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RESEARCH PAPER

Shadows of the Past: Memory and the Shaping of History in *Wolf Hall*

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses the interaction between memory and historiography in Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall*, examining how the novel reconstructs Tudor history using the subjective memory of Thomas Cromwell. During the English Reformation, *Wolf Hall* questions the veracity of historical accounts, highlighting the fluidity of memory in constructing personal and collective identity. Qualitative analysis via close reading and thematic interpretation is utilized, in addition to quantitative methods to monitor the repetition of central motifs of memory and historical manipulation. The research indicates that Mantel presents history as a constructed narrative and not an objective fact, illustrating how power and individual recollections shape recorded history. *Wolf Hall* is a space where memory, fiction, and historical record meet to challenge the authenticity of traditional historiography. Thus, the article underscores the idea how historical fiction reconstructs the popular view of history and how the influence of memory on historiography shapes modern interpretations of history.

KEYWORDS Memory, History, Historiography, Constructed Narrative, Cromwell

Introduction

This research article is a discussion on how Hilary Mantel's novel steers memory towards historical documentation to reconstruct the past. This reconstruction shapes the self and also the broader history of Tudor England. This novel is set against the background of the English Reformation and strides a fine line 'truth' of history and fictional narrative, opening up a complex play of memory, interpretation, and historiography. Through the rise of Thomas Cromwell in the Tudor court, history is presented as being both personally and collectively remembered, thereby confronting the readers with the evident lack of authenticity in documented history and the biases it carries in historical narratives. This paper intends to assess how Mantel's novel engenders an association between memory fluidity and history reconstruction, portraying the fragility of individual memories with historical documentation in shaping personal identity and the grand historical context of Tudor England.

The narrative thus opens with Cromwell's early life in England, the key events therein being the death of his family and his experiences in Europe, all of which contribute to the imprinting or shaping of a pragmatic worldview and ambition in the youthful Cromwell. And from that point till the fade-out of the novel, Cromwell becomes one of the most trusted advisors to the courtian, that is, Henry VIII himself, and he comes to terms with the affairs that were currently ongoing concerning the changes in the political and religious areas of the king, most especially regarding the severance of the Catholic Apostolic Church and starting the Church of England. Central to *Wolf Hall* is

Cromwell's relationship with Henry VIII and the people who surround him, such as the ambitious Queen, whom Cromwell would help marry the king, and the tragic Thomas More, who falls victim to Cromwell's political machinations. Intelligence, pragmatic ways, and ruthlessness are all reflected on by Cromwell as he grapples with other people's societal issues, often paying scant regard as to how these might take their toll on the lives of those who are grounds for opposition to his ascendance.

Anne Boleyn, the second wife of Henry VIII, is the mother of Queen Elizabeth I. She is shown as very ambitious to be queen with political awareness and extremely fierce. Anne is one of the key characters of the story placed under her relationship with Henry, which eventually results in the condition for the English Reformation, the Church of England, and all that follows thereafter. Her political ambassadors are part of the plot leading to her role in Henry's departure from Rome and eventually by her downfall, as well. Anne is ambitious, vibrant, but tragically she does not give Henry a son, and he cannot avoid execution.

Catherine of Aragon was the first wife of Henry VIII, a central figure in the early chapters of *Wolf Hall*. She is portrayed as a devout, dignified and determined woman who fiercely defends her marriage to Henry despite his desire for divorce. Catherine's inability to produce a male heir leads Henry to Henry's desire to annul their marriage and marry Anne Boleyn. Catherine's character embodies themes of loyalty, sacrifice, and the role of women in patriarchal society. On her tragic fate as she is cast aside by the king highlights the precarious position of women in the period.

Literature Review

This literature review explores key academic perspectives on *Wolf Hall,* focusing on studies that address themes of memory, historiography and the representation of history in fiction.

