

## Trollope's Heir Trouble in *Cousin Henry*

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**Choi, Jung Sun.** "Trollope's Heir Trouble in *Cousin Henry*." *Studies in English Language & Literature* 49.4 (2023): 183-207. This essay undertakes a meticulous examination of the nuanced gender performance depicted in Anthony Trollope's literary work, *Cousin Henry* (1879). The focal point of the narrative is the character Indefer Jones, a testator confronted with the weighty decision of designating an heir or heiress capable of perpetuating the enduring legacy of the English landed gentry. Rooted in a steadfast adherence to the tradition of primogeniture, Jones is compelled to select a male descendant to inherit the family estate. However, the plot unfolds with the revelation that Henry Jones, the presumed male heir, not only lacks moral integrity but also exhibits unmanly cowardice. Consequently, this essay delves into a comprehensive exploration of Henry's moral unsuitability as the central figure in an inheritance narrative and as the designated heir tasked with upholding the esteemed Jones legacy. Furthermore, the analysis delves into Trollope's deliberate reliance on a sophisticated comprehension of architectural norms and regulations pertinent to the Victorian country house. Intimately connected to Henry's inadequacies is his deficient education and unfamiliarity with the requisites of overseeing a Victorian country estate. This extends beyond architectural considerations to encompass a lack of awareness regarding the nuanced protocols necessary for maintaining respectability in accordance with the specific temporal and locational norms of Victorian society. Consequently, Henry fails to command the respect of the estate's denizens, including both servants and tenants. (Soongsil University)

**Key Words:** Anthony Trollope, *Cousin Henry*, heir trouble, inheritance plot, failed youth, Victorian country house

## I. Introduction

Young gentlemen abound in Victorian novels, an arena in which they learn, struggle, fight, are defeated but soon recover, and make affiliations. While some fail to prove their individual worth and usefulness by being stuck in the adolescent stages, most young male characters successfully demonstrate their gender-influenced morality. However, they soon realize that the test is one of many until they achieve gentlemanly status, a constellation of moral qualities, gentle birth, courtesy to women, generosity, openheartedness, magnanimity, responsibility, social obligation, and leadership. Critics of Victorian masculinities studies agree that Victorian men seem to believe that proper manliness is not inborn but earned through self-denial of personal pleasure and practices of gender norms. In other words, self-discipline is considered the central theme in the discourse around what it means to be a manly man in Victorian society.<sup>1</sup> For instance, Herbert Sussman points out that the male gender is “a state of being that is not innate,” but the result of arduous manly performance and self-discipline (Sussman 13). The critical point is that achievement and maintenance of manliness depend on self-control: instead of *doing* something, masculinity is often composed of what one *shouldn't* do. As James Eli Adams states, the constant styling of masculinity is required to fit the ever changing social

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<sup>1</sup> The 1990s marked a significant shift in academic discourse towards gender studies, with a particular focus on men and masculinity. Prior to this, much of the feminist scholarship had understandably concentrated on women's experiences and perspectives. However, the 1990s saw an increased awareness of the need to study masculinity as a social and cultural construct. In Victorian studies, this shift manifested in a reevaluation of how middle-class heterosexual white gentlemen were constructed and represented in the literature and society of the 19th century. Scholars began to critically examine traditional notions of masculinity and explore how these ideals were established, enforced, and performed during the Victorian era. See Richard Dellamora's *Masculine Desire: The Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism* (1990), Herbert Sussman's *Victorian Masculinities: Manhood and Masculine Poetics in Early Victorian Literature and Art* (1995), James Eli Adams's *Dandies and Desert Saints: Styles of Victorian Masculinity* (1995), and Jason D. Solinger's *Invention of Modern Masculinity 1660-1815* (2012), Philip Mallet's *The Victorian Novel and Masculinity* (2015), and Joanne Begiato's *Manliness in Britain, 1760-1900* (2020).

circumstances and environments (5). Self-discipline as economic utility is necessary to claim “new forms of status and privilege within an increasingly secular and industrialized society” (5). Self-discipline is the dominant characteristic because Victorian gentlemen must demonstrate that they can control themselves to master of others. Victorian novels, therefore, center on young males who would be the new dominant group in society by entangling them in a plot to become a genuine “gentleman master” in which they succeed in showing their ability to transform into the ideal adult masculinity or demonstrate they already possessed the moral character and genuine manliness.

In his novels, Anthony Trollope centers their gender performance of the male gender in the following characters: Charley Tudor in *The Three Clerks* (1857), Johnny Eames in *The Small House at Allington* (1864) and *The Last Chronicle of Barset* (1867), Peregrine Orme in *Orley Farm* (1862), and John Caldigate in *John Caldigate* (1879).<sup>2</sup> David Skilton explains that Trollope’s ideal manliness is the

