

UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLOMOUCI
FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA

KATEDRA ANGLISTIKY A AMERIKANISTIKY

**Between Narrative and Reality: Hilary Mantel's
Treatment of Thomas Cromwell and the Historical Basis**

Bakalářská práce

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Olomouc 2018

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci na téma “Between Narrative and Reality: Hilary Mantel’s Treatment of Thomas Cromwell and the Historical Basis.” vypracovala samostatně pod odborným dohledem vedoucího práce a uvedla jsem všechny použité podklady a literaturu.

V Olomouci dne.....

Podpis.....

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor PhDr. Libor Práger, Ph. D. for his support, his patience, motivation and immense knowledge. I take this opportunity to express gratitude to all of the Department faculty members for their help and support. I also thank my family for encouragement, support and attention.

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Introduction

The Tudor era is a glorious period in the history of England. In this period enormous changes occurred, changes that shaped the entire nation, starting with the English Reformation, which changed England's religion from Catholicism to Protestantism, and the shifting of power from nobility to parliament, which instigated many other alternations. King Henry VIII stood behind all these novelties, with the help of Thomas Cromwell, who is thought to be the architect of all this enterprise.

Hilary Mantel used the figure of Thomas Cromwell as a main character in her historical novels which are planned as a trilogy. The first novel is called *Wolf Hall*. It was published in 2009 and its sequel *Bring Up the Bodies* in 2012. Both are Man Booker Prize winners, among other prizes. The chairman of the Booker judges, Sir Peter Stothard, called Mantel "the greatest modern English prose write- working today", and said she had "rewritten the book on writing historical fiction".¹

In addition, John Mullan of the Guardian says: "A reader who knows nothing of Hilary Mantel's earlier work will immediately sense the stylistic confidence of *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies*—the sheer verve of those sentences. No British novelist writes such resourceful, delightful prose. Here is a writer who is good enough to persuade us that literary prizes do make sense after all."²

After this success, her increasing number of readers are waiting for the third part of the trilogy, *The Mirror and the Light* to be published. Although *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies* are published rather recently, they have already made their way to

1. Mark Brown, "Hilary Mantel Wins Man Booker Prize for Second Time," *Guardian*, October 16, 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/oct/16/hilary-mantel-wins-booker-prize>.

2. John Mullan, "EL James, JK Rowling, Hilary Mantel... the Women Who Dominated Publishing in 2012," *Guardian*, November 30, 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/nov/30/women-who-dominated-publishing-2012>.

theatre and television. The Royal Shakespeare Company has staged adaptations of both *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies* in London and Broadway, which were nominated for the Tony Awards. In addition, BBC two broadcasted a six-part series of television adaptations of both novels. The series was a huge success. It was nominated for Emmy Awards, and won a prize at the Golden Globe Awards.

The aim of this bachelor thesis is to discuss *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies*, in particular, to explore why Hilary Mantel chose to elevate Thomas Cromwell's figure, and the procedure with which Hilary Mantel manages to alter Cromwell's diabolical figure presented by history through decades to one of a hero. Without altering historical data and truthfully following the sequential order of events, Mantel creates an intriguing and powerful character, which at the same time is tender and caring. Because of this complex character of Cromwell, Mantel's success is enormous. Still, this success did not extend into critical studies.

Even though there is a lack of critical studies on these books, the usage of related works, written in different times, facilitates the discussion. In this thesis, whenever possible, arguments will be supported by quotes from a diverse range of literary and historical sources.

The first chapter discusses why Mantel chose to rehabilitate Cromwell's figure in her novels, and why she slightly deprecates that of Thomas More's. It also discusses how Thomas Cromwell's figure was treated by other writers of history and fiction.

The second chapter deals with Cromwell's childhood, his vicious life, and tries to unravel the impact of violence on his upbringing. It goes on with his travels and his education in Europe, which would later serve him in his accomplishment.

The third chapter deals with his political career, how he learned and used his political craft. This chapter tries to find features of Machiavellian political philosophy and compare Mantel's Cromwell with the real Cromwell. Several Machiavelli's propositions from *The Prince* are used to test Cromwell's political strategies. This chapter is divided into several sub-chapters such that each of Machiavelli's proposition can be analysed separately. The last sub-chapter reveals the findings.

The last chapter discusses Cromwell's relationship with women and Mantel's usage of imagination as a fiction writer. While the real Cromwell's private

life is unknown, this chapter discusses how Mantel imagines and presents Cromwell in his private life in order to build a full picture of his character.

Finally, the conclusion chapter offers explanations and findings for arguments raised and summarizes Mantel's effort in bringing Cromwell's altered character in front of the contemporary reader.

1. Thomas Cromwell's elevation

Hilary Mantel is often criticized, for presenting Thomas Cromwell as a hero, as a compassionate father and husband, while her character of Thomas More is degraded. She has been criticized for being unfair to More's character. While Cromwell loves and respects his wife and all women around him, Mantel's More is nothing alike. He detests his wife, especially for her lack of intelligence.

Lucy Lethbridge, a British author of non-fiction and history books in her magazine article *A Man for this Season* wrote:

We cannot help but ask how the author knows how More or Cromwell treated their wives. Mantel's More is in many ways a more interesting, troubling figure, if a much less attractive one, than the St. Thomas of Catholic devotion, but he is also squeezed here into the role of Cromwell's opposite, and more than once I felt that the imaginative liberties to which a novelist is entitled were being abused by Mantel.³

In her fictional narrative, Mantel chooses to depict these characters in different lights. If she is too sympathetic with Cromwell's character and harsh with More's, as a fiction writer, she has every right to do that. For decades, history has gratified Sir Thomas More and no one doubts his genius and prominence. His writings, especially *Utopia*, speak for themselves. Mantel does not diminish any of his values and merits that history has acknowledged. She stays truthful to history, but fills those gaps, which were left empty by history.

She also responded to critics about this matter. In *History Today* she published an article on More, where she wrote:

In my novel, I showed Cromwell's long fascination with More, his often reluctant sympathy with him. They share a common intellectual background and, if they are divided on one fatal issue, they are united on many. I formed my picture of their relationship from More's own letters. I situate More's

3. Lucy Lethbridge, "A Man for This Season," *Commonweal*, October 23, 2009, <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/node/33442/33442>.

heresy hunting in the context of his time, but I cannot treat it as an aberration, a minor flaw in an otherwise impeccable character. It was at the core of what he did and what he was. He was proud of it and, in the light of his worldview, it made sense. But he conceded neither sincerity nor humanity to those who disagreed with him; he relished the thought of their pain, which he hoped would be prolonged for eternity. In his century or ours, we are entitled to be repelled by this.⁴

Before starting to write about Cromwell, Mantel has done a thorough research on this topic, she has searched the British archives for material. Consequently, she has found flaws and virtues on both men, and she chooses to rehabilitate Cromwell's reputation through her fiction. After all, not only fiction writers, but historians as well, leave their personal impression in their writings. There is huge number of historians that have been writing about Cromwell recently, and each of them brought Cromwell's character in a different light. Each of them has different perception on his persona. Robert Hutchinson in his history book about Thomas Cromwell represents him as "an ambitious and totally corrupt statesman...an opportunistic jack-the lad"⁵ and an "inveterate conspirator"⁶. He goes on calling him a man with "habitual duplicity and ruthless manipulation"⁷. Hutchinson's Cromwell is a man totally barren from other ambitions than his personal benefit. Hutchinson also minimizes every possible profit from separation with Rome and his work with parliament. On the other hand, Tracy Borman, also a history writer, represents a totally different Cromwell from Hutchinson's. In her history book about Thomas Cromwell she says, "Cromwell was capable of intense loyalty, and his service first to Wolsey then the king took precedence over even his most cherished personal ambitions ... The few references to his personal life within contemporary sources hint at a loving husband, father and friend."⁸

4. Hilary Mantel, "Hilary Mantel on Thomas More," *History Today* 65, no. 7 (July 1, 2015): 100, <https://www.historytoday.com/hilary-mantel/hilary-mantel-thomas-more>.

