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STEWARDED AFFECTIVE LANDSCAPES IN ANN RADCLIFFE'S *THE MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO*

Melissa Smith

I

One of the most significant sociological changes taking place in England at the time of *The Mystery of Udolpho's* (1794) publication was enclosure, which began as an informal process of mutual agreement between landholders as early as the 1500s but by the 1700s was often characterized as an official, top-down process mandated by Act of

Parliament.¹ But the continuing role of mutuality and mediation in this process is underserved by this description. Much of the social change taking place in England was being communicated from center to periphery, from lord to tenant, and vice versa by a person whose professional interests gave him a liminal, mediatory position in the social landscape: the steward. A universally recognizable figure in eighteenth-century society, the steward and his vicarious management put him at the forefront of the changes wrought by enclosure, not the least of which was the shift from a land-based to a cash-based economy and its perceived commodification of all social relations. The ethic of stewardship therefore became a touchstone in the enclosure debate as the role of property in mediating community life was made a key issue. Stewardship, in fact, seems to offer an alternative, anti-capitalist language for articulating a conception of land use that synthesized economy and sympathy. The *Mysteries of Udolpho*, despite its setting in the Italy and France of the sixteenth century, dramatizes the potential effects of enclosure and agrarian capitalism through the language of stewardship being developed in eighteenth century England.

The conflict over enclosure in the eighteenth century was in large measure one that rhetorically pitted “the moral economy” against the “self-interested individualism of agrarian capitalism.”² In other words, profit and sympathy were often seen as irreconcilable outcomes of one or the other side of the debate. Conservative opponents to enclosure, for instance, were concerned about the character of the individual or citizen that would result from the land reform and what sort of relation he would bear toward the other members of his local community.³ Many expressed the view that the erection of fences by liberal enclosers was a heartless—and sometimes even godless—consolidation of power that would impoverish the many to enrich the few.⁴ Stewards, embodying a compromise between profit and sympathy, often found themselves implementing such changes while seeking to mollify tenants and other locals dependent on

¹ Susanna Wade Martins, *Farmer, Landlords, and Landscapes: Rural Britain, 1720 to 1870* (Bollington: Windgather Press, 2004), 24, 33.

² Jeanette M. Neeson, *Commoners: Common Right, Enclosure and Social Change in England, 1700–1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 43.

³ Jeanette Neeson points out that “commoners were not only potential labourers; they were either property-owners and patriots, or criminals and paupers, too. Critics expressed a concern with morality and poverty as well as labor supply” (44).

⁴ Martins, *Farmers, Landlords and Landscapes*, 36.

the estate lands. One such class of people was England's commoners, who, believing stewards to be inevitably compromising in the direction of enclosure, adopted a rhetoric of stewardship to save the common lands and champion what they perceived to be the system most likely to promote an ethical community.

The Mysteries of Udolpho inserts itself into this debate largely through the character of Emily St. Aubert, although, as I will demonstrate, other characters, notably her father and her double, Lady Blanche, also further the themes that articulate the novel's stance toward enclosure. That stance is communicated through Emily's own behavior toward property; though Emily eventually comes to own most of the property available for inheritance in the novel, its value to her is primarily sentimental rather than monetary. Instead of asserting her ownership, Emily casts herself as preserving property primarily as a means to cultivate affective ties and create a virtuous, sympathetic community. To achieve this, the novel establishes a distinction between property and its intangible, immaterial counterpart, landscape: Radcliffe's characters depend on landscape to access, experience, express, and share their emotions, but property has a stifling effect on this practice. Indeed, property ownership is villainized in the novel through figures like Montoni, whose exploitation of its purely fiscal value is an exclusive, individualistic, and oppressive endeavor. In the novel, property ownership interferes with or obscures free access to the landscape and therefore inhibits the creation or sustaining of relationships and the ability of characters to experience consolation or express grief. Emily, however, is the proper person to entrust with the land because she seeks to cultivate its socializing value, represented by the mediating role of landscape. Her rhetorical position is, in essence, not that of owner, but of steward—a position that, as I will argue, aligns her with commoners and places her in the conservative camp of the enclosure debate. Furthermore, I will demonstrate that Radcliffe's attention to the psychic and social dimensions of enclosure, especially Emily's positioning as steward, allowed her to criticize the economic exclusion of women from the emerging capitalist society.