Historical Fiction and Memory Studies

Scholars like Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney emphasize the role of the fiction in shaping collective memory. Erll argues that historical fiction serves as a medium for reconstructing and preserving cultural memory in Literature, Film and The Mediality of Cultural Memory. Rigney expands on this by suggesting that fiction can challenge traditional historiography by offering alternative perspectives. Both scholars provide a framework for examining *Wolf Hall* as a site where collective memory is negotiated and reshaping our understanding of Tudor history. Their work contextualizes Mantel's approach to historical fiction as a powerful force in memory-making.

Critics such as John Mullan and Sarah Dillon have analyzed the narrative techniques of Hilary Mantel that specifically incorporated Cromwell's limited perspective to introduce ambiguity into historical 'truths'. This narrative strategy positions Cromwell's memories as a central organizing principle, questioning the reliability of historical accounts. Mullan adds in "The Many Lives of Thomas Cromwell" that Mantel's Cromwell defies traditional portrayals suggesting that history is an interpretive process rather than a fixed record.

Memory-Sculpting Identity

Memory studies often concentrate on individual and collective memories and their impact on identity building. In "History, Memory, and Identity in the Novels of

Hilary Mantel," Lisa Jardine argues that Wolf Hall employs memory in constructing not an individual identity but a national identity, shorthand for collective Tudor memory. Cromwell's recollections, especially the humble beginnings and the relationships, play a role in the construction of a more complicated account of identity than could at once be confined within historical stereotypes. This investigation of identity will be vital in facilitating understanding of how Wolfe Hall employs memory to undermine monolithic historical narratives.

Blurred Fictional Histories

Scholars such as David Loades and Diarmaid MacCulloch, who have devoted most of their academic careers to Tudor history, have noted that historical fiction indeed poses a challenge to traditional historiography. Loades has condemned Mantel for historical inaccuracies, while MacCulloch admires the recreation of the intense atmosphere found in Tudor politics. Both views really raise the tension between historical truth and fictional construction, which can be said to be the main concern of Mantel's writing. This work considers how *Wolf Hall* navigates such issues, on the basis that the novel may open avenues through which to appreciate the idea that history is a subjective construct of memory and interpretation.

Material and Methods

Memory studies and theories of historiography are mobilized to analyze how memory operates in *Wolf Hall* as a narrative mode that reconstructs the past. Important theoretical foundations include Pierre Nora's lieux de mémoire (sites of memory), Paul Ricoeur's narrative memory, and Hayden White's narrative theory in historiography.

Pierre Nora's Sites of Memory

Nora's notion of sites of memory are foundational to understanding how memory works in *Wolf Hall*. Places or symbols where memory crystallizes to let societies concretize their past in specific narratives are what 'sites of memory' refers to. Cromwell himself, in fact, becomes a site of memory in *Wolf Hall,* the one memorialized point of history that enables Mantel to articulate competing forces shaping Cromwell's life and times. Hashtags Having Cromwell focus on memory events illuminates how memory anchors historical identities, even where facts prove hazy.

Ricoeur's Memory in a Narrative

Narrative time and memory are important dimensions of Ricoeur's theory, especially as they are presented in *Memory, History, Forgetting*. According to Ricoeur, memory is in its very nature a kind of narrative-a way of organizing past experiences which will always include subjectivity. Cromwell's memories in *Wolf Hall* work within a narrative framework to convert historical events into personal happenings and to allow Mantel to retell history from the viewpoint of one single, imperfect individual. This narrative memory produces a subjective history where Cromwell's selective memories might mingle with the fixed history of Tudor England.

Hayden White's Narrative Theory on Historiography

In this sense, it is possible to see White's insight that history fundamentally is a narrative construction as the one that forms a method of reading *Wolf Hall* as the history of storytelling. Historical narrative, in the view of White, is not an objective account of

history but rather dependent on rhetorical choices and narrative structures. Mantel's choice of words, structuring, and perspective in the story essentially intertwine these realities, hence making it harder to draw a line between what is an historical fact and what is a narrative invention. White's theories will be very important in understanding how the text by Mantel manages to blur these lines, thus encouraging readers to treat history as a subjective and interpretive process.

