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***Six The Musical: A new Portrayal of Henry VIII's wives***

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**Abstract:** This final dissertation analyses the historical references in three songs of *Six: The Musical* (2017), a production that tells the story of the Six wives of Henry VIII from their perspective, with the aid of Postmodernism techniques such as rewriting and intertextuality. Each song functions as a journey to discover the background of the relationships between the King of England and his wives from a feminist point of view. The aim is to disclose how these techniques and references have been used in the songs and how they are used to change the traditional representation of these six women.

**Keywords:** Six: The Musical, Wives, Rewriting, Empowerment, History, Divorce.

**Resumen:** Este Trabajo de Fin de Grado analiza las referencias históricas en tres canciones que pertenecen a *Six: El Musical* (2017), una producción que cuenta la historia de las seis mujeres de Enrique VIII desde sus puntos de vista, con la ayuda de técnicas del postmodernismo, como lo son reescribir una historia o la intertextualidad. Cada canción sirve como un viaje para descubrir la relación del rey de Inglaterra con sus esposas desde una perspectiva feminista. El objetivo es investigar cómo estas técnicas y referencias se han empleado en las canciones y cómo han cambiado la representación tradicional de estas seis mujeres.

**Palabras clave:** Six: El Musical, Esposas, Reescribir, Empoderamiento, Historia, Divorcio.

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## 1. Introduction

*Six: The Musical* is a highly acclaimed stage production that takes a modern and feminist outlook to the lives of the six wives of the English monarch Henry VIII. The aim of this final dissertation is to explore the representation of Henry VIII's six wives in the songs of this 2018 musical and compare it with their portrayal throughout history. Written by Toby Marlow and Lucy Moss, the show started as an idea of two Cambridge University students in their final year of English and History, who were proposed in 2017 to bring an original story to the table that would substitute the usual performance of a classic work of their school in the annual Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Therefore, according to an interview both gave to Seth Rudetsky in Playbill Newspaper, the co-directors started to consider different topics that were of public domain to prevent copyright issues. When a literary work is copyrighted, to be able to perform it legally is necessary to pay to the original author or company an amount of money. Since they were just two students, they could not afford the original work and decided to change the perspective of the stories. At first, they contemplated *The Real Housewives of Shakespeare* as a topic. However, they decided to focus on the wives of one of the most famous English monarchs, Henry VIII, as they thought it was less known.

During the writing process, Marlow and Moss wanted to break with the common approach of history which retells history from the King's perspective, and rather state what happened from the wives' outlook. Furthermore, the pair wanted to "mess with the musical format" (BBC News, 2018) and structured the show as if it was a pop concert and all Catherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves, Katherine Howard, and Catherine Parr, were part of a girl band called Six. "Musical Theatre often has lame parts for women", "We wanted to write loads of meaty, funny parts for women" They responded. (Lucy Moss for the BBC News).

Notwithstanding, the show did not have any impact after the festival, and it was not after it was performed again at Cambridge University, that it received a bigger opportunity. The musical producer Kenny Wax was invited to see the production and was delighted by the result. He allowed Marlo and Moss to bring the show to the Arts Theatre West End in London, where the A- list musicals can be found. After the positive reviews, "A beacon of hope for the Future of British Musicals" (Daily Telegraph), "The most uplifting new British musical I have ever had the privilege to watch" (The Evening Standard), the showcases were brought to different corners of the country with a UK Tour, that was followed by a studio album. The latter is a significant detail because the songs were moved to a more open world and they

separate themselves from the Musical theatre category, thus making a diverse audience to listen and enjoy the song. Moreover, *Six: The Musical* crossed the pond, premiering on Broadway in 2018 alluring the American public too. Additionally, the show won several awards, including two 2022 Tony Awards for Best Original Score Written for Theatre, and Best Costume Design of a Musical; 2019 and 2022 WhatsOnStage Award for Best Off West End Production and Best West End show among many other nominations and awards. (*Six: The Musical* Official webpage).

Returning to the music, the studio album consists of nine songs that are organised to tell the story of our historical figures. To know the historical references, in this dissertation I will analyse the lyrics of three of the nine tracks, as well as contrasting the similarities and differences of the songs with history taking into account the postmodernist idea of multiple narratives and intertextuality in order to demonstrate how the assumptions of these six women throughout history change by applying these techniques. The songs I have chosen are Ex-wives, No Way, and Don't Lose Ur Head. All the lyrics are taken from the Genius web page. In addition, this dissertation will be divided in five different sections. I will start by introducing what is postmodernism and its techniques and how they have influenced the creation of this Musical. I will continue with the analysis of the lyrics of each song and commenting the historical references that can be found in them, and I will end the dissertation by giving a conclusion of my findings.

## **2. The Influence of Postmodernism in *Six: The Musical***

Despite the fact that the analysis of the song and the historical references are the main topics of this work, it is important to understand why the authors of *Six: The Musical* decided to take a different approach on history and tell the story from the wives' perspective and not the English Monarch. In order to do so, it is necessary to explain rewriting on history through postmodernism and intertextuality, as well as the influence of previous musical productions who also have taken these approaches in recent years. Intertextuality is defined as “a relationship of copresence between two texts or among several texts: that is to say, identically and typically as the actual presence of one text within another” (Genette, 1-2). It can be divided into the “most explicit and literal form [...] the transitional practice of quoting”, and the “less explicit” (Genette, 2), which are plagiarism and allusion.

Postmodernism is a literary and artistic movement of the 20th century whose main objective was the break with the single reality by applying multiple narratives. The multiple

narration consisted of telling one story from several perspectives. Moreover, this idea has helped to rewrite history by applying intertextuality and changing the point of view of the plot. In consequence, this change in writing drew attention to the marginal characters in fiction and non-fiction by giving them the spotlight.

“Historians (a) can only express the ideology of their times (b) cannot be objective enough to see beyond their own class, sex, ethics, or cultural background (p.272-275). To eliminate these problems, postmodernists take, as Jerkins argues, a demystification approach to set the stage for those who are currently deprived of the opportunity to write their own histories and to ‘free up histories to tell many equally legitimate stories from various viewpoints and types of synthesis’ (p.275)”. (Yilmaz, 7).

This idea can be seen in *Six*, where each queen has a different view compared to the historical documents which have been preserved with the King’s experience. Nevertheless, it can be seen in other literary works such as *Foe* a 1986 novel written by Coetzee where the author rewrites Daniel Defoe’s classic *Robinson Crusoe*, giving a voice to Friday’s circumstances, a slave brought to the island where Robin wrecked, through Susan a new character. Another example of rewriting is *Wide Sargasso Sea* written by Jean Rhys in 1966, where it explains the story of the madwoman in the attic that appears in Charlotte Brönte’s 1847 novel *Jane Eyre*. All these works have the same purpose, to put the marginal in centre stage and change the prototypes of history as it is known.

