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**BALANCE BETWEEN HISTORY AND FICTION IN
PHILIPPA GREGORY'S *THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL*: THE
OPPOSITION BETWEEN MARY AND ANNE BOLEYN**

BA thesis

JOHANNA PÕLDMAA
SUPERVISOR: LECT. PILVI RAJAMÄE

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ABSTRACT

The Tudors remain popular to this day and a number of authors and directors continue to provide the Tudor content to the contemporary society. However, as the historical records have almost been exhausted, history need not be retold for the sake of mere authenticity. Consequently, the lack of attention to historical precision could result in misinterpretation of history among the consumers of history in whatever form. This thesis seeks to analyse how one of the most prominent historical romance novelists Philippa Gregory has chosen to portray Mary and Anne Boleyn in *The Other Boleyn Girl* and whether or how she has decided to establish the balance between history and fiction. Another aim of this thesis is to show how Gregory has altered historical facts in favour of her narrative, which, in return, could result in a misunderstanding of the historical precision.

Chapter One defines 'historical fiction' and 'historical romance' and discusses Gregory's style for writing historical romances. Her position as a historical and a fictional novelist is then further discussed and an overview of the historical background of the Boleyn sisters and their family is also briefly summarised. Chapter One concludes with the criticism on *The Other Boleyn Girl* as a historical novel. Chapter Two analyses how Gregory has used fiction and feminine stereotypes to depict Mary as a woman of good and desirable qualities while the author has chosen to portray Anne as Mary's evil opposite. How their distinctive characteristics create and further their rivalry is analysed through the means of showing how Gregory has taken liberties with and even distorted historical facts in order to make the narrative more exciting and acceptable to the contemporary reader. The thesis ends with a conclusion.

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INTRODUCTION

It has been over 400 years since the Tudor period ended, yet it has remained popular till this day. Several films (*Elizabeth: The Golden Age*; *Mary, Queen of Scots*), television series (*The Tudors*; *Britain's Tudor Treasure: A Night at Hampton Court*) and even musicals (*Six*) have been produced throughout the 21st century and names like Michael Hirst and Lucy Worsley have successfully provided the Tudor content to contemporary society. However, the biggest medium for carrying on the Tudor history is literature. The contribution of numerous writers, including Elizabeth Fremantle, Hilary Mantel and Philippa Gregory, have kept the Tudors alive and made them reappear to the public through both fiction and non-fiction. The Tudors might be more appealing than the other dynasties for the plenitude of scandalous and dramatic events that go hand in hand with their seductive fashion, which are all deemed to evoke excitement in a modern person. A great number of treatments of the Tudors emerging in multiple media proves that society shows keen interest in the Tudor era and its people, and as long as this interest persists, screenwriters and novelists continue to attempt to meet it.

Nevertheless, there is a limit to the knowledge we have regarding the past. This means that the accurate material concerning the stories about the Tudors will also eventually exhaust and ultimately repeat itself. Yet, as the audience looking for the Tudor content exists, their history is perhaps not necessarily retold for the sake of further awareness or precision, even more so that little factual evidence can be confirmed on a personal level. Rather, distinctive authors present their works from different viewpoints and focus on distinguishable aspects in order to appeal to the consumer society and offer a new and unique take on the matter. Consequently, this might mean that stories may lack in historical background, which can subconsciously lead to misinterpretation of real history.

Philippa Gregory is considered to be one of the most prominent contemporary historical novelists and she has been very productive, having published over 30 novels (*The Virgin Lover*; *The White Princess*), and nine of them have been adapted to six films (*The White Queen*) or television series (*The Spanish Princess*). This demonstrates how big influence Gregory has had on the spread of the Tudor culture in contemporary society and how her works have inspired other authors and directors. Her centre of attention lies in the women of the Tudor era and she herself states that her main focus shifts to “ordinary women doing exceptional things” (Time Team Official 2021: 35:08) and “women that have been forgotten or neglected by traditional history” (Bookclub 2012: 25:46). However, the characters she features in her books are queens, countesses and other noblewomen who were nothing like ordinary individuals at the time. The conflict occurring here shows that Gregory has taken certain liberties in the way she portrays these characters.

The author of this thesis chose to analyse one of Gregory’s most popular works, *The Other Boleyn Girl* (2001) (henceforth *TOBG*), which has won several awards and been adapted to two films. It is a historical romance set between 1521 and 1536 and it is the first book in Gregory’s series of The Plantagenet and Tudor Novels. It tells the famous story of King Henry VIII’s court, his quest for a male heir, his marriage to Anne Boleyn and her path to becoming the queen that culminates in her public execution. However, the narrative unfolds through the eyes of Anne’s way less ambitious and powerful sister – Mary Boleyn. The sisters are depicted as opposites in everything and therefore one of the central themes of the book is their never-ending rivalry. These two historical characters and their lives will be discussed in detail in Chapter One and the analysis of their portrayal by Gregory will follow in Chapter Two.

There were no thorough biographies of Mary Boleyn before the publication of *TOBG* in 2001, but two major ones (*Mary Boleyn: 'The Great and Infamous Whore'* by A. Weir;

Mary Boleyn: The True Story of Henry VIII's Favourite Mistress by J. Wilkinson), additionally one examining the whole Boleyn family (*The Tudors: History of a Dynasty* by D. Loades), were written throughout the next ten years. This was most likely in response to the questions regarding historical accuracy that Gregory's book provoked among readers. She has received a considerable amount of criticism from historians concerning her incorrect representation of the personages of the past despite her claims that her image of Mary is fictional and that not enough published material was accessible back then (Bookclub 2012: 10:20-19:05). Critical evaluations of Gregory and *TOBG* will be further looked at in Chapter One.

This research was conducted in order to analyse Gregory's portrayal of Mary and Anne Boleyn in *TOBG* and how the author has used fiction to depict their characteristics. In addition, this thesis studies the tumultuous relationship established between the sisters and how it contributes to their opposition. The research question is formed as follows: How has Philippa Gregory portrayed Mary and Anne Boleyn in her historical romance *The Other Boleyn Girl* and how does the novel depict their relationship in accordance with history and fiction? The author of this research aims to show the reader how Gregory has used fiction to create the Boleyn sisters and cause their opposition in a black and white manner despite of what we know of them from history. In return, that balance could shape the reader's knowledge and opinion on historical characters. In order to examine the liberties Gregory has taken in *TOBG*, this research will first define 'historical fiction' and 'historical romance', then establish what is historically known to us about Mary Boleyn, her sister Anne and the Boleyn family's background. It is followed by an analysis showing how Gregory has included fantasy to build the characters in the book to appear as complete opposites through fiction. The novel at hand is read, analysed and regarded as a work of fiction rather than historical.