* II *

Enclosure was the process by which the English common lands—manorial property in which community members held common rights—were fenced and rendered private property. As Neeson remarks, "Enclosure—rightly named—meant the closing of the countryside."⁵ Enclosure was motivated by the desire to create more pastureland⁶ or to consolidate scattered strips of arable land.⁷ Where an agreement to enclose could not be arranged by mutual consent, an Act of Parliament was needed to mandate the proposed change. Parliamentary enclosure was relatively infrequent until the 1700s and first peaked between 1760 and 1780.⁸ These dates coincide with the increasing enclosure of commons or waste lands, which unsurprisingly drew more criticism than the enclosure of open fields. Common lands and wastes were lands that were not owned by the local peasantry but that nevertheless were available by right for commoners' use.⁹ Field commons supplied pasture on which small landholders or cottagers who held "pasture rights" could graze their livestock; waste commons were often expanses unsuitable for grazing or agriculture but nevertheless yielded an abundance of raw materials for building, local crafts, and fuel.¹⁰ No special right was required to access the waste; its resources were available to any of the parishioners who cared to exploit them. The commons and wastes often supported entire local economies and a closely interdependent community of self-sufficient yeomen who operated independently of the labor and consumer markets.¹¹ It is therefore not unexpected that proposals to close the commons often met with protest and sometimes even violence; such a change could not only impoverish those commoners who relied on commons and wastes for their livelihood, but it would also destroy a community and way of life, turning a previously independent peasant class into wage laborers.¹²

⁵ Neeson, *Commoners*, 5.

⁶ Neeson, *Commoners*, 274.

⁷ Martins, *Farmers, Landlords and Landscapes*, 23.

⁸ Martins, *Farmers, Landlords and Landscapes*, 33.

⁹ Neeson, *Commoners*, 1.

¹⁰ Neeson, *Commoners*, 158.

¹¹ Neeson, *Commoners*, 175.

¹² Neeson, *Commoners*, 12.

As this creation of a new class of laborers suggests, the acceleration of enclosure in the eighteenth century signaled the end of the old landed, agrarian, feudal economy and the increasing dominance of a mercantile, capitalist one. Even earlier forms of enclosure were responses to such changes in the marketplace. As Martins writes, "Both piecemeal enclosure and enclosure by agreement were increasing in importance during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century as a slow transition from mainly open-field semi-subsistence farming in which market influences were local, to a market economy whose prices were dictated by the needs of an urban population was taking place."¹³ Among other things, enclosure was seen as a way to meet the needs of a more demanding marketplace:¹⁴ in the eighteenth century, England was experiencing a labor supply problem, and the commoning economy kept a large number of the peasant class out of the labor force. Not only would pastureland require fewer laborers than farmland, closing the commons would create a class of wage-dependent workers available for other types of labor; both of these effects of enclosure were anticipated as resolutions to an economic problem. However, Neeson claims, neither side framed the enclosure debate in this way.¹⁵ Rather, arguments were often based on a rhetoric of feeling. Enclosers, for instance, sometimes "accused *commoners* of selfish individualism"¹⁶ that exerted itself to the detriment of the national good. Conversely, anti-enclosers observed that as lands were consolidated, "Landlords grew lazy, some 'little better than tyrants . . . who when they had less wealth were more sensible of their dependence and connections, and could feel both for the poor and the public upon every emergency."¹⁷ One encloser even agreed that the process would be "disagreeable and painful [to] the tender and feeling heart,"¹⁸ despite its advantages. These passages demonstrate that both sides of the debate relied on arguments that valorized feeling and community-building.¹⁹ The two are, of course, inextricably connected: "selfishness"

¹³ Martins, *Farmers, Landlords and Landscapes*, 24.

¹⁴ Neeson, *Commoners*, 44.

¹⁵ Neeson, *Commoners*, 44.

¹⁶ Neeson, *Commoners*, 44.

¹⁷ Neeson, *Commoners*, 22.

¹⁸ Neeson, *Commoners*, 26.

¹⁹ Lynn Festa has noticed a similar pattern among other important issues of the era. "Since the sentimental is a formal aspect of a text rather than an ideological position, it is promiscuous in its choice of political bedfellows," she writes. "Janus-faced, the sentimental can be used to

and insensibility cause community members to lose sight of their interdependence and make the community suffer.