Regarding musicals in recent years, the American production *Hamilton*, which premiered on Broadway in 2015, became extremely popular because of its recalling of the story of Alexander Hamilton, one of the Founding Fathers of the United States. Its acceptability was due to the history going hand in hand with hip hop music attracting young audiences to the theatre. *Six: The Musical*, was definitely influenced by *Hamilton*’s new take on musical theatre and decided to break out from the stereotypical sound of this genre by mixing history with pop concert music. This concept of merging two different fields, as it is history and music, was also part of postmodernism, where many poets, especially from minorities such as the Black and Latino communities used the rhythm of blues and Jazz to tell their own stories. An example is the American author, Gwendolyn Brooks.

### 3. Analysis

#### 3.1 Ex-wives

The first song in the album is called Ex- Wives. It has a duration of 5:50 minutes and it is sung by the 6 Queens collectively. This song serves as an introduction where Catherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves, Katherine Howards, and Catherine Parr briefly explain to the audience their relationship with Henry VIII, as well as their frustration for being known in history as ex-wives and not because of what they had done individually. Furthermore, in the song it can be seen some similarities between them especially when they described the mistreatment by Henry VIII. I chose this song in particular because I think it gives enough detail of each wife to be able to know about the six of them equally.

The first stanza of the song starts with one word in each verse where the protagonists spoils how their lives ended “Divorced, beheaded, died, divorced, beheaded, survived”. These lines were used as the slogan for promoting the musical and are part of a mnemonic rhyme employed in schools to learn about the Tudors.

[CATHERINE OF ARAGON]

Divorced

[ANNE BOLEYN]

Beheaded

[JANE SEYMOUR]

Died

[ANNE OF CLEVES]

Divorced

[KATHERINE HOWARD]

Beheaded

[CATHERINE PARR]

Survived

[CATHERINE OF ARAGON, spoken]

And tonight, we are...

[ALL]

Live!”



In this second part of the song the Queens have direct communication with the audience, breaking the 4th wall of the show and using the 2nd person pronoun to capture the public's attention. With the line "A story that you think you've heard before" the protagonists are conscious that the audience knows their story, as the House of the Tudors is an essential topic in British History that is public knowledge. However, history has been preserved from Henry's VIII perspective and they want to change that by telling their side of the story that may change the listener's idea of them. "I am done, cos all this time I've been just one word in a stupid rhyme", "All you ever hear and read about is our ex and the way it ended."

“[CATHERINE OF ARAGON]

Listen up, let me tell you a story

[ANNE BOLEYN]

A story that you think you've heard before

[JANE SEYMOUR]

We know you know our names

And our fame, and our faces

[ANNE OF CLEVES]

Know all about the glories

And the disgraces

[KATHERINE HOWARD]

I'm done, cos all this time

I've been just one word in a stupid rhyme

[CATHERINE PARR]

So I picked up a pen and a microphone

[ALL]

History's about to get overthrown

[CATHERINE OF ARAGON]

Divorced

[ANNE BOLEYN]

Beheaded

[JANE SEYMOUR]

Died

[ANNE OF CLEVES]

Divorced

[KATHERINE HOWARD]

Beheaded

[CATHERINE PARR]

Survived”

After the repetition of the chorus the music changes to a techno version of the folkloric song Greensleeves. The legend says that this song was composed by Henry VIII while he was courting Anne Boleyn. Even if this theory has been debunked, this legend is still part of the British oral tradition. The use of a techno version of the song is to emphasise the remix on history in which women now can change history and tell their side of the story as it is shown in this lyric “Get ready for the truth that we'll be revealing”.

Another hint to the English monarch’s uncommon portrayal in history is in the line “But a pair doesn't beat a royal flush”. In Poker a pair is one of the worst sets of cards while royal flush is “a set of all the five highest cards in one suit” (Cambridge Dictionary). This poker analogy refers to Henry VIII as the pair as he is the man, because the pair also makes reference to the masculine genitals and the royal flush as the six women. In other words, even though he is the man he will not be able to destroy them as women. The analogy is also a reference to the gambling problem the English monarch suffered. During his reign he bet and lost the bell of St Paul's Cathedral to his friend Sir Miles Partridge. “In England, King Henry VIII once lost the largest and most famous church bells, the Jesus Bells, that were in the Tower of St Paul's Cathedral in a dice game” (Meyer, Hayer, & Griffiths, 16).

In addition, one more game of words can be found in the line “Tonight we gonna do ourselves justice Cos we're taking you to court”. Not only makes reference to the legal court, but to the royal court. This was the place where the monarch lived with his family and the higher nobility. So, in this case the singers want the listeners to go back with them to the insides of the royal household to know the reality of living in court.

“[ALL]

But just for you tonight

We're divorced, beheaded, live!

Welcome to the show, to the histo-remix

Switching up the flow as we add the prefix

Everybody knows that we used to be six wives

Raising up the roof till we hit the ceiling

Get ready for the truth that we'll be revealing

Everybody knows that we used to be six wives

But now we're ex-wives

[CATHERINE OF ARAGON]

All you ever hear and read about

[ANNE BOLEYN]

Is our ex and the way it ended

[JANE SEYMOUR]

But a pair doesn't beat a royal flush

[ANNE OF CLEVES]

You're gonna find out how we got unfriended

[KATHERINE HOWARD]

Tonight we gonna do ourselves justice

Cos we're taking you to court”

In the following line “Every Tudor Rose has its thorns” it can be discovered several allusions. The first one refers to the House of Tudor’s heraldry that consisted of a rose with red and white petals in order to represent the union between the House of Lancaster, which its imagery was a red rose, and the House of York, which its heraldry was a white rose. This union was the representation of the marriage of Henry VII, father of Henry VIII, to Elizabeth of York

to unite England and end the War of the Roses in 1487. “Under the Tudor sovereigns, the heraldic rose often shows a double row of petals [...] the attempt to conjoin the rival emblems of the warring factions of York and Lancaster” (Davies, Charles, 269). “His accession and marriage to Elizabeth of York, daughter of Edward IV, would unite a traumatised country. The red rose merged with the white to form a new emblem, the Tudor rose, embodied in their offspring.” (Penn).

The second reference is related to Katherine Howard, the fifth wife of Henry VIII, who was praised by her husband who allegedly called her a rose without a thorn. “While Henry lauded his new queen as the “jewel of womanhood and often called her a rose without a thorn” (Knofler, 2022). Nevertheless, this myth may have a deeper story. According to Coins of the UK, a coin was made by the English monarch in 1526 with the Latin motto “Henric Rutilans Rosa Sine Spine” which is translated as “Henry a dazzling rose without a thorn”. In 1526 Henry VIII was still married to Catherine of Aragon, his first wife, which may refute the first theory. Moreover, Davies Starke confirms in his book *Six Wives of Henry VIII* “Thus the rose has nothing to do with Catherine (Howard) and the motto has nothing to do with her supposed blemishless either” (Starke, 810).

