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Life and Intrigues at the Court of the King Henry VIII

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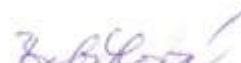
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ANNOTATION

The aim of this bachelor thesis is to analyse a treatment of historical events and processing of literary characters and comparing them with real events and historical personages. The primary source is a historical novel *Wolf Hall* written by a British writer, Hilary Mantel. This bachelor thesis examines the intrigues and life at the court of Henry VIII and closely analyse the characters that spin those intrigues.

KEYWORDS: *Wolf Hall*, Thomas Cromwell, Anne Boleyn, tudor, Thomas Wolsey, Hilary Mantel, king, Henry VIII

NÁZEV

Život a intriky na dvoře krále Jindřicha VIII

ANOTACE

Hlavním cílem této bakalářské práce je analyzovat nakládání s historickými událostmi a se zpracováním literárních postav a jejich srovnáním se skutečnými událostmi a historickými postavami. Primárním zdrojem je historický román *Wolf Hall*, který byl napsán britskou autorkou Hilary Mantel. Tato bakalářská práce zkoumá intriky a život na dvoře krále Jindřicha VIII a zblízka analyzuje postavy, které tyto intriky spřádají.

Klíčová slova: *Wolf Hall*, Thomas Cromwell, Anna Boleynová, tudorovský, Hilary Mantel, král, Jindřich VIII

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	8
1. ENGLAND UNDER THE TUDORS.....	11
2. LIFE AND INTRIGUES AT THE COURT	20
3. LITERARY LANGUAGE	25
4. TREATMENTS OF HISTORICAL EVENTS.....	30
5. LITERARY CHARACTERS ANALYSIS.....	34
CONCLUSION.....	46
RESUMÉ.....	49
BIBLIOGRAPHY	55

INTRODUCTION

The Tudor period was one of the most interesting and notoriously known in the history of Great Britain; many significant changes, revolutions and twists had occurred and England had undergone many changes and unimaginable events for the people currently living in the Tudor times; England was forever changed and never again was the same. Henry VII usurped the throne by military force and ended the bloody long-lasting Wars of the Roses and his son, Henry VIII, changed the course of history of the whole England when he broke with Rome and established the completely new religion in his realm and became the head of his own Church, Church of England. However, the King would not have managed none of these without the help of his loyal servants Thomas Wolsey, Thomas More and Thomas Cromwell; his ir retrievable advisors.

This bachelor thesis deals with the analysis of a book called *Wolf Hall*. *Wolf Hall* is a historical novel written by Hilary Mantel that has immediately become a bestseller. The book was published by Forth Estate in 2009 and soon after was honoured with several awards. It is a well written fictional biography based on Henry VIII's servant's life, Thomas Cromwell. Hilary Mantel wanted to focus on the life of Thomas Cromwell whose deeds and importance usually remains hidden in the shadows. The main character and also the narrator is Thomas Cromwell himself; a lowborn man who managed great things but for the highest price. It was very rare that a lowborn man became so important and powerful and that is the reason why Hilary Mantel writes about it in great detail. Mantel decided to introduce the Tudor era from a different point of view; not from the King's perspective but she intended to outline Thomas Cromwell's importance and tell the story through his eyes. She wants the readers to live Cromwell's life together with him and feel exactly the same feelings.

The plot of the book is set in England during the reign of Henry VIII who is dealing with his "Great Matter"; the divorce with Katherine of

Aragon who is a daughter of powerful sovereigns from Spain. Another big issue of the book is Henry's enchantment with Anne Boleyn who craves to be the queen of England and is literary capable of doing anything to reach her goals. Nevertheless, the King's main intention is to have a male heir so as to secure the Tudor dynasty and this goal is haunting him all his life. The book covers the topic of palace intrigues and efforts of people who try to come to power at all costs.

The subject of analysis is the author's treatment of historical events and data; whether she uses true and historically proven facts and real personages or whether she is creating her own characters and modifying historical events according to her own imagination and purposes. To answer these questions is essential a proper understanding of events dealt in *Wolf Hall*. This is the reason why it was necessary that the first chapter was dedicated to historical circumstances started in 1485 when the Tudor reign began with the first Tudor king Henry VII. The first chapter covers all the important details that serve for accurate understanding of events taking place in *Wolf Hall* and their explanations. There are inserted passages from *Wolf Hall* in the first chapter that covers historical information to demonstrate how the history of the Tudors and the story of the book are closely connected together.

At Henry's court iniquities and secrecies are constantly going on and the second chapter deals with those palace intrigues and life providing an explanation which characters spin the intrigues and for what purposes. There is shown why two main factions are intriguing against each other and how important is to win in this dangerous game; a loss in this game could mean a death.

The third chapter deals with literary language and styles in which *Wolf Hall* is written. Despite the fact that *Wolf Hall* is a modern fictional novel the literary style is very interesting in many aspects and the explanation is provided throughout the chapter three. Hilary Mantel adorns her book with plenty of jokes, interesting facts and even uses different languages to make the book more accurate the Tudor times. Although *Wolf Hall* is

a historical fiction and the story takes place in medieval England Hilary Mantel is using a contemporary language and ingeniously adds interesting features to make her book special.

The fourth chapter deals with treatment of historical facts giving information if Hilary Mantel is strictly following the course of history or whether she adds her own little stories and ideas to make the book more interesting and unpredictable. The manner in which she uses historical sources is very interesting and their utilizations in the book as well. The last fifth chapter is based on the analysis of certain characters from *Wolf Hall* and their comparison with real Tudor personages. The goal is to discover if Hilary Mantel strictly follows descriptions provided by historians or whether she makes her own characters and their natures.

The main purpose of this bachelor thesis is literary analysis of *Wolf Hall*. The attention is paid on the survey of historical facts; how Mantel treats them and how she involves them in her book. Great emphasis is also put on the characters and their comparison with the real people. The goal is to discover if Mantel managed to portray *Wolf Hall* characters according to historical sources and thus tell the real story about The Tudors and Thomas Cromwell without the slightest tap from the truth or whether in addition to the actual characters creates other completely new characters according to her imagination. This bachelor thesis also analyses using historical events, their accuracy and how the writer was capable of depicting the Tudor times and inserting her characters into the book.

The Tudor period is a really famous time span and many professional books have been written about it and most of them contain a similar content. For this reason I chose the literature which was found the most adequate and suited for the purposes of this bachelor thesis.

1. ENGLAND UNDER THE TUDORS

In this chapter the attention is paid only to the important and basic facts about the Tudor monarchs. Only the circumstances relevant for *Wolf Hall* are mentioned in detail, which is the period from the fall of Cardinal Wolsey to the night, when Thomas More was executed. The reason that only basic facts can be outlined is that the excessive historical context would not fit within the scope of this thesis; as such the focus is on the most relevant facts. This chapter is essential for the whole bachelor thesis to understand the historical context and to be familiar with the Tudor period, which is important to better understanding of the events, characters and their acts in *Wolf Hall*.

The Tudors were one of the most notorious rulers in the history of Great Britain despite the fact their reign did not last very long time. Internet resource *Britannica* informs that the House of Tudor was of Welsh origin and there were only 5 Tudor sovereigns all together. The first Tudor king was Henry VII (reigned 1485–1509) who was followed by his son, Henry VIII (1509–47). Henry VIII was followed by his three children, Edward VI (1547–53), Mary I (1553–58), and Elizabeth I (1558–1603).¹

According to Elton's *England under the Tudors*, the beginning of the Tudor reign is traced back to 1485, August 22, when Henry VII, earl of Richmond, beat his rival Richard III (died without a direct heir) who commanded a stronger army; unfortunately for Richard his army was halved by treason, leading to his downfall. Richard III was killed and Henry VII won one of the successive battles which took place near the Leicestershire township of Market Bosworth (1485) and finally ended the Wars of the Roses after 20 long years of fights.² Henry VII seized the throne by military force and started a famous period of the Tudor reign full of intrigues, executions and religious revolutions.

¹ *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, s. v. "House of Tudor", accessed November 04, 2013, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/608456/House-of-Tudor>

² Geoffrey Rudolph Elton, *England Under the Tudors*: (Great Britain: Cox and Wyman Ltd., London, Reading and Fakenham and bound by James Burn Co. Ltd., Esher, 1955)

Henry VII's claim to the throne was dubious as Elton in his book *England under the Tudors* explains:

He claimed to represent the line of Lancaster; his mother Margaret was the last of the Beauforts, John of Gaunt's illegitimate descendants who had been legitimized by the Pope and by Richard II. However, an insertion, itself of doubtful validity, in Henry IV's confirmation of his predecessor's grant had denied them the right to succeed to the crown³.

It is clear from this excerpt that Henry VII had almost no right to the throne so he just claimed himself the king and in 1485 announced to his Parliament the fact he came to the throne by inheritance. For a long time there were conspiracies to seize the throne because there were other claimants who had better claim than Henry, but none of them were successful.⁴ Henry VII needed to stop all these revolts and as Elton says in *England under the Tudors* Henry VII made a good political match; he married Elisabeth of York, the eldest daughter of Edward IV, in January 1486. Soon afterwards in September 1486, Elisabeth gave a birth to a son whose name was Arthur.⁵ In 1488-9 Henry VII negotiated a treaty of marriage with a Spanish princess, Katherine of Aragon, who was a member of a royal Spanish family; her parents were Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon.⁶ Henry wanted to secure recognition for his dynasty via some European power and the rising influence and power of Spain seemed to be a great choice. Moreover, this alliance looked to help England in the eternal struggle with France. Henry VII saw this match as very advantageous but later on it was his son, Henry VIII, who regretted it.

Only few people mourned, when the old king passed away for there was a new young king, seventeen-year-old Henry VIII, who was announced King on 24 April. Henry VIII was born on 28 June 1491 and became Duke of York. Alison Weir in her book *King and Court* notes that Henry

³ Elton, *England under the Tudors*, 19

⁴ Elton, *England under the Tudors*, 18

⁵ The revival of the ancient British name – King Arthur)

⁶ Elton, *England under the Tudors*, 20 - 24

was never destined to be a king since he had an older brother Arthur who was meant to be the ruler and Henry should have entered the Church, as the second son but because of the death of his elder brother, he became the heir to the throne.⁷

Henry VIII's main responsibility was to have a son and heir; this was a big issue in all his life because he needed to secure his dynasty, to make sure there would be a son to continue the line of the Tudors, he married Katherine of Aragon, who was perfect for that purpose; she had good political benefits and with Katherine came the support of Spain. Alison Weir states that a papal dispensation for this match was needed because canon law forbade a man to marry his brother's widow. Therefore Katherine had to swear that her marriage with Arthur was never consummated.⁸ This dispensation caused many problems during the King's later divorce with Katherine of Aragon.