By virtue of undertaking qualitative research and the quantitative research methods, this study explores the themes of memory, history and producing the whole pasts in Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall*. The qualitative dimension is focused on deep reading, interpretive analysis of the text and examines how Mantel's narrative techniques in character development and use of memory constructs historical meaning. The quantitative dimension complements its findings by analyzing the frequency and patterns of the key themes and motifs enforced in the text. Thus, these two methods provide a complete picture of how memory and history are imposed in *Wolf Hall* and how they do so in relation to the various historical and political contexts that inform the site of the novel.

The qualitative approach stands at the heart of this study since it allows an internal deep interpretive analysis of the text. It readily lends itself to themes that are heavy and complex, such as memory, history, and identity, as much as it does on literary texts. From there the reader can begin to interpret and provide meaning to the text, particularly by understanding the ways in which Mantel reflects on that interaction between his personal memories and the facts of history.

Close reading is a critical method of qualitative research; this comprises careful scrutiny and detailed analysis of specific extracts of the text. Close reading helps decoding the relevant excerpt and unveil the knotty symbolism, themes, and narrative techniques by Mantel in regard to memory and history. It means understanding how Cromwell's memories condition his understanding of the historical moment and how they inform his actions.

A segment of the text in which Cromwell considers himself, with particular reference to his relations with Anne Boleyn, depicts how personal memories inform his political deeds. By focusing on language and narrative structure as research materials in moments such as these, the use of memory as an instrument for both personal reflection and political maneuvering is discovered.

Thematic analysis is the process of discovering and interpreting themes and patterns in a text. In *Wolf Hall*, memory, power, identity, and historical manipulation are some of the main themes on which the novel revolves. As the thematic continuum is traced, the avenues are opened to understand how Mantel constructs memory as a force rather dynamic in constituting personal and collective history.

The non-linear narrative structure employed by Mantel in *Wolf Hall* affects the way memory is demonstrated within the text. As flashbacks, internal monologues, and jumpy perspectives build a multifaceted yet often subjective perspective on history, this becomes important when time passes-the novel jumps back and forth between the now and then. Hence, narrative analysis scrutinizes those shifts in time and how they serve to show the complexity of memory and influence the retelling of historical events.

The changing narrative between Cromwell's memories of his boyhood and the events of his political career conveys how memory becomes an apparatus for revising the past. Understanding how temporal shift contributes to the making of historical truth is vital for grasping the novel's treatment of history.

As a complementary note, the quantitative method is used to give measurable numbers in pattern, frequency, and relationship within the text along with qualitative research. It covers the reproduction of the major themes, motifs, and even linguistic features that are associated with memory and history and explores how far they have been mingled into the novel.

Quantitative analysis counts the occurrences of such elements within text. To cite an example, the researcher might measure how often words like memory, past, history, power, and forget-as they relate to the novel appear. In turn, this illustrates how a central theme gets emphasized and also how its prominence shifts throughout the narrative.

The frequency analysis of the words memory and history may indicate, in the firstly by mentioning the terms, how often these themes forefront the text and hence narratively renders them important. If memory was recurrent within the first half of the novel, but glances within the latter half, it could suggest a change or shift in focus, or in the way memory is engaged within the narrative.

Pattern recognition is a keyword in quantitative research, with these patterns being recurrent in the particular text, then mapped along with examining how such specific themes depict each in various places in the text as the researcher can finally end up mapping various routes of such themes throughout the narrative.

To investigate passive voice concerning Cromwell's memories, as this might show how he positions himself in relation to events, sometimes it appears as if he is detached from the events; he writes more in some sentences, or it may even show that he is not the agent in creating history.

These two methods thus *combining qualitative and quantitative methods*. Qualitative methods give you an in-depth interpretive analysis of the text, while quantitative methods show how much easier it is to identify patterns and trends in the text that may otherwise be hidden or not immediately obvious through close reading alone. It combines both approaches into a shrill interpretation of the way memory and history come to be represented in *Wolf Hall* and how such very ideas affect narrative structure, characterization, and even the political legacy of the characters.

