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lady jane grey the nine days queen

A Study of the Dynastic Questions, Religious Reforms, and Unique
Personalities that Influenced her Fate

by Susan Elizabeth Plunkett

Honors Thesis in
the Department of History
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Advisor: Dr. John Rilling

Few stories in fiction or reality were as tragic and coincidental as Lady Jane Grey's. Known as the "nine day's queen", she was forcibly thrust onto the throne of England in 1553 at the age of sixteen years and five months, and replaced by Mary nine days later. A quiet and demure child, her destiny was cruelly manipulated by myriad forces and power-hungry personages, in the pursuit of the throne of England. The uncertainty of dynastic succession originated with Jane's great uncle, Henry VIII, and was perpetuated by his only son Edward VI. The protectorship of Somerset during Edward's minority set in motion forces that would shape the course of history. Northumberland's questionable manipulation of Edward's will and his strategical marriages, ensured Jane's succession at any cost. Religion was another factor that affected Jane's fate. The unique religious climate in England at this time again originated with Henry VIII, his abandonment of Rome and the establishment of the Church of England. Edward continued more fervently this Protestant reform~~x~~ at the expense of the Catholic majority of English people. Jane's own unshakable adherence to the Protestant faith was an important factor in her advancement, by Northumberland, over her fanatically Catholic second cousin, Mary. The last major cause was the unique personalities of the

players in this tragedy. Jane's parents, Henry Grey and Francis Brandon
Grey, Edward VI, Edward Seymour the Duke of Somerset, John Dudley the
Duke of Northumberland, and Mary all undeniably catalyzed and propitiated
the circumstances that culminated in the be-heading of this innocent girl.

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Mary Luke summarized it best when she said "From her parents, who
abused her physically and emotionally, to the political opportunists of the
Tudor court who manipulated and used her, all must bear responsibility for
setting in sequence the myriad forces that caused her tragic end."¹ Thus
this compelling and tragic story of the fight for the Crown of England
resulted in the inconsequential death of a teenage girl.

When the possible acquisition of power for oneself and one's family
arises, all circumstances are viewed in a different light--"At no period in
our history was the detestable disposition to render every connection
subservient to political purposes so much the prevailing feeling...the ties
of friendship or of kindred were seldom suffered to interfere, when
opposed to the prospect of advancing self-interest superseded every other
consideration."² This then was the prevailing atmosphere created by
Henry's successional chaos and the accession of a minor to the throne.

The unusual political climate can be extrapolated back to Henry's
successional dilemma. His first wife Catherine of Aragon, failed to
produce a male heir. Their only daughter, Mary was to be a harbinger of

agony for England, as she would later reverse Henry's and Edward's religious reforms. His next wife Anne Boleyn gave him Elizabeth. His third wife Jane Seymour succeeded in providing a male heir, Edward VI. Henry's secession from the Church of Rome was a direct result of his dynastic dilemma. Most historians, following A.F. Pollard, while not ignoring conscience or passion, tend to stress Henry's concern over the succession in explaining the creation of the Church of England and the subsequent divorces.³ His failure to obtain an annulment of his marriage to Catherine from Pope Clement VII catalyzed and hastened the formation of the Church of England. A series of successional acts changed the order until it became meaningless—"In a unique demonstration of the virtual omniscience now attributed to statute, Parliament gave the king unqualified authorization to designate a further succession by his letters patent or his will; he could now will the crown as he pleased—to his nephew of Scotland, his bastardized daughters, his dying bastardized son, and even children yet to be born. No English monarch before or since has ever had this statutory power."⁴

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This observation was confirmed by an analysis of Henry VIII's statutes; a sequential display of his rampant, whimsical alteration of the order.⁵ An act for the king's succession, Statute 25, invested the line of inheritance in the children of his "...entirely beloved wife queen Anne."

Henry's preoccupation with this matter was seen in his passage of Statute 26 the next year that made it an act of treason for any subject to violate his successional plan. The Second Act of Succession in 1536 repealed Statute 26 and directly repudiated Statute 25; "...the lawful marriage of the Highness and the late Queen Anne...deemed and adjudged to be of no force, strength, virtue or effect...all children under the same marriage proclaimed illegitimate ...utterly foreclosed, excluded, and barred to claim, challenge, or demand any inheritance as a lawful heir." Also included in this document was the investment in Henry himself of the absolute determination of the order --"that your Highness shall have full and plenes powers and authority to give, dispose, appoint, assign, declare, and limit by your letters patent or else by your last will made in writing." The Third Act of Succession continued this desparate manipulation; the precariousness of Edward's health was noted and given as justification for the relegitimization of Mary and her children, and then Elizabeth and her heirs. Henry's will dated December 30, 1546 confirmed the Third Act but also stipulated that Mary and Elizabeth would forfeit their assent if they married without the consent of the Privy Council. This clause would later be used to justify the Wyatt rebellion against the Spanish Match, Mary's betrothal to Philip II of Spain. Hence, this was the legacy of controversial manipulation which Edward, at the age of nine, inherited. It