5. Robert Hutchinson, *Thomas Cromwell: The Rise and Fall of Henry VIII's Most Notorious Minister* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2007), 2.

6. Hutchinson, *Thomas Cromwell*, 47.

7. Hutchinson, *Thomas Cromwell*, 135.

8. Borman, *Thomas Cromwell*, 391.

Borman, also points out his achievements in the English parliament, profits from dissolution of monasteries and bringing the God's word to masses "by ensuring that every church held a copy of the English Bible – arguably one of Cromwell's greatest achievements."⁹ Evidently, Borman's perception on Cromwell differs from Hutchinson's, even they both are history writers.

However, not only history and non-fiction writers presented Thomas Cromwell's figure dissimilarly. Fiction as well portrays his character diversely. Shakespeare in his play *King Henry VIII* includes Cromwell as a minor character. Shakespeare's Cromwell is a capable and loyal person, so loyal that when he leaves Cardinal Wolsey in order to be in the king's service, Wolsey gets emotional for losing his services.

CROMWELL: O my lord,
Must I then leave you? Must I needs forgo
So good, so noble, and so true a master?
Bear witness, all that have not hearts of iron,
With what a sorrow Cromwell leaves his lord.
The King shall have my service; but my prayers
For ever and for ever shall be yours.

WOLSEY: Cromwell, I did not think to shed a tear
In all my miseries; but thou hast forc'd me,
Out of thy honest truth, to play the woman.¹⁰

Shakespeare's Cromwell resembles Mantel's Cromwell. He is loyal and compassionate towards his old master. However, another fiction writer Robert Bolt in his play *A Man for All Seasons* presents Cromwell as a devil himself. Arthur Kincaid in his "Study Guide" notes that in Bolt's play it is Cromwell's competence that is stressed, not any moral quality.¹¹

9. Borman, *Thomas Cromwell*, 392.

10. Austin Brereton, *The Stage Shakespeare: King Henry VIII* (1623. London: William Collins, Sons & Co, 1900), 86.

11. Arthur Kincaid, "A Study Guide with Theatrical Emphasis for Robert Bolt's Play *A Man for All Seasons*" (Monograph, University of Pennsylvania, 1990), 25,
https://www.thomasmorestudies.org/docs/Kincaid_Monograph.pdf.

It is a known fact that history has twisted truth during decades, and so does fiction. That is why Mantel has chosen to give this good treatment to her Cromwell and to remove a bit of it from her Thomas More. This suggests that she does it for the sake of her narrative as a modern writer. She perceives faults and values in her own way.

Some critics, one of them is Lucy Lethbridge, connect Mantel's approach to Cromwell and More to religion. They think that she is promoting "New Religion" as opposed to the old one. This opinion is totally unfounded. She did not show her Thomas More as "Saint" but she did not besmirch him either. In her narrative, she values highly cardinal Wolsey's and Catherine of Aragon's character, both devoted Catholics. This suggests that it has to do more with Cromwell's low-birth and More's noble one than with their religious beliefs. She wants to give credits to Cromwell, who from nothing and with enormous obstacles, arrived in the uppermost point. While Thomas More, born in a noble family and educated in a best way possible had his road paved in advance.

2. Walter Cromwell's impact on his son's life

Thomas Cromwell was born in Putney, the son of Walter Cromwell, a blacksmith who owned a brewery as well. That is all what is known from history about Cromwell's early life. Hilary Mantel uses known facts and fills in unknown ones. In *Wolf Hall* she mentions that Thomas Cromwell's mother died early, and his sisters Kat and Beth married. Living alone with his father was a terrible part of his life. Living in the same household with a man who drinks a lot, fights with everyone, always has law issues and on the top of that beats his family members all the time, was unendurable. Mantel starts her narrative with a scene where Walter beats his son almost to death, without any particular reason.

“So now get up!” Walter is roaring down at him, working out where to kick him next. He lifts his head an inch or two, and moves forward, on his belly, trying to do it without exposing his hands, on which Walter enjoys stamping. “What are you, an eel?” his parent asks. He trots backwards, gathers pace, and aims another kick.¹²

This is the moment when Cromwell decides to leave Putney. He believes that Walter beat his mother to death and his sisters were lucky to be married.

While lying on the ground, and bleeding on his father's cobbles, he becomes aware that he must escape from home for the sake of his own life. But at that moment he considers that he must stay calm. “Inch by inch. Inch by inch forward. Never mind if he calls you an eel or a worm or a snake. Head down, don't provoke him.”¹³ He does not want to provoke him. He tries to avoid further attacks in order to be able to escape later. He is learning his lesson of perseverance and patience, which is going to serve him well, later in his life. Although he is very young, he is forced to leave his home, he is forced to grow up fast.

12. Hilary Mantel, *Wolf Hall* (London: Fourth Estate, 2009), 3.

13. Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 4.

Crossing the Channel, he starts his new life in Europe. He travels a lot, meets a lot of people and many different cultures. He encounters good and bad, experiences that are going to shape Cromwell into a very capable person.

He fights with the French army in a battle of Garigliano. In Florence, he is fortunate to enter service in the household of a known banker, where he learns a banking craft. In Antwerp, he is a wool merchant. So, when he comes back in England, he comes as a polyglot who has a vast range of knowledge. From arms to the finest materials, such as damask and silk. Mantel says about him:

It is said he knows by heart the entire New Testament in Latin... He can draft a contract, train a falcon, draw a map, stop a street fight, furnish a house and fix a jury. He will quote you a nice point in the old authors, from Plato to Plautus and back again. He knows new poetry, and can say it in Italian. He works all hours, first up and last to bed.¹⁴

Mantel tries to point out the fact that Cromwell became this accomplished man without anyone's help. His only help was his courage to escape from his father, and his ambition to achieve something in his life. He is a self-made man, who emerges from the lowest classes to become the closest aid and the most capable minister of King Henry VIII.