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<sup>2</sup> Certainly, gender dynamics and the portrayal of women in the works of Anthony Trollope have been subjects of critical examination, and feminist scholars have played a significant role in reshaping the discourse around Trollope’s literary world. Feminist gender criticism on Trollope began with Robert Polemus’s *The Changing World of Anthony Trollope* (1968), which laid the groundwork for later feminist analysis including Juliet McMaster’s *Trollope’s Palliser Novels* (1978), Debora Denenholz Morse’s *Women in Trollope’s Palliser Novels* (1987), Jane Nardin’s *He Knew She Was Right: the Independent Woman in the Novels of Anthony Trollope* (1989), Priscilla Walton’s *Patriarchal Desire and Victorian Discourse: A Lacanian Reading of Anthony Trollope’s Palliser Novels* (1995), and Margaret Marwick’s *Trollope and Women* (1997). Since the beginning of studies of men and masculinities, critics of Trollope have responded to a changing landscape, asking to re-assesse the meanings of men and their gender performance. For instance, Shirley Robin Letwin’s *The Gentleman in Trollope: Individuality and Moral Conduct* (1982), one of the earlier criticisms on masculinity, presents the ways in which Trollope redefines meanings of Victorian gentlemen based on conduct rather than on biology. More recently, Mark Turner’s *Trollope and Magazines: Gendered Issues in Mid-Victorian Britain* (2007) examines the gendered discourses presented in Victorian magazines under Trollope’s editorship around the issues of the women question, middle-class manliness, and gendered readership. Meanwhile, Margaret Marwick published *New Men in Trollope’s Novels* (2007), which aims to challenge conventional portrayals of aggressive and authoritative husbands and fathers, while arguing that Trollope’s affective male characters can be qualified as the New Men figures of caring and healing. Recently, in his chapter contribution to *The Cambridge Companion to Anthony Trollope* (2011), David Skilton points out that Trollope ensures that difference and unevenness between Victorian men should be tolerated. While the scholarship on Trollope’s masculinity

combined effect of “education and socialization, building on a good foundation of character” (130). These conditions in Trollope’s manliness would be acquired through self-discipline and proper behavior, not “deliberately or learned quickly” (130). Furthermore, his ideal manliness is applicable to the landed gentlemen who are allegedly regarded to have these qualities inborn or through inheritance. Trollope claims that, since landed gentry are dependent on the recognition of their authority or fitness from those below them, their masculinity, which is achieved through self-discipline, contributes to their legitimacy and prestige.

Certainly, Trollope’s interest in the portrayal of young gentlemen and the ideals associated with country gentlemanhood provides a fascinating lens through which to explore his views on masculinity, social responsibility, and the preservation of English values. Trollope, who idealizes the “country gentlemanhood” (McMaster 70), takes an interest in young gentlemen’s gender performance as they play a role of landed gentry in the country estate. Trollope’s portrayal of landed gentlemen as individuals who connect the past, present, and future aligns with a broader theme of continuity and tradition. This perspective suggests the novelist’s belief in the importance of landed gentry’s “responsible stewardship” in maintaining historical values and passing them down through generations (Robin Gilmore 172).

Deborah Denenholz Morse agrees with Gilmore that Trollope tends to see landed gentry as embodying his “values of duty, hospitality, and stability” of Englishness itself (71). Therefore, Trollope’s novels often deal with the topics of inheritance laws in which young gentlemen are tested to be the heir to landed property. For instance, in *The Belton Estate* (1866), *Ralph the Heir* (1871), *Sir Harry Hotspur of Humblewaite* (1871), *Cousin Henry* (1879), and *Mr. Scarborough’s Family* (1883), Trollope explores young gentlemen’s challenges, expectations, and personal growth

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might not be as extensive as that on the “woman question,” delving into this aspect can offer a deeper understanding of the complexities and contradictions inherent in his exploration of gender roles. It provides an opportunity to unravel Trollope’s attitudes toward masculinity and his contribution to the broader discourse on Victorian gender dynamics.



associated with inheriting a family estate. In each narrative, an old gentleman (either present or absent) must bequeath his property to the suitable candidate, but he finds himself in a predicament about whom he chooses as the next "steward" of the family estate and name. Young gentlemen's moral characters are scrutinized, and their gender performance is measured to meet the testator's expectations of the new master's eligibility.

Young gentlemen are expected to overcome obstacles and prove their individual worth, but unfortunately, they often fail at the test. In the inheritance plots of *Ralph the Heir*, *Sir Harry Hotspur of Humblewaite*, and *Cousin Henry*, Trollope directs the reader's attention to those who are told would-be heirs, but eventually are disqualified from the ownership of the family estate and name. These young gentlemen often turn out to be mediocre or less than that because they do not train themselves to achieve moral manliness. They are given a seemingly promising future, and furthermore are granted several chances to remedy their wrongdoings, but they fail to cultivate their moral character, taking a step backward. Even worse, they would backslide against Trollope's seemingly supportive tone by revealing the baseness underneath their skin. Skilton expounds that Trollope's wayward young men may stay in the pre-stage to mature adulthood (135). As Laurie Langbauer states, they can be termed as "hobbledehoy," or as those "who, no matter how much they want to fit in, remain de trop. They are terrible at their jobs, gauche in company" (113). Langbauer implies that there are no expectations of Trollope's failed youth, who are stuck in the stage of "antideveloping" (118). Meanwhile, agreeing with Skilton, Alice Crossley expounds Trollope's view of the male gender as an ongoing progress. Trollope's backward-developing youth capture the "undeveloped nature of the ineffective male adolescence" (Crossley 104). However, Trollope perceives these failures as a stage in the trajectories of becoming. They now undergo the period of emotional turbulence, but, as he expects, eventually grow out of "a prolonged adolescence" (104).