CHAPTER ONE: HISTORICAL ROMANCE AND PHILIPPA GREGORY

This chapter provides the necessary background information to better understand the following comparison and analysis regarding Mary and Anne Boleyn. It starts with the definitions of ‘historical fiction’ and ‘historical romance’, then goes on to discuss Gregory’s style of writing a historical romance. After that, the historical background of the Boleyn sisters and their family is elaborated on. Criticism of Gregory and *TOBG* concerning historical precision ends the current chapter.

1.1. Historical fiction and historical romance

In order to understand the thesis at hand, it is important to start from defining ‘historical fiction’. Johnson (2009: 1) describes it as a work of fiction set in a bygone time that tries to imitate the period based on the author’s research instead of personal experience. She adds that contemporary historical novels usually talk about topics that stress common people’s everyday lives through the eyes of historically famous people (ibid.: 5). According to her, the popularity of historical fiction is increasing and she suggests that based on speculations of various literary critics the main reason for it is that readers regard it as a way of escaping from their depressing contemporary reality (ibid.: 3-4). However, this can be problematic in a sense that people do not turn to historical fiction as a representation of scholarly facts regarding the past, which it is first and foremost supposed to be. Therefore, with the growing demand for historical fiction among the consumer society, it is possible that authors tend to put less emphasis on the accurate historical setting of their novels and rather focus on writing a story that fits the needs of the readers looking for ways to escape reality through literature. Johnson (ibid.: 4) also admits that “historical fiction must keep

reinventing itself to remain interesting” as people’s interests, as well as topical issues, shift over time. Although there should be more attention directed to the historical setting and its precision, the changing community and the growing enthusiasm for this type of escapist novel alter the ways how historical fiction is written.

‘Historical romance’, the subgenre of historical fiction, also ought to be defined for a better understanding of this thesis. According to Hughes (1993: 1), one of the most important features of historical romance is fantasy, for it functions as a way of transmitting readers’ expectations and creating a gap between the everyday reality and the historical setting of the story. She states that another crucial characteristic of the genre is a romantic story, which explores the themes of “sexual love” and “adventure” (ibid.: 2). Johnson (2009: 133) also stops at this subgenre and briefly mentions that historical romances focus on the growth of the main character’s relationship, which generally ends positively. However, there is a considerable issue when it comes to the historical component of this subgenre. Hughes (1993: 2-6) explains that historical romance prioritises the plot over the historical setting and writers may even exclude unpleasant or alarming features of the past, all in order to appeal to contemporary readers and promote the story. Therefore, it can be said that historical romance tends to be a less accurate, sometimes even outright inaccurate, form of historical fiction, focusing on its commercial success through the current interests of the people. Thus, it is also questionable whether, and how much, authors really adjust the events, personages and traditions of the past to fit their narratives. With the focus on historical precision in decline already in the case of historical fiction, historical romance novels pay even less attention to facts as the main narrative is driven by a fantasy-filled and a happy-ending love story in order to meet the demand for escapist novels instead of offering an accurate historical representation.

Inevitably, historical fiction often has a guiding role in readers' understanding and perception of historical facts and thus it works as a medium that shapes people's insight into the past. De Groot (2010: 6) points out that historical novels are subjects to criticism because of their tendency to alter facts and those who reprimand this genre are "often concerned with its innate ability to encourage an audience into being knowingly misinformed, misled and duped". Therefore, historical fiction evokes certain cautiousness among scholars, as it has the authority to represent the past and shape people's knowledge and beliefs. This means that the balance of factual history and fiction must be clearly established and recognised for the sake of the readers' correct interpretation so no distorted views of the veracity of history would form. That being said, the awareness of historical accuracy can be especially problematic in the case of historical romance, which pays little attention to the factual background of the novels. This matter is further elaborated by Beck (2012: 12), who discusses how modern society, specifically young people, consider films, television series and fiction as the primary source for historical knowledge instead of turning to real history. He says that there are a lot of faulty accounts that are handled as the truth, which he refers to as being "distorted, biased, glamorised and perverted" (ibid.: 12). Yet, they seem to provoke interest in people. Beck (ibid.: 10) continues that it could be due to the failure of historians to present their work to the public, since not all of professional historical works are authentic and general reader friendly. They are generally all academic texts full of footnotes, statistics, arguments and specific vocabulary. They are not only dry and difficult to grasp for common readers, but they also lack the excitement and relatability a fictional story can offer. Thus, with television and fiction attracting bigger audiences than scholarly history texts, they are bound to shape people's perception of the past. Considering all the above, the question concerning the balance between history and fiction remains problematic. In order to spread awareness, historians should draw a firm and a reader friendly line of our

actual knowledge based on existing references, while our society needs to critically regard fictional works as bare fiction, for they are deliberately fabricated for the sake of a successful story.

1.2. Philippa Gregory and her historical romances

It is difficult to determine precisely Gregory's position as a historical or a fictional novelist as she herself is equivocal concerning the explicit nature of her work. She has claimed that "more history than fiction /.../ is where I sit, which is that I always base the unfolding narrative on the historical record" (Commonwealth Club of California 2011: 5:46), but at the same time she admits that *TOBG*'s protagonist Mary Boleyn is largely fictitious: "I don't know her [Mary]. /.../ I made her up" (Bookclub 2012: 19:00). This highlights the duality of Gregory as a historical novelist. According to her own words, she claims to pay more attention to the historical background than some other writers rather than relying on imagination alone. This preference purports to categorise her as a historical novelist. Yet, as Gregory claims to have based Mary on her own fantasy, it would be incorrect to regard her as more than a fiction writer. However, it has to be pointed out that Gregory's knowledge of history is not wholly autodidactic. She has a BA degree in history at the University of Sussex and a PhD in 18th century literature at the University of Edinburgh. The author of the present thesis does not classify Gregory as a fully historical nor a fully fictional novelist but as something in between, a writer of romance fiction with a strong interest in history. In turn, this raises the question concerning the balance between history and fiction also in *TOBG*.

Gregory's books generally talk about royal and aristocratic women of the English court (*The Last Tudor*; *The Taming of the Queen*). She prefers to refer to her protagonists as

“ordinary” (Time Team Official 2021: 35:08) or “neglected” (Bookclub 2012: 25:46) women. This is a bizarre and confusing statement, considering that she has written about well-known historical persons Mary Tudor, Katherine of Aragon, Jane Seymour, Elizabeth I and numerous other monarchs and noblewomen who have played a significant role in English history and can by no stretch of the imagination be called ordinary or neglected neither by the novelists nor historians. However, the author of this thesis believes that, for Gregory, their social status is not her chief concern. Rather, Gregory has chosen to write about them as “ordinary” women because she aspires to access the inner workings of their minds and thus brings them closer so to say to the ordinary reader. Therefore, Gregory takes the liberty to depict queens and aristocrats as common people for the sake of a better relatability. In doing this, she exercises the inalienable writer to do with her characters as she pleases, this fictional licence needing no justification. However, the knowledgeable reader has to bear in mind that they are reading fiction, not history.