In their historical context, such arguments would have been especially legible and persuasive. Note that in the quotation castigating landlords, above, a landlord who becomes less “sensible” is less able to act ethically toward others in his community. This key word is explained by Sussman: “The term ‘sensibility’ usually refers to a . . . susceptibility to the feelings of others, particularly their sorrows. Sensibility spurs the person who possesses it towards benevolence.”²⁰ In this way, “sentimentality fosters the sympathy Lord Kames calls ‘the great cement of human society’ by making ‘the prosperity and preservation of each individual . . . the care of the whole species.’”²¹ The ideology of sensibility, as the example of the unfeeling landlord shows, therefore added a moral dimension of care to arguments that relied on sensibility: “Sentimentality is a philosophy in which feelings and morality are linked,” Charlotte Sussman confirms. “It presupposes that the emotions you feel in response to others’ feelings are not only pleasurable or painful but also instructive.”²² Such an ideology puts an additional barb in the accusation that enclosers “impoverished twenty small farmers to enrich one.”²³ The landlord’s accumulation of wealth dulls his moral feeling because it insulates him from suffering; like an unexercised muscle, his sympathies atrophy. These arguments were particularly common among anti-enclosers and were part of a strain of conservative rhetoric politicized by Edmund Burke. Such rhetoric sentimentalized the feudalism and tradition that enclosure threatened to erase and, Burke-like, expressed the fear that “in destroying village relations enclosure also endangered relations in the nation as a whole”²⁴ because society would no longer be sustained by the old foundation of affection and obligation that the old system of landlords, tenant farmers, cottagers, and commoners had maintained. Burke’s identification of “sophisters, oeconomists, and

argue both sides of a question: thus it is employed as a rhetorical strategy by both proslavery writers and abolitionists, borrowed by supporters and adversaries of colonial trade alike” (15).

²⁰ Charlotte Sussman, *Eighteenth Century English Literature, 1660–1789* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), 194.

²¹ Lynn Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 15.

²² Sussman, *Eighteenth Century English Literature*, 194.

²³ Neeson, *Commoners*, 22.

²⁴ Neeson, *Commoners*, 22.

calculators" whose proposals for restructuring society he had called "the offspring of cold hearts"²⁵ in many minds probably aptly described the motivations of the enclosers.

Important to such feeling-based arguments is the fact that sentimental ideology relied heavily on the idea of mediation—that emotions are communicated, for instance, by bodily signs that in announcing one's sensibility also announce one's virtue.²⁶ In addition, by imbuing an object with sentimental value, material objects could "furnish touchstones for . . . emotions" and "serve as a means of recalling, calibrating, manipulating the incitement of feeling."²⁷ As will be discussed below, land often performed the function of such sentimental objects, embodying the life of feeling of the community that clustered around it. The conservative concern about the status of community can be thought of as a fear that a mercantile society will disrupt old modes of mediating feeling. As Raymond Williams points out in *Culture and Society, 1780–1950*,²⁸ at the turn of the century, concern was rising that the disappearance of pre-industrial labor practices would result in a devolution of human relations into market exchanges. In the world of commerce, utility alone determined value, which in turn determined price; Englanders therefore mistrusted that the exchange of cash, goods, or labor alone could foster the type of sympathetic awareness or "cement" necessary to preserve human values. Though often commodities themselves, sentimental objects represented a protest against commodification by accruing a value that had no meaning in the marketplace and that rendered it nonexchangeable therein.²⁹ In contrast, when freemen were forced into the labor market by enclosure, they suddenly represented no more than their own purchasable labor power; the exchange was one of utility alone, sapped of the ennobling, humanizing sentiment of village relations.

The consolidation of estates to meet the demands of the new economy contributed to this threatening trend by emphasizing the

²⁵ Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the French Revolution* (New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1909–1914), accessed July 10, 2013. <http://www.bartleby.com/24/3/6.html>.

²⁶ Sussman, *Eighteenth Century English Literature*, 196. Such signs included bodily reactions such as "blushing, sighing, and most importantly, tears."

²⁷ Festa, *Sentimental Figures*, 67.

²⁸ Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society 1780–1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958).

²⁹ Festa, *Sentimental Figures*, 68.

efficiency of privatization over the potential of the land to mediate relationships. Usually insignificant on the economic radar, the fruits of labor in the commoning culture were highly likely to take on additional sentimental meanings and to be exchanged for the purposes of strengthening community ties.³⁰ Neeson comments, "Waste gave [commoners] a variety of useful products, and the raw materials to make more. It also gave them the means of exchange with other commoners and so made them part of the network of exchange from which mutuality grew," fostered prominently by gifts and shared labor.³¹ The land, therefore, especially shared common land, became the matrix in which community members related to each other. The common was the site of year-round harvesting that brought the community together, and local games and festivities often grew up around traditional times for harvesting furze or picking berries.³² About the effect of such communal gatherings Neeson concludes, "All these occasions of contact, familiarity and exchange established some obligation, some connection on the basis of equality—a mutuality between landless commoners and everyone else. . . . They met on common ground."³³

The instrumentality of property in establishing interdependent, sympathetic communities was made effective by a principle of "sharing," "access," and especially "possession without ownership."³⁴ Importantly, these concepts were constantly re-echoed in eighteenth-century discourses about landscape, property's idealized counterpart, establishing it as a kind of sentimental token. "For men of reason and imagination," Ann Bermingham writes, "the prospect becomes a spectacle providing viewers with an experience of domination and possession that transcended simple economy."³⁵ In transcending ownership, experiences with landscape took on a morally superior tinge. In the early nineteenth century, Ralph Waldo Emerson would write, "The charming landscape which I saw this morning, is indubitably made up of some twenty or thirty farms. Miller owns

³⁰ Neeson, *Commoners*, 180.