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is a fact at once remarkable and pertinent that after Edward himself, all but one of the potential claimants were women. The English had been traditionally wary of women rulers, because of their supposed weakness of character and constitution. Thus the situation, itself a product of Henry's political and religious conflicts, propitiated Northumberland's conspiracy.

Edward's accession created an even more unstable situation—"Once the strong hand of Henry VIII had been removed, and a child of nine placed on the throne, the Tudor ship of state entered previously uncharted water."⁶

Henry's will stipulated that a Privy Council of sixteen specified men

should rule, until the termination of the minority on Edward's 18th

birthday. Edward Seymour, the ^{brother} sister of Jane Seymour and Edward's uncle,

convinced them to proclaim him Protector. Only seven out of the sixteen

Privy Council members signed the patent proclaiming him Protector, and

Warwick's name was missing.⁷ This statement was indicative of

Somerset's tenuous position and lack of support, and also of the members

hesitancy to deviate from Henry's prescribed design. Evidence suggested ^{what evidence?}

that Seymour was planning to alter the succession, whether to himself or

just toward his line was not known. As a result of the Protector's unique

personality, religious and social policies, and family troubles, he was

overthrown in a bloodless coup d'etat by John Dudley, the Duke of

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Pollard in his work England Under Protector Somerset noted that "The majority of the Privy Council was opposed to the Protector's social policy and abolition of treason laws, ^{sp} the lenity, which might have reconciled the country even to the rapid religious changes of Edward's later years were exchanged for the tyranny [of Northumberland] and hastened the embittered, inevitable reaction." ^{10?} ^{Pollard displayed} This author tended to have a remarkably favorable opinion of Somerset and an equally derogatory attitude towards Northumberland, in direct contradiction to the more recent trends in historical opinion. The hypothesis that Somerset's policies facilitated Northumberland's rise to power, where his policies inevitably led to the rise of Mary was illogical and utterly unfounded. W.K. Jordan saw the Protector's demise more as a result of the irreconcilable and fundamental differences that existed, and from a deep-seated mistrust which prevented their cooperation in ruling England.⁹ Northumberland's destruction of Somerset in a politically acceptable manner was an act of expediency to avoid anarchy at the higher echelons of the already weak government. Jordan's views ^{are} were concurrent with the more recent consensus that Northumberland was a pathetic figure ultimately manipulated by forces beyond his control. He accelerated Somerset's downfall with trumped up charges and the support of the Catholic members

of the Privy Council. His duplicity was aptly demonstrated by his abandonment of promises for a Catholic reform. This was confirmed by William Cecil's observations—"...the chief assisters of Northumberland in bringing this Duke [Somerset] to his end, ...great papists..., many false rumours and forged letters were sent about, to the defamation of the Duke, and to make him criminal. And not long after they had done the Duke's business, Northumberland had no further need of them, and instead of getting them preferred, as was promised, they were all kicked off again."¹⁰ D.E. Hoak in The King's Council in the Reign of Edward VI concurred with these observations, stating that he gained support of the Catholic Privy Council members opposed to Somerset's rule by offering them the hope of a conservative religious settlement and then suddenly purged the body of them after his coup.¹¹ A.F. Pollard discussed the situation in great ^{detail} ~~deal~~ and arrived at the same general conclusions.¹² Conclusively Northumberland was the man to whom the determination of the succession fell.

Northumberland's influence was seen in the changing of Edward's attitude towards Mary and his proclivity towards a more extreme Protestantism. Northumberland, the grandson of Elizabeth Woodville and Edward IV, had royal blood in his veins, yet many were far ahead of him in the concatenation. Allying himself with Henry Grey ^{he} ~~they~~ plotted the

alteration.