Another typical trait of Gregory’s fiction is a narrative packed with intrigues, power struggles, romance, secrets and ambition. These leitmotifs are not necessarily based on historical fact and even when they are, they can be exaggerated out of all proportion or even credibility as will be seen in the analysis in Chapter Two. As a writer of romance, she is undoubtedly good at rendering the characters’ emotions and thoughts that create vivid inner lives for her characters. This facilitates the creation of a strong bond between the reader and the writer, the reader finding it easy to identify with the characters and relate to them. In return, that helps to capture readership’s interests and attention, which is important for the novel’s success. However, historical records as a rule are scanty, full of gaps and omissions and they hardly ever give access to someone’s thoughts or feelings, which means that writers of historical romance must use their imagination to fill the gaps through the use of fiction. Thus, Litt (2008: 112), for instance, argues that it is inescapable that historical fiction is

“drawn to more speculative areas of the past – hidden love lives, disguised conspiracies”. Gregory’s romances illustrate this extremely well, her strength being her ability to bring to life the hypothetical inner lives of her characters.

Gregory states that she spends considerable time on researching her subjects (Simon & Schuster Books 2009: 01:23), yet it is a love story that forms the centre of her narratives. It may be said that Gregory turns history into romance, her focus being on her characters’ feelings and personal growth, these aspects being close to the contemporary readers’ hearts. In her case, the characters’ strong emotions are frequently a prerequisite for a story based on a series of oppositions. This is the case with *TOBG*, where the rivalry on many levels between Mary and Anne Boleyn takes centre stage. Their basic opposition is between good and bad, right and wrong. Due to such stark conflict, Gregory’s characters tend to become black and white, which is easy for the reader to follow but tends to simplify the complexity of the original historical characters. Despite her claim that she believes that no human-being is flawless and that she does not apply only virtues to the protagonists (Commonwealth Club of California 2011: 1:01:13), her main characters are either heavily romanticised or distorted. Namely, Mary and Anne have been given very noticeable features to distinguish one as the good and the other as the bad. Everything related to Mary speaks of her virtue, while everything Anne does is ultimately evil. This opposition is present from the beginning of the book and is elaborated on and developed further with every new incident brought into the narrative until the gap between them that is hardly noticeable at the beginning is insurmountable in the end. The rivalry of the Boleyn sisters will be shown in Chapter Two.

1.3. Historical background of the Boleyn family

The House of Boleyn dates back to the end of the 13th century. They were initially tenant farmers working in the trade business, which successfully became their main source of prosperity. The great grandfather of Mary Boleyn, Sir Geoffrey Boleyn, was able to marry into the nobility due to the family's wealth and from this time onward, the status and prominence of the House of Boleyn continued to grow. During the Wars of the Roses (1455-1487), they originally supported the House of York, but once their defeat became inevitable, the Boleyns discreetly swore their loyalty to the Tudor dynasty. Having won the favour of the Tudors, the Boleyns became an outstanding family among the English aristocracy. Mary's father, Thomas Boleyn, worked directly under King Henry VIII as his trustworthy negotiator and diplomat. His success allowed him to marry Lady Elizabeth of the House of Howard, which brought together two ambitious families invested in money and power. (Weir 2012: 9-14)

Thomas and Elizabeth Boleyn had three children, Mary, Anne and George. Little can be said about their birth order, age and childhood as the historical records are scanty. It is known to us that Anne served at the court of Archduchess Margaret of Austria since 1513 until she and her sister were requested to accompany Mary Tudor on her marriage to the French King Louis XII in 1514. Although Anne's name does not appear on the list of the maids of honour, Mary is known having been to France. It was rumoured at the time that during her stay at the French court, Mary was a mistress of Francois I (Louis XII died at the beginning of 1515 and his cousin Francois became the new King of France), but to what extent this is true is unknown. It also remains unidentified what were Mary's whereabouts until 1520, when she married William Carey, who was part of Henry VIII's household. Her husband's position also granted Mary a place at the court and she became a maid of honour

to Queen Katherine of Aragon. At the same time, Anne joined her sister at court. (Wilkinson 2010: 21-39)

By 1522, Mary had caught Henry's interest and during her time as the king's mistress her family received numerous titles and estates. Mary became pregnant twice and gave birth to Catherine (1524) and Henry (1526) Carey but the paternity of the children remains unclear. It has been agreed upon that Mary's affair with Henry VIII ended before the birth of her son. Since then, the focus of the Boleyn family and the king shifted to Anne and Mary returned to her husband William Carey until his death in 1528 due to an outbreak of sweating sickness. As a widow, Mary was financially supported by her father and Anne was granted the wardship of Henry Carey so she could provide for him to ease her sister's burden. Mary's whereabouts are unknown once again until 1532 when she is briefly described as having accompanied Anne and Henry VIII on their trip to Calais to meet Francois I. After that she disappeared from the records until 1534 when she reappeared at the English court while being pregnant and introduced her second husband William Stafford. This brought along resentment in her family as she had acted on her own and married a soldier. By that time, Anne had given birth to Elizabeth (1533), which was followed by a miscarriage. Mary was banished from the court for her selfish and thoughtless behaviour and left without any allowance. She wrote to Thomas Cromwell for help but no response has been recorded. Similarly, there is no information about Mary's third child. (Wilkinson 2010: 40-154)

However, Mary was back at the court in 1536 during the time of Anne's third miscarriage. Soon after that, Cromwell provided "evidence" against Anne and accused her of adultery and incestuous behaviour, even though the confessions were received through the means of torture. She was publicly beheaded in the same year after the execution of the men in her service (Thomas Wyatt, Francis Weston, William Brereton) and her brother

George. It is not known where Mary was or whether she tried to contact her family. (Wilkinson 2010: 155-168)

Courtly love was a strong element of the Tudor period and flirtatious behaviour was common. Anne did have a courtship with Henry Percy in 1523 but it displeased both of the families as well as Henry VIII and therefore it remained short. She caught the king's eye around 1525 but only agreed to succumb to him as his official wife. Since then, Henry sought to annul his marriage with Katherine of Aragon but the Pope prevaricated. In 1533 Henry married Anne and declared himself the head of the Church of England in the following year. However, she was beheaded three years later for treason in the form of adultery and incest. It cannot be said for certain whether Anne or George (or any of the executed men serving her) were guilty as the trial was rushed and evidence one-sided and often fictionalised. (Ives 2008: 63-344) Lofts (1979: 142-143) explains that Cromwell ordered spies to collect "bits of gossip and hearsay" in order to get rid of Anne. Lofts states that keeping adultery a secret as a Queen during the Tudor era would have been nearly impossible as there were attendants everywhere and "everyone's privacy was a luxury" (ibid.: 143). Although it is commonly believed that Anne was not guilty, *TOBG* shows Anne to be responsible for not only adultery and incest but also for witchcraft. Furthermore, her final miscarriage in the novel results in an awfully malformed and monstrous fetus, which has not been mentioned in the official historical records.