Katherine of Aragon was not able to give Henry a male heir; their only offspring was Princess Mary. This is the breaking point when Henry realized that he wanted to divorce. This is an important issue mentioned in *Wolf Hall*:

Six times (to the world's knowledge) Katherine and the king have lived in hope of an heir. 'I remember the winter child,' Wolsey says. ... The queen was taken unexpectedly with pains and the prince was born early, just at the turn of the year. When he was less than an hour old I held him in my arms We called him the New Year's prince. We said he would be the richest, the most beautiful, and the most devoted. ... He breathed fifty-two days, and I counted every one of them.'⁹

Alison Weir in her book *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* adds that Katherine of Aragon was probably pregnant six or eight times but there was only one child who survived and it was her daughter, Princess Mary. In the Tudor period it was always women who were blamed for stillbirths and neonatal deaths and in 1525 was publicly known that Katherine of

⁷ Alison Weir, *Henry VIII: King and Court*: (Great Britain: Vintage, 2008) 1 - 4

⁸ Weir, *Henry VIII: King and Court*: 7 - 8

⁹ Hilary Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, (London: Forth Estate, 2009), 80 - 81

Aragon is past the age when women commonly bear children. It was clear that there would not be any male heir.¹⁰ The King still needed a son to secure his dynasty and he knew that it would not be possible with Katherine.

Peter Ackroyd in *The History of England: Tudors* claims that the second reason for the divorce¹¹ was that Henry VIII fell in love with Anne Boleyn who simply charmed him. He obviously was in love with her but the main reason for the divorce was procreation of a legitimate male heir. As the reason for the divorce was stated that he married his brother's widow and this was against Leviticus¹² and therefore the King is living in a sin.¹³ This is essential in the King's divorce case and also a reason why Hilary Mantel deals with this situation in *Wolf Hall*:

The trial of the king's great matter is approaching. The king intends to show that when Queen Katherine came to him she was not a virgin, having consummated her marriage with his brother Arthur.¹⁴

The King needed to prove that Katherine of Aragon was not a virgin when he married her so he could claim the marriage void and against the God's will. Peter Ackroyd adds that Henry asked his cardinal, Thomas Wolsey, that he arranged the coveted divorce because Henry trusted Wolsey in all the matters; he was a man of a great power, king's Councillor and a close friend answerable solely and only to the King himself. Eventually, the people began to say that Wolsey became a second king, which brought Wolsey many enemies. In the end the cardinal failed convincing the Pope to grant his holy blessing and approval on the matter of the divorce, which led to cardinal's fall – his days of glory were gone. Thomas Wolsey was accused of high treason

¹⁰ Alison Weir, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, (New York: Grove Press, 1992), 120

¹¹ It was an annulment rather than a divorce, but most sources mention a divorce

¹² The king's marriage was against Leviticus, there is a verse that says that a man who marries his brother's widow shall be childless. Henry was an amateur theologian and as a formal Christian was well aware of this.

¹³ Peter Ackroyd, *The History of England: Tudors* (London: Pan Books, 2013), 58 - 65

¹⁴ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 143

and was sentenced to death. Cardinal died in 1529 on his way to the Tower in Leicester Abbey, where he was buried.¹⁵

Elton in *England under the Tudors* writes that Thomas Cromwell was born in about 1485 at Putney to his father who was a blacksmith and a brewer.¹⁶ Cromwell was of very humble origins and Mantel puts a lot of emphasis on it in *Wolf Hall* because it was not common to become someone as powerful as Cromwell was and to be of a lowborn origin, which is something, Hilary Mantel intends to highlight in the book. See an example when Wolsey is talking to Thomas Cromwell:

‘You can never advance your own pedigree – and God knows, Tom, you were born in a more dishonourable estate than me – so the trick is always to keep them scraped up to their own standards.’¹⁷

Elton adds that very little is known about Cromwell’s childhood. His life career was much diverted, he was a mercenary in Italian wars and afterwards he became a merchant and somehow he learnt the common law so he became a lawyer. Cromwell was well known for his wit, he never forgot either of his friends or benefactors, among them Thomas Wolsey.¹⁸ This is perfectly displayed in *Wolf Hall* when Thomas Cromwell refuses to abandon his master Thomas Wolsey although it means that Cromwell might be discredited as well and lose his social status. This situation captures a moment when George Cavendish sees Cromwell crying and asks him why and Cromwell replies:

‘I am crying for myself,’ he says. ‘I am going to lose everything, everything I have worked for, all my life, because I will go down with the cardinal ... because I have done what he asked me to do, and been his friend, and the man at his right hand.’¹⁹

Cromwell refuses to abandon his master and saves his own skin; he is loyal to Wolsey until Wolsey’s death.

¹⁵ Ackroyd, *The History of England: Tudors*, 65 - 74

¹⁶ Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 127

¹⁷ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 70

¹⁸ Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 127

¹⁹ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 156

As Elton comments, the Cromwell's loyalty helped him to enter into the King's service in 1530 and a year later he belonged to the inner circle. He had unbeatable administrative skills; thanks to them he obtained many offices, one of which was master of the jewels and later on he added others: Clerk of the Hanaper (1532), Chancellor of the Exchequer (1533), Principal Secretary and Master of the Rolls (1534), and finally Lord Privy Seal (1536). Cromwell was not powerful because of his offices but because of the King's confidence. Cromwell proved his wit when he found simple solution to the King's problem. He suggested that Henry could implement supremacy by ousting the Pope out of England, which was a chance for the King to obtain his divorce.²⁰

In Elton's *England under the Tudors* is explained that The King took seriously what Cromwell proposed and put things in motion. In February 1531 the King was recognized as the Supreme Head of the Church of England by indicted clergy. The spiritual authority of the Pope was not unchallenged yet because the King did not break with Rome, only set himself as the temporal head of the English Church. Later on Henry was disgusted by the Pope's procrastinations and wanted a complete break with Rome. In 1532 Henry VIII secretly married Anne Boleyn because she was carrying his child (Henry expected a boy) and it was unthinkable to let the child born as a bastard. Unfortunately for Anne, she gave birth to a healthy red-haired girl whose name was Elisabeth.²¹ Hilary Mantel in *Wolf Hall* displays that the King was really expecting a son and was disappointed with a daughter:

‘Healthy?’ he says. ‘Then I thank God for his favour to us. As I thank you, my lords, for this comfortable intelligence.’... The king walks away towards his own rooms. Says over his shoulder, ‘Call her Elizabeth. Cancel the jousts.’²²

²⁰ Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 129

²¹ Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 130 - 132

²² Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 484

This extract shows that the King is not pleased with Anne Boleyn and his daughter; there is no reason for the King and his realm to celebrate any more for there is no heir to continue and secure the dynasty.

Elton continues in *England under the Tudors* that in 1534 the Act of Supremacy was established and recognized Henry VIII as the “Supreme Head of the Church”. Who refused to swear was sentenced to death including Thomas More and Bishop Fisher. Also English nobility had to take an oath in which they recognized Anne Boleyn as the Queen of England and Henry’s lawful wife. The Dissolution came after the Act of Supremacy, which caused the abolition of all Catholic monasteries and abbeys, which brought enormous wealth to the King.²³

Finally, the King had his utmost desire but his love and compassion for Anne started to decline. Alison Weir points out that Anne miscarried her two unborn children, which disappointed Henry for he was aware of the fact the last one was a stillborn boy. Subsequently, the King was disgusted by Anne Boleyn who was just an obstacle for him at this point and decided to eliminate her. Cromwell constructed a plot against her and she was accused of adultery and executed in 1536. Historians believe that none of the accusations against Anne Boleyn were supported on true testimonies.²⁴ Henry VIII was still without a male heir and he craved for a boy, successor of the throne more than ever before.

Alison Weir says that another woman in Henry’s life was Jane Seymour. Henry had to wait a long time but finally Jane gave him a son, Edward. A legal heir to the throne meant the Tudor dynasty was secure; the spectre of civil war was suppressed. Soon after the birth of a young prince, the Queen died, probably as a result of unhygienic obstetric methods employed during her confinement.²⁵ Although Henry VIII lost his beloved wife he finally had a son. The King’s lifelong desire was finally fulfilled.

²³ Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 132 - 137

²⁴ Weir, *Henry VIII: King and Court*, 237 - 368

²⁵ Weir, *Henry VIII: King and Court*, 398 - 408

Alison Weir mentions the year 1540 when Henry VIII wedded Anne of Cleves at the suggestion of Thomas Cromwell. Cromwell assumed that a union between England and Protestant Germany would be advantageous. Unfortunately Henry did not find any feelings for Anne of Cleves, on the contrary he was disgusted by her and he fell in love with young and beautiful Katherine Howard. Henry let Anne of Cleves know that their wedlock was invalid and was about to be annulled. Anne of Cleves did not protest at all and in return she gained 500 pounds (150,000 pounds nowadays) a year, Richmond Palace, Hever Castle, Buckingham Manor and was allowed to call herself the King's sister. On the background of these events Thomas Cromwell was arrested and sentenced to death for high treason and heresy. He was beheaded on 28 July 1540.²⁶ Thomas Cromwell was one of the best and most loyal servant the King ever had and did a lot for him and his kingdom yet it was not enough for the King to grant him a royal pardon.

In a book called *King and Court* is stated that on the day of Cromwell's execution, the King married Katherine Howard in private. Katherine Howard was a young and naïve girl who fell in love with a king's servant, Thomas Culpepper. Their secret meetings were revealed and Katherine Howard and Thomas Culpepper were sentenced to death.²⁷ The old King was not able to show any mercy for those two poor young lovers.

Britannica notes that the King for the last time found his interest in 30-year-old Katherine Parr and married her a year later on 12 July 1543; she was his only wife who outlived him.²⁸

Henry VIII is seen as a true monarch who made the Tudor period one of the best known and the most important in the history of Great Britain. Henry VIII died in 1547 in London aged 56.

²⁶ Weir, *Henry VIII: King and Court*, 418- 419, 427, 433, 435

²⁷ Weir, *Henry VIII: King and Court*, 437, 452, 453, 456, 458

²⁸ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. "Henry VIII", accessed February 22, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/261947/Henry-VIII>.

