de Carles worked for the French ambassador."[23] Ives also points out that this account was never convincingly corroborated. He ends his review by saying that "science is said to proceed from obituary to obituary. So does history, but *Anne Boleyn: Fatal Attractions* will not, as George Bernard intends, bury the reformist and innocent Anne Boleyn." His statement harkens back to and reaffirms the conclusion of Ives' own research: Anne was a Protestant deeply committed to the Reformation.

Retha Warnicke, an American historian whose research delves into the gender prejudices of the early sixteenth century, also adheres to this second view of Anne presented by Bernard. Warnicke's *The Rise and Fall of Anne Boleyn: Family Politics at the Court of Henry VIII* depicts an incredibly unflattering picture of Anne, in which she appears as a mercenary, unprincipled agent solely concerned with the advancement of herself and her family and, similar to Bernard's interpretation, generally indifferent to the religious issues and the Reformation.[24] Warnicke cites Anne's usage of her advanced position to promote her family, describing how she "dispensed the her patronage to her family and friends…her elevation certainly brought rewards to her family, including the earldom of Wiltshire for her father."[25] Although Warnicke does mention her interest in scripture, she concurs with Bernard's belief that this is no way meant Anne herself was wedded to Protestant ideas:

> Anne has often been aligned with an evangelical faction at court. Clearly, she supported scripture reading and the schism. Before her marriage, she may have presented two religious books to the king, an anti-papal one by William Tyndale and an anti-clerical one

[23] Ibid, 5.
[24] Retha M. Warnicke, *The Rise and Fall of Anne Boleyn: Family Politics at the Court of Henry VIII* (Cambridge University Press, 1991). 1991.
[25] Retha M. Warnicke, "Anne Boleyn, Queen of England," History Today, accessed March 29, 2019, https://www.historytoday.com/archive/anne-boleyn-queen-england. History Today, 2002.

> by Simon Fish. Yet although she also patronized future Protestants, such as Matthew Parker, Elizabeth's archbishop of Canterbury, there is no evidence that she followed the Lutherans in denying the good works system or transubstantiation.[26]

Rather than seeing Anne's support of the split with Rome as evidence of reformist leanings, Warnicke states that it was simply a result of the increased potential for her elevation such a schism would yield.

Unlike Bernard, however, Warnicke incorporates a new framework with which to explain Anne's swift demise after failing to give birth to a healthy son: namely, the idea that she gave birth to a deformed fetus, something people at the time would have viewed as evidence of foul enchantments and witchcraft, which would have prompted Henry to distance himself from the miscarried child's paternity:

> Later that year, perhaps in September, she conceived again. Then, on 7 January 1536, Catherine of Aragon died. Some time that month, Anne miscarried a male fetus. Tragically, it was this miscarriage, I believe of a deformed fetus, that caused her husband to turn against her. This event would have greatly concerned - even frightened - Henry, for contemporaries thought that God visited monstrous births, as they were called, upon parents to punish them for their sins. By having her accused of adultery with five men in the two years preceding the birth, Henry made it virtually impossible to identify him as its father. Only a tragedy like this would have led him to besmirch his honor with a public admission that five men had cuckolded him.[27]

Warnicke takes the conclusion one step farther, hinting that this deformed miscarriage could also be construed as evidence that Anne did in fact sleep with her brother George in a desperate bid to produce a male heir, as the products of incest have been known to suffer such physical abnormalities. Such a claim remains widely disregarded by historians like Ives, Starkey, and even Bernard, who all point to the fact that there is no evidence of Anne giving birth to a malformed child.[28]

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[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Bernard, "Anne Boleyn's Religion."; Ives, "Anne Boleyn on Trial Again."; *The Wives of Henry VIII* (Bfs Entertainment, 2002).