1.4. Criticism of *The Other Boleyn Girl*

TOBG has been subjected to strong criticism, mostly negative, especially from professional historians. Gregory has pointed out that she based her story largely on historical footnotes like wardrobe and party entries, other mainly insignificant documentation and a

single letter Mary had written to Thomas Cromwell that has survived (Arapahoe Libraries 2019: 02:15). This meagre amount of historical fact highlights the amount of fiction Gregory has employed. Naturally, this imbalance between fact and fiction has attracted the attention (sometimes even ire) of several critics.

Ridgway (The Anne Boleyn Files and Tudor Society 2019: 02:07-02:50) points out that *TOBG* includes a number of inaccuracies and shortcomings as far as the historical background is concerned and she stresses that Gregory has written “**fiction, inspired** [emphasis mine] by real historical events and real people”. According to her, the major inaccuracies in *TOBG* are Mary’s sexual inexperience, Anne taking the wardship of little Henry Carey without Mary’s consent, the incestuous relationship between Anne and George and Anne practicing witchcraft. She continues that there are also several unverified things that Gregory has added or distorted that have no historical basis. Such are the scheming meetings of the Howard clan, Mary’s long and passionate relationship with Henry VIII and him having fathered both Catherine and Henry Carey, Anne giving birth to a deformed fetus, Anne’s attempt to poison Bishop Fisher, Catherine Carey serving in Anne’s household and Mary actually giving birth to her third child. (ibid.: 05:35-48:00) Weir (2012: 2) is also critical of Gregory, stating that her novel has given “the wrong idea” about Mary because of its numerous inaccuracies. She even goes as far as to consider Gregory’s Mary the most “romanticised, mythologised and misrepresented” subject she has encountered (ibid.: 1). Kennedy (2016: 48) reproves Gregory for “bending or outright disregarding historical facts” for the sake of her plot, despite claiming to be aiming at authentic history. The author of the present thesis is also of the opinion that since *TOBG* belongs to the historical romance genre, Gregory brings into the focus of her story chiefly the various sexual relationships of Mary and Anne and has rather deliberately distorted the known historical facts, scarce as they are.

However, it must be acknowledged that Gregory wrote *TOBG* in 2001, whereas the independent biographies used to highlight the shortcomings of her work were published after that date. This means that she had no access to this research and it is unjust to hold this lack of knowledge against her by her critics. In fact, much of this research was probably inspired by the warm reception her novel received, drawing attention to a largely neglected minor historical character at the court of Henry VIII. Furthermore, Saxton (2013: 93) points out that since the information about the Boleyn family is limited to certain key events only, historians rely on speculations even now without a view to certain events without being able to provide any actual references. Similarly, Weir (2012: 4) admits that there is a lot that cannot be known about Mary due to the lack of material and Wilkinson (2010: 25) states that barely anything about Mary's time before and during her stay in France is known and it "could only be conjecture". The subjectivity of historians is further shown by Saxton (2013: 100), who argues that several authors talk about Mary's reputation as a mistress of Francois I, yet none of them mentions proper evidence in addition to rumours, which consequently means that their argumentation is based on speculation and contemporary hearsay.

As the known historical records are not exhaustive but rather scanty concerning the details of Mary and Anne Boleyn's lives, the author of the present thesis was intrigued about the balance between historical fact and poetic licence in Gregory's *TOBG* and in the next chapter examines it more closely. The aim is not to show that Gregory has distorted history purposefully but rather to demonstrate how she has picked and highlighted certain facts to suit the purpose of her narrative. It has to be borne in mind that what she writes is first and foremost fiction.

CHAPTER TWO: MARY AND ANNE BOLEYN IN OPPOSITION IN *THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL*

This section of the present thesis analyses how Gregory has portrayed Mary and Anne Boleyn in *TOBG* and created their rivalry through the use of fiction. The sisters are depicted as black and white opposites both physically and mentally while often lacking historical accuracy, therefore the novel is looked at as a work of fiction. The goal of the following analysis is to show how Gregory has manipulated history in favour of fiction, which, in return, might shape the perception of the reader. First, the analysis will cover the major historical inaccuracies concerning the Boleyn sisters in the novel. Then, the focus will shift to their divergent qualities and characteristics that Gregory has applied. Lastly, their differences in physical appearance will be discussed.

2.1. Fictional rather than historical

TOBG appears to be a fictional rather than a historical novel. As mentioned in Chapter One (Johnson 2009), one of the common objectives of the historical fiction genre is exploring people's everyday lives. Gregory has often emphasised that she tries to look at historically famous people from the perspective of them being 'ordinary' people. In accordance with this principle, she has chosen to portray Mary as a rather unsophisticated woman who cherishes tranquillity and simplicity. She does not appear as a particularly noble lady and once she is banished from the court and living with her second husband William Stafford at his farm, she is made to admit rather critically of the social mores of the court: "I remembered the endless drudgery of dancing with men I did not like, and flirting with men I did not desire, playing cards and losing a small fortune, and forever trying to please everyone around me." (Gregory 2017: 413). The novel also focuses on the characters' sexual

love and relationships, which is another typical trait of historical romances that was discussed in the previous chapter (Hughes 1993). Gregory has chosen to include several rather explicit sex scenes to convey Mary's views on having an intercourse which shows her to be rather liberal and free-thinking in matters concerning sex and relationships which look rather incongruous in the religious and even puritan context of the time, considering that fornication (that is sex outside marriage), for instance with her future husband Stafford, was condemned by the church as a cardinal sin. Yet, as the historical records do not give insight into information about such intimate and personal situations, it is all fiction based on imagination and preferences of the author ostensibly for the sake of making the narrative more exciting for the reader. Since Mary's daily life and interior monologue form a major part of the book, it can be concluded that *TOBG* tends to be first and foremost a fictional novel.