However; the combination of a thematic analysis (qualitative) and a frequency analysis (quantitative) can be helpful in identifying the fact that memory and manipulation of history are consistently key themes in the novel: thematic analysis will reveal those personal memories of Cromwell's, while frequency analysis will demonstrate just how many times certain memories are alluded to throughout the text.

Results and Discussion

This section is an exploration of how Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall* engages memory and the historical past to inform the historical story. The novel's concentration on Thomas Cromwell and the rise to power in the court of King Henry VIII thus becomes a unique vantage point from which to view how the making of history is conditioned by subjective memory, dynamics of power, and interpretations of past events.

Mantel (2009) highlights Thomas Cromwell's use of memory as both a survival tool and a means of exerting control within the unpredictable political landscape of the Tudor court. Cromwell, having acquired a structured memory system during his time in Italy, demonstrates an extraordinary capacity to store and recall vast amounts of information. This skill enables him to maneuver through the treacherous power dynamics of Henry VIII's England. Mantel alludes to the ancient story of Simonides, a Greek poet who, as Cicero tells us, survived a catastrophe by recalling exactly where individuals were sitting, thus creating the art of memory. Mantel states, "It is Cicero who tells us this story. He tells us how, on that day, Simonides invented the art of memory" (Mantel, *Wolf Hall,* p.107).The appeal to Simonides connects memory with power and destiny, stressing that memory is not a passive recollection of the past but an active force in determining the future.

History is made by the powerful, and constructed for political purposes and not an accurate truth. This is reflected in the character of Thomas Cromwell, both real and fictional, who understands the manipulation of history to uphold authority. His distrust of the historical records written by monks emphasizes this theme: "For hundreds of years the monks have held the pen, and what they have written is what we take to be our history, but I do not believe it really is. I believe they have suppressed the history they don't like, and written one that is favourable to Rome" (Mantel, *Wolf Hall,* p.146). This text highlights one of the central themes of the novel—that history is not an impartial or unchangeable record of the past but a manufactured and frequently selective one, framed by those with the authority to author it.

A consistent motif in *Wolf Hall* is the manner in which the past continues to inform the present, most notably through memory and its impact on political choices. King Henry VIII, with all his great power, is tormented by his dead brother, Arthur, whose memory haunts him as a personal and political demon. Henry's dream about Arthur makes clear his underlying guilt and insecurity: "In my dream he stood and looked at me. He looked sad, so sad. He seemed to say I stood in his place. He seemed to say, you have taken my kingdom, and you have used my wife. He has come back to make me ashamed " (Mantel, *Wolf Hall,* p.180).This shows how memory, be it real or imagined, influences not only Henry's own conscience but also the path of English history. Henry's remembrance of Arthur, while subjective and potentially biased, drives his insecurity regarding the validity of his rule and marriage to Katherine of Aragon. His conviction that he has replaced his brother is driving his desperation for a son, propelling him toward the scandalous annulment that will eventually bring England into schism from Rome. Thus, *Wolf Hall* illustrates that history is not only written by rulers but is also structured by their own recollections, anxieties, and wishes. Henry's experience of the past informs his political decisions, illuminating the ways that personal memory can serve as an engine for historical change.

Cromwell himself is in the business of rewriting history, whether by managing the narrative surrounding Wolsey's downfall or by assisting Henry in rationalizing his breach with Rome. His approach to the past is pragmatic—what is important is not what occurred, but what others believe occurred. It can be seen through his counseling to Henry of record from history: "Henry says, 'Our history … As you know, I am gathering evidence. Manuscripts. Opinions'" (Mantel, *Wolf Hall,* p.146). It signifies Cromwell's awareness of how history can change and its interpretation is one power.

Memory is, in *Wolf Hall,* a tool of survival and a tool of history-making, evidenced through the figure of Thomas Cromwell. His unparalleled skill at remembering and

twisting facts is key to his ascension within Tudor court, enabling him to navigate its tempestuous political currents with accuracy, "In Italy he learned a memory system, so he can remember everything: every stage of how he got here" (Mantel, *Wolf Hall,* p.106).This quote highlights Cromwell's expertise in memory skills, which not only help him survive but also make him an architect of history instead of a passive observer.