Although Mantel exaggerates his number of skills in order to indicate Cromwell's huge success, history suggests similar facts. Alvaro Silva in his review of Robert Hutchinson's history book wrote about Cromwell: "The Cromwell's years were few but among the most crucial in England. Thomas Cromwell came from nothing and got everything. He dominated every aspect of government and English life."¹⁵

Historians for decades, inexplicably, presented Thomas Cromwell as a villain but they were also obliged to admit his great role on reshaping the monarchy. Mantel tries in her narrative to fill in all gaps left blank by history, and give Cromwell's character his tribute. In one of her interviews she states:

Thomas Cromwell had really fallen victim to Robert Bolt and *A Man for All Seasons*, and we see him emerge in a very bad light. Even though I would

14. Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 31.

15. Alvaro Silva, "Robert Hutchinson's *Thomas Cromwell: The Rise and Fall of Henry VIII's Most Notorious Minister*," *Moreana* 47, no. 179-180 (June 2010): 249–252, <https://www.eupublishing.com/doi/abs/10.3366/more.2010.47.1-2.18>.

say there can be other ways of thinking, my interpretations are valid; they're not plucked out of the air... He was a ruthless man, but no more so than other politicians of his era. And he had a number of good qualities that I think tended to be buried under a weight of prejudice.¹⁶

Mantel finds it discriminatory for a man who is capable to elevate himself from a low class to the noblest title of England, to be besmirched by history. So, in her narrative, she gives Cromwell's character a different treatment, a different interpretation. Her Cromwell is a courageous boy, who does not submit to his father, but finds his own way from the bottom to the top all by himself.

16. Carole Burns, "Hilary Mantel Talks About Her Cromwell saga Coming to Screen and Stage," *Washington Post*, April 3, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/books/hilary-mantel-talks-about-the-new-masterpiece-series-wolf-hall/2015/04/03/db80198e-d6ee-11e4-8103-fa84725dbf9d_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.13820988d391.

3. Cromwell the politician

After returning from Europe, Hilary Mantel presents her protagonist Thomas Cromwell as the most brilliant politician in England. Cromwell is educated in law and banking in Europe, while in politics, he learns his craft from Cardinal Wolsey, his patron. He does not live in Thomas More's *Utopia*, he lives in a real, rough world of Henry VIII. Cromwell's world is dangerous, and he is aware that it is impossible to survive alone in this world. He needs more than a pair of eyes, more than two ears and he has to be in more places in the same time. That is why he gathers around himself many young, clever and energetic boys. Together with these boys, they try to be flexible and adapt to every situation. Mantel calls him a 'serpent' and goes on describing him and his pragmatic approach to politics, since the time he worked for Cardinal Wolsey. When Duke of Norfolk and Duke of Suffolk come to Wolsey, after he was dismissed as Lord Chancellor, in order to confiscate The Great Seal of England, Mantel introduces her protagonist like this:

He, Cromwell, touched the cardinal's arm. A hurried conference. The cardinal turned back to them, gracious: it appears a written request from the king is necessary; have you one? Oh: careless of you. It requires a lot of face to keep so calm; but then the cardinal has face.

'You want us to ride back to Windsor?' Charles Brandon is incredulous. 'For a piece of paper? When the situation's plain?'

That's like Suffolk; to think the letter of the law is some kind of luxury. He whispers to the cardinal again, and the cardinal says, 'No, I think we'd better tell them, Thomas...not prolong the matter beyond its natural life... My lords, my lawyer here says I can't give you the Seal, written request or not. He says that properly speaking I should only hand it to the Master of the Rolls. So you'd better bring him with you.'¹⁷

Nobody knows if he knew it or if he made it up, but it is obvious that his aim was to buy some time for the cardinal. He knows that in his world, everything can take

17. Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 47–48.

a new turn within 24 hours. Someone's death could reverse the situation. Some changes in European politics or perhaps, the King or Anne Boleyn could have changed their minds, for some reason. He has nothing to lose, so why not exhaust every possibility.

Cromwell's pragmatic approach to politics is not displayed only in Mantel's books. A considerable number of historians wrote about this fact. T.M Parker says, "Cromwell possessed two qualities without which it is hard to see how the Henrician revolution in Church and State relations could have been carried through. He was diligent and methodical to a degree."¹⁸

Some of them go further and discuss Cromwell's ideas to be not only pragmatic, but also inspired by Machiavelli's *The Prince*, a fact that Mantel did not point out in her books. Paul Van Dyke wrote:

The first of these judgements upon Cromwell became prevalent in England during the lifetime of his grandson and continued dominant for many generations. But the image of the martyr suggested by Foxe has been to a great extent replaced by the picture of an unscrupulous adventurer, loving chiefly the profits of power, the English disciple of Machiavelli, flattering the ideals of his age while he sneered at them, cruel, treacherous, and even when he sought great ends, pursuing them by means baser than those generally used by his contemporaries.¹⁹

Even in Tudor times there are to be found contradictory writings about this matter. While John Foxe lists him in his *Book of Martyrs*, others called him a disciple of Machiavelli. According to Van Dyke, some of the portrayals of Cromwell were biased.²⁰ Mantel chooses to detach Cromwell's character from Machiavelli, she wants to present her character as a pragmatic one but not as someone who attains his goals in indecent ways. She has every right to do it, not only because she is a fiction writer but also because there are not sufficient facts that would prove Cromwell a Machiavellian.

18. T.M. Parker, "Was Thomas Cromwell a Machiavellian?" *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 1, no. 1 (April 1950): 63–75.

19. Paul Van Dyke, "Reginald Pole and Thomas Cromwell: An Examination of the *Apologia Ad Carolum Quintum*," *American Historical Review* 9, no. 4 (July 1904): 696–724, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1834095>.

20. Paul Van Dyke, "Reginald Pole and Thomas Cromwell," 696.

3.1. Machiavelli

Machiavelli's *The Prince* begins with a dedication to Lorenzo de Medici, in which he offers his knowledge to the prince in exchange of some favor. Machiavelli states:

Those who strive to obtain the good graces of a prince are accustomed to come before him with such things as they hold most precious, or in which they see him take most delight; whence one often sees horses, arms, cloth of gold, precious stones, and similar ornaments presented to princes, worthy of their greatness. Desiring therefore to present myself to your Magnificence with some testimony of my devotion towards you, I have not found among my possessions anything which I hold more dear than, or value so much as, the knowledge of the actions of great men, acquired by long experience in contemporary affairs, and a continual study of antiquity; which, having reflected upon it with great and prolonged diligence, I now send, digested into a little volume, to your Magnificence.²¹

Same as Machiavelli, Thomas Cromwell offers his knowledge, initially to Cardinal Wolsey, and then to the king himself, apparently in return of favors. Even though his business was flourishing, being in contact with powerful people it grew much more. But real favors for him were his posts and his title – Earl of Essex. In this initial point, the resemblance between Cromwell and Machiavelli is obvious, nevertheless Mantel does not indicate it. She does not want to share his credits with no one else. She is determined to display him as a unique man, incomparable with anyone. She talks a lot about his readings, about his new books arriving frequently from Europe in secret ways, but she does not mention any of it, apart from Tyndale's Bible. She tells the reader that whenever Cromwell is confused or needs guidance, he seeks his dead patron cardinal Wolsey's advice. He asks himself what would the cardinal do if he was in his position. So, for Cromwell's skills, only the

21. Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. W.K. Marriot (1532. London: David Campbell, 1992), 1.

cardinal gets some credits, no one else. In Mantel's eyes, he is a self-made man. His experience was his best teacher.