Finally, an enthralling detail is that even if Katherine Howard is the protagonist of this legend she is not the one singing but Catherine Parr. However, her line can make a reference to the first since she sings before her. In this part, Parr just acts as a medium to finish Howard’s story.

Catherine Parr continues with the line “And you're gonna hear 'em live in consort” making an allusion to the fact that the six of them were never Queen regnant but Queen Consort. A Queen Regnant is “a queen who reigns on her own behalf” (Collins Dictionary), while a Queen Consort is “the wife of a ruling monarch” (Collins Dictionary).

After the chorus there is a change of lyrics in the bridge of the song, changing “Raising up the roof till we hit the ceiling. Get ready for the truth that we'll be revealing” for “Dancing to the beat till the break of day, once we're done, we'll start again like it's the Renaissance”. In this instance Renaissance is related to the historical period that went from the end of the 15th century to the beginning of the 17th century, which means rebirth, and it was the period in which the reign of Henry VIII took place. Nevertheless, it is also a mention of the rebirth of these women who are now speaking up.

“[CATHERINE PARR]

Every Tudor Rose has its thorns  
And you're gonna hear 'em live in consort

[ALL]

But just for you tonight  
We're divorced, beheaded, live!  
Welcome to the show, to the histo-remix  
Switching up the flow as we add the prefix  
Everybody knows that we used to be six wives  
Dancing to the beat till the break of day, once  
We're done, we'll start again like it's the Renaissance  
Everybody knows that we used to be six wives  
But now we're ex-wives”

In the next section of the song, each character is going to briefly explain key information about themselves.

It begins with Catherine of Aragon introducing herself. In the line “was married twenty-four years” she gives the exact number of years she was married to Henry VIII, being the longest relationship of the six, from 1509 to 1533. “I'm a paragon of royalty, my loyalty is to the Vatican”. Catherine of Aragon is talking about her royal background since she was the daughter of the Spanish monarchs Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile. Due to her Spanish background, she was raised as a Catholic swearing loyalty to the Vatican, the place in which the Pope, the main figure of Catholicism, lived. In fact, her religion will then take a significant role in the last stage of her marriage since the Pope did not allow Henry VIII to get divorced from Catherine due to the rules of the Catholic religion. In order to get a divorce, the English monarch decided to create the Church of England and separated it from the authority of the Pope. Since their separation was so complicated Catherine of Aragon mentions this line in the song “So if you try to dump me You won't try that again”.

Furthermore, it is important that she mentions her religion because it is one of the main characteristics of her personality that will build her up as a character in the song.

“[ALL]

Divorced

[CATHERINE OF ARAGON]

My name is Catherine of Aragon

Was married twenty-four years, I'm a paragon

Of royalty, my loyalty is to the Vatican

So if you try to dump me

You won't try that again"

The next woman is Anne Boleyn, the second wife of Henry VIII.

The line "I'm that Boleyn girl" is an allusion to the 2008 movie *The Other Boleyn Girl* starring Natalie Portman and Scarlett Johanson, which is an adaptation of the book with the same name written by Philippa Gregory. This hint could be made as a way in which the public knows about her.

Moreover, in the line "I broke England from the Church" takes the responsibility of separating the church since the reason behind the divorce that I mentioned before between Catherine of Aragon and Henry VIII was that the latter fell in love with Anne Boleyn. In fact, according to John Cassel and Eilliam Howitt in their book, Henry VIII wrote a letter to Anne Boleyn in which he declared his love for her.

"For of necessity I must ensure me of this answer, having now been above one whole year struck with the dart of love, not being assured either of failure or of finding place in your heart grounded affection. ... But if it shall please you to ... to give yourself up, heart, body and soul to me, who will be, and have been, your loyal servant, I promise you that... I will take you for my only mistress, rejecting from thought and affection all others save yourself, to serve you only." (Cassell and Howitt, 183)

Anne Boleyn did not want to be just a mistress and wanted to be the official wife of the monarch. "Your wife I cannot be, both in respect of mine own unworthiness, and also because you have queen already. Your mistress I will not be". (Cassell and Howitt, 183). That is why Henry had to get divorced in order to get married again.

Furthermore, her personality or at least what the reports have portrayed throughout history, is shown through the lyrics "yeah, I'm that sexy". Anne Boleyn is depicted as a flirtatious and seductive woman who was able to make the King of England fall in love with her. Moreover, she is often portrayed as a representation of passion.

Finally, in her last three lines “Why did I lose my head? Well, my sleeves may be green but my lipstick's red”, she explains the reason of her death. Anne Boleyn was accused of adultery, witchcraft, incest and treason in May of 1536, only three years after her marriage. “The principal charge was the adultery with Rochford (George Boleyn), Norris and Mark Smeaton” (Ives, 172). The latter man was a musician from Sweden who confessed the affair with the Queen, which led to multiple physical and emotional tortures. Moreover, Anne Boleyn was accused of incest after Jane Rochford, her sister-in-law charge her of keeping a relationship with her husband and Anne’s brother, George Boleyn.

“The charges of adultery, and especially the charge of incest with her brother, were, it is widely believed, so preposterous that no one can take them seriously”. “One of the reasons why historians have tended to see the charges against Anne as false is because the legal procedures followed were in many ways travesty. Modern sensibilities recoil at adultery being in effect a capital offence. Nor was adultery an offence punishable by death in Tudor England” (Bernard, Chapter 10).

Even many historians think Anne Boleyn was innocent; she was beheaded on the 19 of May of 1536.

In this song the second wife of Henry VIII makes another reference to the song Greensleeves, mentioned before with the line “my sleeves may be green”. She mentioned that despite the monarch supposedly showing his love in a song he was able to decapitate her because “her lipstick’s red”, because she seduced many other men.

The next woman to introduce herself is Jane Seymour, the third wife of the English King. In the first verse of her stanza Jane claims that she was Henry's favourite wife. “Jane Seymour, the only one he truly loved”. In fact, Seymour was the most beloved wife of Henry VIII because of one key element: she gave birth to his only son, and heir Edward VI. “Jane Seymour remained his “true wife”, the one who was “entirely beloved”, on the grounds that she gave him a son. This partiality extended to having her prominently enshrined after her death as his consort in his vast dynastic portrait of his family, when Catherine Parr was actually living loyal wife at his side” (Fraser).

In the next lyric “When my son was newly born, I died” Seymour makes reference to her death. After the birth of her son Edward VI that lasted more than 48 hours, she caught an infection and died 12 days later at the age of 28.

Although the King had a fondness for his wife even after her death, her life is not as known as the previous two wives. In the song she suggests she went unnoticed throughout history because there is not much information about her life. In order to prove her point she uses the sentence “But I'm not what I *seem, or* am I? Stick around and you'll suddenly *see more...*” Since there is not much information the public does not know much about her, so if the audience sticks around they will learn more about her. In addition, this line is also a play of words that when she sings all together it sounds as if she is pronouncing her last name Seymour.