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Another instance of discrepancy and debate among historians concerned Edward's Devise, ^{will} This was his final attempt to determine or rather alter the succession away from Henry's proclamations and will. This document totally excluded his half-sisters, Mary because of impure blood and Elizabeth for illegitimacy. The Devise, as originally drawn, proclaimed only a male heir yet to be conceived. Thus the succession of the throne of England rested on a nonentity, while all possible female heirs were passed over in favor of Edward's son. J.G. Nichols stated that "It became necessary to name some existing person as an immediate successor, and to terminate an arrangement, which, designating only a future and unborn heir, might have the effect of placing the crown in abeyance."¹³ An analysis of the actual document revealed obvious erasures, deletions, and insertions. The original important clause "...to the L'Jane's heires masles" was changed to read "...to the L'Jane and her heires masles"; bringing into order alongside the hypothetical male heirs one pivotal living person. In the actual document a pen is drawn through the letter s, which still remains, and the words "and her" are written above the line. The realization that Jane would not have time to bear a son by Guildford Dudley before Edward's death justified the change. The insertion of only two extra words altered the whole order of succession.

Debate over whether Northumberland or Edward altered the work ~~was still~~ ^{is continues.}
widespread. For example Bernard Beer unequivocally absolved
Northumberland of any participation in the questionable activity, citing
his age and lack of motivational incentive as proof. "If the argument of
Professor Bindoff that the second draft [of the Devises] was not prepared
till May 21, 1553, then Northumberland had no assurance that his son
would marry the heir apparent on May 28."¹⁴ Beer continued that
"Although blind ambition is one explanation, it is implausible that he
would risk life, fortune, and family on a plan, the fundamental objective
being the capture of Mary, that he failed to execute even with every
resource of the kingdom at his disposal."¹⁵ Northumberland unwisely left
London in charge of Henry Grey and the dubious Privy Council, while he
pursued the one person upon which "his" entire plan depended. These were
not the actions of an unscrupulous schemer bent on treason. Beer
conclusively saw the advancement of Lady Jane Grey as "...an act of futile
desperation conducted by a confused and sick man who had lost sight of his
own interests."¹⁶

Jordan also absolved Northumberland of all initiatives ^{he found}
himself engulfed in a gigantic treason, facing almost imminent disorder as
a result of the ill-considered fevered contrivings of a desperate dying
boy.¹⁷ Many other historians attributed the impetus for the change in

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order to Edward. Citing another reason, Nichols argued that the will never created the right in Lady Jane Grey's mother, but her daughters. Thus, if Mary and Elizabeth were disqualified, Lady Jane Grey was, according to the provisions in her great uncle's will, the undoubted heiress to the throne.¹⁸ The more recent trends implicated Edward as the instigator of the change, and Northumberland as only a loyal pion caught up in the boiling cauldron of court politics. It must be realized that Northumberland kept Mary informed of Edward's precarious condition until two days before his death. This was not the action of a man obsessed with manipulating the rightful order of succession.

Analyzing the circumstances and attitudes prevalent when Lady Jane succeeded add another dimension to the dynastic question. It is important to note that the Privy Council was reluctant to accept Edward's Devise as legally binding and would do so only after Northumberland guaranteed them a pardon for any offense.¹⁹ They contended that the settlement of the crown by Henry VIII as confirmed by Parliament, and another act in Edward's reign made it treason to attempt to change the order. Thus Henry's ubiquitous will was influential even now. Jordan conclusively attributed Jane's overthrow to the principle of legitimacy, the reverential trust placed in the decisions of Henry VIII. This was proven true by the numerous references to Henry's stabilizing influence even after his death.

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The mention of Northumberland as the person who persuaded the Privy Council to accept her, demonstrated his power and desire to realize his daughter-in-law's potential. Jane's ignorance of her father's and Northumberland's plan to advance her to the throne was unanimously conceded by all sources. Nichols commented that "History concurred in stating, that until the monarch's decease, Lady Jane was not only totally uninformed of the important measures which her father had taken in her favour, but that she received the intimation of this with the deepest sorrow."²⁰ Even the document proclaiming Jane's ascension, was wholly in Northumberland's handwriting.²¹

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Mary's deposition of the nine day queen was the result of many forces.

~~The majority of~~ ^{Most} English people supported Mary over Jane. Historically usurpations had led inevitably to anarchy and anything was preferable to that. They were disturbed by the drastic religious reforms and longed for a return to the Henrician Catholicism which they assumed Mary espoused.

which was deemed anything was preferable to Ank

The people also tended to view Henry's order of succession as the most desirable and legitimate; the subsequent peaceful transition, from Jane to Mary, was a result of the ordered structure of regality and solid base of Tudor order inherited from Henry. Northumberland's reputation was another factor in this bloodless overthrow. Pollard interpreted the situation as "...the welcoming of the rightful heir as a deliverer from the

violence and iniquity of Northumberland's influence.²² From all this evidence, it was unequivocally proven that Lady Jane Grey was the unwilling victim of forces beyond her control, vying for the most sought after possession in all of England.

