

Embedded and Embodied: The Cognition of Movement in *A Sicilian Romance*

By

Erica Paige Oliver

Thesis

Submitting to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Vanderbilt University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

In

English

December 12, 2020

Nashville, Tennessee

Approved:

Advisor, Scott Juengel, Ph.D.

Second Reader, Anthony Reed. Ph.D.

Copyright © 2020 by Erica Paige Oliver All
Rights Reserved

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Embedded and Embodied: The Cognition of Movement in <i>A SICILIAN ROMANCE</i>	1
Plotting <i>A Sicilian Romance</i>	7
Embedding Cognition into the Gothic Floorplan	10
What is Orientation in the Gothic?	19
Thinking on your Feet.....	22
Works Cited.....	32

Embedded and Embodied: The Cognition of Movement in *A Sicilian Romance*

A “directionless narrative.”¹ Not without cause, this is the abiding critical estimation of *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), Ann Radcliffe’s second novel and a text often derided for its immaturity.² In one sense, Wolfram Schmidgen’s assessment is entirely accurate, for, the plot of *A Sicilian Romance*, as it were, consists of futile searches, tortuous flights, and increasingly improbable happenings. In the final pages of the novel, Julia Mazzini’s endless flight from tyranny jarringly transitions into an accidental unearthing of her imprisoned mother, presumed dead for fifteen years; read thusly, Radcliffe’s narrative does produce an illusion of directionlessness. Yet, at the same time, it is a text acutely aware of directionality and the cognition generated by the body’s movement through the physical world. So, in an almost visceral way, it is a text obsessed with direction. By readjusting our critical vision, viewing *A Sicilian Romance* not through the generic standards of realism or genre theory but through the lens of embodied and embedded cognition, Julia’s and her siblings’ unwieldy movements through castle, countryside, and narrative are imbued with new significance; read with cognition in mind, then, the intense spatiality and mobility of *A Sicilian Romance* reveals, not a writerly immaturity, but, rather, a surprisingly modern philosophy of thought, one that is galvanized by motion and that grants mind, body, and world equal share in the production of cognition. Moreover, such a reading is enabled by recent developments in both Radcliffian scholarship

¹ Schmidgen compellingly reads Radcliffe’s circuitous plot as a symptom of contemporary, landed domination; it is only through “submission of action to setting, narrative to description, time to space” that the crimes of the marquis are revealed which in turn “liberates us from spatial domination” (157). Schmidgen, Wolfram. “Ann Radcliffe and the Political Economy of Gothic Space.” *Eighteenth Century Fiction and the Law of Property*, 2009, pp. 150–85.

² Robert Miles notes that there are “still signs of ‘immaturity,’” in *A Sicilian Romance*, “especially in the breathless pace and ceaseless calamities” of its plot (86). Miles, Robert. *Ann Radcliffe: The Great Enchantress*, Manchester U P, 1995, pp. 85-148.

(which has taken a decidedly spatial turn) and by cognitive literary studies (which has found fertile soil in the eighteenth century).³ Working at the juncture of these two trends, I seek to reevaluate *A Sicilian Romance*, emphasizing world embedded and embodied movement as the distinguishing features of a particularly gothic model of cognition, effectively demystifying a plot driven by motion. Before this, however, it is necessary to situate *A Sicilian Romance* within both modern and contemporary understandings of embodied thought.

The last decade has witnessed a growing interest in literary studies that use modern cognitive science to deconstruct body-mind dualism. Rather than locating cognition in an isolated, disembodied mind, literary scholars have, instead, used texts to explore how cognition is *embodied* in our physicality, *embedded* in the social and material world, *extended* into our environment, and perhaps even *enactive*, dependent on our bodies' movement. This literary adoption of "4E cognition" is facilitated by our changing perception of the mind. As Alva Noë's *Out of our Heads* (2009) demonstrates, thinking is not centralized to our minds but is manifest throughout the body:

Human experience is a dance that unfolds in the world with others. You are not your brain. *We are not locked up in a prison of our own ideas and sensations.* The phenomenon of consciousness, like that of life itself, is a world-involving dynamic process.⁴

³ For recent spatially minded studies of Radcliffe, see Amanda Auerbach (2020), Benjamin Brabon (2006), Alice Labourg (2019), Patrick O'Malley (2018), and Wolfram Schmidgen (2009). And, for eighteenth-century applications of cognitive literary studies, see Amanda Auerbach (2020), Jonathan Kramnick (2016), Karin Kukkonen (2019), Jennifer Mensch (2019), and Sean Silver (2015).