On the other hand, Tracy Borman in her book about Thomas Cromwell includes letters that were written to him, letters indicating that Cromwell studied hard. "Coverdale had written to Cromwell around 1527, possibly earlier, asking for books to help advance his studies, and praising Cromwell 'for the fervent zeal, that you have to vertu and godly study.'"²² – wrote Borman.

Mantel in this point stays truthful to history, Cromwell's education is her primary tool to build his character. Thus, it is not only his life experience, his childhood, his flexibility but also his devotion to reading and life-long education that made him such a brilliant politician.

3.2. Do not believe in fortune

Machiavelli did not believe in fortune, he said that "he who has relied least in fortune is established the strongest."²³ He was talking about the princes who relied in their own resources and strength. In the same way Mantel's Cromwell is not the man waiting for miracles to happen for his king. His plans are equipped with several exits in case something unexpected happens. He does not rely only on plan A or B, his list of letters is much longer. He negotiates with the French, he negotiates with the Emperor, through ambassador Chapuys, he does not close doors to anyone, but he never believes them, never relies on them. He does not even rely on his Queen Anne. For him, she is replaceable, as was Catherine of Aragon. Mantel tells us how shocked Anne was, when she found her death to be mentioned in one of the bills written by Cromwell. But he calmly explains, writes Mantel: "I can't exclude the event," he says. "Parliament can do anything, madam, except what is against nature."²⁴

Cromwell is precautionous, he does not want to leave anything in the hands of fate, and he is paving the road in several directions for his plan to arrive in the chosen

22. Tracy Borman, *Thomas Cromwell: The Untold Story of Henry VIII's Most Faithful Servant* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2014), 132.

23. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 23.

24. Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 573.

destination. Whereas Mantel's Cromwell does not leave anything in the hands of fate, the real Cromwell was partially a victim of fate. He made the biggest mistakes in his most unpropitious time of his career. He wrote some apologizing letters to the king, but Henry did not respond. Marilee Hanson wrote in Cromwell's biography: "Henry who was surrounded by Cromwell's enemies and – more significantly – newly infatuated with Norfolk's niece, Catherine Howard, would hear nothing."²⁵

Thus, it was fatal for Cromwell that, when he needed desperately to rely on his king, Henry was distracted with his new love affair. And what is more ironic, this new girl was a member of Howard family, the greatest enemy of Cromwell.

3.3. Multiple changes

In order to accomplish what Wolsey failed to do, Cromwell undertakes an enormous enterprise. He introduces a plan which will satisfy his Kings appetites in several levels. When his plan concluded, not only that Henry attained his primary wish, married Anne Boleyn, but also, he increased the possibility to secure a male heir to his throne. Consequences of this plan were not simply in family affairs, this led to the separation from Rome, which in short term filled the king's coffers and in the long term created the Church of England as it exists today. While Mantel in her books gives more significance to family affairs and places the king's love affairs in the first place, history gives more importance to the consequences. In Thomas Cromwell's biography it is written:

One will note that most of the 'accomplishments' were motivated by financial need. Like his predecessors in government ministry, Cromwell needed to provide secure and regular income. This alone necessitated an assault on the church's wealth. Cromwell also developed a novel, and very unpopular idea – in the past, taxes were created to support warfare; in 1534, he developed a new tax. Its basis? The king's maintenance of peace. These

25. Marilee Hanson, "Thomas Cromwell: Facts and Biography Information," English History. net, accessed April 5, 2018, <https://englishhistory.net/tudor/thomas-cromwell/>.

measures did not help his reputation but, by 1547, had brought nearly two million pounds to Henry's treasury.²⁶

It is obvious that Mantel's Cromwell is way much humbler than Cromwell who is to be found in many historic researches. But, both of them digress from Machiavelli's principles in this point, who says, "It is enough to have destroyed the family of the prince ... preserving in other things the old conditions, and not being unlike in customs, people will live quietly."²⁷

So, Cromwell not only managed to replace a beloved queen Katherine of Aragon, but he brought many changes to the English life in a very short time, changes that not only the king's subjects, but also the king himself couldn't grasp easily.

When Cromwell started to work for the king, according to both history and Mantel, he found England divided into earldoms and dukedoms, and people who lived there, followed their earl or duke and not necessarily the king. For Cromwell, who came from the lowest class of the English society, this was unacceptable. Maybe he was jealous because he had no title, or he could not stand anymore the everyday insults from English nobility reminding him that he was no one. However, he found a way to weaken them, he knew that almost all of them had huge debts, and he was in great relationship with their creditors. In his visit to Harry Percy- earl of Northumberland, in *Wolf Hall* Cromwell threatens Percy:

You hold your earldom from the king. Your task is to secure the north. Percys and Howards between them defend us against Scotland. Now suppose Percy cannot do it. Your men will not fight for a kind word—

'They are my tenants, it is their duty to fight.'

'But my lord, they need supply, they need provision, they need arms, they need walls and forts in good repair. If you cannot ensure these things you are worse than useless. The king will take your title away, and your land, and your castles...

'He will not. He respects ancient titles. All ancient rights.'

'Then let's say I will.' Let's say I will rip your life apart. Me and my banker friends.²⁸

26. Hanson, "Thomas Cromwell: Facts & Biography Information."

27. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 21.

28. Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 378.

Cromwell was aware that king respected highly ancient titles, that is why he started with these particular earls and dukes with whom the king had bad relationship, in this case with Percy, who had a secret marriage contract with Anne Boleyn. Later, in a same way proceeded with monasteries. Mantel in her books deals only briefly with this topic but in other historical books, the shifting of power from nobility to parliament is of great importance. This shift meant changing the whole system of government. In an autobiography of Thomas Cromwell, Hanson says:

In the 1530s, he had instituted reforms of the English government which earned enmity from the nobility. Cromwell recognized the basic inefficiency of feudal government and, from it, struggled to create a more logical system. Instead of offices held solely because of birth, he wanted trained servants with expertise in their field. He built a bureaucracy of professionals outside the royal household. He began the first era of parliamentary control of England, using the institution to dissolve the monasteries which made up a quarter of all arable land and validate his other decisions.²⁹

Apparently, Mantel on this matter stayed truthful to historical facts. She does not elaborate it deeper but from time to time the reader is informed about the hard work, done by Cromwell and his boys—Rafe Sadler, Richard Cromwell, Thomas Wriothesley and Richard Riche.

This idea of reformation, from feudal to parliamentarian government, is to be found in Machiavelli's *The Prince*. In his fourth chapter, Machiavelli talks about two types of governments and states:

I answer that the principalities of which one has record are found to be governed in two different ways; either by a prince, with a body of servants, who assist him to govern the kingdom as ministers by his favour and permission; or by a prince and barons, who hold that dignity by antiquity of blood and not by the grace of the prince. Such barons have states and their own subjects, who recognize them as lords and hold them in natural affection. Those states that are governed by a prince and his servants hold their prince in more consideration, because in all the country there is no one who is recognized as superior to him, and if they yield obedience to another

29. Hanson, "Thomas Cromwell: Facts & Biography Information."

they do it as to a minister and official, and they do not bear him any particular affection.³⁰

It is important to highlight the fact that Machiavelli prefers ministers to barons in the same way as did the real Thomas Cromwell and Mantel's Cromwell. The appointed minister is very likely chosen among professionals while a baron was fortunate to inherit the title, which did not include necessarily competence. Mantel draws special attention to this fact in both her novels.