Additionally, Gregory has written about events that are not verified by the known facts. For example, there are no historical records to prove the scheming meetings of the Howard clan or Anne trying to poison Bishop Fisher, let alone committing incest (The Anne Boleyn Files and Tudor Society 2019: 12:00-45:50), yet the author persistently tries to convince the reader of their veracity. The Boleyns and the Howards who are constantly plotting to use the sisters for the family's advantage are based on conjectures of historians and Gregory's own fantasy. It is not certain whether Anne had anything to do with the attempt to poison Bishop Fisher, yet Gregory strongly suggests that it was her doing: "She [Anne] was not a woman to let something like sin or crime stand in her way – she was guilty of one murder." (ibid.: 43:30-43:42). Furthermore, in the novel, Anne resorts to witchcraft, which ultimately leads to her downfall, but that was not part of the accusations originally levelled at her. The author denigrates Anne further by dwelling at length on her supposedly having given birth to a monstrous fetus as a result of having an incestuous relationship with

her brother George. Although the factual evidence is lacking, Gregory has added these themes in order to make Anne seem as vile as possible by the end of the book showing it to be the results of her soaring ambition. Thus, *TOBG* includes a number of things that the author has presented as the truth which on closer inspection turn out to be no more than the result of her vivid imagination.

In addition, Gregory has also consciously ignored certain historical aspects that do not fit the image of her story. Hughes (1993: 7) refers to such act as “‘sanitizing’ of the past”. Gregory has excluded a number of facts that would not contribute to her ostensible rivalry of the Boleyn sisters. Some of the omissions even forthright contradict Mary’s revulsion which she is made to feel towards her family in the book which supposedly was the incentive for her strive for independence. For instance, the author has depicted Anne and their father Thomas Boleyn as lacking any interest in helping Mary after she becomes a widow and even Henry VIII is made to ignore her. Quite to the contrary, Anne even uses Mary’s unstable situation to force her further into submission by adopting her son against her will. Mary reflects on her sister’s brutality and influence over her fate: “I’m only the other Boleyn girl. No money, no husband, no future unless you [Anne] say so.” (Gregory 2017: 249). In reality, it is known that the king was actually still somewhat affectionate towards Mary and turned to her family for aid on her behalf and as a result, Anne became the caretaker of Mary’s son Henry Carey and Thomas Boleyn provided financial support to Mary (Wilkinson 2010: 114). Another fact Gregory has ignored concerns Mary’s daughter Catherine Carey. She did not appear at the court until three years after Anne’s execution (The Anne Boleyn Files and Tudor Society 2019: 45:55-46:42) yet, the author has included her among the royal household. From the perspective of the narrative, this lays the foundation for Anne coming over as a remorseless woman when she orders Catherine to accompany her to the Tower after her imprisonment, which greatly distresses Mary who is thus made to share her lot

rather undeservedly. Therefore, Gregory rejects the historical facts that would add a more humane side to the cold-hearted members of the Boleyn family. Even though leaving out certain historical details could make the text more appealing to the contemporary reader, it can by no means be considered appropriate by a historical novelist claiming to aim at authenticity.

Furthermore, as discussed above (Kennedy 2016), Gregory has been criticised for strongly distorting the historical background. The purpose for it is to bend history in Mary's favour to show her from a better light than her sister. Although historians generally agree upon Mary having been a mistress of Francois I, Gregory describes her as sexually inexperienced, speaking about her first husband: "William did it once a week or so, and that in the dark, and quickly done, and I never much liked it. I don't know what it is I am supposed to do." (Gregory 2017: 21). Her relationship with Henry VIII is also greatly elaborated on and characterised as lengthy and affectionate, while in reality the precise nature of their relationship remains largely unknown (The Anne Boleyn Files and Tudor Society 2019: 21:55-22:10). Historians speculate about when it started, whether it was a one-night stand, when it ended and who fathered Mary's children. Thus, as it was explained in Chapter One (Litt 2008), historical novelists tend to write about speculative areas, such as their characters' love lives. In addition to exploring Mary's relationships without any historical basis, Gregory has also heavily altered Anne's actions and accusations levelled at her. Although she is considered by historians to be rather blameless than guilty since the allegations were largely conjectural (Ives 2008: 344), the author not only shows Anne to be unequivocally guilty of adultery and incest but also includes witchcraft among the imputations. There are also no official records of the malformed fetus that was the supposed result of Anne's last miscarriage, yet Gregory has strongly exaggerated this topic to emphasise her inhumaneness. To summarise, the historical background of *TOBG* includes several inaccuracies and

distortions that are based on fiction and have been implemented for the advancement of the sisterly opposition.

2.2. Divergent qualities of Mary and Anne

Saroff (2014: 11-15), discussing some feminist aspects and female protagonists of historical fiction, explains that many modern historical novelists seek to feature female main characters since the contemporary readership tends to lean towards feminism and prefers stories that cover women's issues over historically precise world- or character-building. However, she points out that some novels, including *TOBG*, describe characters with stereotypical female characteristics, such as emotional expressiveness, passively following someone's lead, achieving independency as a response to a threat and achieving happiness through a romantic relationship (ibid.: 25-39). Gregory's Mary fits into Saroff's category of a stereotypically described woman. In Gregory's novel, Mary is portrayed as very emotionally attached to her children and her lovers and she is not afraid to admit how she feels: "I miss him [Henry Carey] and I miss Catherine. /.../ I am so sad that I want to do nothing but lie on my bed and put my face into my pillows and weep and weep." (Gregory 2017: 157). In addition, Mary is initially depicted as a passive and obedient daughter who dutifully follows the orders from her family even if she opposes their plans: "Surely to God you can all see that the one thing, the *one thing* is that I always, always, do as I am told." (ibid.: 110). However, after the attention of her family and the king switches to Anne, Mary realises how insignificant she has become and the uncertainty of her future becomes apparent: "I would not be the king's favourite, I would not be the centre of the court. I would lose the place I had worked for ever since I was twelve years old." (ibid.: 201). Due to the perspective of being abandoned completely by her family and the king and written off as nothing more than a whore, Mary's priorities are made to shift to yearning for a simple farm

life she had once grown so fond of at her childhood home Hever Castle: “I could live on a little farm and be happy.” (ibid.: 51). Rather than furthering her social status at the court like everyone else, she is shown to dedicate herself to her children and she ultimately falls in love and marries for love which in the context of the time was extremely rare for a noblewoman: “I had found a man I loved; and married for love. I would never suggest that this was a mistake.” (ibid.: 413). It is thanks to William Stafford and his liberating influence that Mary can become both independent and happy in the novel. Thus, Gregory has portrayed Mary through stereotypical female characteristics and made her into an emotional woman who, thanks to a man’s guidance, develops from an obedient daughter into an independent woman, embracing an uncertain future with determination.

