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**Faculty of Arts and Philosophy**

**The Aspects of Life of Women in Tudor England in Wolf Hall**  
**by Hilary Mantel**

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### Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Autorka ve své bakalářské práci nejprve obecně představí historické období, kterým se bude analyticky zbývat, tj. tudorovskou Anglii. Zasadí ji do kulturně-historického kontextu a zaměří se především na vybrané aspekty života v tomto období. Tuto kulturní analýzu potom bude reflektovat v literárním rozboru díla Hilary Mantel *The Wolf Hall* a provede srovnání literárního obrazu života tudorovské Anglie s jejich historickou interpretací. Studentka svou práci založí nejen na vybraném primárním díle, ale především na odpovídajících sekundárních kritických zdrojích.

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## **Annotation**

This bachelor thesis focuses on the selected aspects of life of women in Tudor England. These aspects are reflected in the historical novel *Wolf Hall* written by the English writer Hilary Mantel. The attention is focused on such elements as the role of a woman in the sixteenth century, possible education of a woman, marriage and its circumstances, childbirth and the possibility to divorce. The aim of this paper is to compare the literary image of life of women in Tudor England in the novel with their historical interpretations.

## **Keywords**

The Tudors; the sixteenth century; a woman; marriage; a child

## **Název**

Aspekty života žen v tudorovské Anglii v díle *Wolf Hall* od Hilary Mantel

## **Souhrn**

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá vybranými aspekty života žen v Tudorovské Anglii. Tyto aspekty jsou reflektovány na příkladech z díla *Wolf Hall* anglické autorky Hilary Mantel. Pozornost je zaměřena na taková témata, jako například úloha ženy v šestnáctém století, její vzdělání, manželství a okolnosti, které jej provázely, rození dětí a rozvod. Cílem této práce je porovnat literární obraz života žen v tudorovské Anglii v románu *Wolf Hall* s jejich historickou interpretací.

## **Klíčová slova**

Tudorovci; šestnácté století; žena; manželství; dítě

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## **Introduction**

This bachelor thesis deals with the life of the women in England in the sixteenth century. The purpose of this paper is to render a cultural and historical analysis of the Tudor England. This analysis describes the chosen aspects of life of women at that period. The main purpose of the thesis is the literary analysis of the English novel *Wolf Hall* written by Hilary Mantel that shows how the author deals with the feminine topic and how she approaches the historical accuracy in her novel. The main subject of the analysis is a life of a married woman. In the subsequent chapters of this thesis such aspects as the essential education of a woman that preceded marriage, courting, marriage, and the circumstances of giving birth will be presented. The thesis will also slightly cover the topic of the rights and obligations of woman in her marriage. It is important to say that it was not possible to cover all the factual information concerning the Tudor women into details whether because of the limitations of this paper or because of the extensiveness of this topic. Therefore, the elements of the analysis were chosen only according to those which appear in the novel and consequently, they had to be rather generalised.

The subject of the analysis is a historical novel *Wolf Hall* written by Hilary Mantel, a British novelist. *Wolf Hall* was awarded the Man Booker Prize for fiction in 2009. The novel is set in England during the reign of King Henry VIII. The main character of the book and also the narrator is the king's advisor Thomas Cromwell. The plot of the book focuses on the "king's great matter", the divorce with Catherine of Aragon, the new marriage to Anne Boleyn and also on the king's desire to have a male heir. The end of the novel reveals the fact that the king feels the end of his marriage to Anne Boleyn is near and it is necessary to look for another woman. That is the time the mind of Thomas Cromwell is concentrated to Wolf Hall, a seat of the Seymour family, where the future wife of the king, Jane Seymour, lives. The Wolf Hall manor is only mentioned in the novel several times, but no event takes place there. To explain the title of the book, it comes from the name of the Wolf Hall manor and also from a Latin proverb "homo homini lupus" that means "man is wolf to man". (Mantel, 2009, p. 572) In the novel this quote was uttered by Thomas Cromwell and refers to the bad deeds humans are capable of.



The historical facts in this thesis concern primarily the lives of the aristocratic women or the women of higher status, such as the wives or widows of richer townsmen, because the historical sources that could provide factual information about lower class women at that period are limited. Nevertheless, the pieces of knowledge from their lives are essential to get a vision of the everyday life of ordinary women. But just because of their ordinariness, such women were not probably attractive enough for contemporary chroniclers to record any events of their lives. Poor women were also rarely literate and so they could not leave any records of their lives, such as diaries or letters. The reasons mentioned above and also the content of the novel are the reasons why the characters of Catherine of Aragon, Anne and Mary Boleyn, the women from the household of Thomas Cromwell and other women characters living at the court or its vicinity are the prevailing topic of the literary analysis of *Wolf Hall*. In some parts of the thesis, the poor or peasant women are also mentioned, but only as an interesting note or because of the fact that their life was outstanding in a particular way. In general, there are not so many historical records devoted to women, especially to those of the lower social classes. The historians have always more inclined to men and their issues, but women also were and always will be indispensable. What would the world or history be without women? Hilary Mantel has written in *Wolf Hall*: “Beneath every history, another history”. (Mantel, 2009, p. 66) This quote could be applied to define the role and the importance of a woman in the life of a man. Some women stood quietly and humbly by their husbands, some have changed history. A woman has many faces. She can be a creator of new life, a person who cares of her family, guards her children. She can be a loving, devoted, loyal, brave, daring, gracious and beautiful person, but also defiant, stubborn, rebelling, tempting or sinful. All those characters of women occur in *Wolf Hall*. Some of them are the main characters that affected a male’s world and even the future history. The others are only supporting characters illustrating the story to its perfection.

The Tudor dynasty is considered to be the most famous royal house in the history of England. The members of this house ruled the Kingdom of England for more than a hundred years, from 1485 to 1603. It is necessary to briefly mention the historical background to realize the individuality and influence of each ruler. The first Tudor king, Henry VII, gained the crown for his kin in the Battle of Bosworth Field. The Tudor

period was probably one of the most influential and the most significant eras of England. A great amount of changes was introduced in various spheres of people's lives and also in the monarchy. The novelties in law, culture, religion, the Protestant Reformation and of course the enriching of the Crown are the major changes. The people of England were naturally influenced also by the events in Europe. Derry and Blakeway note that:

the marks left by the Tudor period were perhaps the deepest of all, for during these one hundred and eighteen years the British peoples were being reshaped, not only by the flow of events within their own island, but to an exceptional extent by greater movements which were transforming the life of the whole of western Europe. (Derry, and Blakeway, 1973, p. 1)

The sixteenth century England kings and queens from the House of Tudor were truly notable rulers. Their governance was strong, but according to André Maurois, its strength was based more on public opinion, landlords, merchants, yeomen and religious power than on the power of the army and the police. (Maurois, 1993, p. 229) There were three generations of monarchs and almost each of them was exceptional in their own way. The first Tudor monarch was Henry VII. He is primarily known for "the long series of prudent, carefully considered, and self-controlled actions by which he restored the power and prestige of the monarchy". (Derry, and Blakeway, 1973, p. 12) Francis Bacon, the English philosopher, briefly described his reign in these words: "What he minded, he compassed." (Derry, and Blakeway, 1973, p. 12) His successor, Henry VIII, was considered to be an outstanding ruler as well, "whose matrimonial infidelities are for ever entangled in the story of the Breach with Rome, the most important act of state in the whole century". (Derry, and Blakeway, 1973, p. 12) This separation from the Roman Catholic Church and establishment of a state church, the Church of England, in 1534 was a remarkable change and with various changes through the years the Anglican Church remains an established church in Great Britain until nowadays. Although Henry VIII was a very successful ruler and his achievements are undeniable, he is also considered to be a cruel man due to the executions he ordered to carry out. Henry died in 1558 and "left a kingdom strong enough to hold together through nearly twenty years of religious upheaval and social crisis". (Derry, and Blakeway, 1973, p. 12) Henry VIII's successors were his three children. The first of them who came to the throne was a child-king Edward VI, whose mother was Henry's third wife Jane Seymour. Edward

ruled England for six years but died at a young age of fifteen. His sister, Mary I, took the government over The Nine Days' Queen, Lady Jane Grey. Mary, who became famous for her cruelty during the persecutions of the Protestants, was "the only Tudor whose mother was a foreign princess" (Derry, and Blakeway, 1973, p. 13), Catherine of Aragon from Spain. The last Tudor on the throne was Queen Elizabeth I. She was a legend of the period that she gave the name to. Under her rule, the people of England felt united. The land was prosperous and relatively free. Elizabeth's legend "has never wholly faded and, what is far more important, [...] injected a new degree of patriotic fervour into the make-up of her people". (Derry, and Blakeway, 1973, p.13) Her reign was different from her male predecessors. Elizabeth was admired by her people. "Whereas her father and grandfather had been respected and feared, she became the object of her subjects' love." (Derry, and Blakeway, 1973, p. 22)

This enumeration of the monarchs is important to realize how different every and each of them was, or, conversely, what they had in common. Being a monarch was purely a man's matter before Mary's accession to the throne. With a woman on the throne a lot has changed. The women became freer at making decisions about themselves. Queen Elizabeth is a great example of such a freelance. She decided not to get married. After all, her situation was different from the ordinary women's situation. She could afford to stay unmarried because of her status of the queen. In her position, she did not need any husband to be dependent on. However, such a decision caused the end of the Tudor dynasty because Elizabeth had no children to pass her government on. Nevertheless, the fate of this woman shows how a woman can be strong and what she can achieve. As Thomas Cromwell tells Jane Seymour in *Wolf Hall*: "...any little girl can hold the key to the future...". (Mantel, 2009, p. 244)

## **1. Education and upbringing of women**

This chapter focuses on the education and upbringing of women in the sixteenth century England and on its importance in their future life. This topic is significant and it shows the meaning of education for women and the way it was perceived.

Before the sixteenth century, learning and teaching was considered to be very practical and sensible for women. The education focused more on religion and was accessible to both poor and rich women. The beginning of the sixteenth century and the arrival of Humanism and Reformation in England affected the education of women in a way that it became more liberal than the preceding religious scholasticism. According to Cressy, at the beginning of the century education was not widespread, but later in Tudor period, especially during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, access to education became easier than in recent years. Nevertheless, the educational disadvantages for the poor people still existed. (Cressy, 1976, pp. 302-303) Cressy further explains that the illiteracy of people was measured by the ability or inability to sign one's name and also that this was correlated with social and occupational status rather than with anything else. He also mentions the fact that only two per cent of gentry and aristocracy were unable to sign their names. (Cressy, 1976, p. 314) This proves that the level of literacy in the high-born families was relatively high. It was rather expensive to have an educated child and that was the reason why it was not accessible for all the social classes.