In *History of Britain and Ireland: The Definitive Visual Guide* is written that after Henry VIII died in 1542 he was succeeded by his son, Edward VI aged just nine. Young Edward was sick and it was clear his reign was not going to last long. It would have meant that Mary I, his Catholic elder sister, would become a queen. Even Edward himself gave his support to his aunt, Protestant Lady Jane Gray, by signing “Device of the Succession.” This way the succession skipped Mary and Lady Jane Gray became a queen after Edward’s VI death. Lady Jane Gray was a grand-daughter of Henry VII and had a weak but legitimate claim to the throne. Unlike Mary, she did not have enough support either military or from the people and she is known as the queen who reigned nine days. After only nine days Lady Jane Gray was executed for high treason.²⁹

R.G. Grant explains that after the death of Lady Jane Gray, Mary I became the Queen of England. Mary was a ruthless and tough queen; she burnt many Protestants during her reign and thus was called “Bloody Mary”. There was nobody to continue her work, so she agreed that Elisabeth, her sister, would succeed the throne. After Mary I died, Elisabeth I became the Queen. Elisabeth I never married and never had an heir so she chose James VI, son of Mary Queen of Scots to succeed to the English throne as James I of England.³⁰ Elisabeth I was the last of the Tudor monarchs and by her the reign of the Tudor dynasty ended, her successor James I was the first Stuart monarch on the English throne.

²⁹ R.G. Grant et al., *History of Britain and Ireland: The Definitive Visual Guide* (New York: DK Publishing, 2014) 133

³⁰ Grant et al, *History of Britain and Ireland: The Definitive Visual Guide*, 133, 137, 140, 141

2. LIFE AND INTRIGUES AT THE COURT

In this chapter information about the King's court and its intrigues are provided, however, the emphasis is put on the important issues that are relevant for *Wolf Hall*.

The King's court was a place where the King and his queen lived, all the intrigues were spun and where all the actions took place. It was not only the King and his queen who lived at the court but also courtiers, servants and many others who helped to run the whole household. Alison Weir in her book explains that Henry VIII's court was the first Renaissance court in England and Henry used a great deal of his father's money to establish it. The court was a nomadic institution, extravagant and wasteful place, moving from palace to palace (*Greenwich, Richmond, Windsor, Westminster, the Tower of London, Eltham Palace, Hampton court*).³¹ Henry VIII's court was one of the most lavishing, magnificent and triumphant in the English history. The court was a place for high ranked people whose ancient pedigree provided them with a certain position in the king's household or there were 'new men' whose friends or mere ability secured them their place at the court. Alison Weir in *Six Wives of Henry VIII* adds that it was Wolsey who transformed the old disgusting court into its modern version. He restricted number of people accommodated in castle and even the food was rationed but still very generously.³² The King was proud of his court and Weir writes that it was Henry who first expressed a desire to be called 'Your Majesty' rather than 'Your Grace'; no English king before had such power and none had after him.³³

It was not only courtiers with a noble pedigree who surrounded and worked for the King. Alison Weir explains that Henry preferred men who could offer him their good services, loyalty and companionship.³⁴ It is understandable that high-level courtship did not like the idea that

³¹ Weir, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, 87

³² Weir, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, 89, 90

³³ Weir, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, 80

³⁴ Weir, *Henry VIII; King and Court*, 96

lowborn people should hold their rightful place at the King's side. This is a topic that appears many times in *Wolf Hall*. The following passage expresses disapproval one of the courtiers on the fact how powerful lowborn people might be:

Sir Thomas's face has drained; the scarlet spots have vanished from his cheeks, and he is almost fainting with rage. As he quits the room, he whispers, 'Butcher's boy.' And as he passes the clerk – whose beefy hand lies idly on his desk – he sneers, 'Butcher's dog.'³⁵

This passage clearly shows the hatred and envy that aristocrats feel towards lowborn high ranking people who held high-ranking position at the court of the King.

Thomas Wolsey and Thomas Cromwell were no aristocrats yet both of them were powerful men and were Henry's close friends who advised him and Henry cherished and followed their advice in return. Katherine of Aragon states in *Wolf Hall*: "Do you know who this is? This is Master Cromwell. Who now writes all the laws."³⁶ Cardinal Wolsey became also very powerful and was on the top of his powers, which describes the situation that lasted until the late 1520s, when Henry was mature enough to rule on his own without Wolsey's help, as Weir adds.³⁷ In *Wolf Hall* Mantel deals with Wolsey's huge power in detail, to provide an example: Wolsey talks with Cromwell and underlines Wolsey's power. "The king will do such-and-such. 'Then he began to say, 'We will do such-and-such.' Now he says, 'This is what I will do.'"³⁸ Mantel shows that Wolsey was becoming more and more powerful, involved in many intrigues with Thomas Cromwell who works as a spy for Wolsey providing him with a huge amount of information and gossips. "Thomas, from now on, any London gossip, 'he touches the damask cloth, 'bring it right here to me. Don't trouble about the source.'"³⁹ Those are Wolsey's words in *Wolf Hall*. The King's court was a dangerous

³⁵ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 70

³⁶ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 288

³⁷ Weir, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, 79

³⁸ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 28

³⁹ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 75

place full of menacing people who wanted to profit from the King's favour.

Everyone who wanted to be powerful or achieve high ranked status needed to attend the king's court. According to G.J. Meyer the most essential thing was access. Anyone who wanted to rise in King's services, government, church, or in a military service needed access to the King himself, which meant to go where the King lived, the court. It was impossible to be successful without being known by the King or his closest friends and all of the major figures of the Tudor age. Thomas Wolsey, Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, Thomas More, Thomas Cromwell, and Thomas Cranmer, all of them gained their power and success because of their access to the court and the King himself. The rise of the Boleyn family is a good example how the friendship and good access to the King worked and how fruitful it might have been, but also illustrates how bad the situation could be when the political weather changed.⁴⁰ It was not effortless to come closer to the King or become a friend of him. There were only few, who managed, but then they had a great influence on him; one of them was young Anne Boleyn. Anne together with her family were masters at spinning intrigues and Anne Boleyn knew exactly what she wanted; to be the queen of England and the King's lawful consort. Mantel pointed out the Boleyn's family deviousness and avarice in *Wolf Hall* when cardinal Wolsey is talking with Thomas Cromwell about the rumours about Anne Boleyn: "But her family will want to get something out of it. What did they get before?"⁴¹ Everyone wanted something from the King and Thomas Boleyn was willing to trade his own daughter for money and power. Alison Weir writes that the King was so deeply in love with Anne Boleyn that he was enslaved by her. She and her family started to influence the King, which was dangerous for Boleyn's enemies; one of them was Thomas Wolsey. Thomas Boleyn started to perceive Cardinal Wolsey as a dangerous

⁴⁰ G.J. Meyer, *The Tudors: The Complete Story of England's Most Notorious Dynasty* (New York: Random house, 2010), 110 - 112

⁴¹ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 75

enemy, too powerful so he and several other lords decided to use Anne against him and destroy him forever.⁴² In *Wolf Hall* Mantel shows that the Duke of Norfolk and Thomas Boleyn hate Wolsey and make many attempts to destroy him.: ”When the cardinal had heard that the Duke of Norfolk was coming out to Richmond to tear him with his teeth, he had laughed and said, ‘Marry, Thomas, time to be going.’”⁴³ Wolsey was a wise man who was aware of his enemies, but not afraid of them. Mantel also blames Anne Boleyn of the Cardinal Wolsey’s fall in *Wolf Hall*..

He thinks, Anne arranged this, and it must have given her an intense and secret pleasure; vengeance deferred, for herself, for her old lover, once berated by the cardinal and sent packing from the court.⁴⁴

Alison Weir adds that Anne was convinced that Cardinal Wolsey destroyed her secret marriage with Henry Percy so she would do anything to disgrace the cardinal.⁴⁵ Anne Boleyn was a clever, strong woman who followed her goals callously. To achieve what she wanted she would go over the dead bodies without taking care of anyone or anything.

When the powerful lavish courtiers of the English court were not plotting they needed to be entertained. Many pastimes took place at the king’s court and they cost a lot of King’s money. Alison Weir lists several disports that were popular at the Tudor court; hunts, tournaments, banquets, balls, sporting events and many more. However, Alison Weir notes:

But perhaps the most popular and spectacular of the entertainments staged for the pleasure of the Tudor court was the pageant, an early dramatic form. Pageants followed a set pattern: the male participants would enter the hall clad in matching costumes with a certain significance; then the ladies, in complementary attire, would emerge from a kind of stage on wheels, which could be made to resemble a castle, a forest, a

⁴² Weir, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, 140, 162

⁴³ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 208

⁴⁴ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 260

⁴⁵ Weir, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, 158

mountain, the sea, or anything else that the King's Master of the Revels could devise.⁴⁶

In *Wolf Hall* Hilary Mantel first introduces Anne Boleyn at the King's court during one of the pageants that were so common at that time. The ladies were dressed as Virtues, and Anne Boleyn was presenting Perseverance.⁴⁷ Mantel also uses this scene and reflects it in the story of *Wolf Hall*. "At Shrovetide, she dances in a court masque. The ladies are costumed as Virtues, and she takes the part of Perseverance."⁴⁸ Alison Weir in *Six Wives of Henry VIII* confirms that Anne Boleyn was chosen to take part in one of those pageants planned for Lent, but the King was still interested in Anne's sister, Mary Boleyn.⁴⁹ This sequence from the book was both used as an introduction of Lady Anne Boleyn with her past and as an example of the palace gossips which gave readers insight into the matter and informs about important circumstances. Mantel gives her readers hints that are relevant to the story and also are historically proven: "The rumour spreads that she is going to marry Harry Percy, the Earl of Northumberland's heir"⁵⁰ Mantel uses this information as an unconfirmed conjecture but in fact it is a historically proven fact. Alison Weir notes that it is known that Anne Boleyn really wanted to marry Henry Percy, the 21-year-old heir to the earldom of Northumberland, but their secret intentions were disclosed. Wolsey did not perceive Anne to be worthy of such a great marriage.⁵¹ Intrigues and rumours were on a daily basis of lives not only of noble courtiers but even of ordinary people and Hilary Mantel incorporates them masterly into her book.