³¹ Neeson, *Commoners*, 158–59, 180, 181.

³² Neeson, *Commoners*, 182.

³³ Neeson, *Commoners*, 182.

³⁴ Neeson, *Commoners*, 3.

³⁵ Ann Bermingham, "System, Order, and Abstraction: The Politics of English Landscape Drawing around 1795," in *Landscape and Power* ed., William J. Thomas Mitchell, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 85.

this field, Locke that, and Manning the woodlands beyond. But none of them owns the landscape. There is a property in the horizon which no man has but he whose eye can integrate all the parts. . . . This is the best part of all these men's farms, yet to this their land-deeds give them no title."³⁶ As such quotations demonstrate, land and landscape were being carefully separated and distinguished from each other and, as growing anxieties about industrialism predict, treatment of property purely in terms of its monetary value was seen as inferior to a recognition of its spiritual value, represented in landscape. Mitchell affirms, "Landscape" must represent itself . . . as the antithesis of "land," as an "ideal estate" quite independent of "real estate."³⁷

The relationship of common land and its culture to enclosed farms was often expressed in a rhetoric that paralleled the distinction between landscape and property. Like the common fields and wastes, landscape was land to which all had access and from which no one was barred by arbitrary possession. Neeson tells us that "Critics of commons weighed the value of common right in terms of the market,"³⁸ comparing the financial benefit of commoners' gleaning, grazing, or gathering practices against the benefits of privatization. As has already been discussed, however, the shared use of common lands also gave them an important social value. Because of the discursive similarity between commons and landscape, their sentimental values, landscape was often used to symbolize and idealize the way of life represented by the commons. One commentator, George Bourne, "thought that a commoner's sense of well-being came from a sense of ownership and possession, a feeling of belonging, and an overwhelming localness. This was not the ownership of a few acres . . . but the possession of a landscape."³⁹ Indeed, the societal restructuring that took place during enclosure was often registered in terms of the changing landscape. For instance, John Clare's poems lament the loss of a society based on personal freedom, mutual aid, and fluid class relations as enclosure made small farmers "more differentiated, more specialized, more

³⁶ William J. Thomas Mitchell, "Imperial Landscape," in *Landscape and Power* ed., William J. Thomas Mitchell, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 13–14.

³⁷ Mitchell, "Imperial Landscape," 15.

³⁸ Neeson, *Commoners*, 41.

³⁹ Neeson, *Commoners*, 179.

private."⁴⁰ In "The Mores," these changes are communicated by comparing the landscapes of past and present:

But now alls fled and flats of many a dye
 That seemed to lengthen with the following eye
 Moors loosing from the sight far smooth and blea
 Where swopt the plover in its pleasure free
 Are vanished now with commons wild and gay
 As poets visions of lifes early day . . .
 And sky bound mores in mangled garbs are left
 Like mighty giants of their limbs bereft
 Fence now meets fence in owners little bounds
 Of field and meadow large as garden grounds
 In little parcels little minds to please
 With men and flocks imprisoned ill at ease⁴¹

In its ability to be invested, like a sentimental object, with memory and emotion, landscape becomes "a medium not only for expressing value but also for expressing meaning, for communication between persons."⁴² As a social practice it also represented the real exchanges mediated by shared property that took place outside of the realm of economics. Celebrating the common inheritance of landscape afforded by the commons, artists like Clare condemned private enterprise and celebrated the collective value of possession without ownership.

The rhetorical position that the concept of possession without ownership afforded, especially its easy accommodation of the ideology of sensibility, was an attractive one to the liberal side of the enclosure debate as well. It allowed them to propose that their strategies for improvement, including enclosure, would promote the happiness and prosperity of the community or the nation.⁴³ This position I call stewardship. A steward is anyone who takes on a project of care whose purpose is to create the conditions that make a sympathetic existence more available to members of the

⁴⁰ Neeson, *Commoners*, 257.

⁴¹ John Clare, *John Clare: Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. Merryn Williams and Raymond Williams (London: Methuen, 1986), 90-93.

⁴² Mitchell, "Imperial Landscape," 15.