The women's education differed from the education of men quite significantly. Boys were attending schools, but girls were not allowed to. This was related to the fact that a man was a lord for a woman. She, as a completely subordinate person, was considered to be somewhere else than at purely men's place. The upper class girls were usually educated at home by their private tutors. If a woman did not come from a wealthy family, she did not have many opportunities to become an educated person. In fact, she did not even need that. All that she needed was to be taught enough to run her household in the future or to be prepared to serve in somebody else's house. The education consisted of learning practical and necessary skills, such as sewing and cooking, which served as a preparation for her married life.

As for the aristocracy, it was not unusual that a woman was literate. The education was adjusted to the needs of an aristocratic woman. Girls were educated at

home by their private tutors. The education of such a girl was aimed at different subjects from learning to dance, play some kind of a musical instrument such as lute, organ and the virginals, learning to read, write, sew, embroider and also learn languages, usually Latin, Greek, Spanish or French. Alice Friedman gives an example of a mid-sixteenth century family having three daughters. The youngest one attended a convent school, two other daughters were employed in the household of a French family, “where they learned to read and write, to play the spinet, to dress both decorously and fashionably, and to sew”. (Friedman, 1985, p. 60) The girls sent to the French household had an opportunity to gain all the best for their future life. As Friedman writes, they could learn the basics of household management. Such skills they had learned were extremely important to be familiar with for the fact they would marry into higher classes or serve an aristocratic lady. (Friedman, 1985, p. 60) The girls could become a lady-in-waiting of a noble lady or even a queen. Friedman also stresses that “the highest achievement was to serve in the royal household with grace and skill both in domestic arrangements and in polite entertainment”. (Friedman, 1965, p. 60-61) This was the case of Anne Boleyn and her sister Mary who were sent to France and spend some time at the court. They served as the ladies-in-waiting to the Queen of France. Anne and Mary have been brought up there, learned various manners and ways of behaviour and to speak French perfectly.

In *Wolf Hall*, Hilary Mantel does not deal with the subject of women’s education in detail. She mentions only marginally the examples of women who wanted to be or had to be educated and also of those who did not get the opportunity to it at all. In some cases, they managed to achieve at least a little, for example they learned to read and write. However, this was perfectly sufficient then. One of those women who did not have an opportunity to have access to education was Kat Morgan, the sister of Thomas Cromwell. For a daughter of a blacksmith and brewer, there was no reason for being literate, because all her duties she had to do were taking care of their household and raising children. Kat’s father, who was cruel and beat his children, was, among other things, the reason she remained uneducated. She could not count and probably even write. The only thing she was able to do was to sign her name because of her brother. Kat comments the allusions of other people on her not being literate with the words: “...how much time do you think I had for learning figures, with a father like that? If I

can write my name, it's because Tom [Thomas Cromwell] here taught me". (Mantel, 2009, p. 25) The next example of an illiterate woman in *Wolf Hall* is Helen Barre, a woman in Cromwell's household. She had not been blessed with the opportunity to learn to read and write. Helen was taken by some women to a night school where she learned about the biblical characters she had never heard of before. Stimulated by this, she wished to learn to read so that she could read the gospel for herself. (Mantel, 2009, p. 420)

It was not common that low-class women would be taught any foreign language. This was not even typical for the upper-class women, except for the aristocratic ones. Friedman notes that only a low number of women coming from the upper classes had a chance to learn Latin. The daughters of the literary men, such as Thomas Cromwell and Sir Thomas More, were exceptions. (Friedman, 1985, p. 64) In *Wolf Hall*, Thomas Cromwell is a progressive man. His daughter Anne is a clever and curious girl and her father supports her desire for being well educated. Anne learns Latin and "is eager to start with Greek". (Mantel, 2009, p. 132) As it is not possible to attend any school, Cromwell's duty is to find an appropriate person to teach Anne. Choosing the right teacher is not easy and Cromwell has specific criteria. "He is thinking who best to teach her, asking around. He wants someone congenial, whom he can talk to over supper, a young scholar who will live in the house." (Mantel, 2009, p. 132) Apparently, it was typical for a teacher to stay at the household of his employer and in some cases almost become a part of the family.

Another man who contributed to the improvement of the education of high-born English women was Sir Thomas More. The most important subjects being taught were "classical literature, philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, physics, logics, and rhetoric". (Balmuth, 1988, p. 18) He himself educated his three daughters as well. In Thomas More's house, as described in *Wolf Hall*, the women's position is determined. His wife and daughters should always have something to do to prevent them from doing some of the foolish activities. They either learned or worked for the family. However, it seems that he rather preferred when they worked than when they learned. More says that "... one must keep them employed. [...] They cannot always be at their books, and young women are prone to mischief and idleness." (Mantel, 2009, p. 230) Although it was common for aristocracy to be able to read, still it was seen by some men as a pointless

skill for a woman. In *Wolf Hall*, the Duke of Norfolk is an example of a man who considers it as a cause of not being married yet:

He thinks book-reading an affectation altogether, and wishes there were less of it at court. His niece is always reading, Anne Boleyn, which is perhaps why she is unmarried at the age of twenty-eight. (Mantel, 2009, p. 163)

Such opinion was not unusual. In some cases, the education of a woman was treated as unnecessary or even undesirable. For a man education of a woman may also be perceived as an obstacle for him in his controlling of her as her lord. The more educated a woman was the less likely a man would command her. A woman was principally brought up and formed to profess faith in God and to be decent.

In terms of education, the Tudor women and the youngest children in a family did not have many chances to be well educated. Alice T. Friedman comments on the situation of Tudor education:

Because the Tudors believed in educating children to better fulfil adult responsibilities which varied according to gender, class and social status, women were always less well educated than men, and younger sons and daughters less well than older ones. (Friedman, 1985, p. 65)

The late sixteenth century, the era, in which the English throne was occupied by Queen Elizabeth I, brought some changes into the lives of English women. One of the major changes was that education became available to a much greater extent for women as well. However, this still applied only for the women living in the noble families.

## 2. The courtship and marriage

This chapter describes the basic principles of courting, engaging and then getting married in the sixteenth century. These topics are discussed the most in the novel *Wolf Hall*. Entering into marriage was an important change in a life of a woman. The issue of marriage is very broad. Therefore, the aspects examined in this chapter had been chosen according to the appearance of these elements in the novel *Wolf Hall*. The attention paid to these aspects is limited by the extent into which they are being dealt in this novel. As it was previously mentioned, the sources of life of the lower-class women are rather limited. For that reason, the aspects concerning the topic of marriage are based on the examples from the lives of aristocratic women, especially those who were probably the most famous in their period.

Naturally, there is a notable contrast between getting married at present and in the past. Generally, wedding is a legally approved act between woman and man, during which the fiancées pledge they will follow the rights and duties of matrimony. It is a form of contract in which the married couple promises to each other to meet the obligations connected to the institution of marriage. The unity of marriage is seen differently within various societies and cultures in the world. In today's England, as well as probably in the whole Western world in the twenty-first century, marriage is perceived as a voluntary joining of two separate lives of two people into one unity. If compared entering into marriage in the sixteenth and twenty-first century, it would be exactly the word "voluntarily" that would be very important in this comparison. Nowadays, people have the right and the opportunity to decide for themselves freely about their future partner. Lawrence Stone notes that a present-day couple is being "united primarily on the basis of romantic and sexual attraction, and a harmony of tastes and interests". (Stone, 1961, p. 182) In the sixteenth century this also appeared, but either very rarely or rather among the lower social classes. Regarding the aristocracy, the reasons for a marriage were different. These were predominantly the so called marriages of convenience.

To begin with, the marriage was preceded with a period of courting. In the Medieval times courtly love was connected with gallantry and chivalry which was valued most. To gain love of a lady was a principal purpose of courting. The brave deeds were the means of gaining a favour of a lady to whom a man later devoted his



life. According to Einstein, since the Medieval period these values have changed. The Tudor men rather abandoned chivalrous behaviour and courting became a pleasant pastime without serious intentions. (Einstein, 1921, p. 250) But, at the king's court, a tradition of medieval courtly love was still present. For instance, as a love of a knight for a lady who was married. He was sure he could never have her love. As Weirová notes, in medieval period, it was a chaste relationship, but at the Tudor court it also worked as a pretext to conceal adultery. (Weirová, 1999, p. 17) Although a premarital intercourse was forbidden, it was often committed. The morals of the aristocracy were more loosened. The men were allowed to enjoy the presence of many women, but the women were not allowed to do the same. Otherwise, they would be expelled from society due to their reputation and had no chance to be married well. It is important to note that the courtship was not considered to be fully binding. It was an attempt, usually adventurous, but it was not assumed it would definitely end with a marriage. In the progression of courtship, people could lose their interest in each other. Nevertheless, according to Carlson, courtship was an important and complex matter in the lives of young people. It was an important process that influenced their lives. "In Tudor England, it was the bridge over which they crossed from youth into adulthood." (Carlson, 1993)

Regarding finding a partner, according to Stone, the main difference between getting paired in the sixteenth and the twenty-first centuries are that nowadays, the role of parents of fiancées is not as important. The selection of the counterpart is a subject of some kind of personal appeal and not the financial rise and thus subsequent progress in the social status. In the sixteenth century, at least in the upper-gentry and noble families, this situation was different. Marriage was hardly ever about affection. Romantic love was not the exact reason for getting married. A woman was not usually allowed to marry a man she had fallen in love with. Getting to know each other and engaging were organized events. It was the parents of the potential bride who had the major vote in the decision of marrying off their daughter. (Stone, 1961, p. 182) The daughter was obliged to obey her parents, or precisely, to follow the rules stated by her father, because of the prevailing patriarchy. This was expressed by the subordination of children to their parents who were supposed to be highly respected by their children. Women were seen as subordinate to men as well, so in the family, it was not a son, but a daughter who was

treated more strictly by her parents. Lawrence Stone describes the superiority of daughters to their parents like this:

The most severe parental pressure was inevitably exercised on daughters, who were most dependent and sheltered, who were regarded as members of an inferior sex, and who had little alternative to obedience since celibacy was even less attractive than an unwanted husband. (Stone, 1961, p. 183)

This quotation clearly demonstrates that for parents or custodians from the noble or upper-gentry families it was a matter of a morality to marry off their daughter.

It was common to arrange the marriage in advance. The marriage negotiations took very often a long time. The parents of the bride made an agreement on engagement with the parents of the future husband, even though both children were already in their very early infancy and therefore they could not express their opinion. Actually, even if they were old enough, no one would probably ask them about it. Stone noted that “in the early sixteenth century wills and marriage contracts by which small children were bartered in advance like cattle were fairly common in all classes and all areas”. (Stone, 1961, p. 183)

Still, some historians would note that the Tudor period was not so strict in terms of discipline and obedience. As Einstein writes, there were people who felt that they can find a partner outside their caste. (Einstein, 1921, p. 248-249) Therefore it happened that a duchess married a gentleman of a lower social status or even a commoner. Poor people were marrying nobles and also the girls dared to chose their partner.