⁴⁶ Weir, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, 90 - 91

⁴⁷ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 67

⁴⁸ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 67

⁴⁹ Weir, *Six Wives of Henry VIII*, 155

⁵⁰ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 67

⁵¹ Weir, *Six Wives of Henry VIII*, 156 - 157

3. LITERARY LANGUAGE

Hilary Mantel uses a very unique voice throughout *Wolf Hall*. It is called a third person, which is Cromwell's perspective and she is referring to him as "he" rather than just Cromwell, which is sometimes a bit confusing, readers have to get used to it. Mantel in the interview with the *Wall Street Journal* explains that it was a voice that just came out. She thinks that her readers are looking through Cromwell's eyes so the first person narrative could not be used. So she feels that since she is behind his eyes, she cannot really start calling him Thomas Cromwell. She chose the other way of doing it, which has now become one of the main features of the book.⁵² The readers see and feel everything exactly as Cromwell does, the other characters are perceived from the Cromwell's point of view. The readers see Anne Boleyn as well as she is seen by Cromwell in *Wolf Hall*: „She's so small. Her bones are so delicate, her waist so narrow if two law students make one cardinal, two Annes make one Katherine.”⁵³ This is exactly the way Thomas Cromwell sees Anne and Mantel wants her readers to perceive her in the same way. Cromwell also interprets the appearance of the King himself: „The king smiles. That fine curl of the red lip. He has a pretty mouth, almost like a woman's, it is too small for his face.”⁵⁴ Throughout the whole book the readers are witnesses of Cromwell's deepest and most intimate thoughts and findings. Sometimes it seems that Cromwell is speaking to the readers, it almost seems that the readers are a part of the story: “Thomas Boleyn is with us, Earl of Wiltshire. Lord Privy Seal is here; ...”⁵⁵ Some passages are written in a way that it seems that Cromwell is commenting on the situation as he was talking to the readers themselves.

Contemporary language is used throughout *Wolf Hall*. The reason Mantel is doing so is that there are a lot of words that have changed their

⁵² Alexander Alter, "Hilary Mantel on her Sequel to *Wolf Hall*", "The Wall Street Journal, May 10, 2012, accessed January 10, 2014, <http://blogs.wsj.com/speakeasy/2012/05/10/hilary-mantel-on-her-sequel-to-wolf-hall/>

⁵³ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 200

⁵⁴ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 181

⁵⁵ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 281

meaning and form since the Tudor times. To get an idea in which way the book would have looked like if the Tudor English had been used see the extract below:

“Hit may lyke your good Grace to be advertised that I have received your Graces Lettres directed to my selfe date the last day of Auguste, with the Lettres of my Lord Admirall to your Grace, sent in Post, and copies of Lettres sent betwene the Queen of Scots and⁵⁶”

This is a short extract from the letter which was written by Thomas More to Cardinal Wolsey. It is obvious that English in the Tudor times did not have strict grammatical rules which are used today. It would be difficult to understand the text and the writer would have to have great knowledge of Tudor English therefore Mantel decided to use a modern language. Hilary in the interview for *The Wall Street Journal* explains why:

And I think the obvious thing is, stick to modern English, but just occasionally invert the word order, introduce a rhythm that’s slightly different, try to get a suggestion for the period, without being heavy handed about it.⁵⁷

It is demonstrated by the following excerpt from *Wolf Hall* describing Wolsey and Cromwell discussing Queen Katherine complaining about Wolsey’s intrigues against her:

He has used every means he can, she says, to drive me from the king’s side, so that I know nothing of his projects, and so that he, the cardinal, should have the direction of all. He has prevented my meetings with the ambassador of Spain. He has put spies in my household – my women are all spies for him.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Henry Ellis, F.R.S. Sec. S.A., *Original Letters Illustrative of English History including Numerous Royal Letters: From Autograph in the British Museum and One or Two Other Collections with Notes and Illustrations*, (London: printed for: Harding, Triphook, And Lepard, MDCCXXII)

⁵⁷ Alexander Alter, “Hilary Mantel on her Sequel to “Wolf Hall”, “The Wall Street Journal, May 10, 2012, accessed January 10, 2014, <http://blogs.wsj.com/speakeasy/2012/05/10/hilary-mantel-on-her-sequel-to-wolf-hall/>

⁵⁸ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 83

This excerpt shows that Mantel is not using historicisms but she just uses slightly different rhythm to achieve the right effect, as she explains in the interview.

In another short excerpt in which Anne Boleyn is dancing at the Henry VIII's feast we can distinguish the use of a contemporary language, to be more specific a phrasal compound: "She dances gracefully but briskly, with an amused expression on her face, a hard, impersonal touch-me-not smile."⁵⁹ Mantel often uses humour to make the book more readable, even in bad situations the characters does not lose their sense of humour, although it is an irony or grim humour. It is possible to distinguish it in the following passage from *Wolf Hall*. After Wolsey's disgrace, the King is confiscating Wolsey's palace for Lady Anne Boleyn when Cromwell notes: "Have I missed something? This palace belongs to the archdiocese of York. When was Lady Anne made an archbishop?"⁶⁰ Mantel uses jokes and dramatic irony to entertain readers and lighten the storyline, for example when young Thomas Cromwell declares after being beat up by his father: "I've had enough of this. If he gets after me again I'm going to kill him, and if I kill him they'll hang me, and if they're going to hang me I want a better reason."⁶¹ This is a nice example of a dramatic irony because it is known Cromwell was executed, not hanged, but beheaded.

In *Wolf Hall* there are many salacious jokes to entertain readers that give the book its uniqueness, wit and humour. To give an example: Thomas Cromwell is talking with a boatman who is gossiping about Lady Anne Boleyn and her brother George Rochford.

... '- because she knows that very night her brother's inside her, licking her up to the lungs, and then he's, excuse me, sister, what shall I do with this big package – she says, oh, don't distress

⁵⁹ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 67

⁶⁰ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 48

⁶¹ Mantel *Wolf Hall*, 9

yourself, my lord brother, shove it up the back entry, it'll come to no harm there.'⁶²

In this passage the sexual innuendo is more than obvious and gives the book its spicy side.

Wolf Hall is written in English but Mantel decided to use other languages to make the book more interesting and authentic. In Tudor times it was common that high rank people could speak many languages like French, Latin, Spanish, German, even Welsh and Flemish. To be able to speak in many different languages was essential for courtiers if they wanted to hold important offices. It is mentioned in *Wolf Hall* that important high-ranked people can speak many languages. "The queen speaks in English. 'Do you know who this is? This is Master Cromwell. Who now writes all the laws.' Caught awkwardly between languages, he says, 'Madam, shall we go on in English, or Latin?'"⁶³ Hilary Mantel intended to make the book more authentic so in some cases Mantel replaces English by other languages. Foreign words are always written in italics and sometimes they are translated or explained but once in a while there is no explanation or translation at all so the readers have to have certain knowledge to understand, however those foreign parts have no essential meaning and the readers who do not understand them are not losing anything important including the plot. Adding foreign words make the whole book more diverse and interesting, for example Cromwell overhears a young boy singing an Italian song while the boy is working:

'Scaramella va alla guerra
Colla lancia et la rotella
La zombero boro borombetta
La boro borombo ...'⁶⁴

There is no translation of the song, so those who do not speak Italian have absolutely no idea what the song is about. In the book there are also words of Latin meaning that occur in conversations among characters e.g. conversation with the King: "Brandon's face falls. 'What, the same

⁶² Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 295

⁶³ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 288

⁶⁴ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 206

story?’ ‘Mutatis mutandis. The servant isn’t called Robin.’ The king meets his eyes. He smiles.”⁶⁵ Again, there is no explanation what the Latin words mean. The use of French words is also highly frequented. In Calais people scream at Anne Boleyn “‘Putain!’” and “‘Great Whore of England’”⁶⁶ The word Putain has a similar meaning as the word whore, they are more or less of the same meaning, but the readers have to have at least basic knowledge of French to be aware of this. Sometimes even the whole sentence is written in another language, Hans Holbein, talented painter says to Cromwell: “‘Gefällt es Ihnen, Herr Cromwell, sind Sie stolz darauf?’”⁶⁷ This time the author gives a translation of the sentence: “‘He says to Helen, he asks if I am pleased and proud.’”⁶⁸ A use of foreign words is frequent throughout the book and adds a special charm to the storyline and authenticity of the conversations between the characters. Hilary Mantel made great deal of efforts in creating translations into other languages with help of several other people to whom she thanks at the end of *Wolf Hall*.; Delyth Neil helped with Welsh, Leslie Wilson with German, and a Norfolk Lady who helped with the Flemish.⁶⁹ Mixing several languages together makes the book challenging and interesting for the readers and overall illustrates the atmosphere of Tudor England.

⁶⁵ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 184

⁶⁶ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 395

⁶⁷ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 421

⁶⁸ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 421

⁶⁹ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 652

4. TREATMENTS OF HISTORICAL EVENTS

This chapter is focused on how the writer conceived historical facts and placed them into the book. In the interview made by Krishnan Guru Muthy Hilary was asked whether she wanted to tell the truth. She thought for a while and then replied: “I am trying to make the reader aware that there are versions behind versions behind versions.” She is trying to tell that everyone can choose his own version. She does not want to tell the readers only the history itself which tells the readers only what happened, her job as a novelist is to tell us how it felt because novelists move forward with characters. She insists that there is no possibility to have the truth and nothing but the truth, it is necessary to approach the evidence with an open heart. She admits that she is no historian, she is a novelist who can open up the past and say it was like this but it needs not to be historically correct.⁷⁰

In *Wolf Hall* the author presents her completely new insight into the issue of events that took place during a short historical time period: from Henry VIII’ disenchantment with his first wife for her failure to produce a male heir, to the execution of Thomas More. Hilary Mantel spent 5 years searching for historical facts and writing the book. She chose only real characters and historical events that are proven to be truth. Mantel demonstrated tremendous knowledge of history for she did not write about characters or events that would be fictional or contradict the actual course of history.

Hilary Mantel in *Wolf Hall* uses real characters and real historical events to create the whole story. Hilary did not invent the plot of the book; she connected lives of real people and events of the Tudor period and placed them into *Wolf Hall* to create the whole brand new story, she invented only dialogues between the characters and developed their personal feelings and inner thoughts. Mantel uses real historical events and

⁷⁰ Information used from the interview with Hilary Mantel about her book by by Krishnan Guru-Muthy, accessed 7th January 2014, available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-1wBRsQAV>

develops them in detail; she takes real facts that are historical proven and really happened and then creates her own version of how it happened.

J. Patrick Coby says that it is known that Thomas Cromwell's wife and his two little daughters died on a sweating sickness.⁷¹ Mantel uses this tragedy for her book and creates her own version how it happened creating dialogues and she expresses character's feelings and makes the story touching and more sympathetic for the readers. Hilary Mantel uses life stories of her characters like Henry VIII, Anne Boleyn, her sister Mary Boleyn and many others that are mentioned in the story which really happened and with a maximum precision put them into the storyline of the book to create her incredible masterpiece.