In examining Trollope's perspective on a failed young gentleman within *Cousin*

*Henry* (1879), the novel featuring the titular would-be heir, the focus is on the character's lack of moral integrity and display of unmanly cowardice. As Henry Jones struggles to demonstrate his adequacy as the heir to a Victorian country estate, Trollope's narrative appears to go beyond mere condemnation of his immaturity. Instead, it aims to persuade readers that Henry's failure stems from his inexperience, inadequate education, and lack of proper guidance from a responsible adult. Trollope, in essence, encourages readers to exercise tolerance, suggesting that the journey toward improved usefulness and moral worth for young men like Henry is a gradual process requiring time and understanding.

*Cousin Henry* begins with a mystery of the whereabouts of a missing document, the latest will of Indefer Jones, who desires to leave the family estate, including Llanfeare, and the family name to his niece, Isabel Brodrick. Llanfeare is a manor house surrounded by many acres of land, "which look[s] down from the cliffs over the sea on the coast of Carmarthenshire" (1). Indefer Jones, an old bachelor, changes his will several times, depending on the outcome of a battle between his moral duty in primogeniture and his fatherly heart toward Isabel. As his moral conscience wins, he will leave a generous bequest to Henry Jones, his nephew in the male line, even though the testator perceives him to be a despicable, immature young man who does not deserve the family name nor money. In his last days, Jones feels disgusted by the idea of Henry inheriting his land and people and finally changes his will in favor of Isabel. The trouble, however, occurs when Jones dies without telling anyone where he puts his latest will. After the funeral, the family lawyer has servants to ransack the house, but they could not find the expected document. Meanwhile, watching this domestic disturbance, Henry does not participate in the search; instead, he sits in the bookroom, sitting all day staring at a bookshelf. He looks at a specific book among several volumes of sermons, and this volume coincidentally contains the missing will. Afraid of being discovered, Henry does not show the search part keeps where the will is. Meanwhile, a local newspaper raises questions about whether Henry is responsible for the missing document. Additionally, the family lawyer tries

to wring the truth out of Henry. Being pressed, Henry vacillates between his desire to escape from an excruciating position by telling the truth and his greed to possess Llanfeare. Eventually, Henry is driven to show the lawyer where the lastest document would be found. On being given some scolding and advice (no severe punishment), Henry is allowed to return to his London home and office. Thus, Isabel inherits all the property and, later, the family name, Jones.

Certainly, Henry stands in stark contrast to the Victorian ideal of an exemplary masculine character, with the novel providing no indication of his transformation into a hero. Critics, such as Julian Thompson, emphasize Henry's lack of distinction, selfish actions, and questionable motives, portraying him as a pathetic figure driven by unwarranted desires (xi). Thompson also suggests that Henry might be a victim of Old Jones's heir-finding scheme, exposing him to disrespect and mistreatment by servants and tenants (xv). On the other hand, Carol Landsbury disagrees with the notion that Henry is unfairly treated, asserting that he is unequivocally perceived as a "perjurer and a thief in the eyes of society" (150). Landsbury contends that the novel serves a didactic purpose, aiming to impart a moral lesson. In contrast to Henry's misguided belief in inherent male entitlement, the narrative elevates Isabel, portraying her as someone who can surpass biological constraints through her moral integrity and business acumen in estate management. Her ability to uphold the family name positions her as a more deserving candidate for future ownership. In this context, Trollope relies on "the power of woman" (Landsbury 146) to instruct an immature young man on the path to acquiring moral character. Isabel's portrayal serves as a beacon, demonstrating that qualities beyond gender stereotypes are crucial for assuming responsibility and ownership of the family estate.

Alexander Gray delves into the paradox presented by Trollope in *Cousin Henry*, questioning why the traditionally valid heir is initially portrayed as unfit for inheritance. In essence, when the prospective heir's morals are found to be askew and his gender expectations subverted, what deeper implications emerge? Gray contends that Trollope, despite his staunch belief in the values of British tradition

and primogeniture, accentuates shifts in gendered practices within inheritance law. Isabel, a woman and a descendant in the female line, emerges as more masculine in terms of moral integrity, physical agility, and mental fortitude. In contrast, Henry, a male descendant in the male line, exposes “an embarrassing inability to embody self-government” through his deficient gender performance (Gray 109). Old Jones’s selection of Isabel signals a changing reality where the validity of the English custom of primogeniture is challenged, leading to a restructuring of inheritance law. This dynamic shift challenges preconceived notions about gender roles in inheritance and emphasizes the transformative potential of women in assuming traditionally male responsibilities.

Trollope’s construction of Henry Jones as an anti-hero is evident in his portrayal of an inexperienced and immature character who fails to overcome his shortcomings and reveals a lack of moral integrity. The expectation for Henry to become a part of the landed gentry, embodying Trollopian values, is thwarted as he becomes a vehicle for exposing flaws in the traditional inheritance norm of primogeniture (Morse 71). I also agree with Landsbury’s perspective, seeing Trollope’s intention not as punishment for the prodigal son but as an eventual offering of a moral lesson. In this essay, I aim to delve into how Trollope underscores Henry’s unfitness by examining the heir trouble in terms of qualifications through practices rather than inheritance, gender subversion, and the challenge to male-oriented traditional beliefs. A key aspect explored will be Trollope’s reliance on an understanding of architectural norms within a country house. This elucidates his point that Henry is a proven failure, especially when inheriting more than just a building—the ownership of Llanfeare involves managing the household matters both within and outside the estate to uphold the tradition of the gentry’s ideas and values, such as hospitality, prestige, and paternalism. *Cousin Henry* serves as a narrative that emphasizes the depth of meaning and values inherent in becoming the legatee of the Llanfeare estate.