In *Wolf Hall,* Mantel (2009) explores the idea that history is not an objective record of the past but a constructed narrative shaped by those in power. Thomas Cromwell, who rises from humble beginnings to become one of the most influential figures in Henry VIII's court, understands the malleability of history and the ways in which it is rewritten to serve political agendas. His doubt concerning recorded history is clear when he says, "For hundreds of years the monks have held the pen, and what they have written is what we take to be our history, but I do not believe it really is" (Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, p.146). This paragraph emphasizes Cromwell's consciousness that past stories tend to be controlled by power, in line with the main theme of the novel that the past is always rewritten by the keepers of its telling.

In *Wolf Hall,* Mantel (2009) examines the inevitable power of the past over the present, specifically through the idea that history and memory have a continuing grip on people and political processes. This is summarized in the legal maxim Cromwell uses, "You know the lawyers' saying 'Le mort saisit le vif'? The dead grip the living" (Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, p.180). This observation highlights one of the central concerns of the novel—that the past is not just a distant record but an energetic force that conditions decisions, identities, and histories.

Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall* examines the psychological and political terrain of Henry VIII's reign, showing how his fears regarding legitimacy are rooted in his history, especially in his relationship with his dead brother, Arthur. A turning point in the novel captures Henry's troubled unconscious, "In my dream he stood and looked at me. He looked sad, so sad. He seemed to say I stood in his place. He seemed to say, you have taken my kingdom, and you have used my wife" (Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, p.180). This sentence evokes Henry's ongoing terror of being a usurper, usurping a place that belonged rightfully to Arthur, the older Tudor prince. Henry's inheritance of the throne and his union with Catherine of Aragon—Arthur's widow—were both influenced by the early death of his brother. Consequently, Henry's reign is also threatened by the risk that his position is illegitimate before God and the face of history. The dream is a physical manifestation of these anxieties in which Arthur is represented as being unhappy, accusing Henry of taking away both his kingdom and his bride.

"Some say the Tudors transcend this history, bloody and demonic as it is" (Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, p.51). This quote speaks to the Tudor dynasty's attempts to get above its blood-soaked origins and redefine itself as one of divine right and predestined rule. The Tudors, most notably Henry VII and Henry VIII, had to overcome the test of establishing legitimacy following the Wars of the Roses, a fierce war that had raised doubts concerning their rightful ascendancy to power. In a bid to settle their dynasty firmly, they explicitly redefined the past, claiming to be chosen by God to rule while demonizing their detractors.

Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall* examines the concept that history is not static but can be manipulated by the powerful. The novel makes clear the ways in which even the past—what is ostensibly cemented in place—still remains open to reinterpretation and manipulation, "We think time cannot touch the dead, but it touches their monuments"

(Mantel, *Wolf Hall,* p.415). This quote implies that although the dead themselves do not change, their legacy, memory, and perception can change over time. The Tudors, especially Henry VIII and his chief minister Thomas Cromwell, know this all too well. They do not just govern today—they actually remake the past to consolidate their authority and control the future's narrative.

In the treacherous political landscape of Henry VIII's court, where alliances shift and betrayal is commonplace, Cromwell's meticulous memory becomes both his greatest weapon and his most essential defense, "I have a very large ledger. A huge filing system, in which are recorded (under their name, and also under their offence) the details of people who have cut across me" (Mantel, *Wolf Hall,* p.306). This line of dialogue shows us Cromwell's systematic use of power. His 'ledger' is not a list of names—it is a tool of control. By maintaining accurate accounts of those who have done him wrong, he makes sure that he never forgets an insult, a betrayal, or a possible vulnerability that can be used against him. This system enables him to control events, anticipate danger, and exact measured revenge when the time is right.

"To Rafe Sadler his books" (Mantel, *Wolf Hall,* p.100). This is more than a mere gift; it symbolizes Cromwell's wish that his education, experience, and intellectual equipment persist after his own death. His protégé and loyal servant, Rafe Sadler, is the designated recipient of the books, reflecting the passing on of knowledge between generations. Unlike other types of inheritance, books provide something ethereal but effective—the power to influence thought, educate decisions, and maintain an influence even when Cromwell has passed on.