To make *Wolf Hall* even more special, Mantel uses real famous citations and applies many historical proven facts, for example when she describes Cromwell's father evil nature:

He tells them about the Pegasus, and about his father's brew house and how Walter gets fines for bad beer at least twice a year. He tells them about how he gets fines for stealing wood, cutting down other people's trees, and about the too-many sheep he runs on the common.⁷²

Hilary Mantel describes Walter Cromwell ingeniously and there is historical evidence that supports Mantel's description of Cromwell's father. J. Patrick Coby demonstrates that Walter Cromwell was a criminal with a bad disrepute and violent nature.⁷³ What makes the book so excellent is Hilary Mantel's sense of detail, she adds interesting historical facts that are not much known or on the contrary notoriously popular and by this method she adds to her book the diversity. For example G.J. Mayer mentions the title that Henry VIII gained from the

⁷¹J. Patrick Coby, *Thomas Cromwell: Machiavellian Statecraft and the English Reformation*, (UK: Lexington Books, 2009) 60

⁷² Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 15

⁷³ J. Patrick Coby, *Thomas Cromwell: Machiavellian Statecraft and the English Reformation*, 59 - 61

Pope himself, *Fidei Defensor*, which means Defender of the faith.⁷⁴ This fact from the Tudor history is as well mentioned in *Wolf Hall*: “The king, with the help from Thomas More, has written a book against Luther, for which the Pope has granted him the title of Defender of the Faith.”⁷⁵

Much of the book is historically correct, Hilary Mantel did not invent events that would contradict the real course of history but some parts of the book are exaggerated or slightly modified to make better impression and to better correspond with the character’s personalities that Mantel modified a little. One of such examples is Mary Boleyn’s situation; Weir explains that Mary used to be the king’s mistress giving a birth to the King’s child and she named him after the King himself. The king refused to acknowledge the child because there was a possibility that Mary had her son with her legal husband, William Carey, and because the King at this time already acknowledged another boy, Henry Fitzroy, as his legal heir.⁷⁶ In *Wolf Hall* Hilary intended to create Anne Boleyn as one of the evil characters so Mantel changed the reason why the king did not acknowledge Mary Boleyn’s child:

’If you saw my son...well, why do you think I called him Henry? The king would have owned him as his son, just as he has owned Richmond, but my sister forbade it. He does what she says. She means to give him a prince herself, so she doesn’t want mine in his nursery.’⁷⁷

In fact it was not Anne Boleyn’s intervention but the King himself decided not to acknowledge Mary’s child. Mantel changes the event in order to make Anne Boleyn an evil and unsympathetic young lady.

Wolf Hall characters and events are masterfully drawn, described and are very historically accurate. Mantel follows the course of history amazingly and although the book is a fictional historical novel that describes a fictional biography Mantel copes with the historical facts

⁷⁴ G.J. Meyer, *The Tudors: The Complete Story of England’s Most Notorious Dynasty*) 188

⁷⁵ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 39

⁷⁶Weir, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, 133 - 134

⁷⁷Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 137

impressively and tries to stick to facts and at the same time create a new insight into the issues of the Tudor period.

5. LITERARY CHARACTERS ANALYSIS

In this chapter the information about the book are provided and this chapter also contains the analysis of the characters and their comparison with the real personages. All the following characters are the main and important people who spun the intrigues at the court of Henry VIII. There are only the main and important characters of historical significance mentioned in this chapter.

The book has its name after a noble family⁷⁸ seat in Wolf Hall, Wiltshire that is still standing there although it is a farm house nowadays. *Wolf Hall* has also metaphorical meanings, it is everywhere the king goes, there are always wolves that are waiting to bite a bit from the King's favour and generosity and they go over the dead bodies. The writer is playing with this metaphorical meaning several times in the book, for example when Thomas Cromwell is talking to Rafe Sadler: "The Duke of Norfolk would fall on us like a pack of wolves."⁷⁹ Another reference to a wolf in the book is a metaphorical meaning for plague: "They take comfort from a belief that since the infection killed so many last year, it won't be so violent this year;... the wolf comes down on the sheepfold, but not on the nights when the men with dogs are waiting for him."⁸⁰ Anne Boleyn herself and all her family are a pack of wolves that are trying to hunt the King. *Wolf Hall* is also a place where all the main characters go at the end of the book. "'Now here, before we go to Winchester, we have time to spare, and what I think is, Rafe, we shall visit the Seymours.' He writes it down. Early September. Five days. Wolf Hall."⁸¹

The main protagonist of the book is Thomas Cromwell, a lowborn son of a blacksmith. In the interview with Krishnan Guru-Muthy Hilary Mantel confides that she first chose her main protagonist, Thomas Cromwell, not

⁷⁸ The Seymours, 3rd queen's family, Jane Seymour

⁷⁹ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 140

⁸⁰ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 148

⁸¹ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 650

the historical period in which the story is set. Hilary decided to portray Cromwell as a capable ingenious man who despite being lowborn managed to get to the top. In *Wolf Hall* Mantel's version of Cromwell is rather a nonviolent man who is a hero rather than a villain, as some historians perceive Thomas Cromwell. Mantel decided that Cromwell would be a hero and she wanted to put her readers in that position. Hilary Mantel admires him, his ability, as a son of a blacksmith, to win the king's favour and become a dangerously powerful man. Mantel even admits that she was accused of excessive sympathy with Cromwell. She also claims that she is not obsessed by her character because there must be an ironic distance and she respects it.⁸²

In *Wolf Hall* Thomas Cromwell is a man of great wit, very well educated and very self-confident although he is ugly in appearance, which proves the following extract in which a fisherman asks Cromwell: "Never forget a face, eh?" "Not when it's ugly. 'Have you seen yourself, *back?*'"⁸³ Hilary Mantel makes Cromwell a positive character who is kind-hearted and who would never abandon his master and friend, Thomas Wolsey, even though if it would mean a disgrace for him. Throughout the whole book the fact that Hilary Mantel sympathies with him is obvious; she gives Cromwell a gentle nature and she demonstrates it many times, for example: Cromwell loves his family, even his eldest son Gregory, who is not successful at his studies and he is not at all capable as his father wants him to be. In *Wolf Hall* Thomas Cromwell loves his son in the way he is; Cromwell is not disappointed by his son's bad study results and accepts it as the following extract suggests:

Gregory has little interest in his books so far, though he likes to be told stories, dragon stories, stories of green people who live in the woods; you can drag him squealing through a passage of Latin

⁸² Alexander Alter, "Hilary Mantel on her Sequel to 'Wolf Hall'", "The Wall Street Journal, May 10, 2012, accessed January 10, 2014, <http://blogs.wsj.com/speakeasy/2012/05/10/hilary-mantel-on-her-sequel-to-wolf-hall/>

⁸³ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 294

if you persuade him that over the page there's a sea serpent or a ghost.⁸⁴

J. Patrick Coby reveals that in fact Thomas Cromwell was displeased by his son's slow progress so he always paid late to Gregory's tutor. Gregory was definitely a big disappointment for his father.⁸⁵ Hilary Mantel admires Cromwell so she avoids this fact and makes Cromwell only a kind-hearted person without any faults.

Cromwell was an ambitious man and thus Hilary Mantel perceives him in her book. The writer makes a picture of a good man who would never destroy anyone to promote to a higher position. Cromwell means no harm to anyone he only does what he is told by his masters, Wolsey, later on by the King himself. Hilary Mantel shows it in the book when Cromwell tries to save More's life although More is threatening Cromwell, as it is obvious in this conversation in Cromwell's house when More is displeased about letters which Cromwell writes. Cromwell asks More and he replies: "Are you threatening me? I'm just interested." Yes, More says sadly. "Yes, that is precisely what I am doing."⁸⁶ It is obvious that Cromwell does not take the threat seriously. Elton says that Cromwell really did try hard to save More's life but Thomas More was too stubborn to let Cromwell do so and Thomas More was finally executed.⁸⁷ The storyline in *Wolf Hall* is written in the same way.

Another important character is Thomas More. *Britannica* informs that Thomas More is generally known as a scholar, humanist and statesman, a son of a lawyer and the author of famous Utopia. He was executed for what he believed and "he is recognized as a saint by the Roman Catholic Church."⁸⁸ Thomas More is seen as a positive figure of Tudor period and

⁸⁴ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 36

⁸⁵ J. Patrick Coby, *Thomas Cromwell: Machiavellian Statecraft and the English Reformation*, 60 - 61

⁸⁶ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 352

⁸⁷ Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 139

⁸⁸ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. "Sir Thomas More", accessed January 22, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/392018/Sir-Thomas-More>.

overall in the history although in *Wolf Hall* Thomas More is perceived quite vice versa. Cromwell thinks of him as about someone who is a pure evil as the following excerpts from *Wolf Hall* prove: “There’s something sly in More, he enjoys embarrassing people; ...”⁸⁹, “He would chain you up, for a mistranslation. He would, for a difference in your Greek, kill you.”⁹⁰ *European Institute of Protestant Studies* testifies that More was cruel and fanatic supporter of the Catholic Church with radical opinions that heretics must be punished and burnt. He personally interrogated prisoners in his Chelsea house which was equipped for these purposes by stocks and a whipping tree.⁹¹ In *Wolf Hall* Thomas Cromwell is very well familiar with More’s fanatic personality and remarks:

When heretics are taken, he stands by at the Tower while the torture is applied. It is reported that in his gatehouse at Chelsea he keeps suspects in the stocks, while he preaches at them and harries them: the name of your printer, the name of the master They say he uses the whip, the manacles and the torment-frame they call Skeffington’s Daughter.⁹²

More is in fact making his own intrigues and he is fighting against Marxism and tries to search for heretics who are tortured and asked for information about other heretics and forbidden books. Thomas More has dedicated his life to the God and blindly adheres to his faith.

Thomas Cromwell is perpetually making fun of More and demonstrating his disagreement with his opinions. It is obvious from the extract where Thomas More tells Thomas Cromwell about his opinion about women in his household:

‘Because one must keep them employed,’ he says. ‘They cannot always be at their books, and young women are prone to mischief

⁸⁹ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 227

⁹⁰ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 152

⁹¹ European Institute of Protestant Studies, “Thomas More: Zero Tolerance (Part II),” accessed February 23, 2014,

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

⁹² Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 298, 299

and idleness.’ ‘For sure,’ he mutters. ‘They’ll be fighting in the streets next.’⁹³

Cromwell is constantly laughing at his strange and radical opinions and he often has sarcastic comments on More, sometimes only in his thoughts, Mantel intended this in order to entertain her readers and to underline his fanatic nature: “...; he thinks in irritation, why More can never get a proper shave? Can’t he make time, shorten his whipping schedule?”⁹⁴ Hilary Mantel chooses a favourite well-known historical person who is widely perceived to be a positive figure in history and presents the dark side of his character and in a way make fun of it.