Not all the young people were choosing their partner with regards to their parents. According to Carlson, if they were marrying in their late twenties, they might saw themselves as independent of their parents. In addition, their parents could already be dead by that time. Young people often spend their years in apprenticeship. Far from home, they naturally found their counterpart without the parental consent or advice. (Carlson, 1993) But generally, a parental consent was important at all social classes. Therefore, some courting did not result in marriage because the parents, friends or kin did not agree.

Concerning the most common reasons for a marriage in the sixteenth century, probably the most crucial one was a social advancement. Marriages were planned and prearranged for the purpose of retaining or even improving the social position of a woman. A woman could achieve that by marrying usually an older man who was

supposed to be able to secure her economically. Otherwise, she did not have any means to make her living for herself. If she became a widow she usually remarried to ensure satisfactory life conditions for her and her children. Women, especially the upper-class ones or those marrying into the upper-class family, could gain a lot from marriage, for example a status. After they married the king, Catherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn were both crowned the queens of consort, were given the lands, property and money to run their households with servants. They also had an opportunity to influence important things in the country if they were interested, as they were in the centre of political life.

Among other reasons which were considered by parents when trying to find the best match to their daughter, the financial gain and security were in the first place. According to Carlson, having enough money was essential to enter a marriage. Although marrying for money was a deed from which people were discouraged, it was not reasonable to marry without it. The fiancées had either inherited some money or they spent some time in service to gather money in order to have enough to be able to start their own family. (Carlson, 1993) Wedding was also preceded with the arrangement of a dowry. Such contracts were written and sometimes it was much earlier than the fiancées met. The future of a woman depended on the money or property her father had raised for her. According to Wall, both sides, the bride's and the groom's, contributed by giving a piece of land, money, jewels or other goods. The dowry of poor people was little, it could be the pieces of useful household items such as cutlery and other dishes. (Wall, 1995, p. 515) When arranging a marriage, money and a status were more important than beauty. A cash dowry was paid to the groom. After the wedding the dowry of a bride became a property of her husband. She had no rights to control it. "Marriage thus transferred wealth between male heads of families with women serving as the medium of exchange." (Harris, 1989, p. 61) Barbara J. Harris notes that "marriage ties were one of the most effective ways of reinforcing and extending the kin and patronage networks that underlay the regional and national power of the English elite". (Harris, 1993, p. 98)

But not only was the money important when thinking of the most suitable counterpart. As Sarah Mendelsohn points out, "it comprehended quite a number of desirable traits, among them birth, estate, 'breeding', religion, beauty (for females), suitable age, and so forth". (Mendelsohn, 1979, p. 128) The old connections or the

distance of the residences of the families were taken into consideration as well. That is why blood relationships were quite common, especially in noble families. As Mendelsohn notes, matches were often proposed because the parents of both fiancées were old friends, neighbours who visited each other or they could even be already related. (Mendelsohn, 1979, p. 129)

As seen from previously mentioned facts, almost everything was arranged by men, namely fathers, brothers or guardians. Thus, it is important to realize that marriage has not been examined from the point of view of women. Einstein notes that family relationships were frequently based on material advantage with no regard to personal happiness. (Einstein, 1921, p. 245)

In the middle of the sixteenth century, English fathers began to change their view of prearranged marriages due to its influence on the family lives of their daughters. According to Stone, they realized that such artificially formed relationships between wife and husband were not happy. From this time towards the seventeenth century, a kind of emancipation of women began to appear and the women started to have a right to decide freely for themselves about their future. (Stone, 1961, p. 184)

In Tudor period, no legal age was set for entering the marriage. As Carlson mentions, the word “adolescence” was probably unknown at that time, but the people knew that there was a level of age with its certain features that followed childhood and preceded adulthood. The period of life that we nowadays call adolescence was dedicated to such activities as courting and mostly led to marriage. (Carlson, 1993) This period did not have any clear boundaries. The exact age at which people were entering into marriage varied. Generally, the peerage was said to marry earlier than gentry. As Alison Wall notes, the average age was about twenty-three years (Wall, 1995, p. 514), but according to Carlson, since the beginning of the sixteenth century and on, the first marriage started in the person’s late twenties. The average age for entering into marriage for a man was about twenty-seven, for a woman it was twenty-five. (Carlson, 1993) Nevertheless, earlier marriages also appeared. It even happened that people were about fifteen years old. In that case it was necessary to have the parent’s consent. As Einstein notes, some boys were even married when they were fifteen or sixteen years old. These children marriages resulted in frequent unhappiness in the relationships. (Einstein, 1921, p. 246) At the age of sixteen, a person was too young to marry, but it is

important to realize that the average lifespan in the sixteenth century was quite low. The average life expectancy for a woman could be between thirty and forty. For a man it was higher, approximately about fifty years. The lifespan depended on the standard of living. As for the examples, Henry VIII died aged fifty-five, Catherine of Aragon lived up to fifty and his last wife, Catherine Parr, was about thirty-five when she died.

The wedding ceremony could be either in privacy or a big wedding with public celebrations. English people loved traditional weddings accompanied by a great feast and dancing. According to Weirová, another custom was that the bride and a groom were accompanied to their marriage bed where the priest blessed them. Although there is no proof that it was also carried out in Henry's case and any of his wives. (Weirová, 1999, p. 13) No wedding ceremony is described into the details in *Wolf Hall*. A marriage of Anne Boleyn and the king is only mentioned, because it was a quiet and small wedding. As Mantel describes, Anne and Henry were married on January 25, 1533. It was almost secret, there were just few witnesses. It took place in the chapel and they took their vows before a priest who joined their hands. Anne was attended by a sole woman, her sister Mary. There were no big celebrations following. In terms of Henry's weddings, to be married six times was even at those times very unusual. Weirová notes that because of the fame of the king, the historians started to be interested in details of his marriages. (Weirová, 1999, p. 9)

An arranged marriage was in fact an agreement similar to a trade contract. There were the fathers who negotiated matches for their children, but Harris stresses that such arranged marriage was a burden for women more than for men. The Tudors instilled submissiveness into girls more than in boys. Girls were defenceless against the pressure on them. (Harris, 1989, p. 61) They were also dependant on their dowry and that is why it was hard to oppose the matches they did not approve of. Moreover, they were socially dependant throughout their lives. Stone reveals that:

the primary purpose of the arranged marriage was to preserve and expand the wealth and political power of aristocratic patrilineages and that its role in perpetuating the subjection of women was secondary, even incidental. (Stone in Harris, 1989, p. 59)

In *Wolf Hall*, the different views of reasons for a marriage and freedom when choosing a partner are illustrated in the conversations in the household of Thomas Cromwell. Anne, the daughter of Cromwell, asked her aunt why people marry. She

answered: “So there can be children”. (Mantel, 2009, p. 127) Cromwell tells his daughter: “Most people...feel it increases their happiness”. (Mantel, 2009, p. 127) Anne asked whether she would choose her husband by herself and Cromwell replies: “‘Of course.’, but means: up to a point”. (Mantel, 2009, p. 128) It probably means that she will be allowed to choose, but not without the parental consent. Or, that her father will choose her a suitable husband by himself and her opinion of him will be taken into account. Cromwell then chooses Ralph, a boy who lives in their household to be raised. But Cromwell knows his daughter is too young to marry him yet, although he would prefer him for her too. The situation does not have a solution in the story, because Anne dies of sweaty illness.

The best known example of a woman that openly opposed the arranged marriage was probably royal princess Mary Tudor, the younger sister of Henry VIII. Mary was a very beautiful lady. Lacey even calls her “one of the icons of the age”. (Lacey, 1972, p. 45) She was eighteen when Henry, being her guardian after the death of their father, proposed her to fifty-two-year-old Louis XII of France. It was a marriage of convenience, because Henry hoped that the result of such marriage could be an alliance of England and France. Mary did not want to marry old and sick Louis. Apart from that, she fell in love with Archduke Charles Brandon of Suffolk, a handsome young man and Henry’s close friend. Henry suggested to her that when Louis died she could marry again, this time someone she loved and Mary agreed. Louis died within three months after the wedding and Mary was free of “the obligations that conventionally bound princesses to sacrifice their passions on the altar of diplomacy”. (Lacey, 1972, p. 48) Mary and Suffolk married secretly, because Henry did not approve of that marriage. Later, Henry forgave them, but they had to live away from the court. Harris writes that Mary’s success in her matter was not caused by the fact she would have any strong position in her social class or that she would have authority or power. It was caused by her personality. She was beautiful and charming and knew how to manipulate people. (Harris, 1989, p. 84)

Mary Tudor’s niece, her namesake, was another great example of an arranged marriage. Mary, the only surviving child of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, was christened after the king’s favourite sister. Mary was a devout Catholic, exactly like her mother was. During her life, Mary suffered from health problems concerning later

inability to carry a child. Mantel probably gives a hint of that in *Wolf Hall* when she describes the situation when Mary feels sick because of her woman's disorder. Despite her pain, a young girl stands up straight. She has to, because her mother ordered her to, yet she is the princess of England. As a result, Mary almost faints. (Mantel, 2009, p. 287) That shows how strict and demanding life at the court could be. She was a daughter of the queen consort, which meant that if she did not have a brother in the future, she could have been the queen regnant. According to O'Connor, Mary disagreed with her father's desire to have his marriage with Catherine annulled. (O'Connor, 2003, p. 292) She knew her rights and claim to the throne. After the divorce and the arrival of Elizabeth, daughter of Anne Boleyn, Henry proclaimed Mary not to be his legal child and her life was uneasy.

It was typical that the marriages were prearranged when the children were little babies, but then, during their life the arrangements were often changed because of the importance of the alliance. It was a political matter and the future marriage could help. The woman may not have been satisfied, but nobody asked her. Henry's daughter Mary was betrothed many times to the heirs of France and the Empire, but the arranged marriages were always cancelled for various reasons. In *Wolf Hall*, Mary speaks about the number of marriages that had been negotiated for her:

I was a baby at the breast when I was married into France. Then to the Emperor, into France again, to the king, to his first son, to his second son, to his sons I have lost count of, and once again to the Emperor, or one of his cousins. I have been contracted in marriage till I am exhausted. One day I shall really do it. (Mantel, 2009, p. 557)

In the end, she married Philip of Spain, but due to her health problems they remained childless.