"Some of these images are flat, and you can walk on them. Some are clothed in skin and walk around in a room" (Mantel, *Wolf Hall,* p.144).This is an indication of Cromwell's extremely visual and spatial way of retaining information. His mind works like a huge filing system, where memories come in various forms—some as static pictures, others as living, breathing entities. This mental architecture allows him to recall people, places, and events with striking clarity, enabling him to anticipate threats, manipulate outcomes, and maintain his influence in Henry VIII's volatile court.

"You can't know Albion, he says, unless you can go back before Albion was thought of" (Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, p.68). This indicates that in order to know England—its identity, politics, and monarchs—its history has to be accessed beyond what has been written into the myths and legends that predate it. Albion, Britain's ancient and poetic name, conjures a mythical past earlier than the Tudor dynasty, even earlier than written records. Wolsey's observation points out the way national identity is formed not only by recorded events but also by the myths and opinions that preceded them.

"What is the country for, but to support its prince in his enterprise?" (Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, p.122). This remark summarizes Henry's philosophy—one in which the country is there foremost to serve and maintain its prince's interests. By presenting his choices as naturally connected to the welfare of England, Henry rationalizes his actions, whether they are war, religious turmoil, or the realignment of political authority. This revisionist strategy enables him to redefine military campaigns as chivalrous ventures instead of political or personal gambits.

"Before London was called Lud's Town, it was called New Troy. And we were Trojans" (Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, p.51). This assertion is the continuation of the long British myth that the country originated from the Trojans, namely from Brutus of Troy, a

legendary character who was supposed to have established Britain following the destruction of Troy. The legend, made popular in medieval chronicles, gave English monarchs a magnificent, near-divine pedigree, tying them to one of the most illustrious cultures of the ancient world. Through the use of this legend, the Tudors do not position themselves as just monarchs over a kingdom, but as heirs to an epic and venerable heritage.

"Christophe says to him, 'I wish your old master the cardinal were here to comfort you, sir. He was a comfortable man" (Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, p.387). This is a moment that encapsulates Cromwell's persistent feeling of loss. Even as he becomes more powerful and influential, there is a tacit acknowledgment that Wolsey's departure has created a gap that cannot be replaced. The term "comfortable" not only implies Wolsey's physical presence but also his capacity to offer advice, protection, and reassurance—things that Cromwell, in spite of his own strength, silently yearns for. Wolsey was a world in which Cromwell had a definite purpose, and in Wolsey's absence, Cromwell has to survive court politics by himself, aware of how vulnerable his position is.

"A printing press that can write its own books? A mind that thinks about itself?" (Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, p.408). This is a reflection on the great change occurring during Cromwell's era—the shift from an oral and clerically dominated historical record to one where knowledge, previously dictated by the Church, is increasingly available in the printing press. The question poses both awe and apprehension: if a printing press can generate books on its own and if the human mind can think about itself, then who, finally, has the ultimate control over knowledge.

"He admits that he is 'unable to prevent himself from continuing to wander along these same tracks'" (Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*, p.142). Stevens' inability to break free from his past mirrors the way that nostalgia, though comforting, can also prove inhibiting. He holds fast to his strict ideals of dignity and service, even as the world around him changes. His unwavering allegiance to Lord Darlington—a politician whose political miscalculations have been tarnished—betrays his hesitation to re-examine his previous actions. Likewise, his inability to confront his own repressed emotions, especially towards Miss Kenton, also speaks volumes about how his adherence to outmoded ideals has left him personally unfulfilled.

"Now that's the way his lordship deserves to be remembered" (Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day,* p.158). Stevens decides to remember Lord Darlington in a manner that preserves his dignity, disregarding the ethical nuances of his employer's political decisions. In so doing, he protects himself from accepting that his decades of unshakeable devotion were spent on a man whose actions were, in retrospect, profoundly flawed. This selective remembering even carries over to his relationship with Miss Kenton—he remembers his interactions with her fondly but refuses to see the emotional intensity of what he lost. His repression of the memories keeps him from fully acknowledging the possibilities of love and joy that he lost out on.