Anne, on the other hand, is depicted as the opposite of a stereotypical woman. She almost always conceals her true emotions for the sake of her position at the court and she utilises her wits to alter her reactions and responses according to what is currently the best option. Due to her constant acting and lying she becomes weary and anxious but Mary and George are the only people who know about Anne’s real condition. Mary refers to Anne’s fake behaviour as “glittery and hard” and she says that “I longed for /.../ the world where things were as they appeared.” (ibid.: 438). The only times Anne’s mask comes off are the moments of absolute desperation or panic. Furthermore, unlike Mary, Anne is described as an independent woman from the beginning of the novel. Even though she follows the family’s orders, she also makes her own decisions for personal gain: “I am playing my own game and I don’t want you [Mary] interrupting. Nobody will know anything until I am ready to tell them.” (ibid.: 92). Once Anne becomes the queen she even neglects her family: “The king is wholly mine. /.../ I need no-one.” (ibid.: 366). Unlike Mary, she does not need to become independent as a response to dangers regarding her future, she is simply driven by her desires. Gregory has turned her into a ruthless and heartless woman whose ambition is

limitless: she seduces Henry VIII and steals him from both Mary and the queen, accepts Henry Carey's wardship without Mary's consent, plans the death of Cardinal Wolsey and Bishop Fisher, turns to witchcraft, commits incest and tries to deceive the whole country and the king with it. From the very start, everything Anne does in the book is for her own gain and she does not need a man on her side to guide her to the path of independency. The way Gregory has portrayed Anne contradicts the stereotypical female characteristics the author has given to Mary and as a result, Anne appears as an ambitious and independent woman who is mindful of her own success and not letting herself be stopped by anyone's emotions.

However, given the historical background of the 16th century it becomes clear that Gregory does not present the authentic English women of the time. The author simply re-imagines the characters from a modern perspective. Mary develops into a brave and independent woman who chooses to shape her own future, which was highly unlikely back then. For example, it was historically unreal that a woman could talk back to her husband: "Now hear this, husband [William Carey] /.../. You were happy enough to get your title and your lands and your wealth and the favour of the king, and we all know why those came to you." (ibid.: 218). Furthermore, a lady of aristocratic rank would have never been allowed to ride alone in the countryside without a single servant or an escort. Yet Gregory describes Mary casually stopping at an ale house while being covered in dirt and dust. This would have been an unacceptable sight for any noblewoman. There was simply no liberty for a woman to do as she pleased at the time. Similar inaccuracies apply in the case of Anne. It is very unlikely that she turned against her family, especially in such a disrespectful manner: "Every time I step, I trip over one of you, asking for another favour." (ibid.: 365). She even goes as far as to threaten her uncle Howard: "You could see the inside of the Tower again at one word from me." (ibid.: 366). Gregory shows Anne as someone with immense influence and cruel measures even if the historical records provide no evidence for it. Thus, the author has

often distorted and even excluded the authentic historical aspects that do not fit her modern perspective of the characters and the narrative.

Another essential trait pertaining to women Gregory has featured in her book is fertility. Although the historical records indeed state that Mary was pregnant three times and Anne had three miscarriages, Gregory has included exaggerated and unproven information in order to take the Boleyn sisters' opposition even further. In the novel, Mary is constantly portrayed as fecund with both Henry VIII and William Stafford and she gives birth to three children, naming her second daughter Anne. While it is known that Mary was pregnant for the third time, there is no historical record about her second daughter. Thus, it has been suggested that her pregnancy either resulted in a miscarriage or the child died soon after being born (Wilkinson 2010: 154). In contrast to fertile Mary, Anne is shown to have troubles conceiving after Elizabeth and fails to go full term. She has a total of three miscarriages, which have also been recorded in history. However, Gregory strongly hints that the last pregnancy was achieved through an incestuous relationship with George. As a result, Anne gives birth to a heavily deformed fetus, a "monster /.../ with a spine flayed open and a huge head, twice as large as the spindly little body" (Gregory 2017: 472). In addition to a single document that has been deemed rather unreliable there is no official factual evidence that Anne had an intercourse with George nor that any of her miscarriages resulted in a horribly malformed fetus (Ives 2008: 296-297). Therefore, Gregory has distorted and exaggerated the historical background of the Boleyn sisters' fertility in Mary's favour to portray her as desirably fecund and Anne as disgracefully barren.

The last feminine trait that plays an important role in the novel is motherhood, which Gregory has chosen as one of the major opposing features of the Boleyn sisters. Mary is depicted as a caring mother in the modern sense who plays with her children, tells them stories and surprises them with gifts, a practice that became common in aristocratic

households in the late 18th century after J.-J. Rousseau published his *Emile, Or on Education*. Yet, Gregory's Mary does not regard her children as new political pawns for her family nor does she care about their gender, which is historically unconvincing, considering the predetermined and different fates prescribed by social mores for boys and girls: "I fell completely and utterly in love with her [Catherine Carey] and I could not for a moment imagine that anything would have been any better if she had been a boy." (Gregory 2017: 122). She is shown to deeply cherish and care about her children equally. Anne, on the other hand, is described to have neither concern nor empathy as a mother. She is visibly disappointed after giving birth to Elizabeth: "A girl. What good is a girl to us?" (ibid.: 387). The only time she regards her daughter with pride is when Elizabeth could function as the last resort for her in order to clear her name of the accusations. She hysterically strips her child in the middle of Henry VIII's meeting and cries out: "Her [Elizabeth] skin is perfect, she has not a blemish on her body /.../. No-one can tell me that this is not a child blessed by God." (ibid.: 497). Gregory causes the sisters to differ even more for the sake of deepening their rivalry. She shows Anne as an extremely spiteful person who is willing to steal Henry Carey and order Catherine Carey into her service in the Tower, which makes Mary seem like the victim of her sister's cruelty. However, both of these incidents are historically inaccurate. As discussed previously (The Anne Boleyn Files and Tudor Society 2019), it is known that Anne had Mary's permission to care for her son and that her daughter did not appear at the royal court until 1539, which means that she did not serve Anne at any point. Thus, Gregory clearly portrays Mary as the embodiment of a contemporary loving mother while Anne is depicted as a selfish and manipulative woman who has no interest in the well-being of either her own or Mary's children.

2.3. Virtuous Mary and sinful Anne

Gregory presents Mary as a virtuous woman with good qualities: humility, diligence, honesty and righteousness. As Mary grows more independent, the author empathically shows her as a woman of only good characteristics. While staying at Hever after upsetting Henry VIII and her family, she starts to realise that she is not interested in her family's political gambles. Even though she often disapproves of her uncle Howard's instructions to do more for her family, she is still obliged to follow through with them. Yet she does not ask Henry VIII for titles nor estates during their affair because her modesty and conscience simply cannot abuse the man she loves: "I want the man [Henry VIII]. Not because he's king." (Gregory 2017: 51). Mary's sense of justice and honesty that Gregory has attributed to her stand out after she has betrayed Katherine of Aragon's trust several times and she takes responsibility for it. Although she had no other choice, for her children's well-being was on the line, Mary still confesses out of respect for the queen: "I always seem to betray you, but it is never my intention." (ibid.: 277). After being banished from the court and left with no money, Gregory describes Mary as a hard-working farmer's wife. Despite never having had to work before, she is eager to be able to earn her own living: "I liked the work since it put food on our table." (ibid.: 413). Thus, the reader is left with the impression that Mary does not care about rising in status especially at the expense of other people. Rather, she is a humble and honest woman who is willing to work hard for the future of her husband and children.