Finally, the representation of Jane Seymour through the songs will be innocent and sweet since she portrayed the role model of the perfect wife. “Jane Seymour was exactly the kind of female praised by the contemporary handbooks to correct conduct; just as Anne Boleyn had been the sort they warned against” (Fraser).

The next woman to sing is Anne of Cleves, Henry VIII's fourth marriage. In this section of the song there is a change in language on the two first verses from English to German. “Ich bin Anne of Cleves Ja?” This happens because Anne was in fact born in Germany. She was born in the House of Cleves in the county of the same name. She was the sister of William, Duke of Cleves, promoter of Protestantism in Western Germany. Due to his influence on the rest of Europe and the desperate look for a spare, the English monarch needed to create a political alliance with Germany, therefore he accepted to get married with Anne. Before getting married, Henry VIII selected Anne as his future wife through a portrait made by his painter Hains Holbein. Nevertheless, when they met face to face Henry was appalled by her appearance, claiming she did not look the same as in the portrait. “When he saw my portrait, he was like— Ja! But I didn't look as good as I did in my pic”.

“Henry's immediate dislike of Anne's appearance has been subject of speculation for centuries. According to the eighteenth-century historian Smollet, Henry found Anne so different from her portrait that he swore that he had been brought a Flanders Mare instead of a woman to wed” (Norton).

A Flanders Mare is an ugly war horse. Allegedly the King of England also claimed that Anne “had unsavoury smells about her”. Nevertheless, it is stated that her appearance was not that disgraceful.

“Surviving portraits of Anne are pleasant enough and she compares favourably to both Jane Seymour and Catherine Howard, supposedly the fairies of Henry's wives. Henry also never punished Holbein for the portrait of Anne, retaining his confidence in him as an artist (...)



suggesting that the portrait was a true likeness. One clue may lie in the fact that, unusually, Holbein painted Anne facing forwards. X-rays of a second portrait of Anne, painted with a side view, show that the portrait originally had a longer nose and Anne may have had a longer nose than would conventionally be called beautiful” (Norton).

Notwithstanding, Henry VIII was not the perfect individual in the marriage. As the song declares “Funny how we all discuss that but never Henry's little pr-” The song mocks in a way the fact that it is said the couple never consummated their marriage because Anne was not appealing enough. The song reverses the situation, alluding that it was not consummated because of the size of Henry’s masculine member and not because of Anne's appearance. In addition, the song joins the last word of Anne of Cleaves “pr-” to Katherine Howard's next word which is “prick”. The word Prick has different meanings in English. For Anne of Cleves’ sentence would be the slang word for penis, while for Katherine “prick up your ears” would be to listen carefully.

[ALL]

Divorced

[ANNE OF CLEVES]

Ich bin Anne of Cleves

[ALL]

Ja?

[ANNE OF CLEVES]

When he saw my portrait, he was like—

[ALL]

Ja!

[ANNE OF CLEVES]

But I didn't look as good as I did in my pic

Funny how we all discuss that

But never Henry's little pr-

To continue, Katherine Howard was the fifth wife of Henry VIII. She starts her stanza with “I'm the Katherine Who lost her head” She explicitly identifies herself as the one who lost her head in order to differentiate from Catherine of Aragon and Catherine Parr as the Tudor married with 3 women named Catherine. “Beheaded For my promiscuity outside of wed Lock

up your husbands, lock up your sons K-Howard is here and the fun's begun". Katherine Howard faced the same fate as Anne Boleyn. She was beheaded on the 13th of February of 1542 because she was accused of having relationships before marriage and adultery.

“Katherine Howard was consigned to history as a flirtatious and irresponsible teenager who courted disaster through her reckless behaviour and adulterous liaisons with a succession of lovers under her ageing husband's nose” (Byrne).

Among her lovers there can be found Henry Manox and Francis Dereham, before her marriage, and Thomas Culpepper during it. In 1441, the English monarchs went on a summer tour and the latter accompanied them. It is said that Culpepper and the Queen's relationship began there. That same summer Howard wrote a letter to his lover “It makes my heart die to think I cannot be always in your company” “Yours as long as life endures” (Hampton Court Palace) However, “recent interpretations suggest that its emotional tone was fuelled less by sexual desire than by the desperation of a young woman who was seeking to placate an aggressive, dangerous suitor” (Hampton Court Palace). In October of 1441, Thomas Cranmer, then Archbishop of Canterbury, informed the King of his wife's immoral actions and the next month the Queen finally confessed. Therefore, she was sentenced then beheaded. “She said that Francis Dereham had used her “in sort as a man doth use his wife many and sundry times”, Catherine also admitted to having sexual encounters with Henry Manox and later confessed to an affair with Thomas Culpepper. In reporting testimony to the King, Cranmer remarked that he found her “in lamentation and heaviness, as I never saw no creature” (Hampton Court Palace).

In the song Katherine Howard comment on the accusations of promiscuity by playing on words with the words “wed” and “lock”. When she sings all together it seems she says wedlock which means marriage.

[KATHERINE HOWARD]

Prick up your ears,

I'm the Katherine

Who lost her head

[ALL]

Beheaded

[KATHERINE HOWARD]

For my promiscuity outside of wed

Lock up your husbands, lock up your sons

K-Howard is here and the fun's begun

The final introduction is by Catherine Parr, the sixth and last wife of Henry VIII. In this song she does not give much information about her. “Five down, I’m the final wife I saw him to the end of his life”. In fact, Catherine Parr was still married to Henry VIII when he died at the beginning of 1447. Nevertheless, she died only a year after.

“I’m the survivor - Catherine Parr”. She was the only one of the sixth who did not die or get divorce while being with the monarch. Moreover, this line could be a reference to the Destiny's Child song Survivor, an empowering song for women. In fact, the melody of the Ex-Wives song changes to a similar melody of Survivor.

[ALL]

Survived

[CATHERINE PARR]

Five down, I'm the final wife

I saw him to the end of his life

I'm the survivor- Catherine Parr

I bet you wanna know how I got this far...

I said, I bet you wanna know how we got this far

Hey!

In the final stanza of the song there is a repetition of the bridge, changing the lyrics to “Get your hands up, get this party buzzing You want a queen bee? Well, there's half a dozen”. This analogy refers to the six wives as six queens. If it is taken into account that the characters are based on pop singers, queen bee can also be taken as a reference from the nickname of the American singer Beyoncé.

[ALL]

“Get your hands up, get this party buzzing

You want a queen bee?

Well, there's half a dozen

Everybody knows that we used to be six wives

But now we're ex-wives

One, two, three, four, five, six”

The next six songs of the album are solo recordings of each one of the wives, and each one of them take a more in depth thought on their own relationships with the King. Nevertheless, only two of them will be analysed on this dissertation. The song No Way to talk about Catherine of Aragon. I selected this wife because of the relations between England and Spain. The second solo song I decided to analyse is Don't Lose Ur Head which tells the story of Anne Boleyn. I wanted to talk about Henry's second wife because of the significant role she played in the English Religious Reformation.