3.4. Surrounded by intelligence

Among Cromwell's crafts Mantel depicts his ability to choose the right people in the right position. Rafe Sadler and Richard Cromwell were raised and taught by him and consequently they were prepared for any vacant position. They were almost like him, masters of many skills. On the other hand, Audley is perfect as a Lord Chancellor. Cromwell could have been in his place, but he says that "Audley is better than me in that position, Audley is a prudent lawyer who can sift a sentence like a cook sifting a sack of rice for grit. An eloquent speaker, he is tenacious of a point, and devoted to his career."³¹

He knows that as a Lord Chancellor, he would have limited access to some matters that are important to him, while with his new title of Master Secretary, a title that did not exist before, he is more flexible.

He keeps Thomas Wriothesley, clerk of the Signet, very close to himself, even though he knows that Wriothesley works for his enemy, Stephen Gardiner. He saw Wriothesley's potential and he wants to use it.

In Borman's book, *The Spanish Chronicle* describes Wriothesley as "one of the wisest men in the kingdom."³² And Borman herself goes on saying, "He was in short, a useful man to know – although not one to trust entirely. Nevertheless, Cromwell came to appreciate his intelligence and diligence, and during the years

30. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 17.

31. Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 432.

32. Borman, *Thomas Cromwell*, 59.

ahead he employed him on a number of increasingly important missions, both at home and abroad.”³³

While Borman bows down to Wriothesley, Mantel mocks his character by naming him “Call Me”. Nevertheless, she does not underestimate his skills. Looking through the list of the officials that worked for Cromwell, Mantel stays truthful to historical facts and evaluates them as did historians before her. The only difference to be found is that Mantel keeps Cromwell on the top of her list, while history remains more “objective.”

Going back again to Machiavelli, in his twenty-second chapter – Concerning the Secretaries of Princes he says:

The choice of servants is of no little importance to a prince, and they are good or not according to the discrimination of the prince. And the first opinion which one forms of a prince, and of his understanding, is by observing the men he has around him; and when they are capable and faithful he may always be considered wise, because he has known how to recognize the capable and keep them faithful. But when they are otherwise one cannot form a good opinion of him, for the prime error which he made was in choosing them.³⁴

Undoubtedly, the real Cromwell and Mantel’s Cromwell would have agreed with Machiavelli in this point. In both cases, he gathered around himself highly-valued individuals, not only in positions as the king’s servants but even guests at his house were chosen carefully. He also changed the entire crew of nobility which was in close friendship with the king.

3.5. A self-made man

Mantel’s intentions to display Thomas Cromwell as the mastermind of the Henrician era as opposed to historians, which never rendered enough for a personality who was possibly the most distinguished politician of the era, are based on historical facts. Moreover, her intention to draw his character as a self-made man is evident. She does not want to associate him with anyone. Cromwell’s merits are

33. Borman, *Thomas Cromwell*, 59.

34. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 107.

only his. Perhaps, she is right to do so, because in Cromwell's time there were plenty of books that dealt with the same topic as Machiavelli's *The Prince*. Marsilius of Padua wrote *The Defender of the Peace* in 1324, then Desiderius Erasmus wrote his *Education of a Christian Prince* in 1516 and so many other books that were universally called "mirrors of princes". Patrick Coby in his book *Thomas Cromwell* argues about this topic, "Cromwell found his end in the controversies of the day, but he deepened his understanding through study of a fourteenth century political philosopher named Marsilius of Padua, author of *Defender of the Peace*."³⁵

Among historians and biographers, there are to be found several different opinions that link Cromwell's ideas with different political philosophies. Machiavelli's political philosophy dominates among the others, which is interesting because of the fact, that *The Prince* was published in 1532, whereas, Cromwell had instituted the governmental reforms in 1530. Coby points out that he could have had a copy of the manuscript, which appears to have been distributed in 1513, a fact which is not to be excluded but also not to be believed.³⁶ Thus, Mantel in absence of proven facts, wisely has chosen to present Thomas Cromwell as a self-made man, who read a lot and gathered wisdom from everywhere. To be pragmatic does not necessarily mean to be Machiavellian. Even Machiavelli admits in *The Prince* that many of his ideas were written by others before him.³⁷

35. Patrick Coby, *Thomas Cromwell: Machiavellian Statecraft and the English Reformation* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 16.

36. Patrick Coby, *Thomas Cromwell*, 31.

37. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 1.

4. Cromwell and women

A great part of Mantel's books covers Cromwell's relationship with women. Mantel reveals his tender side, so tender is her Cromwell that it is impossible that a man like him will later behead hundreds of people. While historians have not had the privilege to dwell on Cromwell's tender aspects, Mantel uses her freedom as a fiction writer in this part. She not only reveals a softer part of Cromwell's heart and his peculiar taste for women, but she also gives the reader the pleasure of a *tete-a-tete* dialogues between Cromwell and women. It is impossible to compare him with the real Cromwell because there are no records on this topic, but it is worth trying to discuss it, because this is the part where Hilary Mantel unhooks her character from history. Larissa MacFarquhar in *The Dead are Real*, says about Mantel:

One of the things she'd always found attractive about the Henry story was that there was so much in it about women. No wives, no story. One of Cromwell's advantages at court was that he did not underestimate women—neither their usefulness as informants nor their cunning as enemies.

“Cromwell, you don't talk to women, do you? I mean, what would be the topic?”

This was always a problem with historical fiction, if you liked to stick closely to the record: there was very little information about women, on the whole, but if you wrote a novel without them it seemed off-kilter.³⁸

She stays truthful to history throughout the novel, but there are also spaces, that are totally unexplored by historians in which she uses to pour her imagination, to give another possible way to look at things and deliberately, in these free spaces, she tries to reshape Cromwell's character, the part of his character that remained untouched by history.

38. Larissa MacFarquhar, “The Dead Are Real,” *New Yorker*, October 15, 2012, 46–57, <http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=4&sid=1787c508-31cb-49ce-a94f-c1ea4c91f527%40ssionmgr4006&bdata=Jmxhbmc9Y3Mmc2l0ZT1laG9zdC1saXZl#AN=82680294&db=asn>.

4.1. Cromwell's wife

Although he marries Liz Wykys as an arrangement of a moment, a practice that was common in 1500's, Cromwell in Mantel's narrative grows to love her and respect her. He does not want her to work hard. He brings servants at their home at Austin Friars. He also wants her to look good, to look like an upper-class lady. When he sees her with her hair pushed under a linen cap and her sleeves turned back, he laughs and says to her: "You look like a baker's wife."³⁹ On the top of that, he discusses with her, matters which Liz is able to understand, treating her as an equal to himself. He asks her if he ever made her cry. "Only with laughter" she says.⁴⁰ After her death, he misses her. He does not marry anymore. After all, Liz is not a thing, easily to be replaced.