Clearly, the academic view of Henry's second wife greatly changed during the latter half of the 1900's, eventually splitting into two polarized and competing interpretations of her religious motivations and personal character. However, the historiographical narrative surrounding Anne was not the only part of her legacy to shift during this time: her image in popular imagination underwent a transformation during the twentieth century as well. As the preceding chapter detailed, Anne had been mostly conceptualized as a romantic victim in cultural depictions of her beginning around the turn of the seventeenth century. Although the feminist revolution in thought during the middle of the 1900's shifted this image of Anne, prompting portrayals of her as astute and autonomous, the passive-victim image lingered for the first few decades of the twentieth century.

This perception is clear in *Anne of a Thousand Days*, a 1948 play written by Maxwell Anderson that garnered a Tony award and was performed almost three hundred times. The play begins in 1536 with Henry VIII debating over whether or not to sign the Anne's death warrant, then begins a flashback that recounts the events of the prior ten years. Henry has grown tired of his wife Catherine of Aragon and his mistress Mary Boleyn and is restless for new entertainment. Anne's arrival at court catches the king's eye, and enchanted by her beauty, Henry orders Cardinal Wolsey to break up her engagement to the son of the Earl of Northumberland. Anne wants nothing to do with Henry, but his constant pursuit of her finally wears down her resolve and they begin a relationship. Anxious for a son, the king decides to divorce his wife and wed Anne. Shocked, she is persuaded to agree, and they marry. After she gives birth to Elizabeth, Henry wishes to end their union and presses Thomas Cromwell to find a reason. Cromwell tortures a servant, Mark Smeaton, until he confesses to an affair with the queen and Anne is dragged to the tower. Moving back to 1536, the king decides to execute his wife, and rides off to

marry Jane Seymour. The final scene is of an infant Elizabeth in a garden, with Anne's voice predicting her future greatness: "Elizabeth shall be a greater queen than any king of yours. She shall rule a greater England than you could ever have built. My Elizabeth shall be queen, and my blood will have been well spent."[29]

From the very onset of the play, it is clear that Henry is the one who holds all the power. From the first scene in which he deliberates whether to sign her death warrant to the last scene in which her daughter plays alone as a cannon shot announces the completed execution, any sense of Anne's control is eliminated. Her arrival at court, the destruction of her engagement to Henry Percy, her eventual relationship with the king, her becoming queen, and her tragic downfall following her inability to give birth to a son are all a result of Henry's passions and whims. She has no autonomy or independence; her only source of strength the promise that her daughter Elizabeth will one day be a great ruler. Although the play lacks any real religious undertones, the passing mention of the Reformation and England's break with the Roman Catholic Church are also referenced as results of the king's actions, in no way influenced by Anne.

The play *Anne of a Thousand Days* and its 1969 film adaptation mirror the picture of tragic, powerless Anne that had dominated her cultural image for the past several centuries.[30] However, this particular idea of her gradually faded from popular imagination in the wake of the feminist movement, replaced by a new Anne, one who was politically adapt and vivacious. Historical novels, films, and television from the latter part of the twentieth century through present day have encapsulated this impression of her. Even though some portray her in a negative light, she remains a powerful, independent agent in all of them. Interestingly, many of the novels from the 1960's through the 1980's specifically frame Anne's rise to prominence as

[29] Maxwell Anderson, *Anne of the Thousand Days: Play in Two Acts* (Dramatists Play Service Inc, 1950).
[30] Charles Jarrott, *Anne of a Thousand Days*, Drama, 1969.

revenge mission she deliberately orchestrated against Cardinal Wolsey for ending her relationship with Henry Percy, the son of a powerful nobleman to whom she became engaged, a trend that arguably tempers the strength of her character's independence as grief over a lost love rather than ambition drives her. In contrast, the more recent films and novels tend to depict her ascent as pure personal aspiration to rise to power.