In Tudor England, it was not easy for a girl to defy her father. Consequently, most women agreed with the negotiated marriage, because they simply acknowledged themselves as a part of a family in the society which was predominantly patriarchal. On the contrary, not all the pre-arranged marriages were unhappy. According to Harris, many of them managed to develop warm and long-lasting relationships in which the subordination of a woman was not as strong. (Harris, 1989, p. 84)

There were also the women who had a right to choose. The case of Anne Boleyn could be interpreted as a kind of example of the freedom of choice of her partner and

also as an example of a woman who knew what she wanted and how to get it. Anne has been a very interesting person for many historians and her fate has been described in various ways.

The members of the Boleyn family were wealthy merchants. Although Anne was a daughter of a diplomat, she did not have any special advantages. By many historians, she is described as a graceful brunette. Anne is not considered to be the handsomest woman, but rather an unconventional beauty. Her height is described as middle, her complexion rather dark. She had very long black hair and beautiful black eyes. “The eyes had it. When she fixed them on Henry, he became, it seemed, her puppet.” (Lacey, 1972, p. 72-73) Hilary Mantel also pictures Anne as a beauty. Her eyes are described as black, “slightly protuberant, shiny like the beads of an abacus they are shiny and always in motion, as she makes calculations of her own advantage”. (Mantel, 2009, p. 166) No wonder that she charmed the king.

The precise history of the origin of her relationship with the king is unknown. As Mackie writes, Anne had served at the court in France as a maid of honour to Queen Claude. (Mackie, 1972, p. 323) When she returned, it is said that she was literally interposed before the king’s eyes but even before, it was her sister Mary who was Henry’s mistress. It was in Boleyn’s concern to get into the favour of the king. According to Winston Churchill, the first mention of Anne being present at the court comes from August 16, 1527, which is four months before the king had commenced discussing the marriage annulment. Churchill raises the questions: “Did he plan the divorce and then find Anne? Or had he arranged to marry Anne from the beginning? We shall never know, for Henry was very secretive in his private matters”. (Churchill, 1956, p. 48) On the contrary, Elton seems to be quite sure that Anne and Henry fell in love between 1525 and 1527 and at that time, Anne had already been living at the court. (Elton, 1977, p. 100) In *Wolf Hall*, Hilary Mantel offers an opinion that it was Anne who wanted to become the king’s wife herself. Mantel also suggests that Anne was confident and was aware of what she deserved and what she might get. In the novel, after the wedding Anne says an important thing: “I was always desired. But now I am valued. And that is a different thing, I find”. (Mantel, 2009, p. 431) As a former mistress, she was not popular at the court where the courtiers still showed their respect for Catherine of Aragon. According to Elton, from the beginning, Anne did not want to



be a mistress, but she wanted to be the queen. (Elton, 1977, p. 101) With the crown on her head and with the hope that she could bear a male heir, she trusted in being finally valued. In *Wolf Hall*, Mantel greatly captures the character of Anne Boleyn. She is considered a temptress and called a concubine. “I am Jezebel.” says Anne in the novel. (Mantel, 2009, p. 362) According to the text from the sermon, Jezebel was a wicked woman who influenced the king of Israel, Ahab. She was thrown out of a window. Jezebel is considered to be a symbol of a proud woman, of female wickedness and apostasy. That Anne compares herself to Jezebel could be seen as an allusion from Hilary Mantel on the similarity of the fatal ends of Jezebel and Anne.

Her fatal end really came. As Maurois writes, in September 1533, instead of the expected son a daughter called Elizabeth was born. Another child was a son, but he was born dead. Her inability to bear a son caused that she was in disfavour with the king. She was also suspected of committing adultery and incest with her brother George. (Maurois, 1993, p. 193) Although this had never been proved, it did not last long and Anne was beheaded. At that time, the king had already found a new woman. It was one of Anne’s ladies-in-waiting, Jane Seymour.

A short time after Anne was executed, Henry married Jane Seymour, the daughter of Sir John Seymour of Wolf Hall. Robert Lacey describes Jane as a modest girl, who did not have anything to do with the royal matters or have any special advances. (Lacey, 1972, p. 147) Mackie notes that she was not particularly beautiful and was quite clever. Jane was reserved, but her nature was kind. (Mackie, 1972, p. 380) Churchill opposes that and claims that she was not considered to be a clever woman. Jane was of a pale complexion, attractive, but not considered to be a beauty. Concerning her behaviour, she was gentle, but arrogant or rather proud. Nevertheless, people generally liked her. (Churchill, 1956, p. 63) Hilary Mantel in *Wolf Hall* paints an identical picture of Jane Seymour. She is often sitting alone in the corner. Jane is, usually by Anne Boleyn, referred to as a “milk-sop” (i.e. not a brave person) and described as very pale, “the sickly milk-faced creeper” and boringly virtuous. (Mantel, 2009, p. 243) Jane’s marriage to the king did not last for a long time. Jane gave birth to a son, but she died soon after that.

The king’s next wife after Jane Seymour was a German princess called Anne of Cleves. The king did not fall in love with the princess who had been chosen for him

according to a portrait and their marriage was annulled. The king's fifth wife, Anne Howard, was accused of adultery and beheaded. His last wife, Catherine Parr, outlived the king.

As it was previously stated, the marriage was a great change in the life of a woman. It brought her many restrictions. As Weirová writes, an aristocratic bride had to be prepared to change her life, to marry a man she may have never seen before, to adapt to new life and also to leave her family. She was expected to be loving, obedient and virtuous. (Weirová, 1999, p. 14) At the moment of a wedding, a woman became a property of her husband and he could treat her in the way he wanted to. Being unfaithful was not good for a woman. Henry even let his wife be beheaded for that. On the other hand, it was usual that a husband was unfaithful to his wife. According to Weirová, a woman was not in a position that she could reproach her husband for unfaithfulness. One of the possible reasons for unfaithfulness was the fact that marriages were pre-arranged. (Weirová, 1999, p. 17)

Women could not be equal to men and therefore, they had very few legal rights. As Pollock and Maitland explain, they were divided into public and private law. Considering the public law, a woman had no rights and no duties except for paying taxes. On the other hand, according to private law almost the same rights as those for men were valid for her. She could inherit a property, make a contract. (Pollock and Maitland in Hogrefe, 1972, p. 97-98) A married woman needed an approval of her husband to make a will. (Hogrefe, 1972, p. 100)

One of the crucial things in the family life was obedience. Women were brought up to be obedient and subordinated to their fathers or, when they married, to their husbands. Even the queen had to obey her husband. As Weirová notes, she was demanded to learn from him in silence. Some of the women were very open and intelligent and it was difficult for them to be ruled by a man. That caused them many problems. (Weirová, 1999, p. 9) The idea of a woman's subordination is very old. According to a premise written by John Knox, a Protestant leader, in *First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* in 1558, "Woman in her greatest perfection was made to serve and obey man, not to rule and command him". (Knox, 1878) This line greatly captures the view of men of women in the whole sixteenth century, the way women were perceived and treated. It cannot be said that it was like

this in all of the English households, but this was probably a general opinion. For a woman to be successful in her marriage, it was fundamental to have a certain control and to be obedient. It was the same as in the society where people should also be obedient if they wanted the society to be well organised. But it was just this system that “placed women in a dependant and submissive role”. (Friedman, 1985, p. 62)

Although from the historical sources it is clear that women were usually subordinate to men, there is one example of the situation which was not exactly like that and it is the case of Anne Boleyn. Anne was a strong woman that used everything to get what she wanted. In *Wolf Hall*, she is not described as a subordinated poor woman either, but as a person who has the control over the king, sets the rules and does not want to give up.

### 3. The unmarried women

In this chapter an unmarried woman will be slightly examined. Her possible fate will be presented on the example of Elizabeth Barton from the novel *Wolf Hall*. It is important to realize the reasons a woman had that she stayed unmarried.

Although marriage was a common thing, there were still women who either decided for themselves or were forced by circumstances not to marry. If that happened, a woman had to choose what to do. Life of an unmarried woman in the sixteenth century was different from the life of a never-married man. As it had already been mentioned above, such way of life was not attractive and it was not easy either. A girl or a woman could not live on her own without any man, whether he was her father, husband, uncle or any kind of a custodian. Of course, she could decide to live on her own without a husband, but it was not appropriate for a woman to live and work alone, because her living or rather surviving was highly dependent on a man. The fact that a woman lived in a marriage offered her more advantages and prospects of a better life than that it was a burden.

Apparently, there is no evidence that could tell us something about the exact motives that were important for Tudor women when contemplating about their future life or even their opinions about it. Barbara J. Harris comments that she [Harris] “has not yet found a single piece of evidence in which a Yorkist or early Tudor aristocratic woman expressed her views about the choice between marriage and chastity or the more specific alternative of marrying or entering a convent”. (Harris, 1993, p. 111) An aristocratic woman was not obliged to marry and she could “remain single and be sexually active, either inside or outside of convents” (Harris, 1993, p. 111), but this situation was not considered to be legitimate and also that choice was “neither socially nor morally acceptable”. (Harris, 1993, p. 111) A woman living in some unusual way was often considered to be strange. At that time any kind of anomaly was considered as a sign of something bad or even devilish. In many cases a woman was even accused of being a witch and thus she was persecuted or punished.

Apart from remaining unmarried, a woman had two main options. She could spend her life either as a nun or as a servant. Before the Protestant reform and the dissolution of the monasteries, an unmarried woman usually left her current home for living in a convent. This involved especially the daughters and wives of noblemen. This

was socially the most acceptable option for a single woman. Barbara J. Harris quotes William Monter who said that the convents were “socially prestigious communities of unmarried women”. (Harris, 1993, p. 90) However, not many of aristocratic women chose this way. Harris notes that the convents were also used as a place of refuge when their husbands were imprisoned or executed as traitors. (Harris, 1993, p. 107)

Another option for a woman who was unmarried or at least was not married for the time being was to work for someone else’s household as a servant. Domestic service for another family was kind of a substitution for her own family she did not have. She could be employed for example as a governess for a young princess or a lady-in-waiting at the court. According to Lacey, Anne Boleyn spent some time at the court as a lady-in-waiting to the Queen of France. When she returned she became a lady-in-waiting to Queen Catherine, actually, her predecessor. (Lacey, 1972, p. 73) The daughters of Sir John Seymour of Wulfhall were also serving at the court of Queen Catherine. Seymour’s daughter Jane, the later third wife of Henry VIII, was sometimes sent to Lady Anne, who never refused any of the queen’s ladies if they were willing to spend their time with her. Regarding the daily activities, the women usually spent their time on handwork. It was for example sewing, but that was rather a necessity, then also embroidery. Telling stories, reading aloud, listening to live music, dancing, participation in drama playing - especially farce, these were other traditional activities at that time. From those carried out in the open air it was horse riding, archery and hunting.