⁴³ Martins, *Farmers, Landlords and Landscapes*, 39. Mary Poovey adds that sensibility was "one theory hospitable to capitalism before its triumph ("Ideology," 330).

community. I adopt this term because the person of the steward embodies the symbiotic relationship between profit and sympathy in England's land economy. Estate stewards, whose job was to ensure "the prosperity of the estate and thereby of his master, his family, and posterity,"⁴⁴ managed the disposal of property they did not own. His eye was toward long-term good, and the best way to ensure the longevity of the estate was to establish and maintain good relationships with the community that grew up around the manor. Indeed, David Roger Hainsworth remarks that the "surest way" to achieve the prosperity of the estate "was by promoting harmony between landlord and tenant," in which effort the steward played "a mediating role."⁴⁵ His actions were premised on the idea that human, emotional bonds of loyalty and gratitude make real property productive. Deeply involved in the affairs and daily life of the estate, even more so than the (often absentee) landlord, the steward legally represented his master in settling disputes, stumping for votes, and policing tenants to see that they were using best practices in their farming. Though in the Reform era the steward himself would come to represent the continuity of a life of feeling in the transition to a new economic order, because of his collusion in the reshaping of the landscape through estate amalgamation and other economic and aesthetic "improvements," commoners often found themselves at odds with the steward over what the proper stewardship of land looked like. The enclosure debate was ultimately an argument over whose stewardship was more legitimate. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* weighs in on this debate through the figure of Emily St. Aubert.

* III *

The Mysteries of Udolpho presents the reader with two possible modes of ownership: possessive and stewardly. Emily's mode is decidedly the latter. Her attitude toward the landscape is steeped in universalism and egalitarianism through her emphasis on its role in creating and fostering affective relationships. "Poverty cannot deprive us of intellectual delights,"

⁴⁴ David Roger Hainsworth, *Stewards, Lords, and People: The Estate Steward and His World in Later Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 48.

⁴⁵ Hainsworth, *Stewards, Lords, and People*, 48.

she tells her father when he reveals that his assets have been significantly diminished. "It cannot deaden our taste for the grand, and the beautiful, or deny us the means of indulging it; for the scenes of nature—those sublime spectacles, so infinitely superior to all artificial luxuries! are open for the enjoyment of the poor, as well as the rich."⁴⁶ Emily reiterates the benefits of a freely accessible landscape in an attempt to soothe a troubled Valancourt: "Observe those moon light woods, and the towers, which appear obscurely in the perspective. You used to be a great admirer of landscape, and I have heard you say, that the faculty of deriving consolation, under misfortune, from the sublime prospects, which neither oppression, or poverty with-hold from us, was the peculiar blessing of the innocent" (503). These passages seem to confirm Norton's observation that "[o]ne of [Radcliffe's] subversive revolutionary messages is that the sublime landscape is a liberating force even for peasants."⁴⁷ Indeed, Emily is here following Joseph Addison's logic that "A spacious Horizon is an Image of Liberty, where the Eye has Room to range abroad."⁴⁸ As John Clare's "The Mores" shows, however, a changed landscape prevents both body and eye from roaming abroad:

Far spread the moorey ground a level scene
 Bespread with rush and one eternal green . . .
 Still meeting plains that stretched them far away
 In unchecked shadows of green brown, and grey
 Unbounded freedom ruled the wandering scene
 Nor fence of ownership crept in between
 To hide the prospect of the following eye
 Its only bondage was the circling sky⁴⁹

Though the landscape may be a democratizing force, it remains so only if the landscape itself is unchanged—"fenceless," as it were. Because the possessiveness of ownership erects the fences, the freedom of the landscape can only be preserved unaltered in the hands of a steward—someone who

⁴⁶ Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 60.

⁴⁷ Rictor Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho: The Life of Ann Radcliffe* (London: Leicester University Press, 1999), 11.

⁴⁸ Bermingham, "System, Order, and Abstraction," 84.

⁴⁹ Clare, *Selected Poetry*, 90–91.

can manage the land in a way that leaves it physically and emotionally available.