Next man of faith in *Wolf Hall* is Cardinal Wolsey. Alison Weir points out that Wolsey was not a butcher’s son, as is stated in *Wolf Hall* but he was a son of an Ipswich grazier and wool merchant. Wolsey was still of humble origins as well as Cromwell but Wolsey had a better education; he studied at Oxford and graduated only at the age of fifteen.⁹⁵ Wolsey managed to obtain an education and became cardinal of York. He was the king’s faithful servant but unfortunately for Wolsey he was hated by many people among them Anne Boleyn, she blamed him of destroying her engagement with Henry Percy. There were other noble people who hated Wolsey since they felt that he was stealing away what should have been theirs, the power cardinal had so they decided to use Anne Boleyn and destroy the cardinal for good.⁹⁶ Wolsey had the King’s confidence so Henry turned to him for help and advice about the doubts he had about his marriage. Alison Weir adds that the cardinal was horrified by the King’s ‘Great matter’⁹⁷ and begged Henry to change his mind and abandon the idea of getting divorce. However the queen was of a different opinion and thought that her unhappiness is all Wolsey’s fault.⁹⁸ In *Wolf Hall* the situation is pictured in the same way, the queen

⁹³ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 230

⁹⁴ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 281

⁹⁵ Weir, *Henry VIII; King and Court*, 87

⁹⁶ Weir, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, 156 – 157, 168

⁹⁷ Situation around the King’s desire for divorce

⁹⁸ Weir, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, 174- 175

hates Wolsey because she thinks he is plotting against her and drags her from the King's favour:

Ever since Wolsey rose in the king's service, the queen claims, he has been working to push her out of her rightful place as Henry's confidante and adviser. He has used every means he can, she says, to drive me from the king's side, so that I know nothing of his projects, and so that he, the cardinal, should have the direction of all.⁹⁹

In *Wolf Hall* Wolsey is pictured as a clever man who means no harm to anyone, what he wants is to make his king Henry to be happy and satisfied. He helps the King's friends many times; once he helps Charles Brandon, the King's closest friend, escape the death but in return Charles was plotting against Wolsey who was outraged and furious about it.

And he,' the cardinal says, furious, 'he, Brandon, when he married the king's sister out of hand – when he married her in the first days of her widowhood, knowing the king intended her for another monarch – his head would have been parted from his body, if I, a simple cardinal, had not pleaded for him to the king.'¹⁰⁰

Alison Weir confirms that this conversation between Charles Brandon and the Cardinal really happened and the content of the conversation was almost identical when Wolsey declared:

'If I, a simple cardinal, had not been, you should have had at this present time no head upon your shoulders wherein you should have a tongue to make any such report in despite of us.'¹⁰¹

Wolf Hall Wolsey is overall portrayed as a kind-hearted elderly man, the King's humble servant and Cromwell's good master, but according to Alison Weir, Wolsey was interested purely and solely in himself. She explains that Wolsey's biggest ambition was to become the Pope but he failed and blamed the Spanish emperor because he refused to help him.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 83

¹⁰⁰ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 186

¹⁰¹ Weir, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, 204

¹⁰² Weir, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, 112

In *Wolf Hall* Wolsey claims that he never favoured anyone or anything but peace: “The cardinal says, wearily, ‘I have never favoured the French, nor the Emperor neither: I have favoured peace.’”¹⁰³ Alison Weir adds that this statement is not entirely true because Wolsey always favoured his own business. Finally Wolsey was destroyed by Anne Boleyn and her faction that included lord Rochford (Anne’s Brother), Norfolk (Anne’s uncle) and Suffolk and Charles Brandon, whom the Cardinal helped to save his life.¹⁰⁴ In *Wolf Hall* Wolsey meets exactly the same fate with the fact that Mantel highlights Anne’s causing of cardinals fall.

Anne Boleyn, a *Wolf Hall*’s character masterfully created, is one of the key characters in the book although she is not the main protagonist. Alison Weir explains that nowadays Anne Boleyn is historically seen in two ways: on one hand she is portrayed as ‘Jezebel’, the great Whore and Concubine by hostile Catholic writers who would do anything to drag her from the King, they claimed that Anne Boleyn was committing adultery and incest to give the King a son in order to save herself from execution. On the other hand, she was perceived by Protestant writers as the saintly queen who brought a true religion to England and who gave life to the great queen Elisabeth I. Both of these claims exaggerate the reality; Anne was not guilty of any incest or adultery but she was not saint either. From historical perspective is known, that Anne Boleyn had many enemies but the worst of them was Anne herself; she treated her enemies openly with a great disrespect and vindictiveness, overall she was indiscreet and arrogant. Anne Boleyn was not a typical beauty but she has a special charm, she had vivacious personality, was graceful and had a good wit.¹⁰⁵ Hilary Mantel portrays her exactly in the same way, see example in *Wolf Hall* when Hans Holbein wants to paint Anne but Cromwell suggests that it is not quite a good idea: “‘I would like to paint her. Anna Bolena.’”

¹⁰³ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 83

¹⁰⁴ Weir, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, 182

¹⁰⁵ Weir, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, 143, 144, 151

‘They say she is not beautiful.’ ‘No, perhaps she is not. You would not choose her as a model for a Primavera.’”¹⁰⁶

Hilary Mantel describes Anne perfectly; she captures Anne’s explosive temper and personality. Anne Boleyn was ambitious and did not stop before she got exactly what she wanted. Mantel describes her character at the time when the King tried to gain an annulment of his marriage with Katherine of Aragon and this took a very long time. Alison Weir explains that Anne started to lose her patience and started growing old, her relationship with the King became to be stormy and they quarrelled a lot. It was more difficult to deal with her because she started to think she was losing her dream to be the Queen of England.¹⁰⁷ In *Wolf Hall* Anne is portrayed as an annoying woman who is constantly dissatisfied with everything and everyone and treats them with disrespect being very arrogant and suspicious. In the book Cromwell meets Mary Boleyn, Anne’s sister, and she informs Cromwell: “When she sees my lord father she holds up a palm to him, don’t dare speak...and when she sees me, she gives me a little pinch. Sometimes I am bruised. She thinks to disfigure me.”¹⁰⁸ Hilary Mantel describes Anne’s character perfectly, which proves the extract in which Cromwell is speaking with Mary Boleyn discussing Anne and the King:

‘They quarrelled. So one hears.’ ‘First he quarrelled with Katherine. Then he came here for sympathy. Anne said what! I told you not to argue with Katherine, you know you always lose. If he were not a king,’ she says with relish, ‘one could pity him. For the dog’s life they lead him.’¹⁰⁹

There is historical evidence as Alison Weir writes that this situation really happened, which also proves that Anne sometimes treated the King incorrectly.

¹⁰⁶ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 372

¹⁰⁷ Weir, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, 211

¹⁰⁸ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 139

¹⁰⁹ Manter, *Wolf Hall*, 203

Henry was immovable on that issue, and the quarrel ended with him leaving to seek comfort from Anne Boleyn. Yet she, knowing he had been with Katherine, was decidedly unsympathetic. ‘Did I not tell you that whenever you argue with the Queen she is sure to have the upper hand?’ she scolded. ‘I see that some fine morning you will succumb to her reasoning, and cast me off!’ With this, Henry had enough, and fled back to his own apartments in search of peace.¹¹⁰

Throughout *Wolf Hall* Anne Boleyn is described as a heartless monster but Mantel exaggerates her character to make the book more interesting. In the book Cromwell informs the women in his household: “‘She provokes the king’s temper,’ he says. ‘He complains Katherine never in her life spoke to him as Anne does. Norfolk says she uses language to him you wouldn’t use to a dog.’”¹¹¹ Alison Weir explains that Anne had obviously less feelings for the King than the King had for her. Anne was using the King to get what she wanted. In the book Anne even declares: “‘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.’”¹¹² Anne is also really vengeful and unforgiving, she did not forget about the broken engagement, which Anne incorrectly thought Cardinal Wolsey constructed but in fact it was the King’s doing that broke the engagement because he wanted Anne for himself. Anne was angry and promised Cardinal a bitter revenge.¹¹³ This is mentioned in the book as well, after the Wolsey’s fall, which was caused by the Boleyn faction, Thomas Cromwell correctly thinks: “He thinks, Anne arranged this, and it must have given her an intense and secret pleasure; vengeance deferred, for herself, for her old love, once berated by the cardinal and sent packing from the court.”¹¹⁴ Thomas Cromwell also thinks that Anne is a cruel and purposeful woman, Hilary Mantel makes a funny note when Cromwell gives Anne a gift: “At New Year he had given Anne a present of silver forks with handles of rock crystal. He hopes she will use

¹¹⁰ Weir, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, 213

¹¹¹ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 309

¹¹² Mantel, *Wolf Hall* 243

¹¹³ Weir, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, 157, 158

¹¹⁴ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 260

them to eat with, not to stick in people.”¹¹⁵ Anne Boleyn was widely unpopular, especially with women because they were compassionate with Katherine and hated Anne for trying to steal the King from the Queen. Anne Boleyn is desperate about it and wants people to love her: “They say the people love Katherine, but really, it is just the women, they pity her. We will show them something better. They will love me, when this creature is out of me.”¹¹⁶ Weir adds that Katherine was indeed very popular and the King was afraid there could be riots in the streets.¹¹⁷ In *Wolf Hall* is also obvious that Anne Boleyn is hated by many people, both nobles and King’s subjects, ambassador Chapuys tells what he thinks of Anne Boleyn to Cromwell: “A friend! She is a witch, you know? She has put the king under an enchantment, so he risks everything – to be cast out of Christendom, to be damned.”¹¹⁸ Weir adds that today is known that Anne Boleyn was not the cause why the King wanted the divorce, she was merely a catalyst, Henry himself realized that his marriage could be against Leviticus long before he met Anne Boleyn and the main reason was absence of male heirs.¹¹⁹ Hilary Mantel makes Anne Boleyn the cause why the King wants a divorce to make the book more entertaining and Anne more evil. In conclusion, Anne Boleyn is a negative character in *Wolf Hall* but the reason for it is that Mantel creates her like that; Anne Boleyn was not a bad person only a modern type of a woman that a modern society of the 21st century would call a gold-digger.