The multiple causes of Jane's demise were inextricably intertwined with the controversial subject of religion. ~~At this time~~ Religion was far from a subject discussed with objective coolness; for more than a decade English religious life had been prey to royal and governmental assault. Henry's establishment of the Church of England, directly a result of dynastic concerns, was more of a change in name than a distinct departure from the theology and practices of the Catholic faith. Termed the Henrician reform, religion as a stalwart bulwark of life did not change substantially. Edward's religious reforms were divided into two areas: the first under the Protector, Edward Seymour and the other under John Dudley, the Duke of Northumberland.²³ The Protector's innovations were more mild and lenient in accordance with his personality; in almost three years no man died for heretical beliefs. It was the first experiment with religious toleration on a national scale in any European nation. Compromise was also inherent in Cramner's Book of Common Prayer, which was tolerated by Catholics and Protestants alike.²⁴ A.F. Pollard contended that Somerset's actions were a result of the situation he

inherited--"the religious revolution, originating with Henry's desire to put away his unattractive wife, alienated one-third of the population without conciliating the smaller portion of reformers."²⁵ Although a devout Protestant, as evidenced by his statement before execution, he did not enact sweeping reforms. The main reasons for the dislike of Somerset by the people was his advancement by monastic spoils and his enclosure policies.

Northumberland's policies were a point of discrepancy. Utilizing the support of Catholic Privy Councilors to overthrow Somerset, he later had them removed. "In religion, as in political and social policy, Northumberland's accession to power marked a radical shift towards harsher courses, an abandonment of the Protector's exposition of toleration and moderation, and a steady push towards an evangelical Protestantism for which the realm was unprepared."²⁶ Northumberland's actions confirmed his hypocrisy: expulsion of the Catholic Privy Council members; harassment of Mary; careful manipulation of Edward's opinion of Mary; sharp move to the doctrinal left resulting in his attempt to bar Mary from the throne; and his death as a confessed Catholic. Beer correctly summarized Edward's reformation as "little more than a program of court politicians supported by the dialogue of a heretical clergy."²⁷ Nicolas Pocock also correctly asserted that "the principal agents in the

Reformation were not moved by any feelings of religion in their reckless dealings with the church doctrine and spoilation of church property.²⁸

Edward's or Northumberland's questionable designation of Lady Jane as heir was also a function of the all-powerful motivator, religion. Raised as a strict Protestant by such notable advocates as Richard Cox and Sir John Cheke, Edward would have opposed the succession of his fanatically Catholic half-sister, Mary. This view was justified by a statute of June, 1549, in which "the Protector sent to the Lady Mary (knowing how averse she was there unto) to conform to King Edward's laws and to observe...the new Book of Common Prayer. Mary replied that King Henry's executors were sworn to his laws; she thus defered her obedience to the King's laws, till he were of sufficient years.²⁹ This demonstrated Mary's rejection of Edward's religious authority, and by implication the legitimacy of any of his legislation. It also confirmed that Mary as well as the rest of England deferred to Henry's judgment on questionable issues such as religion and succession. Northumberland also had a worthwhile motive, his life, in advancing the Protestant Jane over the Catholic Mary. He knew that the accession of Mary would endanger his power and very existence, and result in a reversal of the reformation. But from what one can deduce from the writings of Edward VI, one is led to wonder whether the king in his dying effort to set Mary's succession aside, was not moved rather more by

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the already well-exhibited obsessive and fanatical Catholicism of his elder sister than by the objective fact of her faith. We simply cannot know.³⁰

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The Wyatt rebellion, somewhat a peripheral function of religion, advanced and sealed Jane's fate.³¹ Her father's opposition to Mary's marriage to the Spanish Phillip II resulted in his association with the other conspirators. At this time Jane was being held in the Tower of London. Henry Grey's actions were interpreted as an attempt to re-place Jane on the throne; this confirmed her execution as a potential threat to Mary's infant reign. Even her father had no compunction against participating in a rebellion while his daughter was in the Tower; her life was ultimately expendable and sacrificed for greater gain. Mary's unique outlook compelled her to inflate Jane's threat: "predisposed to view life in monumental terms...Catholicism and Protestantism became huge polarities which overshadowed and drew to themselves every act and event in her experience...a fundamental merging of herself with her faith...a complete identification of her personality and destiny with the righteous cause of Roman Catholicism."³² The nature of the rebellion; Wyatt's attempt to restore Jane or even some other person associated with the previous, tainted regime was futile. John Proctor noted "And considering with himself that to make the pretence of his Rebellion to be the restoring or