On the other hand, history tells that the life of women in that era was far harder. Trueman wrote, "The law gave a husband full rights over his wife. She effectively became his property... Wife beating was common and the logic of Tudor England was that the wife would have provoked her husband into beating her and if she had behaved properly, he would not have beaten her."⁴¹

Though it was common for women to be mistreated by men as Trueman suggests, there must have been exceptions as well. Mantel's Cromwell fits into these exceptions. Mantel gives to her Cromwell attributions of a modern man. She treats him as a contemporary of herself. Her Cromwell does not mistreat his wife, he loves her, respects her, cares for her. Liz is not treated as a property, but as a modern wife should be treated nowadays.

4.2. Cromwell's sister-in-law

In *Wolf Hall*, another important woman in Cromwell's life after his wife's death is his sister-in-law, Johane Williamson. Mantel describes Cromwell as a great

39. Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 44.

40. Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 92.

41. C. N. Trueman, "Women in Tudor Time," History Learning Site, accessed April 22, 2018, <https://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/tudor-england/women-in-tudor-england/>.

lover, a caring one. He gives Johane the rarest gifts and treats her the same way he treated his wife Liz. Although this relationship is considered incest, Mantel manages to conceal it with her pen and treats it as a beautiful romance. Johane hopes that if the king's case could be solved, maybe there is some hope for them too. The king deals with the same difficulty, as to how he can marry Lady Anne when her sister Mary was in his bed. Cromwell is doing everything, consulting a learned body of rabbis who can interpret ancient texts, and they say that in the king's case there is no incest, because the king was not married to Anne Boleyn's sister. He is aware that in his own case, interpretations of ancient texts– the Divines are useless.⁴²

Cromwell has been married to Johane's sister, The Divines cannot help them, either does Mantel. She conceals this incest with a lot of passion and embellishes it with innocence, but she does not want to change the facts. She is satisfied with this short romance, and she treats it in a modern way. She parts them as friends.

Going back to sixteenth century this could be the greatest sin, worse than murdering someone. Sex was supposed to happen solely between married couples and it served to produce heirs. For an act like this, adultery, "women could have been burned at the stake", says Trueman.⁴³

But Mantel breaks the rules of the era, as did many, back in time. To make her narrative more intriguing, she chooses Liz's sister, Johane as a lover, when she could choose anyone else. With Johane in this relationship, there is incest, but also with her resemblance to Liz, there comes some justification for Cromwell's deed. Mantel does not cross her limits to change facts, but her imagination has no limits.

4.3. Queen Anne Boleyn

Cromwell's relationships in *Wolf Hall* do not end with his sister-in-law, he builds affinities with lots of women in the court, but these relationships remain purely platonic. First comes Lady Anne. Mantel describes their relationship as one that is of interest. They both serve each other as ladder, to reach as high as they can. Anne uses his skills to become queen, while Cromwell uses King's love for her, to become himself. "A world where Anne can be queen is a world where Cromwell

42. Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 307.

43. Trueman, "Women in Tudor England."

can be Cromwell.⁴⁴ There is a strange kind of attraction and repulsion between them. Mantel does not elaborate Anne's feelings towards him, but she shows what is inside Cromwell's mind, how he feels when they are alone. She states:

Anne is in the gallery beside him. She is wearing a dark red gown of figured damask, so heavy that her tiny white shoulders seem to droop inside it. Sometimes – in a kind of fellowship of the imagination – he imagines resting his hand upon her shoulder and following with his thumb the scooped hollow between her collarbone and her throat; imagines with his forefinger tracking the line of her breast as it swells above her bodice, as a child follows a line of print.

She turns her head and half-smiles.⁴⁵

Cromwell is attracted to her, but this attraction must remain secret, otherwise he would be in danger. He is attracted to forbidden women, first his wife's sister, then the king's lover. Mantel's imagination makes him a provocative character, while history shows us a tedious one. Anne Barnhill wrote about their relationship, "Anne and her faction preferred the New Religion" and "Thomas Cromwell, the King's chief minister and the man responsible for Henry's marriage to Anne, was a reformer as was his patron, Queen Anne. He believed in the New Religion and he also wanted to reform the way things were run in Henry's houses."⁴⁶

According to Barnhill their relationship was not only based on interest and using each other, they also shared the same theological views. She holds Cromwell responsible for making Anne queen, but she also mentions New Religion and dissolution of monasteries, to be a cause of great importance besides their own growing in power. She goes further describing their disputes as well:

Queen Anne did not agree with the total dissolution of all monasteries and nunneries. She wanted reform, not complete destruction. The queen understood that many of the poor and sick, orphans and widows, indeed, all those in need, flocked to the open doors of the monasteries for help in time

44. Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 205.

45. Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 366.

46. Anne Barnhill, "The Queen, the King and Thomas Cromwell: Friends to Foes," Anne Boleyn Files, accessed March 21, 2018, <https://www.theanneboleynfiles.com/anne/fall-articles/the-queen-the-king-and-thomas-cromwell-friends-to-foes/>.

of trouble. Not only did they provide a help to these unfortunates, they also kept the country in better shape, with fewer beggars on the streets and fewer ruffians who had been forced to turn to crime to survive. The Queen wished to rid these religious houses of their ‘superstitions’ but she did not wish to see them destroyed. This put her in direct conflict with Master Cromwell.”⁴⁷

Queen opens a dispute with Master Cromwell in a time when Henry’s passion for her was fading. This evidently contributes to her fall, but Mantel spares her Cromwell from this responsibility and addresses it directly to the king. She does this all over her narrative, minimizing and concealing his actions. Mantel shows their relationship as a friendly one, not strictly as religious or business relationship. The disagreement between Cromwell and Anne is minimal as well. She says that he was compelled to fulfill Henry’s wishes.

4.4. Mary Boleyn

Cromwell throughout Mantel’s story has a close relationship with Mary, Anne Boleyn’s sister. Mary’s husband died and she as a widow lost her value in her family. She was in king’s bed before Anne, and because of that fact, she is being mistreated by her family, especially by her sister. Cromwell is again intrigued by forbidden thoughts. Mantel again reveals the animal of his character. He is seduced by the king’s mistress, the queen’s sister, and the most upper-class lady. He dreams big. Although, this dream is initiated by Mary, who is desperate to find a husband and secure her status. She tries to seduce him. Mantel describes her: “Mary is running towards him, her skirts lifted, showing a fine pair of green silk stockings.”⁴⁸

She even offers him marriage. She is clever and sees his potential. She wants a ruffian like him to protect her. She says to him, ““Do you know what I want? I want a husband who upsets them. I want to marry a man who frightens them’.”

There is a sudden light in her blue eyes. An idea has dawned. She rests one delicate finger on his velvet she so admires, and says softly, ‘Don’t ask, don’t get’.”⁴⁹

Cromwell taught her that if she does not ask for things, she does not get them. And she is using his words and offering to marry him, while she is touching his

47. Anne Barnhill, “The Queen, the King and Thomas Cromwell.”

48. Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 135.

49. Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 139.

expensive velvet coat in a seductive manner. But Cromwell is precautious, he knows that it would be a great danger to let himself into this entanglement. “Thomas Howard for an uncle? Thomas Boleyn for a father? The king, in time, for a brother?”⁵⁰ He knows that this is too much to ask, but he can enjoy dreaming, together with the reader. His low-birth can be an obstacle to marry Mary, but not to dream of her. Mantel discloses his longing for Mary when Cromwell says while admiring her beauty, “Oh, Christ, to see her out of here; to take her to somewhere she could forget she is a Boleyn. She asked me once. I failed her. If she asked me again, I would fail her again.”⁵¹

Even though he is infatuated with Mary, he does not let himself to be a victim of his own emotions. Besides the fact that Mary is a Boleyn, she is also a very clever woman. He knows that she may have other intentions apart from finding a ruffian husband. Mantel again points out Cromwell’s judiciousness. He is not ridden by emotions. He is ridden by his pragmatic mind. He remains Mary’s friend until the end, but he does not cross the limits of friendship. His tender heart remains tender towards her, but only within margins set by him.

4.5. Jane Seymour

Mantel continues further with odd relationships. Her Cromwell has some inexplicable feelings for Jane Seymour. She is not beautiful. She is also not clever. But she is very young, unspoiled, pure and innocent. Jane is the daughter of John Seymour from *Wolf Hall*, a noble family but not much respected because of old John Seymour’s scandal with his son’s wife. Maybe it is because of the family scandal, which makes Jane affordable to him, or he is really attracted to her, whichever way, Cromwell’s intentions are very unclear. The only person that notices this affinity of Cromwell towards Jane is Lady Rochford. She says to him that she knows his heart:

‘I know where you have disposed it.’

‘It is more than I know myself.’

50. Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 139.

51. Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 243.

‘That is not uncommon among men. I can tell you who you love. Why do you not ask for her, if you want her? The Seymours are not rich. They will sell you Jane, and be glad of the bargain.’

‘You are mistaken in the nature of my interest. I have young gentlemen in my house, I have wards, their marriages are my business.’

‘Oh, fal la la,’ she says. ‘Sing another song. Tell it to infants in the nursery. Tell it to the House of Commons, you do most usually lie to them. But do not think you can deceive me.’⁵²

Lady Rochford has noticed Cromwell’s affinity with little Jane. Although she is an experienced woman who knows the matters of the heart, she is not a reliable person. She is capable of inventing things. Cromwell never admits his feelings toward Jane, but he never denies them as well. Mantel shows an ambiguous Cromwell in this matter. His son Gregory says to him:

‘They say you liked Jane yourself.’

‘When?’

‘Last year. You liked her last year.’

‘If I did I’ve forgot.’⁵³

His answers are ambiguous. He refuses to admit it to Gregory, but he does not admit to himself as well. It is a very uneasy position, having feelings for a girl as young as his daughter. Though, he is known for his peculiar tastes and his attraction towards forbidden women.

Jane becomes totally unaffordable, the moment the king sets eyes on her. Henry invites her for a walk in the garden and after that Cromwell notices: “The king is wearing an expression he has seen before”⁵⁴ The same expression he wore when he was in love with Lady Anne. Whatever Cromwell’s intentions were, now is too late, Jane is lost forever. “If he had feelings for her, he cannot find traces of it now.”⁵⁵ He would have competed with everyone, but not with Henry. He is well aware how Harry Percy ended up when he tried to compete with the king. Again, his pragmatic behaviour is brought up by Mantel. She states: “He feels he should

52. Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 504.

53. Hilary Mantel, *Bring Up the Bodies* (London: Fourth Estate, 2012), 27.

54. Mantel, *Bring Up the Bodies*, 34.

55. Mantel, *Bring Up the Bodies*, 34.

walk backwards, withdraw, fade back into the night, and leave her in the moment she occupies: looking out into England.”⁵⁶

It is one of the strongest points of Cromwell, the fact that he does not discuss with anyone about himself, about his past and his feelings. Not sharing his feelings with anyone gives him the advantage of extracting himself finely.

4.6. Anselma

Mantel invents another relationship for him. She wants to bring Cromwell to England as an experienced man. Not only in law and business but with women as well. Anselma is the woman he had known back in Antwerp, before he married Liz. He has beautiful memories of her, obviously he loved her. She is like The Queen of Sheba to him. He recollects what they gifted to each other:

Anselma kneeling, creamily naked under her trailing nightgown of green damask, its sheen blackish in candlelight; kneeling before the small silver altarpiece she kept in her room, which was precious to her, she had told him, the most precious thing I own. Excuse me just a moment, she had said to him; she prayed in her own language, now coaxing, now almost threatening, and she must have teased from her silver saints some flicker of grace, or perceived some deflection in their glinting rectitude, because she stood up and turned to him, saying, ‘I’m ready now,’ tugging apart the silk ties of her gown so that he could take her breasts in his hands.⁵⁷

Her gifts to him, must have been very precious, since Cromwell thinks of her very often, especially when he meets Wolsey. Wolsey has a tapestry in a wall which Cromwell admires. “Behind the cardinal, moving a little in the draught, King Solomon bows, his face obscured. The Queen of Sheba – smiling, light-footed – reminds him of the young widow he lodged with when he lived in Antwerp. Since they had shared a bed, should he have married her? In honour, yes. But if he had married Anselma he couldn’t have married Liz; and his children would be different children from the ones he has now.”⁵⁸

56. Mantel, *Bring Up the Bodies*, 35.

57. Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 414.

58. Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 23.

Cromwell gives a very flimsy argumentation about his separation with Anselma. Clearly, Anselma would have been an obstacle for his ambitious plans. Even her precious gifts could have not stopped him from chasing his dreams. Rational men as Cromwell do not drag women with them when they are penniless. By the time he got rich and Liz died, he has send men to investigate for his old love, but it was too late. She is married now. He did not honour her and marry her when she was his. Now he feels that it is too much to ask. He chooses to respect her marriage. While his power in politics and wealth are going in a very desirable direction, his love life is not that fortunate. His lovely wife died. At the court, he is surrounded by prohibited women. Being overly occupied by the king's business, he is always late for love. Mantel tries not to settle him into a relationship because to do so, she interferes within historic facts, which is not her aim. In Cromwell's affairs with women, she presents him as a gentleman. Her Cromwell is a man experienced in female matters. He respects them, either because he was disgusted by his father's treatment of women, or because of his tender heart. His proneness to impossible relationships makes him a more intriguing and charismatic character and show his "unconscious" willingness to aim high. Mantel approaches his character in a modern way, by not being judgemental toward his deeds and his feelings.