## II. The Heir's Moral Risk

As its title shows, Trollope's *Cousin Henry* is a story about a young man, Henry Jones, whose role as an heir to the family name and country estate heir is deemed inadequate when compared to Isabel Brodrick, his cousin. While the title seems to indicate that Henry is seen and estimated by Isabel, the story is in fact dominated by Indefer Jones, an uncle of these youth, whose presence and absence influence how Henry is evaluated. In other words, the novel is infatuated with the old man's concerns and worries, from the testator's point of view towards his legatees executing his instructions properly to what the tradition of inheritance means. Trollope suggests that Indefer Jones's vacillation between conscience and duty challenges the legitimacy of British inheritance law when the rightful heir is disqualified or there is a more suitable female descendant.

Jones is the current owner of Llanfeare and the land around the house. The old master enjoys his private life in his house by spending time reading newspapers, reading two sermons on Sundays, and reading the Bible every day. He spends the rest of his time caring for his property and people around it (13). He "intimately" knows each of his tenants and farmers and their families, and he remembers every name of their children (13). He is liked and respected as the desirable master whose generosity spreads across the estate. Naturally, he tends to avoid hearing about any idea harmful to his people, including raising rent. Being part of the landed gentry, he is proud that Llanfeare has belonged to the Jones family for many generations and he can protect his people from the external interference of any "abominable" matter in his property management (14). Consequently, his expectations are clear that his descendants can keep the landed property and the family name as the paternalistic master of the people. Indefer Jones chooses the heir by his or her "stance towards property than by the legalities surrounding the circumstances of their birth or selection" (Frank 312).

The aged squire of Llanfeare now *faces* a critical choice of the next owner of the

Jones estate. Jones used to tell Isabel, who has been residing as “the young mistress of the place” in Llanfeare for the last ten years, that he believes in primogeniture as a “religion”: a landed estate should be a bequest from father to the eldest son (9). He insists that “[i]t ought to go a Jones,” indicating that Isabel is not a Jones (3). However, as he keeps claiming his patriarchal duty and “his lot” of the current keeper of the estate, old Jones sounds more and more undermining the validity of his “religion” (7). Also, Henry helps his uncle make the decision because Henry proves unsuitable when compared to Isabel, who is “strong, brave, sometimes almost bold, with a dash of humor, but always quite determined in her ideas of wrong or right” (11). In the last moment, Jones redefines the meaning of his patriarchal duty by choosing the most suitable candidate over a rightful heir and writing his will in favor of Isabel as Llanfeare’s next owner. Besides, he shows his respect for Isabel, who possesses moral courage on specific issues; tenderness toward the tenants and their wives and children; and estate management skills. In this light, Jones finalizes that Isabel is the heir because she demonstrates suitable attitudes towards the landed property and the inhabitants. This moment of vacillation eventually leads him to write the name of Isabel in his will, and Trollope suggests that there should be a change in English inheritance norms.

Likewise, the novel’s narrator *faces* a problem in narrative-building since the opening pages uncover that the eponymous protagonist will not be the heir, and so he cannot be an object of much attraction. Thus, the narrator seems to be given the task of moralizing Trollope’s construction of Henry as a failure. Henry is the only male member of the Jones family when his uncle passes away. Henry is a good-looking man, “tall with well-formed features, with light hair and blue-grey eyes,” and he is a young man with a gentlemanly appearance (15). Henry appears flawless physically, but his behavior and manners, especially in old Jones’s eyes, are lacking. Jones dislikes Henry’s bodily manners, pointing out that Henry cannot “look one in the face” and tends to provoke feelings of repulsion in others (15). Jones examines the origin of his own revulsion to Henry. Henry’s moral integrity seems

suspect due to his inability to look straight, and, furthermore, he is estimated as “a sly boy, given to lying” (8). Additionally, the narrator explains that Henry’s father had disgraced the family name by his dissipated life. This information is used against Henry, insinuating that he could follow his father’s path, and might disgrace the family name again. There is a piece of good news in that Henry abandons the “practice of running into debt and having the bills sent down to Llanfeare” and he also gets a job in London to live as a “steady young man of business” (8). However, these actions are not enough to alter Jones’s “prejudice” against Henry.

It is not rare in Trollope’s novels for the protagonist to become distraught at blistering criticism. The protagonist usually overcomes public accusations by proving its invalidity with evidence of his moral character. Trollope is known for his sympathetic portrayal of “the lonely individual” alienated from the community (David Gilmore xii). For Trollope, the isolated individual is placed in “unusual circumstances” because he must make some mistake or lack social skills (Thompson viii). Trollope tolerates slow moral growth, believing that the characters would “exhibit [moral] character” in facing adversities and eventually turn out to be the hero (Thompson viii). Also, the protagonist would be “integrated into masculine society and able to support a family and home” (Skilton 130). Most critics point out that there is a rationale behind Trollope’s belief that various individuals develop their moral character in different stages in their life trajectories (Skilton 128). Nevertheless, Henry is not one of those who can transform themselves into a socially accepted individual. For that reason, Jones despises him for not looking him in the eyes. Servants at Llanfeare, including the housekeeper, the butler, and the cook, do not conceal their feelings of repulsion in Henry’s presence.