⁴ Noë, Alva. *Out of our Heads: Why You are Not Your Brain and Other Lessons from the Biology of Consciousness*, Hill and Wang, 2009, pp. xiii (emphasis mine).

Using markedly gothic language, Noë dispels the archaic image of the armchair genius by emphasizing embodied experience as the foundation of cognition, establishing—as Emma Rees puts it—that “we only know the world because of its contiguity with our bodies.”⁵ Yet, it isn’t only that our bodies move through and are embedded in our environment, taking in perceptions for our minds to process as they go; rather, our bodies are inseparable from these cognitive processes. Applying this embodied mind to literature, scholars like Melba Cuddy-Keane have recently explored how narrative renders visible this scientific reality, illuminating through the pairing of science and text that bodily movement—whether conscious or not—*is* cognition.⁶ By surveying a variety of neuroscientific studies, she demonstrates that bodily movement not only serves “as an implicit guide” in learning but, more radically, that “the body can also initiate cognition on its own.”⁷ The body, it turns out, thinks. Though Cuddy-Keane applies these neuroscientific discoveries to the novels of Virginia Woolf and Henry James, the embodied mind she delineates is no less at home in the eighteenth century than in the twentieth.

As an era suffused with theories of cognition—and notable for John Locke, David Hume, and Immanuel Kant—it makes a certain sense that the long eighteenth century produced literature willfully attuned to the mind. This observation is not new, but it is now being understood in new ways. Though we often assign to the eighteenth century a Cartesian worldview, recent scholarship reveals that at least a sampling of philosophers and authors were attuned to a dynamic, embodied conception of the mind that is, if not entirely accurate, then at least surprisingly modern. Sean Silver, for instance, in his *The Mind is a Collection* (2015) takes

⁵ Rees, Emma. “Varieties of Embodiment and ‘Corporeal Style.’” *Talking Bodies*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, pp. 6.

⁶ Cuddy-Keane, Melba. “Narration, Navigation, and Non-Conscious Thought: Neuroscientific and Literary Approaches to the Thinking Body” (2010).

⁷ Cuddy-Keane, 684.

an embedded view of cognition, exploring the way contemporary descriptions of the mind are delineated in social and material terms.⁸ For Silver, Locke’s closet, Addison’s drawer, Hooke’s workshop, and Bacon’s repository all speak to an understanding of cognition that is embedded in each author’s respective material worlds, experienced bodily. Moreover, Jennifer Mensch has recently argued that both Berkley and Kant—despite their differences—demonstrate that “certain challenges faced by perception and cognition can only be resolved” by the fact of embodiment.⁹ As Mensch and Silver make plain, despite the prominence of dualism, there are facets of eighteenth-century philosophic thought that reflect a dynamic, embodied, and world-embedded understanding of the mind. Thus, it seems that as cognitive scholarship expands—whether to the treatises of Kant (Woelert 2007) or the fiction of Eliza Haywood (Kukkonen 2019)—we are finding, as Jonathan Kramnick asserts, that modern theories of embodied cognition are “themselves a lineal descendant...of some eighteenth-century views of the mind and the senses.”⁹ I propose that Radcliffe’s extreme attention to both the gothic space and characters’ bodily movement through said space suggest that she, too, belongs to this embodied lineage.¹⁰

The extent to which the physical world dominates the narrative of *A Sicilian Romance* has not gone unnoticed in scholarship. It is again Schmidgen who notes that in this early work of

⁸ Silver, Sean. *The Mind Is a Collection: Case Studies in Eighteenth-Century Thought*, U of Pennsylvania P, 2015. ⁹ Mensch, Jennifer. “Embodied Cognition in Berkley and Kant: The Body’s Own Space.” *Distributive Cognition in Enlightenment and Romantic Culture*, Edinburgh U P, 2019, pp. 74.

⁹ Kramnick, Jonathan. “Presence of Mind: An Ecology of Perception in Eighteenth-Century England.” *Mind, Body, Motion, Matter: Eighteenth-Century British and French Literary Perspectives*, edited by Alison Margaret Conway and Mary Helen McMurrin, U of Toronto P, 2016, pp. 50. See also Jennifer Mensch (2019).

¹⁰ When I use the term *gothic space*, I am evoking all that it implies. I do, indeed, mean to signify the architectural spaces and geographical landscapes that so dominate Radcliffe’s gothic; however, I also wish to evoke the delineation of the mental space in geographic, architectural, or otherwise physical terms. Characters’ interaction with the physical world is also part of the gothic space. Really though, I wish to posit gothic space as a plane particularly suitable to an embodied model of cognition because it is so dependent upon characters bodily movements that are in and of this gothic world.