### **3.2 No Way**

The first one to sing is Catherine of Aragon with the song No Way with a duration of 4 minutes. In this song, the daughter of the Spanish monarchs shows her determination in marriage and queenship. Even though her husband wants the divorce to marry Anne Boleyn she is not willing to end the marriage and in consequence her position of Queen, without putting up a fight. In contrast to the previous song, this is sung by Catherine of Aragon directly to Henry VIII and not the public. Moreover, her refusal to be a discarded wife is sung over a Latin beat, in order to represent Catherine's Spanish background.

As it was mentioned in the previous song, Catherine of Aragon and Henry VIII were married for 24 years. During their long marriage Catherine knew about the infidelities of her husband, but never said a word and maintained her solemn role as Queen tolerating his behaviour. “You must agree that baby in all the time I've been by your side I've never lost control No matter how many times I knew you lied”. In addition, in this first stanza she calls him baby. This could be a hint on the couple's age gap. Catherine was 23 years old when she married a 17 year old Henry VIII in 1509. That same year Henry ascended to the throne after his father Henry VII and older brother Arthur died. In fact, Catherine was first married to Arthur, but after his death months after the wedding, she married his brother in order to keep the good relationships between England and Spain. The 6 years age difference could be the reason why in this son she calls him baby.

In the line “Have my golden rule” shows her devotion for religion since the Golden rule is a reference to the verse in the Bible “In everything, do to others what you would have the do to you” (Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia).

[CATHERINE OF ARAGON]

N-n-n-n-n-no way

There's no way

You must agree that baby

In all the time I've been by your side

I've never lost control

No matter how many times I knew you lied

Have my golden rule

Got to keep my cool

Yeah, baby

[ENSEMBLE]

You know she's got to keep her cool

Throughout the next stanza she reinforces the idea of her silence and decency, as well as the infidelities of her husband. “And even though you've had your fun Running around with some pretty young thing” describes the flirtatious relationship her husband had with her mistress Anne Boleyn. Furthermore, the verse “And even though you've had one son with someone who don't own a wedding ring” makes reference to Henry's illegitimate child Henry Fitzroy then named Duke of Richmond. His mother was Bessie Blount, Catherine's lady in waiting. Even if the Duke of Richmond was never appointed to be the heir to the throne, Henry did not repudiate him, and he even lived a prince like life due to the fact that all his short life he was the only male son of the King. It was not until a year after his death, at the age of 17, that Jane Seymour would present Henry with a male heir. There was no doubt that he was the King's son because of his last name Fitzroy. This last name was commonly used to identify illegitimate children of a monarch since it literally means son of the King.

“Much of Richmond's importance stems from the fact that while he lived he was the King's only son. He did not survive to see his fortunes eclipsed by the birth of Edward [...] Examples of Henry's affection for his only son abound and during the King's marriage to Katherine of Aragon, Richmond was widely considered to be: very personable and of great expectation [...] The King's chief minister, Thomas Wolsey, stood as his godfather at his christening and he was openly and proudly accepted by Henry VIII”. (Murphy, 9).

[CATHERINE OF ARAGON]

And even though you've had your fun  
Running around with some pretty young thing  
And even though you've had one son  
With someone who don't own a wedding ring  
No matter what I heard  
I didn't say a word  
No, baby  
[ENSEMBLE]  
You know she never said a word

One key element that is significant in the song is that Catherine of Aragon is about to curse, but she contains herself. This adds pretty well to her pure and religious character.

[CATHERINE OF ARAGON]  
I put up with your sh—  
Like every single day  
But now it's time to shh  
And listen when I say  
Woo!

In this part of the song Catherine consolidates how challenging it was for Henry to achieve the annulment of their marriage. Even her nephew Charles V, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire took part of the issue menacing the Pope if he agreed to grant the annulment.

“Queen Catherine’s nephew, King Charles V of Spain, by 1527, held the pope captive in the Papal States. Papal permission for annulment of Henry VIII’s marriage was necessary, but the pope, as prisoner of the mighty Hapsburg Emperor, Charles V, could hardly grant an annulment against Catherine of Aragon” (Longley, 11)

Nevertheless, in May of 1433, and after seven years of insistence, Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury was the one in charge of annulling the marriage.

You must think that I'm crazy  
You wanna replace me?  
Baby, there's n-n-n-n-n-n-no way

If you think for a moment  
I'd grant you annulment, just hold up  
There's n-n-n-n-n-no way  
No way  
No way  
There's n-n-n-n-n-no way  
No way

Besides the King's desire of marrying Anne Boleyn, he also used as an excuse one quote from Leviticus, an Old Testament book which stated that it was unclean to marry your brother's wife. Due to this quote Henry thought his marriage with Catherine was cursed because she was first married to his older brother Arthur, and that was the reason she could not give him a son. "So you read a Bible verse that I'm cursed 'Cause I was your brother's wife You say it's a pity 'cause, quoting Leviticus I'll end up kiddy-less all my life."

"A religious Renaissance prince as he was, and well-educated and schooled in the Roman Catholic faith, Henry VIII felt that maybe his marriage to Catherine of Aragon was cursed. He had broken the biblical laws of Leviticus that stated a man could not take in marriage his brother's wife. He, therefore, sought to divorce Catherine of Aragon, believing that God had cursed him despite the papal annulment" (Longley, 11)

For Henry, as a monarch, having children was a crucial point. Nevertheless, children for him meant sons and not daughters. In this line "Well, daddy, weren't you there When I gave birth to Mary?" Catherine ironically criticises his behaviour and absence when she gave birth to their daughter Mary I. Mary I most commonly known as Bloody Mary was born in 1516 being the first legitimate child of the King of England. Her position in the palace drastically changed after her parents' divorce in 1533. "Mary's royal future looked doubtful: she was demoted from "princess" to the status of "lady", lost her place in the line of succession and banned from seeing her mother. Her relationship with her father never properly recovered". (Hampton Court Palace)

So you read a Bible verse that I'm cursed  
'Cause I was your brother's wife  
You say it's a pity 'cause, quoting Leviticus  
I'll end up kiddy-less all my life  
Well, daddy, weren't you there

When I gave birth to Mary?

(spoken)

Aw, hi, baby!

[ENSEMBLE]

Daughters are so easy to forget

Supposedly Henry VIII thought that Catherine was naïve in thinking that women could be possible heirs to the British throne. For Henry that was not even thought but Catherine grew up with the example of her own mother Isabella I, who was Queen regnant of Castile. “Must think that I'm naïve”.