The ability of the eye to range abroad, the liberty available in landscape, is crucial to the novel's use of landscape as an emotional medium. As in enclosure rhetoric, an altered landscape denotes a threat to the life of feeling. This is primarily because "possessive" property ownership interferes with or obscures free access to the landscape and therefore inhibits the creation or sustaining of relationships or the ability of characters to experience consolation or express grief. A few examples will demonstrate the characters' reliance upon landscape to feel and share their own emotions. Volume 3, Chapter 13, begins,

The Lady Blanche, meanwhile, who was left much alone, became impatient for the company of her new friend [Emily St. Aubert], whom she wished to observe sharing in the delight she received from the beautiful scenery around. She had now no person, to whom she could express her admiration and communicate her pleasures, no eye, that sparkled to her smile, or countenance, that reflected her happiness; and she became spiritless and pensive. (495)

This passage highlights the necessity of the landscape for imagining affective bonds and accessing emotion. Blanche cannot experience her own experience of the landscape unless she can see her own feelings "reflected" in a nearby body; she does not just want to talk to Emily, she wants to be able to "*observe*" Emily sharing her own "delight" (495). That landscape is operating as the primary means of imagining and building affective bonds is reaffirmed in Blanche's petition to her father to allow Emily to stay at the chateau. Blanche simply complains, "And you know, my dear sir . . . How delighted I shall be with such a companion; for, at present, I have no friend to *walk*, or to read⁵⁰ with" (488; emphasis added). Indeed, Emily and Blanche's first shared experience is a walk they take over the grounds

⁵⁰ Reading was a crucial activity in the ideology of sensibility. It educated readers' feelings: "Sentimental literature is exemplary of emotion, teaching its consumers to produce a response equivalent to the one presented in its episodes." It "presupposes that literary emotions herald active ones; a theatrical or fictional tear foreshadows the spontaneous one of human sympathy" (Sussman, *Eighteenth Century English Literature*, 194). Blanche, in her reliance on Emily's emotional reactions to experience her own, may see Emily herself as a landscape or book to be "read" sentimentally.

of the chateau, where Emily is “as much delighted with the surrounding views, as Blanche, in the benevolence of her heart, had wished” (489). In other words, when planning an experience that she hopes will win her a friend, Blanche’s mind turns first to the possibilities latent in landscape. Not only is she not disappointed, as the above quotation demonstrates, but the landscape features, namely the monastery towers, provide them with a topic of conversation in which personal desires and warm emotions are expressed. Emily and Blanche are replicating in a more genteel way the experience of living and working together on the land and building relationships through a shared recognition and interpretation of landscape objects. George Bourne describes how this may have operated in a representative commoner:

From long experience—experience older than his own, and traditional amongst his people—he knew the soil of the fields and its variations almost foot by foot;...the coppices and woods, the water-meadows and the windy heaths, the local chalk and clay and stone...reminded him of the crafts of his people, spoke to him of the economies of his own cottage life, so that the turfs or the faggots or the timber he handled when at home called his fancy while he was handling them, to the landscape they came from.⁵¹

Repeatedly throughout the novel, Emily will similarly rely on the landscape to preserve identity and memory, both personal and communal, and reach out to landscape to find a like mind.

This use of landscape is highlighted in Emily and Valancourt’s relationship, which also blossomed through shared experience in and of landscapes. After several days of wandering through sublime scenes together, Valancourt seems to anticipate Blanche in his declaration that “These scenes . . . Soften the heart, like the notes of sweet music . . . They waken our best and purest feelings, disposing us to benevolence, pity, and friendship. Those whom I love—I always seem to love more in such an hour as this” (46). Recognizing its role in their relationship, the landscape becomes a shared token between Valancourt and Emily so that, upon Emily’s departure for Udolpho, they agree to muse upon the same scenic objects at an appointed time in order to simulate togetherness: “You will then

⁵¹ Neeson, *Commoners*, 179.

meet me in thought,' said he; 'I shall constantly watch the sun-set, and I shall be happy in the belief that your eyes are fixed upon the same object with mine, and that our minds are conversing,'" vows Valancourt (163). In this speech, Valancourt and Emily intend to invest a particular scenic object with an agreed-upon meaning so that, in viewing it, it will speak to them of each other. Just after making this agreement, Emily recreates with Valancourt Blanche's dependence on her as she admires the scenes she passes through on the way to Italy. Feeling as if it is not in her power to thoroughly comprehend the beauty of the Alps without Valancourt, Emily is still ecstatic:

These [mountains] brought to her recollection the prospects among the Pyrenees, which they had admired together . . . How often did she wish to express to [Valancourt] the new emotions which this astonishing scenery awakened, and that he could partake of them! Sometimes too she endeavored to anticipate his remarks, and almost imagined him present. . . . [The sentiments] of grandeur and sublimity now dilated her mind, and elevated the affections of her heart. (163)

This passage contains a remarkable variety of reactions to and through landscape, which here allows Emily to feel increased love for her beau, imagine a conversation they might have, invoke the virtual presence of her loved one, and suffer from the impossibility of enjoying the landscape without him. In each of the examples discussed, feeling becomes nearly impossible without an uninterrupted, immutable prospect.