In the former category is *The Concubine*, a historical novel by Norah Lofts that was first published in 1963. Written from the standpoint of a fictitious servant girl, Emma Arnett, the book traces the rise and fall of Anne at court as she aims to avenge herself on Cardinal Wolsey for ruining her engagement to Henry Percy. The book opens just as she has received word of Wolsey's actions. Heartbroken and convinced she will never be able to love another man, Anne decides to settle for ambition instead by cultivating influence at court that she can then use to destroy the Cardinal. She does this by capturing the king's attention, introducing him to Protestantism, paving the way for the split with Rome, and becoming queen. Of course, her eventual inability to produce a male heir inevitably leads to her downfall and execution.[31] However, Anne retains her independence and fierceness until her death; after she has received word of her execution order she declares that "[Henry] has shamed me, and he'll kill me, but he shan't humble me."[32] Through entirety of the novel, Anne is characterized as competent, shrewd, and independent, deliberately maneuvering others at court in order to accomplish her own goals. Importantly, she is not vilified for this and remains a sympathetic character throughout the story.

Similar to this is Maureen Peters' 1972 novel *Anne, the Rose of Hever*. In it, Anne appears as the intelligent and sincere daughter of an ambitious father. However, she is morally upright, refusing to become the mistress of Francis I during her tenure in France, much to her

[31] Norah Lofts, *The Concubine* (Simon and Schuster, 2008). Simon and Schuster, 1963.
[32] Lofts., 148.

family's dismay. Upon her return to England, she falls for Percy and is devastated by the demise of their love at the hands of Percy's father, the earl of Northumberland, and Wolsey. The earl instantly disliked Anne, whom he described to Wolsey as "sly and shrewd," an indication early in the story of her underlying potential.[33] Having returned to her childhood home at Hever, Anne unexpectedly meets the king, who has stopped by while on a royal hunting trip in the countryside. During the course of their conversation, Anne sees a chance to do the hated Wolsey some damage when Henry mentions the invalidity of his marriage and the cardinal's desire for him to wed a French princess. Mocking Henry for obediently doing as Wolsey bids, she lays a trap for the arrogant king, who within minutes is cursing the cardinal and declaring he will marry Anne instead. Stunned by the over-effectiveness of her ploy, Anne hesitates temporarily, but then decides that becoming queen would be the ultimate revenge against Wolsey and agrees to the king's proposal. Her time as Henry's consort is brief and her end bizarre, as the king decides that she has bewitched him and the only way to free himself is through her death. On the executioner's block, Anne laughs at the absurdity of it all as the sword swings.[34] Again, Anne is portrayed as wily and strong, her agency a result of her intelligence and social acumen. However, her sole motivation in becoming queen is to still avenge her broken heart.

It is difficult to pinpoint when this narrative of Anne's ambition as revenge operation began to shift. However, more recent cultural depictions of her in novels, films, and television from the 1990's through present day have tended to frame her rise at court as a result of her personal aspiration, rather than being prompted by hatred for Wolsey or the machinations of her family. A perfect example of this is *Doomed Queen Anne*, a historical fiction novel penned by Carolyn Meyer. Published in 2002, the book is written as a firsthand of Anne on the morning of

[33] Maureen Peters, *Anne, The Rose of Hever* (Fontana-Collins, 1969). 1972. Page 58.
[34] Ibid.

her execution as she thinks back over the events that led her there. Her unhappy childhood is recounted—how she was the least-favored child of her parents, constantly overshadowed by her stunning older sister, and the stark opposite of the blond, blue-eyed ideal of beauty at the time. Tired of being overlooked, Anne vows to use her wits to win the heart of Henry VIII and become his queen.[35]