[CATHERINE OF ARAGON]

You're just so full of sh—

Must think that I'm naïve

I won't back down, won't shh

And know I'll never leave

The bridge of the song appears again with the alteration of some lyrics. Instead of “If you think for a moment I'd grant you annulment, just hold up” the lyrics go “If you thought it'd be funny to Send me to a nunnery”. In this verse Catherine mentions the time during the process of her divorce, that the English cardinal and statesman, Thomas Wolsey and the Italian cardinal, Lorenzo Campeggio, tried to convince the Queen to join a convent but she refused.

“The three attempts made by Wolsey and Campeggio to persuade Catherine to enter a convent (p.270.)” “The reviewer’s own interpretation is that if Catherine would have entered the convent, she would thereby have abandoned her rights. It would have made it easier for the judges at the trial to take advantage of some technicality or other.” “The English people were sympathetic with Catherine; they were furious at Campeggio and Wolsey” (Cardinal, 114–115.)

You must think that I'm crazy

You wanna replace me?

Baby, there's n-n-n-n-n-no way

If you thought it'd be funny to



Send me to a nunnery  
Honey, there's no way  
No way  
No way  
There's n-n-n-n-n-no way  
No way

To continue, this next stanza alluded to the trial the couple held at the Legatine Court in June 1529 to argue the reasons of the annulment. “On 18 June, Catherine appeared in person at the legatine court at Blackfriars with a formal protest in which she denied the impartiality of the legates and her appeal to Rome.” (Earenfight).

In Catherine’s speech she knew she had to play with emotions and she begged for mercy down on her knees stating the following:

“Alas! Sir, wherein have I offended you, or what occasion of displeasure have I deserved?...I have been to you a true, humble and obedient wife, ever comfortable to your will and pleasure, they never said or did anything to the contrary thereof, being always well pleased and contented with all things wherein you had any delight or dalliance, whether it were in little or much” “If there be any just cause by the law that ye can allege against me either of dishonesty or any other impediment to banish and put me from you, I am well content to depart to my great shame and dishonour” (Tremlett, Chapter 37).

Indeed, this song is structured as if they were at court and Catherine is making all these statements to defend herself and her role as Queen.

You've got me down on my knees  
Please tell me what you think I've done wrong  
Been humble, been loyal, I've tried  
To swallow my pride all along  
If you can just explain  
A single thing I've done to cause you pain, I'll go  
(spoken)  
No?  
[sung]  
You've got nothing to say  
I'm not going away

There's no way

Another change of lyrics on the bridge occurs. In this instance, the verses are “You made me your wife, So I'll be queen till the end of my life”. As it was mentioned before, Catherine of Aragon refused the idea of taking down her role as Queen since she was raised to be so. In addition, the British public had compassion for her because of how she had performed her activities as a Queen, and she was beloved by them more than Henry’s new wife Anne Boleyn. That is why, until the moment she died in 1536 she claimed her position as monarch. “Her last letter to him read "Mine eyes desire you above all things." She signed the letter "Katherine the Queen.”” (Hampton Court Palace)

You must think that I'm crazy

You wanna replace me?

Baby, there's n-n-n-n-n-no way

You made me your wife

So I'll be queen till the end of my life

N-n-n-n-n-no way

No way

No way

There's n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-n-no way

There's no way!

During this first song it can be seen already few changes on Catherine of Aragon common portrayal. Even though she keeps her silence she steps in and confronts the King. This rewriting of her experience by changing the focus from Henry to Catherine confirms the theory that by shifting the point of view it can change the portrayal of the character.

### **3.3 Don't Lose Ur Head**

The second solo recording is the one of Anne Boleyn and is called Don't Lose Ur Head, with a duration of 4:05 minutes. According to Spotify it is the most popular song of the album. Through the use of slang and colloquialisms, this song is structured as if Anne Boleyn was a teenager explaining to her friends how she met Henry VIII. There is also a use of modern elements such as texting. It was interesting that they portrayed Anne Boleyn as an immature and naïve adolescent despite being around 22 years old when she first met Henry

and around 32 years old when she married him. I would suggest that they chose this description to emphasise the mischievousness of being his mistress before being his wife. Starting with the analysis, the beginning of the song could lead to confusion believing that Anne Boleyn was French, which is completely false. Anne Boleyn was an English woman, but when she was nearly a teenager, her father Thomas Boleyn, esquire of the body and ambassador to Henry VIII, was requested to send Anne and her sister Mary to serve the King's sister Mary Tudor who was married to the French King Louis XII. That is the reason why Anne ended up in the French court and became fluent in French. "In late 1514 Henry VIII requested that Thomas Boleyn supply both his daughters to serve his sister, Mary Tudor, following her marriage to the aged Louis XII of France" (Norton). When the latter died Mary Tudor returned to England but Anne remained in France serving Claude, the new queen of France until 1522 "she became French in all but birth". As she says in the song "life was a chore, so she set sail" Anne Boleyn had to return to England to her older queen.

[ANNE BOLEYN]

Grew up in the French court

Oui, oui bonjour

Life was a chore, so

[ENSEMBLE]

She set sail

In court she met Henry Percy, son of the Earl of Northumberland and therefore, from a wealthy family. The couple even was thinking of taking the next step: marriage. Nevertheless, when his father heard the news he immediately refused the idea claiming that Anne Boleyn was not wealthy enough for a man in his position. After being forced to leave the court Anne met Thomas Wyatt, a poet, with whom she would end up having a flirtatious relationship. Thanks to him she was able to return to court in 1525. In his work Norton explains the complex relationship between Anne Boleyn and Henry Percy and the reason of their separation. "Wolsey sent for Percy's father, who indignantly rushed south forcing his son to marry a considerably wealthier bride". Moreover, Norton talks about how Wyatt was a key character for her return to court, where she will meet the King. "It is more likely that Anne hoped that, after she was finally allowed to return to court in 1525, her relationship with Wyatt would bring her to the attention of more eligible suitors". (Norton)

[ANNE BOLEYN]

1522, came straight to the UK

All the British dudes lame

[ENSEMBLE]

Epic fail

Ooh-ooh

To continue this next stanza is not historically accurate. It is true that Boleyn was skilled in singing and dancing, if we take into account that those activities were commonly taught to women in noble families. But she was also extremely involved in politics especially in the religious reformation, promoting new protestant views in religion stating that Henry, as King, was the authority of the Church and not the Pope. To consolidate Henry as the Head of the Church of England, Anne whispered on the King's ear to create plan to help on the disintegration of monasteries, as well as setting engagement with high ranks of the evangelical Church to secure their support to Henry VIII. In addition, she was also involved in the patronage of Protestant literature and culture.

“Anne, leaning on Henry, fomented a policy of dissolving all the monasteries, although she also worked actively towards the use of the riches and lands thus expropriated for the relief of the poor [...] Anne also secured, again through Henry the appointment of several evangelical bishops and deans for the newly independent Church of England [...] Anne was also patron to Protestant publishers and writers, who were extremely prolific during this Protestant period of royal policy” (Zahl, 16-17).