One of the fates of an unmarried lower-class woman that has been described in the novel is the story of Elizabeth Barton, a prophetess and also a Catholic nun from Canterbury. The character of this woman is not a fiction. Lacey notes that Elizabeth, who was among other names called the Holy Maid of Kent, was a real person living in the first half of the sixteenth century. (Lacey, 1972, p. 137) In *Wolf Hall*, her life is a great example of a fate of an ordinary woman who stayed unmarried and whose life ended unluckily. At that time, her life probably was not unexceptional, but Hilary Mantel describes her life to show one of the possible destinies of a woman to illustrate the atmosphere of that time. Concerning her alleged abilities it is said that she was not exceptional until some time. In *Wolf Hall* the development of her character is described as follows: “Nobody took any notice of her till she was twenty or so, and then she had some kind of illness, and when she got better she started to have visions, and speak in

alien voices". (Mantel, 2009, p. 382) For some inexplicable reason she began to behave in a different way from what is usual. She was said to be able to live without food for nine days and it happened that she fell to the ground unexpectedly. She also suffered "spasms, torsions and trances". (Mantel, 2009, p. 383) The reasons for such behaviour could be various mental or neurological disorders such as schizophrenia or epilepsy, starvation could be connected to anorexia, but these disorders were unknown in the sixteenth century and therefore could not be diagnosed. People were not educated yet in this field and thus the various legends arose. At first, people only talked about Elizabeth Barton and shared her prophecies. Later, she started to spread the prophecies concerning King Henry VIII and Lady Anne Boleyn. She kept saying that if the king married Lady Anne, he would be ruling only for one year and no more. Naturally, these prophecies lately showed not to be true. Soon everybody found out she was a fraud and she had no abilities to make prophecies. Nevertheless, Barton was accused of being a heretic because of the prophecies directed against the king. She finally confessed that her prophecies and visions were made up. She admitted she did not have any of the abilities, for example that she had never raised death people as she had claimed. She paraded in front of the crowds as a penitent to make the public confessions of her imposture and then imprisoned in the Tower of London. In the end, she was found guilty as a heretic and a traitor and her death was scheduled. In the novel, Thomas Cromwell suggested her to lie and say that she is expecting a child. Such behaviour was common, because the rule was usually followed that a pregnant woman should not be executed. However, Elizabeth Barton refused and was sentenced to be hanged. That was not as common at that time. A typical punishment for a woman was burning at the stake whereas a punishment for a man was much crueller. In the novel, Mantel describes that being burned for treason is a death penalty arranged mainly for a woman. A man was usually half-hanged, castrated and gutted. (Mantel, 2009, p. 492) Elizabeth Barton's property that counted such things as carpets, pillows, sheets, bolster, dishes, platters and basin was left at the nunnery and she was given some money for the hangman. It was a common practice to pay some amount of money to the executioner to carry the execution quickly and cleanly for a person. In *Wolf Hall* such a situation is commented:

The last person she [Barton] will see as she climbs the ladder is her executioner, holding out his paw. If she cannot pay her way at the last, she may suffer longer than she needs. She had imagined how long it takes to burn, but not how long it

takes to choke at the end of a rope. In England there is no mercy for the poor. You pay for everything, even a broken neck. (Mantel, 2009, p. 576)

In terms of the exceptional but unproven abilities and qualities of women it was quite frequent that a woman could be accused of witchcraft. According to Warnicke, people believed in evil spirits and their presence. One of them was Satan who was supposed to tempt people astray and follow him. The witches were considered to be his allies and were suspected of “maleficium”, which meant injuries, killing animals or causing illnesses in the families. They were also “charged with making pacts with the devil, with night flying, and with metamorphosing into werewolves”. (Warnicke, 1987, pp. 248-249)

Naturally, the hesitations about entering or not entering into marriage appeared in the society. Although the men believed if they remained unmarried, they would be freed of various things such as wife and children who represented the obstacles in making their career, there were still quite a large number of men, especially contemporary book writers, who believed in marriage. According to Carlson, they even saw it as a “duty to the nation”. (Carlson, 1993) Carlson also notes that as a result of low birth rate, high mortality of infants and unexpected diseases, the state of economy had weakened and the commonwealth felt defenceless against other countries which were more populated. (Carlson, 1993) Young people were aware of the importance of the matrimony. They understood it as a natural step in their lives and so “the real issue was not whether but who and when to marry”. (Carlson, 1993)

#### 4. The divorce

This part of the paper deals with the topic of divorce. Probably the most known divorce of Tudor period was that of Catherine of Aragon and King Henry. This event is one of the crucial topics of the novel *Wolf Hall*.

Although the divorce was not seen in the same way as it is nowadays, it is undoubtedly an interesting topic. As well as in the previous chapters, the way the elements are grasped in this paper responds to their importance and appearance in the novel *Wolf Hall*. As the example of the marriage that ended with a divorce, the case of Catherine of Aragon is presented. In this paper and also in many historical works the name of Catherine of Aragon is spelled with a C, probably due to its English sound and also due to her Spanish origin - her name in Spanish was Catalina. Nevertheless, she signed herself as Katherine. In *Wolf Hall*, the author calls her “Katherine” as well.

Firstly, it is necessary to define a concept of divorce or rather what its perception and reasons for it in the sixteenth century were like. Not all the couples were happy in their relationships. If a marriage did not work, a married couple did not have many opportunities to solve that situation. They could have been dissolved, but they had to prove the right reasons for such a move. A divorce, as it is known nowadays, was not typical for that period. It occurred only in exceptional cases. Instead of “a divorce” the marriage was simply “cancelled” or “annulled” which means that it has been declared invalid. But in various historical publications as well as in this work the term divorce is used. According to Weirová, the other reasons for cancelling a marriage could be for example discovering the close kinship between the couple, insanity of one of the partners, or that the marriage was not fulfilled. (Weirová, 1999, p. 17) The greatest example of a divorce of that period was the case of the king Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon.

The details of their divorce as well as what preceded are well known to the historians. According to André Maurois, after Henry VIII accessed to the throne in 1509, he married Catherine of Aragon, his brother’s widow. Catherine was the daughter of the Spanish king and arrived in England when she was sixteen years old. She was a devoted Catholic, a very scrupulously faithful and religious woman. She clung to the Spanish habits and customs. Henry had not chosen Catherine for himself and it is said he did not love her although he claimed to marry her from love. Henry was eighteen



when he married her and she was six years older than him. It is said that she “must have been a tiresome wife to a spirited young man, but the evidence is that she did her best to attune her life to her husband’s way”. (Mackie, 1972, p. 325) On the other hand it should not be denied that Henry behaved well to her. According to Maurois, their marriage was a marriage of convenience, the reasons were purely political. The connection of the Spanish and English thrones was an honour for England and also an assurance for the future. King Arthur’s death threatened that the alliance could be cancelled. (Maurois, 1993, p.185) Maurois further explains that on account of the papal bull that proved that Catherine’s first marriage was not consummated, on her wedding day, Catherine was treated as a virgin. (Maurois, 1993, p. 186) Catherine and Henry had one daughter, Mary, but to preserve the monarchy, it was pivotal to have a son. Maurois notes that if it did not happen, the country could be threatened by another War of the Roses. (Maurois, 1993, p. 187) However, the queen was not healthy any more. Catherine had many miscarriages to be able to carry another child. The king was very superstitious and thought that his marriage was cursed. At that time, the king began to think of a new marriage to solve his situation. He fell in love with Anne Boleyn. In fact, he was living with two women at one time, because he was still married to Catherine, while Anne was his mistress and began to appear at his side. Henry tried to find the best way to get rid of his legal wife. A civil divorce was not known yet. According to Elton, the king was a pious man, so he was obliged to ask the pope for dispensation, that he finally did not get. According to the former dispensation from Pope Julius II, that allowed Henry an exception to marry his dead brother’s wife, he needed to gain another dispensation from new pope Clement VII so the marriage could have been annulled. But new circumstances appeared, Spain as Catherine’s mother country also joined the matter and the possible annulations become very difficult from both the theological point of view and the canon law. (Elton, 1977, p. 98) Finally, the king obtained eight testimonials declaring that his marriage was not valid. Because Anne was expecting a child, she and the king were married secretly. They both wanted the child to be born within matrimony. After that, Anne was crowned queen and the king was excommunicated. All this led to the breach from Rome and the king became the Supreme Head of the Church of England.

Due to Catherine's inability to give birth to a live child, Henry was convinced that his marriage with his brother's widow had been cursed. In the Old Testament there were two passages, but both of them had absolutely opposite meaning. One of them said that a man should marry his brother's widow in case his brother died without leaving any child. As Elton writes, Deuteronomy xxv. 5 "orders a man to marry his brother's widow if she is childless". (Elton, 1977, p. 98) The second passage said the opposite, that a man must not marry his brother's widow. According to Elton, it was Leviticus xx. 21, "which verse declared that a man who marries his brother's widow shall be childless". (Elton, 1977, p. 98) Henry chose the second passage to be valid for him. He believed that his marriage was wrong and the fact he had no male heir was a punishment from God, because his marriage with Catherine was in contravention of Leviticus.

In *Wolf Hall*, the issue of two contradictory religious laws is also dealt with. During the conversation with Thomas Cromwell, Cardinal Wolsey comments upon the king's problem with his wife Catherine. "Well, Deuteronomy. Which positively recommends that a man should marry his deceased brother's wife. As he did. [...] But he doesn't like Deuteronomy." (Mantel, 2009, p. 24) Saying that the king does not like Deuteronomy could be possibly interpreted that Henry does not like Catherine any more. Wolsey also says that the king should not worry about Leviticus, because he already has a daughter, Mary, therefore his marriage did not remain childless as predicted in Leviticus. Cromwell replies "... I think it is generally understood, in the Scriptures, that 'children' means 'sons'". (Mantel, 2009, p. 24) Among others, this is another proof of the fact that having a son was considered to be blessed.

Lacey explains that after the divorce, Catherine had to give up the title of the Queen and was called "the Princess-Dowager", because she was the widow of the king's brother. She could keep certain property. The king would have provided her generously if she had agreed with all of the conditions concerning cancelling the marriage. Though, as Lacey claims, "she could hardly expect the King to support her and her household". (Lacey, 1972, p. 128) After the divorce, Henry did not want to see Catherine. She was given an order to leave for the palace at Moor, where Cardinal Wolsey had lived before. According to Churchill, together with her daughter Mary they were exiled from the king's court. (Churchill, 1956, p. 57) Mantel in *Wolf Hall* precisely explains that after the divorce, Catherine was considered to be a widow after

the king's brother Arthur. She gained a new status and had to move out of the royal palace to another one. Her household, that travelled with her, had now much fewer people than before, but it was still enough to serve her. She had chaplains, confessors, menials, butlers, carvers, physicians, cooks, scullions, maltsters, harpers, lutenists, poultry keepers, gardeners, laundresses, apothecaries, wardrobe ladies, bedchamber ladies and maids. (Mantel, 2009, p. 451)

In the eyes of commoners, Catherine of Aragon did nothing wrong. According to Einstein, she was considered to be innocent and the king treated her badly for no rational reason. (Einstein, 1921, p. 249) By the Catholics, she was perceived a suffering woman. People, especially women, sympathised with their queen and hated Anne Boleyn who took Catherine's place at the court.