Conclusion

This thesis intends to analyze why and how Hilary Mantel manages to bring a new image for Thomas Cromwell. Findings show that Mantel did a remarkable work in the sense of popularity. Her books are bestsellers. However, the lack of critical studies does not suggest the same. Leaving aside the fact that she could not attract enough critical studies, she chose the right moment to publish historical novels, when popularity and interest in old kingdoms and old ways of life is at its highest point. She sets her plot in the Henrician Era because this glorious era is filled with significant changes that occurred and shaped The United Kingdom. She chooses Thomas Cromwell as main character because he is a powerful figure. He emerges from nothing to become the most powerful man after the king. The first chapter answers the question why Mantel decides to bring Cromwell's figure altered and rehabilitated. She wants to show appreciation to Cromwell's figure, who was predisposed to fail but did not fail, to recognize the fact that he is a self-made man, whose effort was multiple comparing to that of Thomas More and other noble figures. Also, this chapter reveals that she is not the only one who portrays Cromwell as a positive character. Thomas Cromwell's figure is a great choice because significant part of his life is unknown. Mantel uses these blank parts of his life and fills them with her imagination without interfering with historical facts. She starts reshaping Cromwell's character from his childhood, the analysis is offered in the second chapter. The impact of ferocity on the early stage of his life leaves traces on his character. He learns to deal with danger. He learns perseverance and patience, which later in his life are going to be his most valuable assets.

Cromwell's travelling in Europe, where he encounters loss and gain, also contributes to his formation. These experiences will help him later to deal with different situations and different people, women, nobility, ambassadors, queens and the king himself. In addition, he masters his craft as a politician with his zealous studying and with Cardinal Wolsey's help. Mantel fulfills her intention to detach him from Machiavelli's political philosophy, a point which this thesis also support. She does this detachment from Machiavelli in order to bring her tender Cromwell closer to the real one. Otherwise, a Cromwell who is Machiavellian and attains his power with dishonest methods, would have been hard to match with Mantel's tender

Cromwell. The comparison and findings suggest that even the real Cromwell is not fact-based Machiavellian.

Cromwell's relationship with women is analyzed in the final chapter. This is an aspect of his character which is totally unknown in history. Mantel uses this aspect and creates Cromwell's new character to rehabilitate the old one, the one known by history. She brings tenderness and charisma to his character. Mantel's Cromwell also has very particular attraction for particular women, which made his character more intriguing. As such, he appeals immensely to the modern reader's requirements.

Hilary Mantel created a character who fits in both worlds, old and modern. While respecting historical facts, she succeeds in bringing her character into the modern and democratic world, where everyone has a chance to be whoever one chooses to be.

Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce si dává za cíl prozkoumat romány *Wolf Hall* a *Bring Up the Bodies* od Hilary Mantelové. Pokusí se zodpovědět, proč se Mantelová rozhodla vyzdvihnout postavu Thomase Cromwella a jakým způsobem dosahuje toho, že tuto postavu, která byla po desetiletí vyobrazována jako d'ábelská, staví do pozice hrdiny.

První kapitola poskytne odpověď na otázku, proč se Mantelová rozhodla postavu Cromwella pozměnit a rehabilitovat. Mantelová se snaží ukázat, jakým způsobem je možné docenit postavu Cromwella, který byl již předem odsouzen k neúspěchu, ale dokázal se ho vyvarovat. První kapitola se rovněž pokusí poukázat na fakt, že Cromwell byl mužem, který se vypracoval sám, a že byl činorodější než Thomas More či jiné dobře situované postavy. Táž kapitola ještě odhalí, že Mantelová není jediná, kdo Cromwella vyobrazuje jako kladnou postavu. Postava Thomase Cromwella se jeví jako výtečná volba, neboť o podstatné části jeho života se nic neví. Mantelová těchto děr využívá a vyplňuje je vlastními představami, aniž by přicházela do konfliktu s dobovými fakty.

Cromwella začíná přetvářet už coby chlapce. Agresivita, s níž se setkal v mládí, ho poznamenala. Učí se, jak se zachovat v nebezpečné situaci. Učí se úpornosti a trpělivosti, což jsou vlastnosti, které se u něj později projeví jako nejvíce doceňované. K formování Cromwellovy osobnosti přispěje i cestování po Evropě, při kterém zažije vzestup i pád. Tyto zkušenosti mu pomohou v následných setkáních s mnohými lidmi, ženami, šlechtou, velvyslanci i samotným králem.

Svou obratnost v politice nabyde svědomitým studiem i přičiněním kardinála Wosleyho. Mantelová dostává svému záměru oprostít vykreslovanou postavu od Machiavelliho politického myšlení. Toto oproštění od Machiavelliho konstruuje tak, aby všechny aspekty Cromwellovy postavy, historicky známé i neznámé, byly vzájemně slučitelné. Jinak by takový Cromwell, který by byl Machiavellistický a dostal by se k moci nečestnými praktikami, byl těžko slučitelný s citlivým Cromwellem Mantelové. Následné, výsledky naznačují, že dostupná fakta dokonce ani skutečného Cromwella z Machiavellismu neusvědčují.

Závěrečná kapitola rozebere Cromwellův vztah k ženám. Jde o stránku jeho osobnosti, která je z historického hlediska naprosto neznámá. Mantelová se zaobírá touto jeho osobnostní stránkou tak, že dává vzniknout neotřelému pojetí jeho osoby, které rehabilituje to původní, historicky známé. Přitýká mu jemnost a charismatičnost. Cromwella v podání Mantelové obzvláště přitahuje jistý typ žen, což dodává jeho osobě na zajímavosti. Takový pak náramně vyhovuje požadavkům moderního čtenářstva.

Hilary Mantelová vykreslila postavu, která zapadá jak do starého, tak do moderního světa. Důsledně se drží historických skutečností a současně ji zavádí do moderního a demokratického světa, kde se každému dostává příležitosti být, kým chce.

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Annotation

Name: Gjurgjeala Tringa

Department: Department of English and American studies

Title of Thesis: Between Narrative and Reality: Hilary Mantel's treatment of
Thomas Cromwell and the Historical basis

Supervisor: PhDr. Libor Práger, Ph. D.

Number of Pages: 43

Number of characters: 69803

Number of attachments: 0

Key words: Hilary Mantel, Thomas Cromwell, character, Machiavelli, the King, Henry VIII, women, power, Thomas More.

Abstract:

This bachelor thesis explores two historical novels written by Hilary Mantel, *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies*. The aim of this thesis is to analyse Mantel's treatment of Cromwell's character. Differences in treatment between Mantel and other history and fiction writers. Reasons, why Mantel chose to rehabilitate Cromwell's figure, and the way how she manages to create this new Cromwell, who is appealing for the modern reader.

Anotace

Autor: Gjurgjeala Tringa

Katedra: Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Název práce: Mezi vyprávěním a realitou: Thomas Cromwell a historická
skutečnost v podání Hilary Mantelové

Vedoucí práce: PhDr. Libor Práger, Ph. D.

Počet stran: 43

Počet znaků: 69803

Počet příloh: 0

Klíčová slova: Hilary Mantelová, Thomas Cromwell, postava, Machiavelli, král, Jindřich VIII, ženy, moc, Thomas More.

Abstrakt:

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá historickými romány *Wolf Hall* a *Bring Up the Bodies* od Hilary Mantelové. Práce si klade za cíl zanalyzovat, jakým způsobem Mantelová pracuje s postavou Thomase Cromwella. Poukazuje na rozdíl mezi tím, jak s uvedenou postavou pracuje Mantelová a jiní historikové a beletristé. Rovněž se snaží odkrýt, proč se Mantelová rozhodla rehabilitovat postavu Cromwella a jak dosáhje tohoto zrození nového Cromwella, který dokáže upoutat pozornost moderního čtenáře.