[ANNE BOLEYN]

I wanna dance and sing

[ENSEMBLE]

Politics

[ANNE BOLEYN]

Not my thing

[ENSEMBLE]

Ooh-ooh

It is commonly believed that Thomas Boleyn requested his daughters to be with the King. Nevertheless, there is not enough evidence about this allegation, but media representation of these characters has always taken that plot, therefore it became a well-known incident. That is why it may be included in the song. Moreover, it will give the patriarchal view that Anne was forced to be with Henry. Notwithstanding, what has been officially proven is that Mary, Anne's sister was involved first in an affair with the monarch, until he asked her to be his official mistress. A similar situation happened with Anne, but the King this time accepted to make her his wife.

[ANNE BOLEYN]

But then I met the king  
And soon my daddy said  
“You should try and get ahead!”  
He wanted me, hah, obviously

As it has been mentioned in the song *Ex wives*, Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn were fond of writing letters to each other. Nowadays, it has been preserved in the Vatican library 17 letters from the monarch to his mistress. “The love letters of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn provide an invaluable source for the early years of their relationship” (Norton). In the song, however, there is an influence of modern technologies where Anne and Henry text to each other instead of writing letters. Furthermore, there is an ironic touch where Anne comments on Henry's persistence through messages and it would be better that he writes her a letter. “You're a nice guy I'll think about it maybe XO baby”. This line shows that Anne Boleyn did not give Henry more than a flirtatious relationship for seven years, until he was able to make her his wife. Moreover, the shift between letters to electronic messages are an example of how the authors of the song wanted to engage with the 21st century audience by rewriting the story of Anne Boleyn from a modern perspective. This addition would make Anne's portrayal closer for modern generations and therefore they would connect more with her and see her more as an independent woman choosing when she wants to be on a relationship than a horrible mistress that ended up with the main marriage of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Finally, it is important to mention that this would be a clear instance of intertextuality where contemporary communication is applied on a song based on the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Kept messaging me like every day  
Couldn't be better then he sent me a letter  
And who am I kidding  
I was prête à manger  
[ENSEMBLE]  
Ooh-oooh  
[ANNE BOLEYN]  
Sent a reply  
[ENSEMBLE]  
Ooh-oooh  
[ANNE BOLEYN]  
Just saying hi  
[ENSEMBLE]  
Ooh-oooh  
[ANNE BOLEYN]  
“You’re a nice guy  
I’ll think about it maybe  
XO baby”  
[ENSEMBLE]  
Uh-oh  
[ANNE BOLEYN]  
Here we go  
[ENSEMBLE]  
You sent him kisses?

In the following verses Anne mentions how she had to live with Catherine of Aragon, Henry’s wife at the time, while she was starting a relationship with the monarch. In fact, Boleyn was one of Catherine’s ladies in waiting when she established herself again at the court. So, literally she moved in with Henry’s official wife.

[ANNE BOLEYN]  
I didn't know I would move in with his missus  
[ENSEMBLE]

What?

[ANNE BOLEYN]

Get a life!

[ENSEMBLE]

You were living with his wife?

[ANNE BOLEYN]

Like, what was I meant to do?

Following the next lines of Don't Lose Ur Head, "Sorry, not sorry 'bout what I said", it gives an idea of what Anne's personality consisted of. It is believed that she was high tempered and quite arrogant. "She was constantly aware that she was not, in fact, the queen, and her fiery temper often got the better of her" "Even Henry felt the sharp end of her tongue". (Norton). The song is proving the erratic behaviour by not making her feel sorry about the derogatory way in which she is talking about Henry and Catherine. Moreover, to emphasise more this aspect of her personality, the song is giving a double ironic meaning to the verse "Don't lose your head", in which it is playing with the fact that she was beheaded, so literally losing her head, and the English idiom, which its meaning is to remain calm and not lose composure.

Sorry, not sorry 'bout what I said

I'm just trying to have some fun

Don't worry, don't worry

Don't lose your head

I didn't mean to hurt anyone

LOL

Say 'Oh, well!'

Or go to hell!

I'm sorry, not sorry 'bout what I said

Don't lose your head

Again, Boleyn highlights her position regarding her role as a mistress with the two first lines of the popular nursery Three in the bed "Three in the bed and the little one said". The original nursery ends up with "and the little one said "Roll over, roll over" So they all rolled over and one fell out" (BBC News). This could mean that there were three in the relationship,

so Anne Boleyn gave an ultimatum to the King, and he left Catherine of Aragon being the one who fell out of the relationship. This final warning is mentioned in the Six's song with the lyrics "If you wanna be wed Make up your mind! Her or me, chum Don't wanna be some Girl in a threesome".

Three in the bed  
And the little one said  
"If you wanna be wed  
Make up your mind!"  
Her or me, chum  
Don't wanna be some  
Girl in a threesome

Here, there are several changes of whom she is directing the song to. First, she addresses Henry asking if he is blind, making the point that she was better looking than Catherine of Aragon. In effect, Anne Boleyn could have been more delightful than the formal Queen since Anne was approximately 16 years younger than Catherine, therefore, in some way more attractive. Secondly, she addresses the Queen herself telling her that Catherine does not want to give the divorce to Henry because she is upset he had left her for someone younger. "Don't be bitter 'Cause I'm fitter". In addition, the lines "Cause I'm fitter" "He doesn't wanna bang you" could indicate that because Catherine is older and in her forties she will probably not be able to give birth to a child anymore, while Anne have the possibility of fulfil the desire of the King of having a son. Nevertheless, Anne Boleyn will give birth to a girl, Elizabeth the I not making the monarch's dreams true either. "Catherine of Aragon was over forty and recognised to be long past childbearing" (Norton). Anne's resentment towards Catherine was such that it is believed she suggested seeing the Queen hung before admitting herself to be mistress of the King. Notwithstanding, I have not seen a recollection of this event in historical sources, but I have found that it was said in the popular 2007 TV show *The Tudors*. Due to its popularity the writers could have possibly used a reference of that scene for inspiring these verses sang by Anne Boleyn. "Somebody hang you" "Your comment went viral" "I didn't really mean it but rumours spiral".

Are you blind?



[ENSEMBLE]

Ooh-oo

[ANNE BOLEYN]

Don't be bitter

[ENSEMBLE]

Ooh-oo

[ANNE BOLEYN]

'Cause I'm fitter

[ENSEMBLE]

Ooh-oo

[ANNE BOLEYN]

Why hasn't it hit her?