The narrator confirms their beliefs about the inadequacy of Henry being a heir. Given several chances to remedy the situation, Henry refuses to come clean about his deception. Henry’s defective morality betrays him even when Jones passes away. With servants, Isabel is busy managing the funeral preparation and discussing business matters with Dr. Power. In the middle of a commotion, Henry “seemed to

be so awe-struck by his position, as to be incapable of action” (51). He appears “servile” to Isabel, implying that Isabel should surrender the keys to his hands to be relieved from the burden of managing the property (51). He knows the meaning of possessing the keys, which indicates the ownership of a house. Also, he condenses to suggest that Isabel should stay at Llanfeare as long as she likes. The narrator points out that Henry already assumes the authority of the new owner, even though he is not, and thus he is ingenuous when offering Isabel hospitality, which is not his to give. However, the inheritance process does not proceed as he expects. After the funeral, the family lawyer asks those concerned to gather around the old squire’s breakfast parlour to read old Jones’s will officially. When they discover it is written in favor of Henry, they are suspicious and suspect the existence of a more genuine will, which is expected to be written in favor of Isabel. Additionally, two tenants announce that they were asked to sign their names on the new will a few days before the death of the old master. With his two clerks, Mr. Apjohn, the family lawyer, begins searching for the final will. While the whole house is in upheaval due to anxiety and excitement, Henry sits on a specific chair in a bookroom, saying no helpful word nor commenting negative on the existence of another will (68). Instead of telling what he knows, he complains about being victimized by a false accusation. With a vengeful sentiment, he lies to the lawyer that he does not know of any existence of the final will (68). His susceptibility to lying is a rupture in his moral integrity that shakes beliefs about the expected gender performance of a moral gentleman.

The interesting thing about Henry is that he cannot be considered the villain. He is an immature, selfish, and greedy young man, but not a rascal. While the search continues, Henry reveals symptomatic evidence of his guilt. Externally, he sweats, shows a “sepulchral” complexion, and cannot contain his hand-shaking, which Isabel and the housekeeper notice (58). Also, he is tormented on the inside by his desire to act innocent and ignorant and his wish to tell the truth (76). However, immediately, he changes his mind and shows spitefulness by blaming his uncle for



giving him false hope, Isabel for not listening to him, and his servants for being hostile to him (76). At night, when everyone is gone, Henry enters the bookroom to check if the will is safely hidden, but he panics after seeing the evidence of his wrongdoings. At the same time, he justifies his actions because he was not the one who hid the will (78). Henry is merely a weak coward who neither tells the truth nor disposes of the will.

Even upon assuming the title of Henry Indefer Jones Esq., of Llanfeare, his timidity persists unabated (92). With the commencement of his role as the new master in charge of the household, the senior staff, comprising the butler, housekeeper, and gardener, submit their resignations. Left in isolation, he ascends to the position of “the lord and master of the house and the owner of everything within” (90), yet experiences a profound sense of abandonment. The underlying cause lies in his inability to address the predicament posed by a concealed document. His internal conflict unfolds incoherently, contemplating various courses of action—concealing the paper elsewhere, destroying it, or feeling compelled to disclose its contents (91). Simultaneously, he harbors animosity towards his deceased uncle and Isabel, who ostensibly thrust him into this precarious situation. Henry blames the others for what he suffers. Concomitantly, fear grips him at the prospect of exposure and potential ostracization. Despite oscillating between anxiety and panic, Henry refrains from introspection regarding the root cause of his predicament, consistently attributing it to external forces.

As his internal turmoil intensifies, an opportunity to alleviate his suffering presents itself. With the finalization of an heir, a formal declaration of the legitimacy of the inheritance is required in court. Summoned to attend the court meeting in Carmarthen, a larger town, Henry contemplates the prospect of fabricating a falsehood about accidentally discovering the will to extricate himself from his present dilemma. Despite exerting himself to disclose the location of the latest will, he retreats at the eleventh hour. He laments that the stern countenance and reproachful tone of Mr. Apjohn deter him from confessing the truth (109). This

marks yet another missed opportunity for rectifying his transgressions, even as he bemoans that the “cursed will” (110) is akin to “a nest of hornets” (111) for him.

Repetitive incidents underscore Henry’s incorrigibility, signaling a lack of reform in his future conduct. Until confronted with irrefutable evidence, he steadfastly refuses to acknowledge his deceit, displaying a notable absence of efforts to cultivate moral character during this period. As the current, albeit temporary, owner of Llanfeare, Henry finds himself at a critical juncture when the *Carmarthen Harold*, a local newspaper, questions the legitimacy of the legal proceedings at Llanfeare. This prompts a public inquiry, compelling Henry to defend his innocence in court. The prospect of a public hearing induces profound emotional turmoil in Henry, evident through his sobbing, gasping, and internal struggle, further reinforcing societal criticism regarding his fitness to be a gentleman landlord (161).

Ultimately, Henry is compelled to disclose the truth to Mr. Apjohn. However, even in this moment of confession, he only reveals a partial truth about the events surrounding the creation of the new will. He maintains a degree of deception, asserting that his uncle wrote something akin to the will and that he understood it favored Isabel (207). Yet, he claims ignorance about his uncle’s actions with the document, concealing the fact that he witnessed his uncle placing the will inside a book. The full truth emerges when Mr. Apjohn pieces together the puzzle, exposing Henry’s deceit. Henry finally confesses to his omission and departs for London after signing an agreement affirming the legitimacy of the found will and Isabel’s rightful claim to the Jones estate.