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contrivance of the new and newly formed Religion was neither agreeable to the nature of Heresy (which always defendth itself by the name and countenance of other matter more plausible) to allure all sorts to take part with him...[pretence] with a stand against a Stranger."³³ It was apparent that ~~he~~ ^{Proctor} realized the absence of religion as a motivating factor; and thus concocted another pretence. Although biased, the epilogue of this tract praised Mary and attempted to justify and glorify her accession. Proctor's statements were generally true. Nicholas commented on Henry Grey's immense desire to see his daughter regain the crown; "seduced by the prospect of once more seeing the imperial diadem on his daughter's brow, he joined the conspirators."³⁴ Thus Jane and Guildford were condemned to death in the wave of retribution that followed the failed Wyatt rebellion; an enthusiastic display of support for the new ruler.

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Jane's ^{role} ~~part~~ in all this was involuntary and unwanted. Mary Luke noted that her parents had to beat her into accepting the crown.³⁵ Yet under all this pressure she never lost her faith, as evidenced by her final words: "Oh merciful God, consider my misery best known unto thee and be thou unto me a strong tower of defense, I humbly require thee...give me grace patiently to bear thy heavy hand and sharp correction."³⁶ The uncertainty concerning the continuation of the more radical reforms instigated by Northumberland under Edward, contributed to her downfall. The legacy

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which Jane inherited from Edward's religious reforms was demonstrated by the comments of Charles Wriothesley in his Chronicle of England During the Reigns of the Tudors: "our chronicler was opposed in principle to the usurpation of the papacy and followed Henry VIII's endeavors to establish a national church, but on the accession of Edward VI, the reforming zeal of the Protestant movement rather scandalized him, as it threatened to sweep away all that was venerable...and with a friendly eye viewed the prospective return of the ancient regime of Mary, as did probably the great bulk of the nation."³⁷ Conclusively, in religious affairs as well as dynastic questions, Lady Jane Grey was cruelly and unknowingly manipulated by external factors beyond her control, which ultimately resulted in her untimely death.

The unique personalities of the influential people surrounding and affecting Jane were also a factor in her ultimate demise. Edward VI, John Dudley, Edward Seymour, and Henry Grey all played a part in this unfortunate story.

Edward VI was the sole male heir that the Tudor dynasty so desperately needed. He was educated by the strongly Protestant Richard Cox, friend of Archbishop Thomas Cramner, and Sir John Cheke, "a most brilliant humanist."³⁸ The depth of the king's education was reflective of the humanistic zeal endorsed by Henry VIII. There is little evidence in The

Chronicle of religious warmth or that he was much concerned about religious matters save as they touched his supremacy and his ultimate sovereignty. This observation corroborates the claim that he altered the Devises; Edward would have definitely realized the threat that Mary's Catholicism posed to his religious reforms. The king's personality was also uniquely revealed by his statement regarding his uncle's death--"The Duke of Somerset has his head cut off upon Tower Hill between 8 and 9 in the morning."³⁹ The tone of his chronicle, a day by day catalog of events, portrayed Edward as cold, ruthless, and trusting no one. Yet another side of Edward was revealed by Nicolas, who contended that Edward's naturally weak constitution, heredity of chronic illnesses such as measles, small pox, and severe colds, made possible the entire scheme to alter the succession. "This crises that the germ of Northumberland's ambition budded with vigour and effect...having thus the amiable monarch's religious fears to work upon, when he was in that state which induces men to think seriously of their eternal welfare, and when they are feverishly eager to grasp at every means...can it be a matter of surprise, that he should have yielded to Northumberland's entreaties."⁴⁰ Thus a different side of Edward was depicted: the weak and fatally ill boy manipulated into violating his father's order of succession. Yet many have concurred that his amazing intellectual precocity and grasp of affairs would have made

him a great king if he had lived. Evidence from The Chronicle suggested that few sovereigns of his years have ever possessed a clearer sense of direction, of tasks to be accomplished...endowed with greater resources where with to secure their realization.⁴¹ Ann Hoffmann's opinion was in direct contradiction to Jordan's appraisal. She said "The general consensus of scholarly opinion is that, had he lived, his radical Protestantism combined with Tudor obstinacy, would have divided England far more than did his premature death..."⁴² However Jordan's conclusions were more valued since his work reflected a ~~great deal of~~ ^{substantial} ~~in~~depth research and published works on the same topic. In contrast Hoffmann's book was more superficial and less documented.