Gregory's Anne appears as a complete opposite to Mary once again. She acts selfishly and is proud of her accomplishments even if it means ruining someone else's position. The author shows Anne as a merciless brute who does not even value others' lives: "I have his [Cardinal Wolsey] house, I will have his life." (ibid.: 273). For her, ambition and wits are her strongest characteristics and once she plans something beneficial for her future,

she follows through with it: “Where I aim, I will hit.” (ibid.: 97). She is described as cold-hearted towards everyone she does not need for her grand plans and in order to secure her position as the queen she is willing to deceive everyone: “If we call in that crowd, we tell the world. At the moment no-one knows for sure /.../; it’s all rumour.” (ibid.: 399). Honesty and righteousness have no presence in Anne’s character in the novel since she is determined to manipulate anyone in order to pursue her goals and give birth to a prince. Although both of the Boleyn sisters are envious of each other at the start of the book, Mary comes to terms with Anne’s success and does not harbour jealousy. Rather, she is shown to reflect on how unpleasant and suppressed the life at the court had been compared to the countryside: “For the first time ever I felt as if I had taken my life into my own hands /.../ following my own desires.” (ibid.: 353). On the contrary, Anne, eventually the most powerful woman in England, remains jealous of her sister until the very end: “What breaks her [Anne] heart is thinking of you [Mary] finding love, while she is /.../ frightened and unhappy.” (ibid.: 415). Thus, Gregory portrays Anne as a proud, envious and greedy woman who does not let her conscience stop her from improving her status at the court.

Another aspect of the novel focuses on the Boleyn sisters’ chastity. Although both of them tend to give in to sexual desire, Mary seemingly even more than Anne, Gregory has still depicted Mary as more virtuous than her sister. Namely, she is described as innocent and inexperienced in bed, yet she naturally seems to please Henry VIII as he keeps sending for her night after night. Throughout her affair with William Stafford, she develops into the real lover: “We rode out into the sand dunes and made love /.../ which was the most passionate of courtships.” (ibid.: 341). Gregory romanticises Mary and shows her as an embodiment of a naturally desirable and loving woman. Anne, on the other hand, remains sexually clueless and Mary even has to teach her how to please the king several years after Anne became his mistress. She hypocritically calls Mary out for acting like a “whore” and

marrying “Sir William Nothing” (ibid.: 406) but by the end of the novel it is her who is shown to completely lose her dignity. Anne is constantly described as having an unnaturally close and intimate bond with George: “His [George] hand brushed her [Anne] skin and I [Mary] saw her close her eyes in pleasure at the continual caress.” (ibid.: 325-326). Ultimately, Gregory strongly hints that Anne’s last miscarriage was a result of her intercourse with her brother: “No-one knows what went into the making of this baby /.../. For I went on a journey to the very gates of hell to get him.” (ibid.: 450). Although the Boleyn sisters’ controversial sexuality is highlighted in the book, Lofts (1979: 32) suggests that they were rather similar in reality, for they had both acquired a bad reputation before marrying: Mary in France with Francois I and Anne in England with Henry Percy. Yet, Gregory has portrayed Mary as a sexually desirable lover who conveniently happens to know all the “whore’s tricks” (Gregory 2017: 255) to profoundly contribute to the relationship. Anne, on the other hand, is depicted as someone sexually unskilled and corrupt.

The previous evaluation accentuates another opposing feature of the Boleyn sisters. Namely, Mary has always remained in control of her body throughout the narrative. Even though she was ordered to sleep with Henry VIII, the reader is left with the impression that it was her own wish: “But I am a girl of fourteen in love for the first time!” (ibid.: 45). Once she goes back to William Carey, she is reluctant towards her husband’s touch. In return, he does not force himself upon Mary, meaning that she continues to be in charge of her body. During her relationship with William Stafford she once again acts according to her true desire: “God knew that I would not say ‘No’.” (ibid.: 341). However, Gregory’s Anne visibly regards her body as a tool that is only meant to work in her favour. It functions as a contract in her case in order to keep a man: “Not even the Percy family will be able to wriggle out of it when Henry and I [Anne] tell them that we are wedded and bedded. /.../ That is why I am doing this, /.../ so that it does not come to nothing.” (ibid.: 100). Therefore, Gregory shows

the reader that it is Mary who is also physically independent as she maintains control over her body and sexuality, while Anne simply makes her body work for her ambitious objectives.

2.4. The Boleyn sisters' physical appearance

Gregory has taken the Boleyn sisters' opposition further by highlighting them as contradictory even in looks. Mary is described as fair-haired with bright eyes and she does not dress out of the ordinary, while Anne is depicted as having dark hair and eyes and she always wears very stylish gowns of French fashion. However, it has been suggested that in reality Mary had dark brown eyes and hair (Wilkinson 2010: 64) and Anne was also likely a brunette (Ives 2008: 40). After Mary is banished from the court and starts to live with William Stafford at his farm, her skin becomes tanned and her hands become dry and rough due to hard physical work, yet she is still regarded as a beauty even by the king though she now most likely looks like a sunburnt peasant woman. On the contrary, Anne's long years at the court make her age more quickly and her face becomes pale and wrinkled. It appears that Gregory's aim is to make the physical appearance of the Boleyn sisters reflect their fictional personalities. Mary's bright and cheerful looks demonstrate her loving and considerate nature, while Anne's deteriorating complexion reflects her internal evil and selfish motives.

Another opposing feature Gregory has attributed to the Boleyn sisters is their full names. George is the only person who occasionally addresses Anne as Annamarie and Mary as Marianne. However, no such information was mentioned in any of the biographies available when writing this thesis. It might be Gregory's way of telling the reader that the sisters are like the two sides of the same coin. After Anne's execution, Mary says that "He

[Henry VIII] had taken away my other self: Anne” (ibid.: 528). This can create quite a compelling paradox due to their full names. In other words, Mary lost her other self in terms of losing her sister as her other side, while at the same time getting rid of the symbolic ‘-anne’ (as there was no one to call her Marianne anymore, thus she would only be Mary from that moment on). Thus, it appears that during Anne’s lifetime the inverted names of the Boleyn sisters signal their connection to one another, while it marks the end of their rivalry after her beheading.