Throughout the narrative, Henry emerges as an anti-hero, incapable of introspection and moral transformation. Faced with multiple opportunities to rectify his transgressions, he consistently demonstrates cowardice and selfishness, prioritizing personal gain over ethical considerations. Amanda Anderson characterizes Henry as a product of internal conflict, where his psychological self triumphs over his moral self (510). Aware of his duties, Henry consistently opts for self-interest, as noted by Patrick Fessenbecker, aligning with Trollope’s exploration of characters

displaying “akrasia” or weakness of the human will (649). These characters, including Henry Jones, act against their moral knowledge, justifying their decisions to pursue self-interest (651), establishing them as anti-heroes in Trollope’s literary landscape.

### III. A Pseudo-Squire in a Bookroom

There are “talks” about Henry Jones as he assumes the new ownership of the Llanfeare estate. Also, those talks are disseminated through the lends of local gossip and media coverage. The *Carmarthen Harold* plays a crucial role in shaping collective criticism Henry’s public behavior, writing that “[i]t was told of him how he lived in the one room, how rarely he left the house, how totally he was without occupation” (144). The newspaper’s detailed reports on Henry’s habits contribute to the rapid spread of these talks among tenants and farmers on the Llanfeare estate, fostering concerns about their master’s respectability. Talks are mainly about Henry’s occupation of a specific domestic space, bookroom on the ground floor at Llanfeare: he is isolated from other occupants, closets himself in the bookroom, and sits in a particular chair by fixing his eyes in the specific direction. As the newspaper reporter writes, the public begins to believe that sitting alone in the bookroom is Henry reflecting on “some mysterious consciousness of crime” (144).

In his instructive work, *The Gentleman’s House* (1865), Victorian architect Robert Kerr delves into the intricacies of the library within a Victorian country house. Described as a “morning room for a gentleman,” the library serves as a space for tasks such as writing letters and perusing business papers (116). This male-centric area allows the gentleman master to engage in discussions regarding estate matters with tenants, free from female interference, and provides a setting for solitary or companionable lounging (116). In *Cousin Henry*, the library is called the bookroom at Llanfeare, which is “a small apartment, placed between the drawing-room and the

breakfast parlour, in which were kept the few hundred volumes which constituted the library of Llanfeare” (55). However, despite the prescribed use of such spaces in Kerr’s manual, the bookroom at Llanfeare stands largely unvisited by the master or other occupants. Old Jones, confined as an invalid, seldom ventures into the room, and Isabel appears to utilize it merely as a passageway between the drawing room and the breakfast parlour. The sole constant presence in the bookroom is Henry, who, despite being idle, remains stationed there. This aligns with Kerr’s guidelines for the rightful use of male-centered rooms by the rightful master.

Nevertheless, the domestic servants at Llanfeare sense an anomaly in Henry’s occupation of the bookroom, deeming it strange and improper. Before the demise of the old master, Henry utilized a gentleman’s room upstairs for private activities, joining his uncle for meals downstairs and spending time in the breakfast parlour. Following the master’s death, Henry isolates himself in the bookroom for extended periods, gazing towards the bookshelf, causing inhabitants to view his behavior as excessively eccentric. Doubts begin to surface regarding Henry’s moral character, as his actions deviate from the established norms of country house living, prompting criticism from those within the estate.

As an illustration of his unconventional behavior, Henry is found lingering in the bookroom until the late hours, extending into the early morning, reaching nearly two o’clock am. The butler, taking it upon himself to offer counsel, approaches the new master, advising him on the prescribed schedule for using each room within the country house (77). However, Henry, adopting a dismissive demeanor, downplays the butler’s guidance, treating it as inconsequential, akin to a piece of the built-in furniture. The household murmurs gain momentum, emphasizing that “hour after hour he sat in the bookroom with his eyes fixed” (93). These discussions escalate, evolving into rumors that circulate throughout the estate, suggesting that Henry spends prolonged periods in the bookroom, his gaze seemingly transfixed. The growing intensity of these talks further underscores the peculiarity of Henry’s conduct, contributing to the formation of a narrative that challenges the established

norms and expectations within the country house setting.

Henry's lack of education and understanding regarding the management of the country house becomes apparent through his utilization of domestic spaces. During his stay at Llanfeare, he employs three rooms for distinct purposes: his bedroom for sleep, the morning room for visits with his uncle, and the dining room for meals. While these choices may be reasonable when he is a guest to Indefar Jones, they become markedly inappropriate and perplexing when Henry assumes the role of the Squire of Llanfeare. His continued occupation of a limited number of rooms signifies a loss of authority within the house. Between his sleep and meals, Henry isolates himself in the bookroom, spending most of his time there. This singular focus on one room raises concerns and invites suspicion and criticism both from within and outside the household. Moreover, such restricted use of space goes against the architectural norms of the time, marking a deviation from expected behaviors for the master of the house.

Mrs. Griffith, the housekeeper, delicately suggests that Henry needs to embrace his responsibilities as the owner by engaging with tenants and farmers on the land (102). She underscores that the servants desire a master who embodies gentlemanlike qualities, revealing that some kitchen staff members have expressed a desire to resign due to the prevailing talks about their master (103). Mrs. Griffith clarifies to the clueless Henry that the master's role extends beyond providing meals—it involves maintaining respectability that garners deference and recognition from the servants. She emphasizes that it's not merely about sustenance but rather about the symbolism associated with the master, as the master's prestige serves as a source of pride for the servants (102). This insight underscores the importance of Henry's role in shaping the perception of the estate and maintaining the respect of those working within it.