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John Dudley, Viscount of Lisle, the Earl of Warwick, and the Duke of Northumberland was born in 1502, created on October 11, 1551, ^{He} forfeited his title on August 18, 1554, and was executed on ~~August 22~~. ^{Some days later.}

Northumberland was one of the most despised men in history; yet recent interpretations of his ^{character} personality and motives have become more positive. ^{over stated}

A.F. Pollard, in England Under Protector Somerset, referred to him as "the subtlest intriguer in all of English history, the most daring English disciple of Machiavelli...master at the art of concealing his motives."⁴³

Pocock described him as ~~as during the whole reign playing the part of a~~ hypocrite, with respect to religion.⁴⁴ John Hayward in The Life and Raigne

of King Edward the Sixth, defamed him as "a blood-sucker, a murderer, a parricide, and a villain."⁴⁵ C.H. Williams conceded that "His religious ideas and his policy cannot be described as based on anything other than expediency and his ambitions for the aggrandizement of his family."⁴⁶ Even Mary, in January of 1550, referred to him as the most "unstable" man in England.⁴⁷ His conversion to Catholicism before execution demonstrated his unswerving obedience to whom ever wore the crown. This observation could also explain his questionable part in Edward's Devises; ~~in that~~ Northumberland would obey the king's demands regardless of the consequences.

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A.F. Pollard, in his introduction to Tudor Tracts 1532-1588, inveighed the most damning commentary against Northumberland's actions: "The Duke had earned a well-nigh universal detestation by a government that was more violent than that of Henry VIII and more pusillanimous than that of Mary. His judicious murder of his rival, the Duke of Somerset, his revival and extension of the harsh laws of Henry VIII, and his attempts to pack parliament and the privy council had offended three-fourths of the nation before his insane plot to alter the succession alienated the rest...Mary's accession was a welcomed relief from the tyranny of Northumberland's rule."⁴⁸ Many historians concluded that in the end Edward, a frail and dying boy, fell victim to the threat of Northumberland's demoniacal persuasion.

It was interesting to note that all of the derogatory works implicating Northumberland as the pivotal instigator in Edward's dire, frantic alterations, were published before 1970. Those that depicted him as a pathetic figure trapped in a whirlwind of political expediency not of his own design, were written after 1970 starting with W.K. Jordan's book Edward VI The Threshold of Power, The Dominance of the Duke of Northumberland. Concurring with more modern historians, Barrett L. Beer viewed Northumberland in a more favorable light; "Historians seeking a figure to damn and ridicule found an easy target and scapegoat."⁴⁹ He continued to explain and justify past perceptions: The creation of the legend of Northumberland as the wicked duke, a legend that has survived unchanged for over four centuries, was changed by ^{viewing} looking at events from Northumberland's perspective. ~~His~~ ^{his} situation proved that political ambition was not inherently evil. To validate past perceptions of Northumberland, it was necessary to present evidence that he consciously conceived a plan of personal and family aggrandizement; no proof of this was found. The evidence does prove that he was forced into acts against his own wishes by events demanding leadership.⁵⁰ An overview of the most recent interpretations confirmed these assumptions. It was true that Northumberland was fifty-two years old, seriously ill, and longed for retirement at the time of Jane's accession. Beer supported this statement

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when he observed that "Warwick was the only man to whom the country could turn; he neither sought absolute authority nor enjoyed legal power over his colleagues.⁵¹ Northumberland's comment concerning his yearning for retirement, "What should I wish any longer this life, that seeth such frailty in it", reflected his unambitious attitude at this point. ⁵² In a

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powerful statement deriving substantiation from many sources, D.E. Hoak said "Indeed, none of the motives which may be ascribed to Warwick--that he was greedy beyond measure for church lands; that as a man of the 'new learning', he had decided at the moment of Henry's death to systematically stamp out Catholic doctrine; that he perceived, perhaps unconsciously, that a violent revolution offered the best chance to establish the dictatorship to which he aspired; that he sought the advancement of his family and so could not allow the political restoration of the old Catholic nobility whose presence should have greatly diminished the lustre of his more recent dignity; that there was a fatal taint of crooked self-seeking in his family's blood that drove him inevitably towards desperate measures--could ^{Not} be proven."⁵³ While both sides

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presented sound evidence to support their allegations; it seemed that historical perspective on debatable topics such as this systematically fluctuated between extremes. Not enough conclusive evidence existed to reach a definitive ~~view~~ *conclusion*.