Strategically using her talents in the game of courtly love, Anne manages to capture the king's interest. Refusing to become his mistress, she persuades the infatuated man to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. When the pope refuses to do so, Anne convinces Henry to split from the Catholic Church and declare himself the sole religious authority in England. This enables him to divorce Catherine and wed Anne, finally giving her the power and recognition she so craved. However, the birth of Elizabeth and subsequent miscarriages take their toll on the royal marriage, and Henry falls for Jane Seymour, who follows Anne's lead in refusing to be his mistress. Eager to dissolve his unhappy marriage, the king falsely accuses his wife of adultery and she is condemned to the Tower awaiting her execution, bringing the story full circle.[36] Her final statement is both concise and courageous: "If I must die, then I will die boldly, as I have lived." [37] Here Anne is shrewd and capable, and her ability to singlehandedly raise her status from unseen wallflower to queen of England garners admiration and respect from the reader. Meyer's use of the firsthand perspective helps maintain a sympathetic bent throughout the story, and Anne's tragic end elicits empathy. This is, in short, the story of an intelligent, ambitious woman whose only crime was reaching for more than was possible.

[35] Carolyn Meyer, *Doomed Queen Anne* (HMH Books for Young Readers, 2004), https://www.amazon.com/Doomed-Queen-Anne-Young-Royals/dp/0152050868.
[36] Carolyn Meyer. HMH Books for Young Readers, (2002).
[37] Ibid, 246.

This same perception of Anne as independent and resolute is seen in the historical fiction television show *The Tudors*. In the series, Anne, played by Natalie Dormer, is presented as a spirited and strong-willed woman whose intelligence and wit made her more than an equal to Henry, something that made her initially attractive to the king but eventually helped to spell her doom. The show frames her as more assertive and autonomous than any of the other queens in the series, consistently outspoken about her opinions and beliefs. This, coupled with her intention to use her power as queen and inability to tolerate Henry's affairs, is shown as one of the primary causes for the disintegration of their relationship. She is also depicted as a sincere Protestant who was disgusted by the abuses of the Catholic Church and thus actively worked to promote the Reformation and elevate supporters of the Lutheran cause. The series takes an admiring tone throughout its portrayal of Anne's rise and fall, showcasing her as a feminist icon of sorts. Indeed, in one scene Thomas Boleyn attempts to take credit for her advancement at court and Anne responds swiftly saying: "I know how I got here, Father. 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 me. [The king] fell in love with me, he respected me. And now, I am indeed queen."[38] Her resolve, intelligence, and courage together make Anne a strong and admirable character throughout the show.

While many of the images of Anne in recent popular culture frame her in this type of positive light, there are a few outliers. Chief among these is *The Other Boleyn Girl*, a 2001 historical novel by Phillipa Gregory and the eponymous film it inspired, both of which have enjoyed massive popularity.[39] It purports to tell the story of Mary Boleyn, Anne's sister who also had a relationship with Henry. Contrary to historical fact, the book depicts Mary as younger than

[38] Ciaran Donnelly, "The Tudors," TV Show (Showtime, 2008 2007), Netflix. Cite the specific episode
[39] Philippa Gregory, *The Other Boleyn Girl* (Simon and Schuster, 2004).; Justin Chadwick, *The Other Boleyn Girl*, Historical Romantic Drama, 2008.

Anne. In many ways, the two sisters are foils of each other: the former a sweet-spirited heroine and the latter a hard-hearted villain. Anne herself acknowledges the way in which they are contrasting counterparts: "I shall be dark and French and fashionable and difficult. And you shall be sweet and open and English and fair. What a pair we shall be! What man can resist us?"[40] In contrast to Mary, who enters into her affair with the king because she truly loves him, Anne only uses him for her own advancement. She has no interest in religious reform, willingly betrays Mary in order to catch the king's eye, and even goes so far as to sleep with her brother when it appears her position as queen may be in jeopardy. She is fully responsible for the ruin of her family and her own eventual demise. In this interpretation, although Anne is still independence and strong, her ambition is her character's central flaw, a corrupting force that results in the destruction of all of those around her.