## 5. Childbirth and raising children

This chapter is going to describe probably the most important role of a woman in the sixteenth century, which was a creator of a new life. The importance of having a male descendant will be examined. Then, the chapter is also dedicated to childbirth and is also dealing with such unpleasant event as a miscarriage and the superstitions that appeared when this event occurred.

In the sixteenth century, it was not easy to live a long and healthy life. In the past, England was hit by plague several times. For example the Black Death and sweating sickness arrived and these caused a reduction in population. With the sixteenth century a growth of the population occurred. According to Derry, the causes for that were the earlier marriages, a more nutritious diet and also better supplies of grain in the times of a hunger. (Derry, 1973, p. 6) On the other hand, death was still on a daily basis. Medicine was developed very poorly and hygiene was rather unusual. Mervyn states that on average, the Tudors washed themselves only three times a year, but presumably the members of royalty washed themselves more regularly. (Mervyn, 2008) There were dwellings with no running water. Thus, the water from the wells was used. In the cities the waste was thrown right on the streets and sewage was carried away from houses in open sewers. These circumstances, among others, caused that in the cities the diseases such as smallpox, typhus, scarlet fever and various types of plagues were often present, usual and potentially fatal.

A man always desired to have someone who would inherit his property, or at least, would be the successor of his family name. Therefore, to bear a male descendant to provide an heir for a dynasty was the main task for a woman, either aristocratic or less significant one. Charlotte Otten stresses the importance of the women's task:

In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English society, the bearing of children was considered a woman's primary calling and children as her primary contribution to the family, the church, and the state. (Otten, 1993)

King Henry was the man whose desire for a male heir was apparently the greatest one. As an example from the novel *Wolf Hall*, the king of France has three sons. Henry is envious and thinks "... how God must love him... ". (Mantel, 2009, p. 390) It is obvious that having a son was perceived to be the blessing of God. The sixteenth century was full of superstitions, assumptions and half-truths. These were also concerning

conceiving a child, the pregnancies and childbirths. As it has been already mentioned above, a male descendant was more welcome in the family than a female one. People have probably tried various things that could influence that a boy was born. The accidental successful attempts to intervene gave rise to various superstitions. In *Wolf Hall*, the belief in certain rumours is also depicted. King Henry tells his wife Anne Boleyn who is expecting a baby: “The Italians say for a boy you have to keep warm.... Heat up your wine to heat up your blood. No cold fruit, no fish”. (Mantel, 2009, p. 440) However, there is no evidence whether this advice actually worked. Another wrong assumption was concerning the sex of a child and fertility. If what a man wanted did not happen, the woman was almost always guilty. If it was vice versa, a man deserved admiration. In *Wolf Hall*, one of the women comments the contemporary views on having a child. Her opinion probably describes a vision of the whole situation by men:

Have you ever observed that when a man gets a son he takes all the credit, and when he gets a daughter he blames his wife? And if they do not breed at all, we say it is because her womb is barren. We do not say it is because his seed is bad. (Mantel, 2009, pp. 503-504)

These judgments could probably originate in the belief that bearing children is primarily a task of a woman and therefore she is responsible for the whole situation and mainly its result.

The Tudor women themselves probably did not have any acquaintance with the subject of expecting the baby. There was no knowledge of anatomy and biology among the common people. As an example of this, in *Wolf Hall*, Jane Seymour asks Anne Boleyn: “Do you think it’s already decided what it will be, or does God decide later? Do you think it knows itself, what it is? Do you think if we could see inside you, we would be able to tell?” (Mantel, 2009, p. 440) Rationally, it was not possible to discover these in the sixteenth century. However, for women it was not necessary as such to be highly cognizant of it. Practical experience of their mothers and midwives were sufficient.

What was childbirth in the life of the Tudor aristocratic woman? There was nothing sure, neither the process nor the result or a future life of a child and especially in the sixteenth century. Therefore the pregnancy was not officially announced in public for sure. As Mantel shows in *Wolf Hall*: “There has been no announcement; announcements are never made, women’s bodies are uncertain things and mistakes can occur”. (Mantel, 2009, p. 541) It is obvious that everything could change in a minute.

To get an idea of what it could have been like when there was a time of delivery, the example from *Wolf Hall* can be mentioned. Hilary Mantel unusually and imaginatively compares giving birth to being at sea, where during the changeable circumstances nothing is sure, which is the situation the men in the Tudor period could go through:

When a woman withdraws to give birth the sun may be shining but the shutters of her room are closed so she can make her own weather. She is kept in the dark so she can dream. Her dreams drift her far away, from *terra firma* to a marshy tract of land, to a landing stage, to a river where a mist closes over the further bank, and earth and sky are inseparable; there she must embark towards life and death, a muffled figure in the stern directing the oars. In this vessel prayers are said that men never hear. Bargains are struck between a woman and her God. The river is tidal, and between one feather-stroke and the next, her tide may turn. (Mantel, 2009, p. 483)

From the above provided quotation it is clear that during the childbirth, the woman was left alone with herself. Usually, there were other women who helped a woman when giving birth, but the men were not present without exception. All a man could do was to wish his wife good luck and pray for her. As shown in example of the childbirth of Anne Boleyn in *Wolf Hall*:

When the day of giving birth came, Anne was escorted to her rooms at Greenwich. Henry kisses her and says bye. She looks sick, but she is decorated with heavy jewels. She has a prayer book with herself. (Mantel, 2009, p. 483)

The time of childbirth was dreaded for most women. They feared of the possibilities that could happen during the process. Otten mentions: “Women feared the ‘nipping throwes’ and ‘pinching pangs’ of prolonged labor, breech birth, stillbirth, hemorrhaging, and were acutely aware of the possibility of dying”. (Otten, 1993) Therefore, during this dramatic event there was a time for the prayers. The woman was alone with God and at that moment she could reveal her fears and plead with God for survival for her and her child. “Alone with God, women could challenge Him, inform Him chide Him, confide in Him, plead with Him, praise Him, glorify Him.” (Otten, 1993) As they were believers without knowledge of medicine, most women had no choice than to rely on God.

The pregnancy and the delivery itself was really a dangerous process in the sixteenth century. Anything could happen during the process of childbirth, because the level of medicine and hygiene was not sufficient. The women could be, and some of

them really were, pregnant every year and they were naturally exhausted by such frequent births. A child was often still-born or died not long after birth. The childbirth was precarious not only for a child, but it was not often certain whether a woman survives. It was common that a woman expecting a child was preparing a layette for a baby in advance in case she would not survive the childbirth. Even if a woman did not die, she could remain somehow affected. According to Weirová, a doctor was not usually present during the delivery, there were only the midwives assisting. The doctor's help was used only when there were the serious complications. The medical care was inadequate and such medical operations as the Caesarean section or using the forceps was unknown yet. (Weirová, 1999, p. 16) These were the other reasons out of many why the children and women were often dying at childbirth. The newborn babies were not fed appropriately and could die because of an infection due to the fact that the antibiotics did not exist. According to Weirová, during the first six weeks after the childbirth, a woman could contract a puerperal fever. The disease was caused by bacterial infection and was fatal. That was the case of Jane Seymour, the third wife of Henry VIII, who had contracted and died very soon after giving birth to the desired son. There was no knowledge of germs and as it was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the hygiene was neglected. (Weirová, 1999, p. 17)

It was not also unusual that the sixteenth century mothers were quite young, but even at those times much greater extremes did exist. Mantel mentions Margaret Beaufort, the grandmother of Henry VIII, who gave birth to her son at the age of thirteen. Her youth and the fact that she was not physically prepared to give birth influenced her later pregnancies. (Mantel, 2009, p. 619) It happened quite frequently that a woman had a number of births, but only a few children survived. The example of Catherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn can be mentioned. They both had many children altogether, but only two of them stayed alive. The pregnancy ended with the abortion quite often and as nowadays, this could affect the future possibility to have another child. Lacey notes that: "Tudor medical science - or the lack of it - meant that one miscarriage might well be the first of an unbreakable series". (Lacey, 1972, p. 147)

There are a lot of discrepancies in the historical records concerning the pregnancies and miscarriages. Some of them could be only alleged. According to Dewhurst, the birth of a surviving child was usually accurately recorded by chroniclers,

but if a child died shortly after it was born, information often remained unrecorded. (Dewhurst, 1984, p. 49) Moreover, the term “miscarriage” had a different meaning than how it is perceived in the twenty-first century. It was “used to describe the birth of a dead child whether this occurred before or after viability”. (Dewhurst, 1984, p. 49) Such an event could be reported as a miscarriage even if a child was born prematurely and did not survive. Not recording the unsuccessful births is also the reason why the exact number of the children Anne and Catherine gave birth to is not accurately known. Various historical sources approximately agree on the fact that Catherine of Aragon and the king should have had six children, but not all of them survived. The first one was a girl, but she was born prematurely and therefore stillborn. The next one was a boy who was called the New Year’s prince, because he was born on New Year’s Day, in winter 1511. The child was christened Henry and celebrated by the whole of London. He was expected to become the richest and the most devoted, but he was taken ill and died shortly afterwards. He lived for only fifty-two days. The next child was a boy who was said to live for only one hour. In 1513 the queen had a miscarriage - it should have been a boy. Two years later, in 1516 Princess Mary was born. The next baby, a girl, lived only for a few days. According to Dewhurst, it is possible that there were other various unsuccessful pregnancies, but there is absence of evidence. (Dewhurst, 1984, pp. 50-53) In her novel Hilary Mantel also describes Catherine expecting six children in total, but it should be noted that in case of the two children, Princess Mary and the last-born boy, the writer was a little bit inaccurate and swapped the order of their birth.