"Democracy is something for a bygone era" (Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*, p.134). Lord Darlington's rejection of democracy is symptomatic of an aristocratic worldview colored by privilege and a yearning for hierarchical order. His support for appeasement policy prior to World War II, motivated by a faith in diplomacy with Nazi Germany, is illustrative of the aristocracy's refusal to accept modern political reality. Stevens, being Darlington's butler, soaks up and internalizes such views

unquestioningly, affirming his status as an outsider viewing history but not playing a part in it.

Conclusion

In *Wolf Hall*, the relationship between memory, history, and personal identity is captured by Hilary Mantel through Thomas Cromwell, whose rise and fall in Tudor England are shaped not merely by politics but from within as he recalls his past and chooses to reinterpret his remembrances. Memory becomes fluid for Cromwell; and that fluidity for 'truth' itself - historical - is what Mantel accomplishes through his challenge of it. I take the same position as Mantel, seeing in her efforts memory as the very principle through which history has come into being or will be amended, chiefly because of character subjectivities. The principle that memory is not static but fluid-and, thus, constantly being reshaped by the individual to serve personal or political ends, more closely matched my perception of how history was manipulated and turned by those in power. In that sense, by stressing the malleability of memory and its relation to the shaping of both personal identity and the historical narrative, she emphasizes the subjectivity of history and of those who write it.

To some extent, taking another view of memory as a potent tool in history reconstruction, in *Wolf Hall* it can be argued that it is for other reasons outside which self-promotion has brought it. Cromwell is depicted in such a way by Mantel that he glances back at his past and memories, making evident the trauma and the resilience that have contributed to him as a figure. The memories of Cromwell will not just be weapons for politicians; they will recall the sacrifices he has made, the battles he has experienced. Unlike this considering memory as straightforward as the tool for reconstructing history, it provides a multilayered tale in which memory humanizes historical characters, making them relatable yet complex. That much adds depth to Cromwell's character, as memories inform not just his political strategies but also his emotional and moral growth. Memory in Mantel becomes quite personal in politics; it shows how often the too far cross in defining history.

Recommendations

One would say that memory is quite a school in reconstruction, actually the one place where I could stand in *Wolf Hall* and argue that it does not exist for self-aggrandizement. Mantel's Cromwell, for example, looks back into his past in such a way that brings out all the traumas and the resilience that shape his character today. The memories of Cromwell would not solely be weapons to politicians; they will also evoke his sacrifices and pain. It provides a multilayered story in which memory humanizes historical characters, making them relatable and yet complex. This adds much depth to Cromwell's character; memories inform not only his political strategies but also his emotional and moral growth. Memory in Mantel is quite personal in politics; it shows how often the too far cross in defining history.

On the flip side, it is clear what Mantel does that goes beyond and does not stop just there at historical reconstruction. Memory is often used to site the personal recollection in and against collective history and the question of authenticity surrounding both; for such an incidence, however, Mantel's Cromwell comes across as acutely and painfully aware of the constructedness of history, and his manipulations of the past reflect the wider political realities of Tudor England where power was often exercised through control over the channels of historical narratives. To challenge the established

norms of narrativization, common sense can be found in this attitude of historical fiction adopted by Mantel; but her text goes beyond that to show the psychological and emotional dimensions of memory. In contrast to more academic approach that hinges on the structural aspects of historical revisionism, Mantel's narrative highlights personal cost incurred in the making of history. By placing memory at the center of her story, she critiques the historical process while also exploring how it affects the lives and identities of those within it, thus adding a human element to her portrayal of history.

Mentally, I agree with Mantel for taking fiction as the means through which one can challenge the established narratives regarding history. But I would also argue that this text goes one step further because it brings in the psychological-emotional aspects of memory. Contrary to my more academic approach focusing on structural aspects of historical revisionism, Mantel tells a tale that brings forth the personal cost of making history. At the heart of her story, therefore, is the human case for the critique of historical processes along with the realization of how these affects those who become part of it.

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