Interestingly, Gregory stated in the acknowledgements and author's note section of her novel that she based her conception of Anne on the work of Retha Warnicke.[41] Warnicke, in turn, has separated herself from this association.[42] This points to a broader connection between academic studies of Anne in the past decades and the popular depictions of her that have followed. One could argue that the renewal of cultural interest in Anne and the way she has been conceptualized in novels, films, and television was heavily shaped by the scholarly examinations of her life by historians like Ives, Starkey, Dowling, Bernard, and Warnicke. Regardless of which side of the Anne-as-reformist versus Anne-as-opportunist debate they fall on, the aforementioned scholars all describe an independent, intelligent, and powerful woman. By reviving the conversation on Anne's personal character and religious motivations and creating a

[40] Ibid. 34.
[41] Gregory, *The Other Boleyn Girl*.
[42] As stated in 'Paul Byrnes reviewer, "The Other Boleyn Girl," The Sydney Morning Herald, March 13, 2008, https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/movies/the-other-boleyn-girl-20080313-gds50x.html.'

polarized framework with which to analyze her, these academics helped give birth to a new historical image of an autonomous Anne, one that sparked curiosity and consequently inspired popular culture.

The idea of Anne Boleyn radically changed during the past century, both in terms of academic interpretations of her beliefs and actions, and her depiction in popular culture. Historians like Ives, Dowling, and Starkey view Anne as a genuine Protestant who was an autonomous agent in both her elevation to queen and the English Reformation, using her increased position to advocate for a cause in which she truly believed. Others, like Bernard and Warnicke, view her association with Lutheranism as pure opportunism, a way to clear her path to the crown. Often heavily influenced by these academic perceptions, her image in popular imagination shifted during the twentieth century as well, the passive Anne of the prior decades giving way to a new independent and autonomous Anne. Sometimes portrayed as a feminist role model, other times as a selfish villain, she remains strong, passionate, and compelling.

Epilogue

"Women surely have a much better time than men in this world; there are far more things forbidden to them."

- Oscar Wilde

The latter half of Wilde's comment rings true even so many decades later. Women who appear in the political sphere have always been subject to scrutiny, unable to act with the freedom allowed men. As public figures, their actions, beliefs, and intentions are dissected in a manner quite lacking from conversations about their male counterparts. One reason for this is the frame of reference applied to women: in many cases, they are expected to be exemplar models of what is deemed to be 'proper' behavior and must be careful to adhere to this imaginary standard at all times. Deviation quickly results in public antagonism and denouncement, something clearly seen in the shifting legacy of Anne Boleyn in the centuries since her time as queen of England, as this thesis entailed.

Hillary Clinton, who knows firsthand the extent to this rigid, gendered structure, expounded on it in a recent interview. Discussing the extreme difficulty women face when operating in the political sphere, Clinton asked rhetorically, "how do [women running for presidential office] get on this kind of Goldilocks path where we are not too strong and we are not too weak, we're not too aggressive and not too passive? This is still a problem for women on the public stage."[1] Clinton is far from alone in this sentiment. An article from the Indian Journal of Political Science elaborates on the extent of this issue:

> While the political playing-field in each country has its own particular characteristics, one feature remains common to all: it is uneven and not conducive to women's participation. Throughout the world women face obstacles to their participation in

[1] Katie Galioto, "Hillary Clinton Says 2020 Female Candidates Unfairly Have to Avoid Looking 'Angry,'" POLITICO, accessed April 2, 2019, https://politi.co/2IETlL8.

> politics. These barriers are to be found in prevailing social and economic regimes, as well as in existing political structures.[2]

This tightrope that women have to walk in order to succeed does not solely apply to politics but extends to other areas in which they are put in the spotlight or undertake leadership roles. In the business world, for example, studies have shown that women consciously must avoid the "backlash effect"—the social consequence of asserting or promoting themselves, while also being expected to be both confident and "prosocial"—demonstrating care and concern for others—while men can promote themselves without showing care for others and not be perceived negatively.[3]