In this case, Anne Boleyn’s destiny as a mother was fairly similar to that of Catherine. Anne became pregnant and married Henry secretly shortly afterwards. In 1533 she gave birth to a girl who was named Elizabeth. Anne conceived two more times, but both pregnancies ended in miscarriage. The first one happened in the summer of 1534, the other in January 1536. Anne expected a boy and after the disaster Henry believed that the marriage was cursed. As Mackie writes, Henry felt that also God was against their marriage. But he was still sorrier for himself not having a son than for his wife. (Mackie, 1972, p. 379) According to Lacey, Anne tried to defend herself and claimed that the miscarriage was a direct result of the shock she had suffered from at the moment she was informed that Henry, who was at that time jousting at Greenwich, had fallen off the horse and had been unconscious for some time. (Lacey, 1972, p. 146-147)



Nevertheless, the historians acknowledge that Anne could have had more miscarriages than it is officially known.

It is obvious that none of the women wanted her pregnancy to end with a miscarriage. But there were no efficient cures for the undesired abortion. No one really exactly knew how to prevent this to make it happen so the people often believed the unproven legends and superstitions. Rueff explains the activities mentioned in the contemporary literature that were considered to be the causes of the abortions. These were such activities as “leaping, dancing, riding in a coach, and lifting or carrying heavy weights, falls, blows, violent vomiting or bowel movements, and immoderate sexual intercourse”. (Rueff in Schnucker, 1975, p. 658) At the court, if the abortion happened, nobody should have known about it. Everything was carried out secretly. The servants did not speak about anything. As Mantel describes the situation after Anne’s abortion in *Wolf Hall*:

women hurry to the queen’s apartments with clean linen folded over their arms. Their faces are blank and shocked and they walk so quickly you know not to stop them. [...] Fires are lit...to burn what has bled away. If there is anything to bury, the women keep it a secret between themselves. (Mantel, 2009, p. 578)

Such a situation had to be kept in secret, not to enter the grounds for defamation. And very often it was a woman who was guilty again.

Future was always uncertain. Even if a child survived the birth itself it still was not sure whether it would have a long life. Premature deaths happened also very often. According to Coulthard, it is estimated that in the sixteenth century one-fifth of children died before they achieved ten years of age. (Coulthard, 1997) The view of the reasons of their death can be summed up by the appropriate words of Thomas Cromwell in *Wolf Hall* who said:

It’s not the hand of God kills our children. It’s disease and hunger and war, rat-bites and bad air and the miasma from plague pits; it’s bad harvests like the harvest this year and last year; it’s careless nurses. (Mantel, 2009, p. 82)

From the quotation above it is easy to get an idea of the reasons for the premature deaths of children in the sixteenth century.

Concerning the already mentioned superstitions and beliefs, when a miscarriage happened and a child, or more precisely, a foetus, was in a way affected it was often attributed to a woman and her behaviour. According to Retha Warnicke, contemporaries

“did agree that the commission of sodomy, adultery and incest were a major reason for the birth of monsters”. (Warnicke, 1987, p. 249) As Warnicke further explains, midwives always examined the delivered fetuses in all the social layers to see the possible defects. They inspected also the miscarried ones. It was believed that a foetus was formed physically from the eighteenth day after conception. Various irregularities, such as “an extra tuft of hair around the navel, folds of loose skin or ‘ruffles’ on the back, and especially a Siamese twin” were characterized as monstrous. (Warnicke, 1987, p. 254) In the case of Anne’s first miscarriage, the king thinks that it is his former wife’s fault. In *Wolf Hall* Henry blames Catherine of Aragon:

I believe she ill-wishes me. The truth is her womb is diseased. All those years she deceived me - she couldn’t carry a son, and she and her doctors knew it. She claims she still loves me, but she is destroying me. She comes in the night with her cold hands and her cold heart, and lies between me and the woman I love. She puts her hand on my member and her hand smells of the tomb. (Mantel, 2009, p. 579)

This quotation shows the belief in superstitions concerning the influence of somebody on somebody else’s happiness. One of Anne’s next pregnancies, ending with giving “birth to a deformed foetus, a mishap which, because it was viewed as an evil omen, led her husband’s ministers to charge her with bewitching the king and having sexual relations with five men” (Warnicke, 1987, p. 248), even with her own brother George or Viscount Rochford. From the point of view of today’s people, it is obvious that such suspicions are nonsense. Nowadays, doctors are able to find out the woman is infertile or has other health problems that could lead to abortion. In Tudor period the science was not so advanced, some events could not be explained and that was why some superstitions could overgrow in the suspicions of witchcraft or the obsession or even joining with the devil.

Nowadays it is difficult to state the reasons that led to those superstitions that were sometimes rather cruel. The main reasons could be for example a lack of knowledge about the issues concerning conception and childbirth as such. In some cases it could be even the helplessness in the desire to have a son or in the case of the king it could be a pure pride and the inability to admit his contribution to the problem.

## Conclusion

To conclude the position of a woman in the Tudor period, it can be expressed by her obligation and her role. The obligation of a woman was obedience and her role was bearing a child. It is clear that exceptions appeared - as always and everywhere. Thus, some statements cannot be proclaimed to be a hundred per cent sure at all times. There are more authors that have their own view of the historical events. Therefore, in this thesis, it was sometimes necessary to mention the different opinions of these authors and to compare them.

The sixteenth century was the time when men ruled the families. But women were also significant, although they were often considered being useful just for one thing and that was the above-mentioned bearing a child. In Tudor England, women were taught that they were more inferior than men were. This was similar a little bit to the medieval thinking when a woman was considered to be even a tool of the devil to seduce a man and lead him astray from his way to religious life. In Tudor England, the subordination of children to their parents and the subordination of women to men was a common thing. A woman was completely dependent on a man. She was living within his household. A man had a great legal and also the economic power over his wife, but it was not the same for a woman. If a woman was not satisfied with the life she lived, she had no opportunity to solve it, while the man could simply leave his wife and start a new affair, which was tolerated in a way. The role of the queen was probably the most difficult task that a woman could have. There was a lot of pressure and expectations. She was expected to be a support for her husband. However, the main task of the queen was, like any other woman, and that was to ensure a successor, preferably a male, for her dynasty.

In the historical novel *Wolf Hall* Hilary Mantel focuses mainly on the development of the relationship between Cardinal Wolsey and Thomas Cromwell. It could appear that women are only the supporting characters in the story. They are not primarily the main heroines of the novel, but they are definitely not negligible. Mantel undoubtedly considers women to be an important part of the life of men. The way women characters are dealt with in the book is very interesting. They are a part of men's lives, debates, actions and after all, feelings. In *Wolf Hall*, women are on the secondary level, but apart from religion and politics, they are the main subject of men's

negotiation. Nevertheless, these subjects can be sometimes interconnected as shown in *Wolf Hall*. Hilary Mantel captures what the ordinary daily life of women was. She predominantly describes the upper-class women, but the women of lower social classes are also a part of the story.

The idea of life of the Tudor period is illustrated on such characters as the women at the court and also the women in the household of Thomas Cromwell. The atmosphere of the sixteenth-century daily life is captured through their work and actions. Mantel does not describe only the pleasant sides of the period. She endeavours to depict the life as it really was. According to *Contemporary Authors Online*, “She includes vivid descriptions of the harshness of life, the dirt, and the abhorrent living conditions of the era”. (Contemporary Authors Online, 2010)

It is worth mentioning that in the actions and dialogues of the characters in the novel the allusions to the well known historical facts appear. If the readers already know those historical events and their consequences, these dialogues can seem to be humorous or rather paradoxical to them. In *Wolf Hall*, the moment when Anne Boleyn finds a drawing hidden in her bed could serve as an example of such allusion. In the picture, there are three figures. The king is in the centre, on his side is a woman - queen Catherine - and on the other side Anne is standing and her figure has no head. Anne laughs at that situation, but she also says: “There is a prophecy that a queen of England will be burned. But a prophecy does not frighten me, and even if it is true, I will run the risk”. (Mantel, 2009, p. 243) This is a part of the story where the reader who knows the history recalls the end of Anne Boleyn and what it looked like.

Although *Wolf Hall* is a historical novel, as a piece of fiction it offers a relatively accurate insight into the lives of people living in the Tudor period. According to the available historical sources and information, the facts in the novel, with a few exceptions, almost entirely correspond with their historical accuracy. The author offers many interesting opinions of the main characters and quotations that reflect the thinking of that period. Hilary Mantel unobtrusively shows the reader the interesting and remarkable moments of life of the sixteenth-century people coming from various social classes through their acting, behaviour, dialogues and simply through the way of their living.

## Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá aspekty života žen v tudorovské Anglii. Obecně jsou zde představeny určité vybrané aspekty ze životů žen šestnáctého století. Tato historicko-kulturní analýza je současně reflektována na příkladech z historického románu *Wolf Hall* od britské autorky Hilary Mantel. Vzhledem k tomu, že historické zdroje se příliš nevěnují ženám pocházejícím z nižších společenských vrstev tohoto období, se tato práce zaměřuje spíše na ženy z výše postavených nebo šlechtických rodin a dále převážně na ženy pobývající u dvora krále Jindřicha VIII. Ženy z nižších sociálních vrstev jsou v této práci též zmíněny, ale pouze v případě, že byl jejich život nějakým způsobem zajímavý nebo podstatný pro tuto práci.

Hlavními tématy jsou takové aspekty, jako například vzdělání ženy, její výchova a události, které předcházely vstupu do manželství. Důležitým tématem je pak manželství samotné. Práce se také velmi stručně dotýká práva a povinností ženy v manželství. Dále se věnuje okolnostem a problémům týkajících se rození dětí. Objevuje se zde rovněž téma potratu, protože tato událost byla pro tehdejší dobu poměrně častá. Zmíněné aspekty byly vybrány na základě jejich výskytu v románu *Wolf Hall* a také proto, že vystihují ženu žijící v šestnáctém století a náplň jejího každodenního života. Rozsah, do jakého je každý aspekt v této práci prozkoumán a popsán je omezen, a to z toho důvodu, že prostor, který je každému tématu věnován v románu *Wolf Hall*, není příliš velký, protože hlavními postavami románu jsou muži, a to především Thomas Cromwell. Rovněž nebylo možné věnovat se každému z těchto aspektů do přílišných detailů, ať již z důvodu výše zmíněného nedostatku či nedostupnosti konkrétních historických pramenů, nebo omezeného rozsahu této práce.

V úvodu práce jsou nastíněna důležitá historická fakta týkající se vlády Tudorovců na anglickém trůně. Tato dynastie je považována za jednu z nejznámějších a nejvýznamnějších v anglické historii. Členové tohoto rodu vládli Anglii v letech 1485 až 1603. Každý z panovníků tohoto rodu byl rozdílný. Je ale důležité zmínit, že mezi těmito panovníky byly i ženy. První z nich byla Marie Tudorovna, dcera krále Jindřicha VIII. Další ženou byla její sestra Alžběta I. S nástupem žen na trůn se mnohé změnilo, začaly mít větší vliv a mohly o něco více rozhodovat o svých životech.