Henry VIII is described in *Wolf Hall* as an almighty king who can do whatever pleases him, the King who is surrounded by his advisors and councillors as it gives an impression that he is unable to deal with anything on his own. Throughout all his life there are men like Thomas Wolsey, Thomas More or Thomas Cromwell who help the King with his whims and wishes; the King seems helpless without his three Thomases.

¹¹⁵ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 296

¹¹⁶ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 469

¹¹⁷ Weir, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, 171, 179

¹¹⁸ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 323

¹¹⁹ Weir, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, 137, 171

The King even lets everyone wake up in the middle of the night just because he has a bad dream about his dead brother and needs an explanation; he said to Cromwell: ““Cromwell, my dead brother came to me in a dream.”¹²⁰ The King is unable to cope both with his dream or his life so he needs others to comfort him. Mantel made the King incapable but in reality the King was very capable of everything but at the same time very unpredictable.

Henry is blinded by love; the only thing he wants is the divorce with his Spanish consort and then finally marries Anne Boleyn, the love of his life. “He only wants one thing, and that is Anne in his bed;”¹²¹ He lives only for Anne, he was passionately in love even after many years of waiting, and he has his eyes only for her: “When the king saw Anne, his face had lit up. His heart is ardent; in his councillor’s hand, it burns to the touch.”¹²² The love for Anne seems to be the only thing which is steady and predictable in the King’s life for he has very unpredictable character: “You could watch Henry every day for a decade and not see the same thing. Sometimes he seems hapless, sometimes feckless, sometimes a child, sometimes master of his trade.”¹²³ Besides the King’s unpredictable temper he was very explosive: “The King has a high voice, for a big man, and it rises when he is angry to an ear-throbbing shriek.”¹²⁴ Nobody could be sure of the King’ favour: “The King has given Wolsey a pardon, but if he was offended once, he can be offended again.”¹²⁵ Henry was very well educated in theology and thus was very superstitious and was afraid of the prophecies which were foreseen by the Maid of Kent: ““And if you enter into a form of marriage with this unworthy woman, you will not reign seven months.””¹²⁶ The King took those kinds of prophecies seriously and was afraid because he was not

¹²⁰ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 274

¹²¹ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 137

¹²² Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 367

¹²³ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 436 - 437

¹²⁴ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 339

¹²⁵ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 238 - 239

¹²⁶ Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 397

sure whether the God is not angry with him because of the divorce with Katherine of Aragon.

Hilary Mantel faithfully captured Henry's character and the way he considers different matters and things although his entire personality is not depicted in details. In *Wolf Hall* the main reason why the King wants the divorce is devoted love for Anne Boleyn. In fact the original reason was Henry's doubts about the validity of his marriage with Katherine of Aragon. "To Henry's mind he was as good as childless, lacking a male heir, and years of worrying whether the prohibition in Leviticus applied to his own marriage had by now crystallised into the conviction that indeed it did. He and Katherine had offended against the law of God ...¹²⁷

Hilary Mantel is an impressive writer and she managed to create characters and plot that perfectly fit to the age when they belong. She modifies her characters to fit to her story but still she made an excellent work. She pictures the characters of *Wolf Hall* according to her own imagination but the basic elements of historically based facts she is leaving unchanged to add credibility to her book.

¹²⁷Weir, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, 137

CONCLUSION

The aim of this bachelor thesis was to analyse the book called *Wolf Hall* written by Hilary Mantel. The main goal was to discover how she dealt with elaboration of some of the *Wolf Hall* characters, how she refined the period of which she writes about and the way of incorporating her main character, Thomas Cromwell into it. This work examines the treatment of historical facts and events and how Hilary Mantel includes them into the book; whether the treatment of historical facts is accurate or whether Mantel creates her own storyline remote the actual events.

Before it was possible to start with the analysis itself, the certain facts and events from the Tudor History had to be mentioned for a proper understanding of affairs that are happening in *Wolf Hall* and to correctly follow Cromwell's actions and understand his feelings and the reason why he does certain things in the book, for example why he is so loyal to Wolsey even though he is already disgraced. From the first chapter it is necessary to know that Henry VIII wanted to divorce his royal Spanish consort Katherine of Aragon because she could not bear any more children, which meant she could not give England a son, an heir who would continue the line of the Tudors. However, Henry VIII desired for a male heir to the throne, it was his responsibility and the biggest desire to secure the future of his realm and this was exactly the moment when Anne Boleyn, a young charming lady, came to a play and tried to seduce the King by her charisma and a promise of a male heir. Anne Boleyn was as clever as a fox and she knew all about the palace intrigues and she personally was involved in many of them. Because of her Boleyn faction and intrigues they were spinning against Cardinal Wolsey, he was discredited and with his downfall Thomas Cromwell, a main character of the book, came to the King's services and this was the breaking point of the story. In this part of the book Mantel emphasises Cromwell's loyalty and a determination not to leave his friend and master.

In the second chapter there are discussed intrigues and courtiers who spin them with the main explanation why. The two important factions fight against each other: a faction that supports Anne Boleyn and her desire to be the queen of England and Henry's lawful wife contra a faction whose leader is Thomas Wolsey. Wolsey is aware of the fact that if Anne Boleyn wins, it will mean his fall. Thus he is trying to convince the King not to divorce Katherine but the King is too stubborn to listen to Wolsey's advice. A glimpse into the life and entertainment at the King's court is also mentioned because during one of the pageants, main royal pastime, Henry meets his future wife, Anne Boleyn. The whole book *Wolf Hall* is riddled with intrigues, therefore it was essential to mention and explain at least those two factions plotting and trying to destroy one another.

Literary language is analysed in the third chapter. The element which gives the book its uniqueness is a use of third person narrative, which means that Hilary Mantel is referring to Cromwell as "he" rather than Cromwell and comments that this idea came spontaneously. She wants her readers to see and feel everything in the same way just as Cromwell does. Mantel explains the use of contemporary language with an argument that we live in a 21st century and not in the Tudor England. If she had used old English most of the readers would have not even understood. Another interesting sign of the book is that Mantel is not using only English but many other languages because in Tudor times it was a standard for high rank people to speak many languages. It has to be taken into consideration that Henry's first wife came from Spain and originally could not speak English so they had to communicate in French, which was a common tongue. This method of using a large scale of languages makes the book very interesting although it is not possible to understand if the reader does not speak the given language but in case of important matters the translation is provided.

The main goal of this bachelor thesis was to analyse whether Mantel is writing the book according to the factual events and is strictly following

the historical facts and data or if she adds her own stories and characters. After a thorough review of many sources and analysing those facts using several specialized books the conclusion is that Hilary Mantel is strictly following historic events without a small branch from the actual history. Mantel herself declares that it is impossible to know every single detail from the history. She uses real events and interprets them in her own individual way without telling wrong details and inaccurate information about the Tudor history. However, Mantel's characters are slightly modified, which is dealt in the fifth chapter where there is an analysis of the main characters from *Wolf Hall*. Mantel did not create her characters she chose real personages that really existed and adjusted them according to her own imagination partly ignoring historical sources. She creates her characters interesting, unpredictable and believable, which make the readers love them or hate them. Mantel only changed natures of her characters and she had her own reason to do so because she intended to make the book interesting and pleasurable to read. The writer wanted to bring her readers close to the *Wolf Hall* characters and made the readers sympathize with them.

In conclusion Hilary Mantel created a masterpiece and breathed life into the characters, especially Thomas Cromwell who was introduced from a different point of view and thus the story of the Tudors that is well known became different, thrilling and full of surprises. She managed it without changing historical facts, events and dates with only a slight modification of her characters. She had a brilliant idea to use a real event and put her breath taking story into this interesting and dangerous Tudor age. Despite the fact that almost everyone knows the story about the Tudors and Thomas Cromwell from history classes and its ending is obvious, in case of the book the readers are constantly surprise as if the story has never been told before. Hilary Mantel made a lot of effort to create a different story from the old well known one and give her readers unforgettable book which is not to be left on a bookshelf full of dust but this book is meant to read over and over again.

RESUMÉ

Tato bakalářská práce je věnována rozboru historického románu *Wolf Hall*, napsaného britskou spisovatelkou a autorkou mnoha historických románů Hilary Mantel, která za svou historickou autobiografickou fikci *Wolf Hall* získala hned několik ocenění a mnoho nominací na prestižní ceny. Dílo bylo napsané v roce 2009 a ihned poté se stalo velmi populární mezi čtenáři a navíc bylo také přeloženo do mnoha světových jazyků.

Autorka zvolila název knihy podle starobylého rodinného sídla urozeného rodu Seymourů, kam se na konci knihy vydává sám král se svou družinou. Toto sídlo stále ještě stojí, ačkoliv se z něj postupem času stala rodinná farma. *Wolf Hall* v překladu znamená vlčí sál a v knize má několik metaforických významů. Například Anna Boleynová se svou rodinou je označena jako smečka vlků, která se snaží získat moc, slávu a peníze nehledě na nic a na nikoho.

Wolf Hall se odehrává v nechvalně známé a proslulé době Tudorovské Anglie, kdy byl u moci tvrdohlavý, velkolepě mocný král Jindřich VIII. Děj románu začíná obdobím manželské krize Jindřicha VIII. a jeho ženy Kateřiny Aragonské, kdy prvopočáteční vášeň a láska nadobro vyhasla a Jindřich byl okouzlen novou charismatickou a elegantní šlechtičnou, Annou Boleynovou. Ačkoli byl král Annou velice posedlý a okouzlený, jeho hlavním důvodem, proč žádal o rozvod se svou španělskou chotí, byla absence mužského potomka, který by usedl na tudorovský trůn a zajistil tak pokračování a dlouholetou budoucnost Tudorovského rodu. Jindřichův nárok na trůn nebyl příliš jistý, jeho otec, Jindřich VII., trůn uchwátit v boji, kde porazil svého úhlavního nepřítele krále Jiřího III., který byl zrazen vlastním vojskem, a tím ukončil dlouholeté krveprolití známé pod názvem válka růží. Jindřich měl na trůn ovšem pouze kradmý nárok, a z právního hlediska jeho nárok na trůn byl nelegitimní. Existovali zde šlechtici, kteří na trůn měli větší, právoplatnější nárok. Z toho důvodu musel Jindřich VII. lépe zajistit následnictví pro své

potomky lépe zajistit a upevnit jej tím, že dohodne sňatek pro svého prvorozeného syna Artura s mladou a krásnou španělskou princeznou, Kateřinou Aragonskou, která byla výhodnou partií už jenom z toho důvodu, že Španělsko byla světová velmoc a s jeho podporou by si nikdo nedovolil zpochybnit Jindřichův nárok na trůn. Navíc Španělsko bylo zapřísáhlým nepřítelem Francie, což se Jindřichovi velice zamlouvalo. Osud tomuto sňatku však nepřál a krátce po královské svatbě Artur zemřel, čímž zanechal Kateřinu bez manžela a bezmocnou v cizí zemi. Kateřina si později vzal Arturova bratra, Jindřicha VIII., ale musela odpřísáhnout, že je stále panna, protože Bible zakazovala jakémukoli muži pojmout za manželku bratrovu ženu, a tak bylo nutné získat povolení od samotného papeže, který k tomuto sňatku poté dal své povolení s požehnáním. Tady nastává hlavní problém rozvodu s Kateřinou, která přísahala, že do manželského lože s princem Jindřichem vešla jako panna, ale pro uskutečnění rozvodu bylo nutné dokázat, že pannou již nebyla, a tudíž manželství Jindřicha a Kateřiny bylo proti Boží vůli.