Why is this the case? Some studies indicate that the qualities necessary for success in this realm are also overwhelming seen as 'masculine' traits.[4] Women must embody these characteristics in order to succeed, yet also compensate by demonstrating an appropriate number of 'feminine' traits, such as modesty, demureness, and kindness. It is equally important that they be viewed as exemplar wives and mothers, something men are not burdened by to the same extent. A research team led by political scientist Dawn Lagan Teele at the University of Pennsylvania investigated this and summed up their findings, saying, "voters look for women to do both the job of a politician and that of a wife and mother…female candidates have to be superwomen, while male candidates enjoy the luxury of delegating family work to others."[5] This idea that women in the public sphere must be perfect wives and mothers is nothing new,

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[2] Thanikodi, A., and M. Sugirtha. "STATUS OF WOMEN IN POLITICS." *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 68, no. 3 (2007): 589-606. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41856357.
[3]Hanna Hart, "The Confidence Gap Is A Myth, But A Double Standard Does Exist: How Women Can Navigate," Forbes, accessed April 2, 2019, https://www.forbes.com/sites/hannahart/2019/03/05/the-confidence-gap-is-a-myth-but-a-double-standard-does-exist-how-women-can-navigate/.
[4] Tom Jacobs, "Masculine Traits Are Still Linked to Leadership," Pacific Standard, accessed April 3, 2019, https://psmag.com/economics/masculine-traits-are-still-linked-to-leadership.
[5] Tom Jacobs, "Voters Expect Female Politicians to Be Perfect Mothers Too," Pacific Standard, accessed April 3, 2019, https://psmag.com/social-justice/how-female-political-candidates-face-a-double-bind-in-2020.

extending back centuries. Solomon, a biblical king of Israel, elaborates on the ideal conception of a partner in his Proverbs:

> A wife of noble character who can find?
> She is worth far more than rubies…
> **11** Her husband has full confidence in her
> and lacks nothing of value.
> She opens her arms to the poor
> and extends her hands to the needy.
> She is clothed with strength and dignity;
> she can laugh at the days to come…
> **26** She speaks with wisdom,
> and faithful instruction is on her tongue.
> **27** She watches over the affairs of her household
> and does not eat the bread of idleness.
> **28** Her children arise and call her blessed;
> her husband also, and he praises her.[6]

This passage is often cited in conversations among evangelicals about the ideal image of femininity. Indeed, this passage allots much more autonomy to wives than other portions of Scripture; for example, the New Testament explicitly forbids women from holding positions of leadership. As a result, societies that adhere to a Judeo-Christian worldview and moral framework consequently need for women in public spheres to exemplify these standards of womanhood, specifically as wives and mothers, in order to compensate for this underlying belief system that runs counter to the idea of women in power.[7]

Tudor England is an example of this, and the vilification of Anne Boleyn can easily be read as a result of her nonconformity to this idea, which her predecessor Catherine of Aragon had adhered to. Her demonization lasted throughout her time as queen, and a new conception of her only began when her daughter took the throne. Importantly, Protestant authors like Foxe and

[6] "Proverbs 31 NIV - Sayings of King Solomon - The Sayings of - Bible Gateway," accessed April 3, 2019, https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+31&version=NIV.
[7] Clark, Elizabeth A. "Women, Gender, and the Study of Christian History." *Church History* 70, no. 3 (2001): 395-426. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3654496.

Latymer who attempted to rehabilitate her public image did so by highlighting the ways in which Anne was a model woman, wife, and queen; presenting evidence of her piety, modesty, and chasteness, reformist writers countered negative portrayals of her by underlining the important traits of a biblical woman.[8] Throughout the centuries that followed, cultural images of Anne have been dominated by the prevailing perceptions of women in the political sphere common at the time, transforming her into everything from an innocent victim to a hard-hearted villain. Recent portrayals of her in popular culture have showcased a new, feminist Anne, reflecting the cultural revolution of female empowerment that took place in the latter half of the twentieth century. Doubtless, images of Anne will continue to shift in the future, as our conception of women in the public sphere grow and change as well.

[8] John Foxe, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* (John Day, 1563).