První kapitola této práce se zabývá vzděláním a výchovou ženy před jejím vstupem do manželství. V šestnáctém století začalo být vzdělávání přístupnější všem, i

ženám, mnohem lépe než v předchozích obdobích, avšak i zde se objevovaly výjimky. Znevýhodnění byli především nemajetní lidé, protože vzdělání bylo poměrně nákladnou záležitostí. Lidé pocházející z vyšších vrstev byli většinou gramotní. Vzdělávání žen se poměrně významně lišilo od vzdělávání mužů. Chlapci navštěvovali školy, zatímco dívky byly vzdělávány doma soukromými učiteli. Kromě čtení, psaní a studia jazyků, jako například latina, francouzština nebo španělština, se dívky také učily hrát na hudební nástroje, tančit a vyšívat. Dívky z nižších sociálních vrstev vzdělání jako takové v podstatě nepotřebovaly. Tyto dívky byly připravovány na to, aby v budoucnu mohly vést svou vlastní domácnost nebo sloužit v jině. Učily se proto praktické dovednosti jako například vaření a šití. Hilary Mantel se v románu *Wolf Hall* vzdělání žen nevěnuje příliš do detailu. Nicméně, autorka zmiňuje alespoň některé příklady žen jako například Kat, sestru Thomase Cromwella, která byla negramotná, a také jeho dcery. Ty ale naopak, jakožto ženy žijící v rodině učence, byly poměrně vzdělané a chystaly se ve svém vzdělávání dále pokračovat. Vzdělání u žen ale nebylo vždy považováno za výhodu. Objevily se názory, že žena by měla spíše pracovat, a že sedět nad knihami jí nepřísluší. S nástupem Alžběty I. na trůn se situace poněkud zlepšila. Vzdělávání se stalo dostupnějším, avšak to stále platilo spíše pro ženy z vyšších vrstev.

Druhá kapitola se zabývá manželstvím a událostem, které mu předcházely. Vstupu do manželství předcházelo období namlouvání, nebo dvoření. Ačkoliv morálka byla v tudorovském období již poněkud uvolněnější, na dvoře krále se stále ještě objevovala tradice středověké dvorné lásky. Takové dvoření ale nemuselo být závazné. Často ani ke svatbě z různých důvodů nedošlo, nicméně to ale byla důležitá součást života mladých lidí a náplň jejich společenského života. Průměrný věk, ve kterém lidé vstupovali do manželství, byl přibližně pětadvacet let. Hlavním důvodem pro manželství v té době nebyl ani tak cit, jako spíše rozum. Protože společnost byla v té době patriarchální, žena byla v podřazeném postavení mužům. Z tohoto důvodu byla většinou provdána za muže, kterého vybral její otec. Důvody pro svatbu byly v šestnáctém století převážně sociální a ekonomické, dále to bylo spojení významných rodů. Většina manželství byla předem domluvená, obvykle už v době, kdy oba potenciální snoubenci byli ještě malé děti. Vyjednávání, které předcházelo manželství, bylo často podobné uzavírání obchodní smlouvy. Jednalo se o majetku, půdě a věnu

nevěsty. Jako příklady domluvených manželství jsou v této práci uvedeny dvě ženy. První je sestra krále Jindřicha VIII. Marie, která byla v mladém věku provdána za o mnoho let staršího krále Francie. Ten po několika měsících zemřel a Mary se provdala za muže, kterého si sama zvolila, vévodu ze Suffolku. Druhou ženou byla prvorozená dcera Jindřicha VIII. Marie. Z politických důvodů byla několikrát zasnoubena a tyto sňatky byly také zrušeny. Jejím manželem se nakonec stal Filip II., ačkoliv i toto manželství bylo uzavřeno z politických důvodů. Jako příklad sebevědomé ženy, která si šla za svým cílem je zde uvedena Anna Boleynová. Historické názory se různí, podle některých bylo v zájmu Boleynových dostat se do přízně krále. Hilary Mantel se drží toho, že Anna sama se chtěla stát královnou manželkou a zobrazuje ji jako velmi ctižádostivou ženu. Nicméně, ženy byly v tomto období vychovávány tak, aby projevovaly mužům úctu a byly poslušné ke svým rodičům. Manželství byla velká změna v životě ženy. Často si brala muže, kterého nikdy předtím neviděla, opouštěla svou rodinu a musela se přizpůsobit životu v jiné. Ve chvíli, kdy vstoupila do manželství, se stala majetkem manžela. Předpokládalo se, že bude poslušná a ctnostná.

Tématem třetí kapitoly je neprovdaná žena. Manželství bylo v šestnáctém století běžnou věcí, ale objevovaly se i případy, že žena z jakýchkoliv důvodů zůstala neprovdaná. Avšak takový život nebyl v té době atraktivní a ani jednoduchý. Žena neměla příliš možností jak získat prostředky na svou obživu. Ve všem byla zcela závislá na otci, muži nebo opatrovníkovi, v jehož domácnosti žila. Nejsou známy důvody, které vedly ženy k tomu, aby dobrovolně zůstaly neprovdané, ale jisté je, že takový stav byl ve společnosti považován za poměrně nepřijatelný. Různé domněnky a neprokázaná svědectví způsobovaly, že život ženy byl považován za podezřelý. Objevovaly se i případy, že žena byla za své zvláštní jednání obviněna z čarodějnictví. Neprovdaná žena mohla vstoupit do kláštera nebo být zaměstnána v cizí domácnosti. Službu v jiné domácnosti vykonávaly i ženy, které ještě nebyly provdané, ale svatby se nezřikaly. Ženy z vyšších sociálních vrstev pak například sloužily jako dvorní dámy u královen, což byl případ i Anny Boleynové nebo Jany Seymourové. Nejvhodnějším příkladem neprovdané ženy je Elizabeth Bartonová, žena z nižší vrstvy, která byla nejprve jeptiškou a také věštkyní. Tato žena byla reálnou historickou postavou a žila v první třetině šestnáctého století. V mladém věku onemocněla neznámou nemocí a poté začala mít vidiny, trpět křečemi a zvláštními stavy. Lidé v šestnáctém století neznali možné

příčiny, které by v dnešní době mohly být klasifikovány jako onemocnění, například jako epilepsie nebo schizofrenie, a tak její chování přičítali posedlosti ďáblem. Poté, co své předpovědi začala směřovat proti králi, byla označena za kacířku a odsouzena k smrti oběšením. Ačkoliv se tedy v šestnáctém století objevovala rozhodnutí neprovdát se, většina žen si byla vědoma důležitosti manželství a jejich hlavní otázkou nebylo, jestli a koho si vzít, ale spíše kdy.

Čtvrtá kapitola se zabývá tématem rozvodu, který byl v šestnáctém století chápán poněkud odlišně. Především nebyl znám jako rozvod, ale spíše jako zrušení či anulace sňatku. Důvodem pro zrušení manželství mohlo být například objevení blízkého příbuzenského vztahu mezi manželi, choromyslnost jednoho z partnerů nebo to, že manželství nebylo naplněno. Příkladem rozvodu v tudorovském období je ten Kateřiny Aragonské a Jindřicha VIII. S Kateřinou měli pouze dceru Marii, ale král potřeboval mužského dědice a proto se rozhodl znovu oženit. Král sice nedostal povolení od papeže, manželství však stejně bylo zrušeno a král se oženil s Annou Boleynovou. Došlo k oddělení od římsko-katolické církve a král se stal hlavou církve anglikánské. Kateřina se musela přestěhovat do jiného sídla a jejich společná dcera Marie byla po určitou dobu považována za nelegitimní. V románu *Wolf Hall* se autorka tomuto tématu věnuje s historickou přesností.

Pátá kapitola se zabývá tématem rození dětí, což bylo považováno za nejdůležitější úlohu ženy v tudorovském období. Rovněž se věnuje tomu, jak byl v této době vnímán porod a popisuje okolnosti potratu. Dále představuje různé pověry a předsudky, které se k těmto tématům pojily. Pro ženy z vyšších sociálních vrstev a zejména pro jejich muže bylo důležité, aby potomek byl mužského pohlaví a mohl se tak stát dědicem. Porod byl v šestnáctém století poměrně nebezpečný proces, během kterého se mohlo stát cokoliv. Hilary Mantel jej v románu příznačně přirovnává k pobytu na moři, kde je každý sám a není jisté, co se stane v příští minutě. Hygiena a zdravotní péče byly v té době nedostatečné a mnohdy se stávalo, že ženy nebo děti během porodu zemřely. K potratům docházelo velmi často a z různých důvodů. Obě královny, Kateřina i Anna, jich prodělaly hned několik. Jejich počet však není znám naprosto přesně, protože se obvykle vedly záznamy pouze o dětech, které se narodily živé. Pokud se dítě narodilo mrtvé nebo došlo k potratu, byla vina přičítána ženě a jejímu špatnému či hříšnému chování. Žena mohla být dokonce obviněna



z čarodějnictví. Důvody pro taková podezření samozřejmě vznikaly z neznalosti a nevědomosti.

Závěr této práce se soustředí na celkové zhodnocení problematiky žen v šestnáctém století v Anglii a též na shrnutí pohledu autorky Hilary Mantel a její pojetí ženské otázky v románu *Wolf Hall*.

Hilary Mantel ve *Wolf Hall* poměrně věrně zobrazuje život žen v tudorovské Anglii od počátku do přibližně první třetiny šestnáctého století. Protože hlavním hrdinou románu je Thomas Cromwell, soustředí se autorka převážně na něj a na vývoj jeho vztahu s králem. Hilary Mantel se sice věnuje ženám, zvláště těm z nižších vrstev, méně než mužům, ale i popisy obyčejných činností a starostí těchto žen dokreslují představu o životě v tomto období. Autorka zobrazuje ženy jako osoby, které mohou být vnímány jako vedlejší postavy v životech mužů, ale také jako osoby, které jsou jejich nedílnou součástí. Ženy často bývají hybatelkami všeho, ačkoliv jsou to muži, kdo jsou považováni za ty, kteří rozhodují a vedou.

Život ženy žijící v šestnáctém století nebyl příliš jednoduchý. Jejím hlavním způsobem chování byla podřízenost, která v podstatě vystihovala celý její život. Žena byla podřízena muži, dcera otci, bratru, strýci nebo opatrovníkovi, královna králi. Role královny byla ta nejsložitější úloha, kterou mohla žena mít. Očekávala se od ní poslušnost, věrnost, zbožnost a podpora manžela. Ovšem nejen to. Jejím hlavním úkolem bylo zajistit svému rodu potomka, a to nejlépe mužského pohlaví. Když v této úloze selhala, její budoucnost mohla být i ohrožena, jak dokládají příklady Kateřiny Aragonské a Anny Boleynové.

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