Radcliffe's, "the course of the action is dictated by the setting, that the resolution of the plot depends on the penetration of this Gothic space."¹¹ Though Schmidgen's main argument is more socio-political in nature than phenomenological, his assertion cuts to the heart of the matter; in *A Sicilian Romance*, action and resolution alike visibly depend upon the meticulously painted physical world and (I would add) to characters *embodied movement through* said world. I wish—for the moment at least—to minimize the socio-political consequences of Julia's plight, to set them aside in order to, instead, think closely with these worlded scenes.

Because world and plot are so conspicuously tied in this text, it is my assertion that close attention to the gothic space not only lends metaphoric or political meaning but also reveals the world-involving cognition central to Radcliffe's work. Consider the following moment in *A Sicilian Romance*, where Julia, her brother (Ferdinand), and her love interest (Hippolitus) all attempt to escape the castle Mazzini together:

They passed the door of madame's chamber; and treading the gallery with slow and silent steps, descended to the hall. This they crossed towards a door, after opening which, they were to find their way, through various passages, to a remote part of the castle, where a private door opened upon the walls. Ferdinand carried the several keys. They fastened the hall door after them, and proceeded through a narrow passage terminating in a stair-case. They descended, and had hardly reached the bottom, when they heard a loud noise at the door above, and presently the voices of several people. Julia scarcely felt the ground she trod on, and

¹¹ Schmidgen, 157.

Ferdinand flew to unlock a door that obstructed their way... Their distress was now not to be conceived.¹²

Here we see how Radcliffe creates a kind of aesthetic of spatial excess, one of unremitting and staggering attention to both directionality and mobility. Typically, scholars have read a passage like this to reflect on Radcliffean terror, but in this essay, I want to think about it as a moment of thought, one albeit under duress. In similarly ranging, gothic moments of suspense, Radcliffe's predecessors—namely Horace Walpole and Clara Reeve—emphasize interiority over spatial detail.¹³ As Walpole's Isabella and Reeve's Edmund move through their respective castles, their spatial surroundings are often obscured, overshadowed by what each character hears or feels. Conversely, in *A Sicilian Romance*, interiority is often absent, dominated by the physical world and by the perpetual motion of Julia and her young companions. To such ends, Radcliffe charts in great detail the movements of her characters, marking how they interact with the gothic space. As Julia, Ferdinand, and Hippolitus sneak through the castle, the reader can map the route of Julia and her compatriots—a fact I will later explore in more detail. Further, Julia does not pause her movements to contemplate her terror, rather, we discern Julia's fear by reading her beleaguered movements, by understanding that she “scarcely felt the ground she trod on” because terror drove her forward. Thus, even our readerly cognizing of Julia's emotions is enacted by interpreting her communications with the physical world.

¹² Radcliffe, Ann. *A Sicilian Romance*, edited by Alison Milbank, Oxford U P, 2008, pp. 66-67.

¹³ In the *Castle of Otranto*, for instance, as Isabella flees from Manfred's untoward advances, “she stop[s], not knowing wither to direct her steps,” she pauses her bodily movement to contemplate her escape: “As these thoughts passed rapidly through her mind, she recollected a subterraneous passage which led from the vaults of the castle to the church of St. Nicholas” (82). Here, a stationary moment of contemplation brings the gothic space into focus, allowing Isabella to better recall her surroundings. Similar passages are present in Reeve's *The Old English Baron*, where her protagonist Edmund only understands the terror of his surroundings when he “pause[s] a while” (36). As both Isabella and Edmund move through their respective castles, their spatial surroundings are often obscured, overshadowed by what they hear or feel. Walpole, Horace. *The Castle of Otranto and The Mysterious Mother*, edited by Frederick S. Frank, Broadview Press, 2003. Reeve, Clara. *The Old English Baron*, Edited by James Trainer, Oxford U P, 2008.