CONCLUSION

The present thesis explored the balance of history and fiction in Gregory's *The Other Boleyn Girl* with the aim of ascertaining how Gregory uses the known historical facts and her imagination in order to further her narrative. Being a historical romance novelist, she was expected to take rather great liberties with historical data. For this purpose, Gregory's novel was examined with the idea to show how, using oppositions, she would come to defining the characters of Mary and Anne Boleyn as dead opposites. It also appeared that in order to achieve this effect Gregory has been rather liberal with the known historical facts, choosing to omit or even distort at will things that are generally known. She has taken such liberties because much of what is known about the Boleyn sisters is either unreliable or plain hearsay and thus, she is given certain leeway by the reluctance of academic historians to address these topics. It also tallies with her principle of writing, which foregrounds her characters' inner lives rather than depicts them in the broad context of the historical narrative. As nothing is known about the inner workings of her female characters' minds, she cannot be condemned for distorting history, as some historians have implied, as there is nothing to distort. The more so because at the time of writing the novel, research into the life of Mary Boleyn was scarce. Definite biographies only appeared after the publication of Gregory's book. What she offers to her readers is a very personal take on history.

Gregory's novel is built on stark oppositions, her treatment of the two women tending to be black and white. These oppositions are numerous, concentrating on the two women's appearance, character, love life, fecundity and ambition. Although the sisters stand on relatively even ground at the beginning of the novel, being rather similar in appearance and outlook, the opposition between them deepens as the book unfolds and finally leads to them being shown as complete opposites in all aspects of their lives. The author has altered history in Mary's favour to make her appear as a stereotypically feminine and virtuous woman while Anne is shown as her evil rival. Gregory has employed fiction to add certain themes that are historically contestable and even probably inaccurate in order to further the sisters' opposition, for instance Anne committing incest, which was part of the trumped up charges against her. Similarly, Gregory has ignored certain historical facts that would make the reader regard Mary from a worse and Anne from a better light, for example Mary being King Francois I's mistress and Anne adopting Mary's son without her consent. All the inaccuracies and alterations the author has made have been implemented for the advancement of the sisterly opposition which is supposed to make the narrative more exciting for the contemporary reader. Thus, Mary comes over as an emotional, obedient, humble and loving woman who develops into an independent lover and mother thanks to her second husband William Stafford. She is made to evoke sympathy in the reader while Anne is portrayed as a merciless, repulsive, unpleasant, emotionless and ambitious woman who acts independently for her own gain. Gregory has also furthered the sisters' rivalry by making Mary seem attractive, fecund, desirable and even physically independent while Anne ends up exhausted, barren and corrupt for her goals. Despite what is historically known about the Boleyn sisters, the author has chosen to leave the reader with the impression that they were different in almost everything and that Mary was more virtuous of the sisters and eventually found true happiness and love as her justified reward while Anne was beheaded for her crimes.

In conclusion, it can be said that Gregory's *The Other Boleyn Girl* is first and foremost imaginative historical fiction which employs history to provide depth and colour to an

otherwise rather ordinary romance story that is characterised by stereotypical oppositions between the good and bad characters within a fairly conventional love story with a happy ending. The reader should always bear in mind that this is rather a fictional than historical novel and not mistake it for real history.

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RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL

ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

Johanna Pöldmaa

Balance between History and Fiction in Philippa Gregory's *The Other Boleyn Girl*: the Opposition between Mary and Anne Boleyn

Tasakaal ajaloo ja fiktsiooni vahel Philippa Gregory romaanis "The Other Boleyn Girl": Mary ja Anne Boleyni vaheline opositsioon

Bakalaureusetöö

2022

Lehekülgede arv: 36

Annotatsioon:

Suur hulk raamatuid ja filme tõestab, et huvi Tudorite dünastia vastu on endiselt suur. Ometi ei ole ajaloolised dokumendid ammendamatud, mistõttu ei pruugita ajalugu taaselustada ainuüksi autentsuse eesmärgil. See omakorda tähendab, et kahaneva faktilise täpsuse tulemusel võivad inimesed ajalugu valesti mõista. Käesolev bakalaureusetöö analüüsib, kuidas on tuntud ajaloolise romaani kirjanik Philippa Gregory oma teoses "The Other Boleyn Girl" kujutanud Mary ja Anne Boleynit ning kas või kuidas on ta loonud tasakaalu ajaloo ja fiktsiooni vahel. Antud uurimuse teiseks eesmärgiks on näidata, kuidas on Gregory moonutanud ajaloolisi fakte oma narratiivi kasuks, mis omakorda võib mõjutada lugeja arusaamasid ajaloolisest täpsusest. Bakalaureusetöö esimene peatükk defineerib mõisted 'ajalooline fiktsioon' ja 'ajalooline romaan' ning arutleb Gregory ajaloolise romaani kirjutamise stiili üle. Vaatluse alla tuleb ka autori kuulumine ajaloolise ja fiktsionaalse kirjaniku kategooriasse ning teadaolev ajalooline taust Boleyni õdede ja nende perekonna kohta. Esimese peatüki lõpuosa tutvustab kriitikat, mis on raamatu "The Other Boleyn Girl" kohta kirjutatud. Teine peatükk analüüsib, kuidas Gregory on kasutanud fiktsiooni ja naiselikke stereotüüpe, et Mary't näidata kui heade ja ihaldusväärsete iseloomuomadustega naist, samas kui autor on Anne'i portreerinud kui Mary vaenulikku vastandust, mis omakorda loob ja edendab õdede rivaliteeti. Lisaks arutleb teine peatükk selle üle, kuidas on Gregory moonutanud ajaloolisi fakte oma narratiivi kasuks, et muuta jutustus põnevamaks ja kaasaegsemaks modernsetele lugejatele. Uurimuse tulemusena selgub, et Gregory ei taotle oma romaanis ajaloolist täpsust, vaid keskendub pigem spekulatiivsetele teemadele ning toob esile Boleyni õdede vastandused, mis põhinevad ennekõike autori fantaasial ja moonutatud ja liialdatud ajaloolistel faktidel.

Märksõnad: Inglise kirjandus, ajalooline romaan, Philippa Gregory, *The Other Boleyn Girl*, Mary Boleyn, Anne Boleyn, kontrastid, rivaliteet, opositsioon

**LIHTLITSENTS LÕPUTÖÖ REPRODUTSEERIMISEKS JA
LÕPUTÖÖ ÜLDSUSELE KÄTTESAADAVAKS TEGEMISEKS**

Mina, Johanna Põldmaa,

1. annan Tartu Ülikoolile tasuta loa (lihtlitsentsi) enda loodud teose

Balance between History and Fiction in Philippa Gregory's *The Other Boleyn Girl*: the Opposition between Mary and Anne Boleyn,

mille juhendaja on Pilvi Rajamäe,

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