Edward Seymour, Viscount Beauchamp, Lord Hertford, and the Earl of Somerset was born in 1506, created on February 16, 1547 executed on January 22, 1552, and finally attained on April 12, 1552. The disparity in views of Seymour were as numerous as those concerning Northumberland. Recent trends tend to view Somerset as a reformer advanced too far beyond his time. Many described him as moderate, tolerant and magnanimous, and achieving minimal support for his radical social and economic reforms. Pollard presented incredible accolades of Somerset's reign: "It would be another century and a half before England would revel in the freedom and toleration it experienced under Somerset...possessing instincts of genuine statesmanship that raised him above personal ambition and his unprincipled colleagues..a seer of visions and a dreamer of dreams."⁵⁴ His policies of religious toleration, land enclosure, and coinage debasement all demonstrate Pollard's assertion. Yet the common people at this time were unable to fathom Somerset's advanced theories; William Cecil said "The Duke of Somerset was a man little esteemed either for wisdom, person, or courage in arms."⁵⁵

Yet others ^{evaluated} ~~discussed~~ Somerset in a less complimentary manner, ~~They~~ ^{it} contended that his policies weakened his position and that he was a ^{he was} failure administratively. Somerset's personality consisted of intolerable flaws in a minister possessing the king's authority; he sparked envy and

hatred and infuriated with leniency and lack of resolve all those who dealt with him. Robert Beale, in "An eyewitness account of the coup d'etat of October 1549" acknowledged Somerset's lack of tact and generostiy in dealing with Northumberland, which accelerated his coup of expediency.⁵⁶ Beale's comment was even more credible since he was undenaibly on Somerset's side. Jordan described Somerset as "politically naive and overly trusting, with no sense of personal danger until his case was in ruins."⁵⁷ The Privy Council records demonstrated his unique style of government; "they reflected his abandon and conductance of the meetings informally in his own household."⁵⁸ The prevalent conclusion was that Somerset was a man advanced far beyond his peers, who was ultimately seen as a failure and a tragic figure for this reason.

Henry Grey, the third Marquis of Dorset, Earl of Suffolk was born January 17, 1517, created October 11, 1551, forfeited his title on February 17, 1554, and was executed on February 23, 1554. Described as a quiet and timorous man, his elevation was a result of the death of his father-in-law Charles Brandon, and his two sons by his second wife, Katherine Willoughy Brandon. It was evident that power was thrust upon him, and not acquired on his own personal merit.⁵⁹ Questionable interpretations of Grey's ambitions were numerous. Nicolas contended that "the character of the Marquis of Dorset appears to have been that of a

quiet, unambitious man. ^{the} writers have attributed any quality to him which could render him a dangerous subject.⁶⁰ Yet others saw his abhorrence of the newer peerage, such as the Seymours, as a motivational factor. Luke's comment that "he and Frances agreed to name their daughter for the queen [Jane Seymour], ^{when} which neither of them particularly liked because she was the child of minor gentry" was particularly reflective of their disappointment at having a female instead of a male heir; and also of their envious hatred of elevated favorites.⁶¹ His part in Northumberland's conspiracy was considered that of a sycophant, of uneven temperament and weak personality, following a more ambitious person. Grey's participation in the Wyatt rebellion was also minimal; he was not trying to replace Jane and did not even raise arms. Conclusively, historian's opinions of Henry and Francis Grey's part in the alteration fluctuated as new interpretations became popular.

Lady Jane Grey's short life was one of constant uncertainty, derogatory remarks from her parents, and manipulation; yet she retained her faith till the end. Her story was intriguing if not for its romance and pathos, then for the way in which it reflected the chaotic political, social, and religious tendencies of this period in English history. It was a time of intrigues and conspiracies where the true desire for nothing less than outright greed and a cut-throat willingness to employ any means to attain

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a goal ran rampant. Her life provided a unique perspective from which to view the dynastic uncertainties, the religious upheaval, and the mindset of the aristocracy in power. Many factors were inextricably intertwined to create a patchwork of doom for this bright, precocious, and devout young girl. From Henry's dynastic concerns and religious reforms, through Edward's minority and pivotal death that brought about a prolonged day of reckoning that shook the kingdom to its political foundations, to the personalities who directly influenced ^{of} Jane's life; all must bear responsibility for the advancement of this innocent girl to her death.