Worst of all, the space of Llanfeare works against Henry. The country house is built based on the Victorian belief that a building can become a home when the inhabitants show their emotional attachment to the domestic space (Tange 6). For

Henry, his relationship with each room of Llanfeare deteriorates. For instance, there is the breakfast parlour on the ground floor, in which old master used to have his breakfast and lunch, read the newspapers, and write business letters. Settled comfortably, old Indefer Jones spends his day, watching his niece manage household matters. It is the same room where Mr. Apjohn, the family lawyer, asks the inhabitants to gather for the will reading. Attendees finish their funeral dinner in the dining room, walk together through the hall, and enter the breakfast parlour. The narrator depicts the scene in detail; if the door is open, Mr. Apjohn is seen as he stands at the squire's desk. Dr. Power stands next to him. Both are standing against the window. On the right side, six chairs are set in a single line, inviting six farmers to attend the ceremony of announcing the old master's legacy. On the left side, Isabel and Mrs. Griffith sit together on a sofa. Between the sides, there is a chair facing the squire's desk. Henry is asked to take a seat in the chair, facing directly where the lawyer and doctor stand, and having Isabel and the housekeeper on his left side and six tenants on his right side (61). They appear to attend the interrogation on Henry's involvement of the missing will due to the sitting arrangement that foreshadows a courtroom where Henry is called in testimony later. However, they gather at the breakfast parlour to hear the family lawyer's reading of Indefer Jones's will. If Henry is regarded the would-be-heir, he is the one who invites people to the dinner event in which he takes "the head of the table" and entertains them. Then he would escort them to the breakfast parlor, arranging where each guest takes a seat. Instead, Henry is forced to sit in a way he is isolated from everyone, even though he attends the event to hear the announcement that he is the new owner and master of Llanfeare. The chairs and a sofa placement accentuate Henry's isolation when the will is read, announcing that Henry is the new owner and master. He not only becomes alienated within the room, but he also loses mobility between rooms.

On the other hand, old Jones used to appreciate the spatial norms that the master of the house has total access to each room, and his mobility is necessary to facilitate

the owner's power and respectability. As much as being hospitable to the inhabitants of his estate and in neighboring ones, a landlord, the owner of every things inside his country house, can enjoy his authority thoroughly in his domestic space. While faithfully fulfilling his duties toward his servants, tenants, farmers, and their families, old Jones, the master of Llanfeare, sees the spatial arrangement of his house as able to accommodate his needs and comforts. As he gets old, he has been fortunate to live with his favorite niece, Isabel, who is a skilled housekeeper and a warm-hearted manager. Isabel supervises the daily routines so they are kept properly to provide comfort to her uncle. At four o'clock, the master must be served with dinner at Llanfeare (3). As Jones becomes an invalid in the last days of his life, Isabel changes the daily routines according to a doctor's orders. She makes sure that her uncle as the man of the house is comforted by domestic arrangement; her uncle "get[s] up after breakfast, and to eat his dinner in the middle of the day after his old fashion" (13). Also, she brings the newspaper when he is awake, helps him read sermons on Sundays, and assists his conference with some of his visiting tenants. It can be said that Indefer Jones becomes dependent on Isabel's housekeeping rules. However, it is more correct to say that Isabel works as "the young mistress of the place" because whatever she does is within the tradition of the Jones family, and it is also approved by the master of the house (8).

While Indefer Jones shows that the master indulges in spatial authority by enjoying comforts and convenience, on the other hand, Henry can be called "the pseudo-squire" because he does not know how to find pleasure in owning a country house (262). He eats simple food. The housekeeper witnesses Henry eating frugally "since he had become the owner of Llanfeare" (236). The butler complains that Henry does not ask for the "luxuries of the table" and expensive wine from the cellar (101). In the day, he sits alone on a specific chair facing the specific bookshelf. At night, he takes a seat on the same chair "alone with a single candle burning on the table by his elbow" (76). He repeats these actions every day.

The Victorian country house is maintained and managed to enhance the master's

authority and prestige. Domestic spaces are architecturally partitioned and managed to the advantage and privilege of the master of the house (Spain 15-6). Inside the building of a Victorian country house, there are divisions such as fronts, backs, upstairs, and downstairs, a division that is “complicated by the Victorian enthusiasm for specialization and subdivision, which assigned each group of inhabitants separate quarters” and “allocated a room to each function” (Gerald 177). The family living area that is separated from the servant living area is designed to accommodate the master’s needs and comforts. As Daphne Spain points out, architectural rules often dictate the separation of master from servants, parents from children, and men from women (112). The master accesses various rooms: the study, the library, the morning room, the gentleman’s room, the smoking room, and the billiard room on the ground floor. He sleeps in the master’s bedroom, changes in the dressing room, and speaks to his valet in the valet room (if he has one) on the first floor.

Llanfeare, like other Victorian country houses, holds significance beyond being a residence; it represents traditional values of the English gentry. According to Jessica Gerard, such houses function as powerhouses, economic headquarters, stages for public display, and “venues for community events” (177). The Victorian country house has its own management system, integral to the social norms of class, gender, and age. Ownership of the property is not merely a legal matter; it involves an understanding of values, beliefs, and responsibilities associated with the estate. The duties of a landed gentleman extend beyond estate management; they involve a connection and interdependence between the owner and the estate. Henry, however, seems devoid of any education regarding a master’s duties for a country house. He lacks knowledge of estate and house management and fails to recognize his obligation to offer hospitality to neighbors, fellow landlords, tenants, and dependents.