In contrast, property, particularly the attitude of possessive ownership, often interferes with the liberatory and mediatory possibilities of landscape. In the case of M. Quesnel, for instance, a possessive sense of ownership gives him the ability to manipulate or efface the landscape. Nowhere are the problematics of this more apparent than in M. Quesnel's plan to cut down the avenue, and in particular St. Aubert's favorite chestnut, on the ancient St. Aubert estate, which is currently in M. Quesnel's possession. Ironically, his justification for this action is that the trees "interrupt [his] prospects" (13). Such an excuse recalls the liberal justifications of enclosers, who argued that commoner's insistence on maintaining their commoning rights was one of self-interest when in reality enclosers

were "more interested in consolidating their power."⁵² While seeming to restrict M. Quesnel's liberty, however, these trees are crucial to St. Aubert's ability to be able to access the childhood happiness he associates with the chestnut (Radcliffe, *Udolpho*, 13). Looking at it causes "the pursuits and events of his early days" to "[crowd] fast to his mind" (24), a circumstance, if the treatment of similar significant trees in the book is any indication, that would cease to be possible if the chestnut were toppled. Feelings of love, again and again, seem to be best recoverable when observing the same scenes in which love has been previously shared. This is apparent in the manner in which Emily grieves for her father after his death; her mourning primarily takes the form of revisiting the scenes near their home that he loved to gaze upon. Ownership like M. Quesnel's endangers the integrity of such scenes.

Emily's enjoyment of landscape is also endangered by others' desires for possession. In order to obtain his late wife's properties, Montoni confines Emily in the castle Udolpho and continually harasses her to sign over her aunt's estate. He is fixated on obtaining the properties to pay off his debts and is interested solely in their monetary value. Not only does her confinement limit her landscape prospects, but the oppression distracts Emily and prevents her from becoming observant of or absorbed in the landscape as she was once able to be in more peaceable circumstances, cutting off her access to memory and feeling. Symptomatically, while in the castle, she is never able to soothe or adequately vent or express her emotions by reading, playing her lute, or painting (which she has always confined to landscape sketches). These feelings are coincident with enclosure. In fact, the only time in the castle episode that she is able to successfully render a landscape is the brief time she spends in the cottage in the woods, an event coincident with a reestablishment of community: not only does this event seem to coincide with her belief that Valancourt is in the castle, it is also the only time during her captivity that she converses with someone of similar tastes, the cottager's daughter, Maddelina (418). Not only Emily, but the castle itself seems to undergo a transformation in the imagined presence of a loved one and in a momentary relief from the pressures of Montoni's possessive desire. Immediately upon leaving the castle she feels an immense sense of liberty and turns to "[gaze], with

⁵² Martins, *Farmer, Landlords and Landscape*, 36.

these emotions, upon the turrets of the castle, rising high over the woods, among which she wound, [and] the stranger, whom she believed to be confined there, returned to her remembrance" (400). The castle has here changed into picturesque feature of the landscape as soon as Emily is able to return to a position of observer sharing the scene of the castle's surroundings with a sympathetic mind.

The crisis of property ownership she undergoes in the castle is appropriate to the setting. The romantic stock ruined tower has been theorized to represent "the coexistence of two opposed ideologies within the Picturesque, one proclaiming the insignificance of private property, the other honouring the rights of real or symbolic ownership."⁵³ The novel, after all, despite its condemnation of ownership, is very much interested in making sure Emily retains her property. As was demonstrated above, the continued availability of a place like La Vallée is indispensable to Emily's ability to express, understand, and share emotion. The novel therefore simultaneously suggests that it is dangerous to allow one's beloved scenes to fall into the wrong hands and requires a means whereby they can be both liberated and protected. The solution seems to come in a form of stewardship over property that respects its role as a provider of landscapes that enable the creation and maintenance of emotional feelings and bonds. This may explain why almost all of the property in the novel reverts to Emily's hands: La Vallée, her father's family's estate; her aunt's estates; Laurentini's estates; even (by marriage) Valancourt's brother's estate eventually fall under her ownership. Emily is, of course, the perfect steward because she views her property through the emotional utility of the landscape it encompasses and thereby maintains its universal accessibility. Recall in the example above that upon learning of their rumored poverty, Emily willingly trades the comfort of her father's real property for the prospect offered by its virtual cousin, landscape. Her addition that "if La Vallée remains for us, we must be happy" (59) in no way contradicts her landscape-valuing philosophy. For her, the value of St. Aubert's estate is sentimental, and she sorrows to think of losing it because, as a scene and a place, it has long facilitated her family's mutual love. This is strongly suggested by a later episode:

⁵³ Raimonda Modiano, "The Legacy of the Picturesque: Landscape, Property and the Ruin," in *The Politics of the Picturesque: Literature, Landscape and Aesthetics Since 1770*, eds., Stephen Copley and Peter Garside, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 196-97.