In this essay, I want to take a step back and really sit with these small moments of excess—these scenes where Radcliffe’s exhaustive attention to worldedness, mobility, and corporeality dominate the narrative to such a degree that interiority seems absent—for it is in these transitory scenes that a dynamic model of cognition is most visible. By bringing recent studies of 4E cognition into the gothic space, we can assess *A Sicilian Romance* anew, questioning the implications of (rather than the immaturity of) Radcliffe’s ambulant and spatially-attuned narrative. In tracing characters’ worlded, bodily progress through the gothic space, we discern in Radcliffe a concept of knowing that is dynamic and situated—both *embedded* and *embodied*—and that grants mind, body, and world equal part in the formation of thought. Further, once the striking mobility of Radcliffe’s *A Sicilian Romance* is reevaluated through this system of cognition, a more philosophic experiment emerges, one that seems particularly suited to the often ambulatory and spatially focused gothic genre. Viewed through the lens of 4E cognition, then, a plot driven by motion dually functions as a plot driven by the mind.

Plotting *A Sicilian Romance*

Though it is perhaps jejune to begin by addressing plot, it is, nevertheless, necessary because *A Sicilian Romance* is neither often read nor simply plotted. As aforementioned, Radcliffe’s second work is frequently characterized as a poorly planned text that is driven more by its “breathless pace and ceaseless calamities” than it is by structure.¹⁴ Indeed, it is true—at least in an initial reading—that Julia’s concluding discovery of her mother verges on a *deus ex machina*. However, when we follow Radcliffe’s ambulant plot to its fruition—effectively

¹⁴ Miles, 88.

explaining the supernatural—this wandering narrative creates a kind of cognitive feedback loop, where hints of the mother and signs of Julia’s intellectual growth are perceivable upon a second reading. Thus, like all of Radcliffe’s exercises in the explained supernatural, *A Sicilian Romance* is a novel to be reread, but such second-order knowledge of the plot illuminates a more philosophic experiment, one that emphasizes the dynamic model of cognition that inhabits the gothic space. Therefore, to use the common metaphor, let us observe the forest before stepping in closer to view the trees, for understanding the narrative arch *A Sicilian Romance* is essential to the hermeneutic reading I propose.

At the commencement of the novel, Julia resides in the castle Mazzini with her sister Emilia, and their tutor Madame de Menon, completely isolated from the world. Despite their experiential deficit, all seems well until, in the crumbling south wing of the castle, an unexplained apparition and ominous noises trouble the presumed domestic harmony. Searching for the source of this supernatural disturbance, Julia, her siblings, Emilia and Ferdinand, and Madame de Menon explore the unused, southern parts of the castle, attempting to unravel the mystery at its source; in these exploratory scenes, Radcliffe carefully attends the movements of the Mazzini youth, emphasizing both directionality and spatiality in her exhaustive descriptions. In the midst of Julia’s search, however, the marquis Mazzini—educating her in the greed of patriarchal men—demands that she marry the older (and wealthier) Duke de Luovo instead of her beloved Hippolitus de Vereza. Here, as Julia’s socio-political realities take center stage, the search for the mystery is left off, almost entirely forgotten for the next hundred and fifteen pages of the narrative. Though this supernatural section is short, upon a rereading, we find that Julia’s, Emilia’s and Ferdinand’s early exploratory movements produces important, if yet unknown, cognition; already, they are discovering their mother. In fact, when we look carefully at these phenomenological scenes, we see that Julia and her siblings circumnavigate their mother’s local,

finding themselves above, to the side of, and even below her prison; to rephrase, in Radcliffe's scenes of spatial excess, Julia and her siblings isolate their mother's spatial location long before her existence is revealed. It is with these scenes that I wish to linger.

As the story shifts away from the supernatural, Julia avoids her imminent marriage by fleeing into the countryside; during this flight, she adopts a more experiential mode of learning. However, because cognition is embedded in the material world, as she moves through Sicily—or, more often, feverishly flees through Sicily—Julia gains anecdotal and experiential evidence of patriarchal greed. Commodified by the marquis, desired by the duke, used as a pawn by the holy father Padre Abate, and mistaken for the similarly positioned daughter of the marquis Murani, Julia is schooled time and again in the gender politics that govern her society.¹⁵ Further, as Julia moves through castle, countryside, ruin, and abbey, she hears the female stories of Madame de Menon, Cornelia, and the daughter of the Marquis Murani; in these, Julia learns paradigms of how harsh social realities psychologically and physically impact women. This cacophonous repetition of socio-political lessons is well-tread by Robert Miles.¹⁶

As the narrative pulls to a close, Julia is at last cornered by the Duke, forced to escape into an expansive cave that leads directly to her presumed-dead mother and to the castle Mazzini. Jarringly, the supernatural happenings—forgotten until the final chapters of the narrative—are abruptly resolved as Julia discovers that her mother, held captive by the Marquis Mazzini, was

¹⁵ It is worth noting that the marquis Mazzini (as father), the Duke de Luovo (as husband), and the Abate (as holy father) all have the potential to legally control Julia's existence. Further, these lessons are not only imparted to Julia by the action of men but also through her encounters with sorrowful women. Through the female stories of Madame de Menon, Cornelia, and the young Murani, Julia gains paradigms of how such harsh social realities effect women.