As a result, the country house, as a marker of dominance, is properly built according to architectural norms and rules and then properly managed by the master,



who is educated with architectural norms based on the social norms of class, gender, and age. Henry's inadequacy as the heir to Llanfeare goes beyond his moral failings and gender nonconformity; he also lacks the essential qualities and understanding required of a country house's master. Trollope leverages the architectural arrangements of the rooms within the country house to underscore that Henry's status is incompatible. Henry's isolation from both people and the estate stems from his lack of acquaintance with anyone or any space at Llanfeare. Despite his greed for owning landed property, he fails to authentically "own" the place. Expressing a desire to leave or sell the house without genuine care for its inhabitants, Henry proves himself incapable of fulfilling the role of a master. His negative connection with Llanfeare raises suspicions and further emphasizes his inability to act as a responsible and respected owner.

Henry does not seem to have any education regarding a master's duties for a country house. He appears to be oblivious to the fact that he must be equipped with knowledge of the country estate and house management. As a landlord, Henry is expected to offer hospitality to the neighboring people. In other words, Henry must interconnect the estate with the public; he is also obliged to offer hospitality to other landlords (Franklin 41). Moreover, he should extend his hospitality "especially to his tenants and poor dependents" on his estate" (Franklin 41). Unfortunately, Henry is isolated from people as well as the estate because he does not acquaint himself with anyone as well as any space at Llanfeare. While he is greedy for owning landed property, he does not know how to genuinely "own" the place. Instead, he keeps telling that he desires to leave the house that is "odious" (206) and "not dear" to him (225) or sell it to the highest bidder. His negative connection with Llanfeare causes him to not care about the inhabitants. Consequently, Henry becomes an object of suspicion since he is unable to act the part of a master.

In Trollope's inheritance plot, the country house and estate are subject to "who will get [it]," and, more importantly, the property is about "being understood in a living sense—house, land, tenants, rents—rather than simply a legal one" (Wall

192). The owner of the landed property must appreciate the “values, belief, and responsibility involved in his estate because he inherits these ideas along with buildings and land and then must bequeath them to the next generation” (Burke 297). Consequently, the owner will be evaluated by how much he understands these ideas and how properly he does his duty as the master. Therefore, the landed gentleman should perform his duties “not just in relation to their estates, but in relation with them,” internalizing the idea that he and his estate are interconnected (McMaster 72).

#### IV. Conclusion

Trollope’s *Cousin Henry* appears to contain a conventional narrative of a prodigal son who is expected to transform into a better person. As the narrative progresses, the reader learns that *Cousin Henry* differs because the later pages only confirm that the eponymous protagonist cannot be a hero. He is not ready to be moral and upright, not is he willing to learn these qualities. He is not fit to be the heir of the landed property and the family name because Henry is an odious, despicable, immature, and self-serving young man. He is also not suitable as the next master and owner of the country house, Llanfeare, because he does not comprehend the depth of symbolic meanings and values of the Victorian country house. With a lack of education and knowledge, Henry cannot keep respectability according to place-specific and time-specific architectural norms. As a result, the inhabitants in the house, including servants, do not respect him. At his worst, he does not even try to build a relationship with the inhabitants, and so they who eventually leave him alone. Since he does not care about people inside the house, he also does not show any emotional attachment to the space of Llanfeare. Likewise, the space of the house seems to dislike the owner, as if refuting the idea that “a man’s house is his castle” (213). If the novel aims at proving how Henry is inadequate both as the hero

of a becoming plot and heir to the landed estate and the family name, it seems to achieve its goal. In doing so, the novel teaches a moral lesson by showing the case of what it should not be.

The narrative ends with Isabel as the next owner of Llanfeare. However, the question remains concerning Henry's last days at Llanfeare. Mr. Apjohn figures out that the lost document is hidden in the book that Indefer Jones used to read. He understands that the book is placed on the bookshelf Henry used to stare at in the bookroom. With the help of Isabel's father, the lawyer secures the document. Then, he makes Henry sign an agreement document indicating Henry's recognition that the new will is legitimate. When all the legal processes are complete, Henry is allowed to return to London, getting his old employment in a firm. Gray, for instance, raises the question about how Henry "remains largely unpunished" (114), while the narrator dramatizes his wrongdoings throughout the narrative. Gray explains that what Henry does is in fact wrong, but there can be no punishment since he was only acting out against his unfair treatment (114). Other critics say that Henry is still wrong, regardless of how unfairly he was treated. Trollope has an optimistic attitude toward wayward men, believing that "different men reach 'manhood' by different routes and with different results" (Skilton 130). How Henry goes back to London safely is narrated by Mr. Apjohn, who also vocalizes Trollope's idea of being tolerant toward those who are wayward and backward. Mr. Apjohn says that there is no need to be angry at the mistake of an immature young man. Instead, he says that "I pit[y] him" (277). Believing an idea of "the slow ripening" (Crossley 106), Trollope takes pity for those young men's unkept promises and the frustrated incompetence, instead of punishing their irresolute behavior and strayed moral judgment. It seems that those failed young men of the present time would improve themselves given the right time.

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