He doesn't wanna bang you

Somebody hang you

[ENSEMBLE]

Uh-oh

[ANNE BOLEYN]

Here we go

[ENSEMBLE]

Your comment went viral

[ANNE BOLEYN]

I didn't really mean it but rumours spiral

Henry VIII had more fondness for Anne Boleyn than for Catherine of Aragon at the time of their separation. However, the British public did not agree with his King. In the song the Ensemble reminds Anne that even if the King wanted her the country hated her. “Wow, Anne, way to make the country hate you!”. Anne Boleyn was disliked by the public because many of them had compassion for Catherine of Aragon and her display as Queen. “An openly hostile account says that no one cried God save the Queen as Anne went past; many laughed at the letters H and A, painted in several places. Her crown did not fit well” (Bernard). Besides, this animosity towards her will grow during her reign not only through the common subjects but with the nobility too, due to her political involvement. “Anne Boleyn was disliked by the

lords of England on account of her pride and that of her brothers and kinsmen, and because the king did not like her as much as he once had” (Bernard).

[ENSEMBLE]

Wow, Anne, way to make the country hate you!

[ANNE BOLEYN]

Mate, what was I meant to do?

Sorry, not sorry about what I said

I'm just trying to have some fun

Don't worry, don't worry

Don't lose your head

I didn't mean to hurt anyone

LOL

Say 'Oh, well!'

Or go to hell!

I'm sorry, not sorry 'bout what I said

Don't lose your head

In the next stanza Anne Boleyn gives her point of view on her experience on the divorce trail between Catherine of Aragon and Henry VIII. As she mentions in the song, she and the King were willing to be with each other but the Pope as it has been mentioned in the song No way, did not approve the annulment by following the rules of Catholicism. “Tried to elope but the Pope said, Nope!”. Therefore, Henry created the Church of England becoming the head of the Church. This event caused a commotion between the British public originating religious wars across the country between Catholics and Protestants. “Our only hope was Henry He got a promotion Caused a commotion Set in motion the C of E”. The C of E is the abbreviation of Church of England. With this use of the vocabulary it can be seen the modern and childish side that the authors tried to give to the character of Anne Boleyn in the musical.

Tried to elope

But the Pope said, “Nope!”

Our only hope was Henry

He got a promotion

Caused a commotion  
Set in motion the C of E

Anne continues with her critique towards the Catholic Church stating that their rules are old fashioned since in Catholicism it was prohibited to get divorced. Moreover, she is showing her frustration and impatience because she waited, as it has been mentioned before, seven years until she could officially marry the English monarch. “The rules were so outdated, us two wanted to get X-rated”. In addition, using X-rated she is modernising her speech by applying cinema references. It is a modern touch since in the 16th century the film industry did not exist yet. When a film is X-rated it means it contains explicit content. Hence, with this analogy she wants to express her desire to have sexual intercourse with Henry.

Returning to the Catholic religion Henry VIII had to be excommunicated after his divorce in 1533 by the Pope at the time Clement VII. “Soon Excommunicated”. However, Anne in the song tries to calm the ensemble because as he is head of the new Church of England and that was really God's will. In reality, Anne actually thought that it was God who sent the King to disseminate His words and not the Pope. “Everybody chill It's totes God's will”.

[ENSEMBLE]

The rules

[ANNE BOLEYN]

Were so outdated, us two wanted to get X-rated

[ENSEMBLE]

Soon

Excommunicated

[ANNE BOLEYN]

Everybody chill

It's totes God's will

The song suddenly briefly changes for a few seconds introducing wedding bells before fast forwarding in terms of lyrics to the moment of Boleyn's and Henry's downfall as a marriage.

In the first few lines, Anne is furious with the King because he starts to lose interest in her by wandering around the court. As the teenager she is represented in the song, Boleyn

shows “revenge” by flirting with other men to make her husband jealous. “If that's how it's gonna be, maybe I'll flirt with a guy or three Just to make him jell”. However, historically it has not been proven that Anne committed adultery.

In addition, the song talks about her downfall as a Queen. When Henry VIII heard about the rumours regarding the infidelity of her wife, and supported by the fact that she miscarried a deformed foetus, he accused her of witchcraft and treason. “He screams and shouts like, so judgemental! You damn witch”. “Miscarrying a deformed foetus was, supposedly, characteristic of witches. Deformities moreover were, allegedly, evidence of gross sexual misconduct. That Henry was responsible for such a foetus was unthinkable: accordingly, Anne had to be blamed. And so Anne was accused of reckless libertine behaviour—sleeping with five men, including her brother— of which that deformed foetus was the inevitable outcome. (Bernard).

[WEDDING CHIMES]

Henry's out every night on the town

Just sleeping around like, “What the hell?”

If that's how it's gonna be, maybe I'll flirt with a guy or three

Just to make him jell

Henry finds out and he goes mental

He screams and shouts like, so judgemental!

You damn witch

Mate, just shut up!

I wouldn't be such a b...

If you could get it up

[ENSEMBLE]

Uh-oh

As it is mentioned in the song Ex-wives, due to the accusations Anne was beheaded in May 1536. “And now he's going 'round like “Off with her head! However, in the song, with the repetition of the chorus Anne seems to not be sorry for what she has done believing in her innocence.

[ANNE BOLEYN]

Here we go

[ENSEMBLE]

Is that what you said?

[ANNE BOLEYN]

And now he's going 'round like

“Off with her head!”

[ENSEMBLE]

No!

[ANNE BOLEYN]

Yeah, I'm pretty sure he means it

[ENSEMBLE]

Seems it

[ANNE BOLEYN]

What was I meant to do?

[ENSEMBLE]

What was she meant to do?

[ANNE BOLEYN]

Like, what was I meant to do?

[ENSEMBLE]

What was she meant to do?

[ANNE BOLEYN]

No, but what was I meant to do?

Sorry, not sorry about what I said

I'm just trying to have some fun

Don't worry, don't worry

Don't lose your head

I didn't mean to hurt anyone

LOL

Say 'Oh, well!'

Or go to hell!

[ENSEMBLE]

Just go to hell!

[ANNE BOLEYN]

Sorry, not sorry about what I said

Don't lose your head

#### 4. Conclusions

*Six the Musical* remains as one exceptional example of rewriting of history following the postmodernism techniques of multi narrative and intertextuality on modern musical productions, due to its challenging narrative breaking with the traditional female standards in history.

The combination of these postmodernist elements has been helpful to unravel the fictional and historical representation of Henry VIII's six wives, where the latter are now the narrators of their own stories. Moreover, through the analysis made on this dissertation it has been proven that there is a change of the previous representation of Henry VIII's companions, changing the roles of submissive and adulterous women for empowered and unique individuals. This musical also gives a platform to these marginalised characters throughout history to modify their roles and legacy through songs. In addition, thanks to the intertextuality of contemporary allusions such as pop songs, or popular idioms it has been possible to demonstrate the influence of Postmodernism in recent musical productions, where there is a blurred line between the present and the past. For instance, the use of 2000's music or texting to tell the story of a historical figure of the 16th century.

Finally, the retelling of history makes it possible to study and understand the social and historical changes made in *Six The Musical*, as well as society standards throughout the last six centuries.

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