Wolf Hall je kniha plná intrik a zápletek, které jsou zajímavě pojaté a mistrně zpracované. Život vysoce postavených lidí na králově dvoře byl pohádkově bezstarostný, dvořané si užívali jednoduchý život a jednou z nejoblíbenějších aktivit byla divadelní představení. Při jednom z těchto představení Jindřich poprvé uviděl přenádhernou Annu Boleynovou v roli jedné z hlavních postav, kde urozené dívky představovaly ctnosti, a Anna ztělesňovala Zdrženlivost. Kromě zábav a různých kratochvil byly intriky oblíbenou zábavou zdejších dvořanů. Pro *Wolf Hall* jsou důležité dvě frakce intrikánů; rodina Anny Boleynové, která si přeje z krále a z možného sňatku s ním získat peníze, tituly a společenské postavení. Anna je dost chytrá na to, aby se poučila ze sestřiných chyb, protože její sestra Mary byla milenkou krále a nakonec skončila těhotná a zavrhnutá. Tato frakce rodiny Boleynů soupeří s kardinálem Thomasem Wolseym, který měl moc tak velkou skoro jako sám král, což mu přinášelo spoustu nepřátel. Tomuto kardinálu pomáhá hlavní postava Thomas Cromwell.

Tyto dvě frakce se smrtelně nenáviděly a Wolsey nebyl žádný blázen, moc dobře věděl, že kdyby si Anna vzala krále, znamenalo by to jeho konec, protože Anně dříve překazil sňatek s významným šlechticem Henrym Percym. Ironií ovšem je, že Wolsey byl ten, kdo měl Jindřichovi jeho vytoužený rozvod zařídit. V tomto směru ovšem Wolsey selhal, král na něj vydal zatykač, ale Wolsey zemřel dřív, než byl odveden a zavřen do Londýnského Toweru. Po Wolseyho smrti se dostal k moci Thomas Cromwell a začal vykonávat službu pro krále, v níž se dopracoval až na samotného kancléře. Anna dostala to, co si vytoužila, a stala se královnou Anglie.

Hilary Mantel ve své knize používá unikátní způsob vyprávění. Thomas Cromwell není pouze hlavní postavou, ale on sám je i vypravěčem celého příběhu a čtenář vnímá celý příběh Cromwellovými očima. Román je tak mistrně psaný, že se čtenář cítí být příběhem naprosto vtažen do děje. Vidí a vnímá postavy stejně tak, jako je vnímá sám Cromwell, což dodává knize její jedinečnost. Hilary se jednou svěřila novinářům, že když ona sama nahlíží na celý příběh Cromwellovými očima, tak ho zkrátka nemůže oslovovat jako Thomas Cromwell v knize, ale používá prosté označení zájmenem ON a tato speciální technika se poté stala hlavním rysem knihy. Mantel používá v celé knize moderní jazyk, a to z toho důvodu, že angličtina se od dob Tudorovské éry změnila a vyvíjela natolik, že by bylo velice těžké psát i rozumět takovéto angličtině. Autorka sice není historička, ale je velice znalá historie, a aby svou knihu ještě více ozvláštnila, použila kromě angličtiny, ve které je kniha psaná, i další jazyky, které se v té době používaly jako například francouzštinu, italštinu, latinu, ale autorka originálně zakomponovala i velštinu, což bylo velice zajímavé. Občas byl ovšem problém s porozuměním, protože pokud čtenář nemluví danou řečí, tak té určité pasáži nerozumí. Jedná se ale spíše o ozvláštnění a čtenáři neuniká nic z hlavní pointy příběhu. Pokud se jedná o něco důležitého, Mantel samozřejmě překlad zakomponovala.

Hlavním záměrem této bakalářské práce bylo zjistit, zda se autorka řídí historickými fakty, nebo zda se od nich odkloňuje a vytváří vlastní koncept příběhu. Na otázku, jestli chce vyprávět pravdivý příběh, autorka odpověděla, že její úděl je rozvést příběh do hloubky a ukázat jen jednu z možností, jak se tento příběh mohl, ale také nemusel odehrát. Autorka poskytla naprosto nový a fascinující pohled do problematiky života Thomase Cromwella, přesto se však držela skutečných událostí a postav. Mantel mistrně využila historicky zdokumentovaných údajů a dotvořila jimi svoji verzi toho, jak se to celé mohlo odehrát dle její úžasné fantazie. Například je historicky dosvědčené, že Cromwellovy děti zemřely na potivou nemoc, ale žádné další detaily již známy nejsou. Tady začíná práce autorky dotvořit příběh tak, aby oslovil čtenáře, a přitom mu dodat určitý smysl a lidskost. Tímto způsobem autorka dosáhla toho, že kniha je čtivá a zajímavá, ale zároveň se nikterak rapidně neodkloňuje od historie, nabízí jen možnou alternativu, jak se tato nešťastná událost mohla odehrát, ale události popsané v knize si nikdy neprotiřečí s prověřenými fakty. Mantel příběh o *Wolf Hall* nemusela celý vymýšlet, použila skutečné historické události, osobnosti a domyslela si pouze dialogy či možné verze, jak se nám známá historie mohla odehrát. Pospojovala dohromady ty příběhy, které jsou historicky ověřené, a tím vytvořila své mistrovské dílo. Je tedy nutné zdůraznit, že Hilary Mantel má velké znalosti z historie, a nepoužila jedinou postavu, která by nebyla historicky podložená a všechny události, které se v knize odehrávají, jsou historicky podložené a ověřené. Přestože je tedy kniha *Wolf Hall* pouze historickou fikcí, údaje a příběhy v ní se odehrávající jsou natolik historicky akurátní a podložené, že by kniha mohla téměř sloužit jako učebnice.

Poslední kapitola bakalářské práce se zaměřuje na rozbor literárních postav *Wolf Hall*. Přestože nejvýznamnější a neproslavenější reálnou osobou této doby je samotný král Jindřich VIII., hlavním hrdinou příběhu je králův mazaný kancléř, Thomas Cromwell. Thomas Cromwell je nízkého původu, syn prostého kováře bez valných vyhlídek na zářnou budoucnost, proto Hilary Mantel klade veliký důraz na fakt, že pro

Jindřicha VIII. už nebyl důležitý pouze rodokmen, původ a vznešená krev, ale spíše preferoval schopné muže, kteří svou užitečnost dokazují činy, ne pečetí na papíře. Autorka se v rozhovoru svěřila, že nejdřív vybrala svou hlavní postavu, ne dobu, ve které se děj odehrává, a také se přiznala, že se svou hlavní postavou začala velice sympatizovat, což pro autory není příliš dobré a mohlo by to zkreslit její úsudek. Cromwell má v knize velice milou povahu, je to milující otec i manžel a věrný služebník svého pána kardinála Wolseyho. Je to chytrý, schopný člověk a je vykreslen jako velice ošklivý muž. V knize mu jde pouze o dobro svých bližních, ale toto je v kontradikci se skutečností, protože Cromwell byl ve skutečnost bezskrupulózní manipulátor toužící pouze po moci a po penězích.

Thomas Cromwell slouží kardinálu Wolseymu, který je také popsán jako mírumilovný muž víry, jenž touží pouze po tom, aby byl jeho král spokojen a správně vládl. *Wolf Hall* Wolsey je mírumilovný starý muž smířený se svým osudem a sloužící pouze a výhradně Bohu a králi, což ve skutečnosti nebyla pravda, Wolsey sloužil výhradně a exkluzivně pouze sobě a svým záležitostem. Hilary Mantel z těchto dvou postav vytvořila lepší muže, než jakými ve skutečnosti byli. Naopak z postavy Thomase Mora udělala sadistického a fanatického následovníka křesťanské víry, který nechal upálit mnoho lidí, a jehož mysl byla velice omezená, což z historického hlediska není vůbec pravda. Kromě toho, že More následoval svou víru a byl ochoten za ni i zemřít, to byl dobrosrdečný muž, i když je pravda, že co se obhajoby víry týkalo, dokázal být velice nelítostný a krutý. Postava Anny Boleynové je také mírně poupravená. Je pravda, že Anna byla pomstychtivá žena a chtěla se kardinálovi mstít za zničenou možnost dobře se provdat za Henry Percyho, ale rozhodně to nebyla nelidská potvora, jak ji Hilary Mantel popsala. V tomto případě autorka hodně přeháněla ve vykreslování špatných vlastností Anny Boleynové, se záměrem udělat z ní zápornou postavu celé knihy. Ve skutečnosti Anna byla peněz chtivá mladá dáma, ale rozhodně ne tak zlá, jak je reprezentována v románu. Je jisté, že k Jindřichovi chovala jisté city, ale dozajista ne tak silné, jaké Jindřich

choval k ní. Z literárního rozboru hlavních postav tedy vyplývá, že se Hilary Mantel úplně nedržela historických poznatků, které jsou z tudorovské doby dostupné, ale popustila uzdu své fantazie a vykreslila postavy tak, jak uznala za vhodné. Ona sama tvrdí, že to co píše, nemusí být nutně podle skutečných událostí, i když většina z toho je historicky velmi akurátní. Autorka v rozhovoru dala jasně najevo, že chce dát svým čtenářům nový a čerstvý pohled na věc a každý z nich si musí najít svou pravdu a udělat si o knize svůj vlastní názor. Kniha je velice zajímavou verzí příběhu, který je velmi dobře známý, a tudíž i jeho konec není žádným překvapením, ale autorka dokázala tento příběh pojmout tak zajímavým způsobem, že čtenář je překvapen a napnut při četbě této knihy až do úplného konce, i přesto, že ví, jak příběh nakonec skončí.

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