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NOTES

- ¹ The Nine Days Queen, p. 7.
- ² Nicolas, The Literary Remains of Lady Jane Grey, p. xix.
- ³ Levne, Tudor Dynastic Problems, p.58. See Pollard's Henry VIII, p.143-150 for further elaboration.
- ⁴ Ibid, p. 67.
- ⁵ See English Historical Documents, ed. C.H. Williams vol.5 1485-1558 Part IV, Government and Administration, A. The Crown, 44. The problem of succession illustrated from various sources for the original statutes during the reign of Henry VIII.
- ⁶ History Today 15 1965 275.
- ⁷ Pollard, England Under Protector Somerset, p. 55.
- ⁸ p. 256. Ibid
- ⁹ Edward VI The Threshold of Power The Dominance of the Duke of Northumberland, p. 73.
- ¹⁰ Collection of State Papers relating to Affairs in the Reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I, and Elizabeth, transcribed from Original Letters and other Authentick Memorials, Never Before Pulifh'd left by William Cecil, Lord Burghley, p. 535.
- ¹¹ p. 240 Ibid
- ¹² See p. 260-272 for a more detailed analysis. Ibid
- ¹³ A Chronicle of Queen Jane and of Two Years of Queen Mary and Especially of the Rebellion of Sir Thomas Wyatt, written by a resident in the Tower of London, p. xxxi.
- ¹⁴ See Beer's Northumberland, The Political Career of John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, and Duke of Northumberland, and Bindoff's History Today Sept. 3 1953, p. 642-648 for more complete arguments.
- ¹⁵ Ibid, p.149-156.

- 16 Ibid, p.149.
- 17 Edward VI, p. 515-517.
- 18 The Literary Remains of Lady Jane Grey with Memoirs, p.XXX and Mary Luke, The Nine Days Queen--A Portrait of Lady Jane Grey, p. 236.
- 19 Ibid, p. xxxiii.
- 20 Ibid, p. xxxvi.
- 21 Ibid, contains a reproduction of the original Devise.
- 22 England Under Protector Somerset, p. 312.
- 23 See Tudor Royal Proclamations, vol. I 1485-1553, p. 483-537 for a collection of original documents concerning religious innovations.
- 24 Jordan, Edward VI, p.109.
- 25 England Under Protector Somerset, p. 44.
- 26 Jordan, Edward VI, p. 241.
- 27 Riot and Rebellion, p. 5.
- 28 "Troubles Concerning the Prayer Book of 1549", Camden Society new series 38 1884, p. 14.
- 29 Calendar of Letters, Despatches, and State Papers, relating to the negotiations between England and Spain, vol IX, Jan. 29, 1547 to Dec. 1549.
- 30 The Chronicle and Political Paper of King Edward VI, p. xxiii.
- 31 See D.M. Loades, Two Tudor Conspiracies, for a detailed study of Wyatt's rebellion based on the Wyatt MSS and other primary sources.
- 32 History Today Sept. 3 1953, p. 240.
- 33 The History of Wyatt's Rebellion, p. 209.
- 34 The Literary Remains of Lady Jane Grey with Memoirs, p. xxix.

- 35 The Nine Days Queen--A Portrait of Lady Jane Grey, p. 227.
- 36 *Ibid*, p. 9.
- 37 p. xv.
- 38 The Chronicle and Political Papers of King Edward VI, p. xi.
- 39 *Ibid*, p. 107.
- 40 p. xxv-xxviii.
- 41 *Jordan, Edward VI*, p. 24.
- 42 Lives of the Tudors 1485-1603, p. 154.
- 43 p. 244.
- 44 Troubles Connected with the Prayer Book of 1549, p. iv.
- 45 p. 92.
- 46 English Historical Documents, p. 60.
- 47 Calendar of Letters, Despatches, and State Papers, relating to the negotiations between England and Spain, x, p. 6.
- 48 p. xxi, xxii. D.M. Loades in The Journal of Ecclesiastical Studies XVI April 1 1965 p. 54-66 acknowledged Northumberland's part in Jane's advancement
- 49 Northumberland, The Political Career of John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, and Duke of Northumberland, p. 163.
- 50 *Ibid*, p. x, 53.
- 51 *Ibid*, p. 99.
- 52 History Today, April 15 1965, p. 276.
- 53 The King's Council in the Reign of Edward VI, p. 240.
- 54 England Under Protector Somerset, pp. 313, 322, 323.

- 55 A Collection of State Papers relating to Affairs in the Reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I, and Elizabeth, p. 125.
- 56 EHR 1955 600.
- 57 Edward VI, p. 84.
- 58 Hoak, p. 260.
- 59 Lady Jane Grey, The Setting of the Reign, p. 86.
- 60 Nicolas, The Literary Remains of Lady Jane Grey with Memoirs, p. xi.
- 61 The Nine Days Queen--A Portrait of Lady Jane Grey, p. 26

*Five use of varied
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Critical notes are
quite appropriate -

You tend to over-use
"very"