La Vallée, her native home, which was endeared to her by its having been the residence of her parents, would soon be restored to her possession. There she meant to fix her future residence, for, though it could not be compared with the chateau at Tholouse, either for extent, or magnificence, its pleasant scenes and the tender remembrances that haunted them, had claims upon her heart, which she was not inclined to sacrifice to ostentation. (570)

La Vallée houses Emily's memory; it is the repository of her identity. This gives it a more than economic value, and Emily's virtue is manifest in the fact that she values the sentimental over the fiscal. Notably, her early reluctance to give up the estates of her aunt was motivated by her desire to please and provide for Valancourt. Their primarily emotional value is pointed out upon her receiving confirmation that the Tholouse estates are indeed in her possession: "[S]he felt, that the estates could now contribute little to the happiness of a life, in which Valancourt had no longer an interest" (559–60). This sentiment is later repeated: "The pleasure, with which she received this intelligence, was clouded when she considered, that he, for whose sake she had once regretted the want of fortune, was no longer worthy of sharing it with her" (570). The only pleasure Emily derives from ownership, then, is in her role as a steward or caretaker of property on behalf of others. If the land proves to have little potential as an affective landscape, she denies her claim to it: "To the estate at Tholouse she had no peculiar *attachment*, and it was her wish to dispose of this, that she might purchase her paternal domains" (637; emphasis added), which are valuable to her as her father's "birth-place and the haunt of his early years" (637). As the novel closes, Emily's role as a steward reaches its height. She creates good feelings and provides consolation by surrendering her Laurentini legacy to M. Bonnac; she uses her property to support the marriage of Annette and Ludovico by making them housekeeper and steward at her father's ancient domain; and she resides in La Vallée because of its ability to revive the love she originally felt with Valancourt. In fact, because of the near impossibility of reviving emotions without the interface of landscape, the love or marriage plot could not be resolved without Emily and Valancourt's return to the scenes of their original declarations. Indeed, the novel closes rejoicing that the couple "were, at length, restored to each other—to the beloved landscapes of their native country" (672), which the narrator's dash seems to suggest are virtually the same thing.

Radcliffe's insistence on the necessity of landscape for affective communication asserts the value of mediation; her treatment of landscape as an ideal form of property establishes stewardship, not ownership, as the proper mode of land disposal. Together, these representations emphasize the values of inclusion and collaboration and suggest the power latent in land to mediate these. By using landscape to make these arguments, she was directly invoking politicized discourse involved in communicating and negotiating changing "social dispositions towards order, power, and meaning."⁵⁴ By putting property—and control of the landscape—in the hands of a woman, however, Radcliffe is doing more than taking a conservative stance toward enclosure. It is also called forth by the need to provide women a way to participate, on their own terms, in an economy that excluded and marginalized them while forcing them into the position of consumers. In her parallelism to the commoner, Emily's preference for access, for possession without ownership, is the result of a threat of imminent economic disempowerment; stewardship is not only a rhetorical position for protesting that disempowerment, it describes actual social practices. For women especially, the failure to recruit sentimental rhetoric to their position would result in the increasingly oppressive dominance of that ideology over their lives: women were one of the groups most affected by enclosure because common rights had allowed them to participate in the economy and contribute to the subsistence of the family. For them, the enclosure of the commons meant an enforced conformity to separate spheres ideology in which a wife became dependent on a male wage earner and, relegated to the home, was closed out of "worldly" occupation.⁵⁵ For Radcliffe, commoners, and especially women, stewardship is more than just managing land—it is a rhetoric for managing the ideologies represented by landscape. Stewardship was a stance, fragile though it was, by which women could grant themselves power⁵⁶ over both economic systems

⁵⁴ Bermingham, "System, Order, and Abstraction," 78.

⁵⁵ See Jane Humphries, "Enclosures, Common Rights, and Women: The Proletarianization of Families in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries," *Journal of Economic History* 50 (1990): 17–42.

⁵⁶ Mary Poovey, "Ideology and 'The Mysteries of Udolpho,'" *Criticism* 21 (2009). As Mary Poovey points out, "sensibility was not just a minor literary movement but a set of values and images which legitimized economic and political behavior as well" (330) and the "foundation of power" both for the middle class (307) and, problematically, for women who conformed to a sentimental ideal (309).

and coopt otherwise oppressive systems of thought. By giving Emily control over the novel's land and landscape, Radcliffe may have hoped to give some of England's most marginalized groups command over some of their era's most contested philosophies.