¹⁶ Indeed, it seems that most readings of *A Sicilian Romance* devote the bulk of their analysis to the latter portion of the text, to those scenes that occur only *after* Julia has fled the castle Mazzini. See Schmidgen (2009), Milbank (2014), and Miles (1995).

responsible for the mysteries of the southern wing. Upon a first reading, this ending is astounding, a fact not unremarked upon in scholarship. Yet, it is the outlandishness of

Radcliffe's explained supernatural that triggers the need for a rereading of Julia's labyrinthic wanderings. Robert Miles (1995), Wolfram Schmidgen (2009), and Allison Milbank (2014), respectively and distinctly, have all demonstrated that much of Radcliffe's post-castle narrative communicates the socio-political realities that facilitate Julia's discovering of her mother and all that she represents. Yet, as I have hinted, I seek to put forth a divergent reading that emphasizes not these experiential lessons—which have been admirably charted by Miles in particular—but that highlights instead the spatially attuned opening chapters of *A Sicilian Romance*. Imagine the narrative of as a piece of paper with the opening castle scenes at one end and the closing castle scenes at the other; there are (of course) important moments in between these two bookmarks, but I want to take an alternate route to viewing this text. Instead of exploring *A Sicilian Romance* linearly, I want to fold that paper, collapsing the narrative to observe how the spatial excess of the beginning not only informs the final chapters, but serves an almost cartographic function. When we fold the narrative thusly, connecting beginning and end, we see that these early scenes of spatial excess construct a kind of cognitive map for Julia to follow to her mother. And, more importantly, the extreme embeddedness of Julia's embodied experiences—which lead to knowledge of the mother—renders visible a system of cognition that emphasizes equally body, mind, and world, a model of thought both strikingly modern and particularly suited to the gothic genre.

Embedding Cognition into the Gothic Floorplan

A world-involving and embodied concept of thought naturally relies upon a connectedness between body and mind. However, equally important to this equation is the

physical world or, in this instance, the gothic space, a plane well-suited to this dynamic model of cognition. As established by decades of scholarship, the gothic—with its castles, labyrinthic structures, and sublime landscapes—allocates a disproportionate share of its narrative to the delineation of the physical world. Indeed, from its very inception, the gothic was a spatially minded genre. With the publication of Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), the gothic began “as an imaginary extension” of an “architectural fantasy.”¹⁷ Walpole’s debut novel extrapolated his actual—though fantastical—home, Strawberry Hill, into the more moldable realm of fiction; thus, as Alice Labourg notes, careful attention to space is foundational to the gothic, inseparable from the form itself. With this in mind, it is unsurprising that scholars have attended to Radcliffe’s many architectural and geographic spaces.¹⁸ In canonical readings, these gothic edifices are denoted as patriarchal symbols that entrap the female heroine, disallow her egress from patriarchal control, and imprison her within labyrinthic structures of oppression. The gothic space confines the female body. It represses. Though these readings have merit, Kristen Girtten—building upon the work of Ellen Malenas Ledoux—has recently complicated this understanding of space, revealing that “Radcliffe’s gothic buildings” dually function as both “oppressive agents of patriarchy” and also as facilitators of “empowerment.”¹⁹ As such studies indicate, gothic renderings of the physical world are multifaceted and elastic; though the

¹⁷ Labourg, Alice. “Reconstructing Gothic Architecture in Ann Radcliffe’s Novels: From Decorative Details to Picturesque.” *Polysèmes*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2019. pp. 1.

¹⁸ See note 2. Labourg, for instance, places Radcliffe’s architectural disruptions in conversation with contemporary artistic conventions, arguing that Radcliffe’s emphasis of “Gothic architecture organizes a truly pictorial space” (19). And Benjamin Brabon maps Radcliffe’s “gothic cartography” onto the shifting ecology of contemporary Britain (840).

¹⁹ Girtten, Kristin M. “‘Sublime Luxuries’ of the Gothic Edifice: Immersive Aesthetics and Kantian Freedom in the Novels of Ann Radcliffe.” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, vol. 28, no. 4, 2016, pp. 716.

crumbling castle might confine and evoke terror, it also holds generative power for the body moving within.

Exemplifying this flexibility, Radcliffe does more than merely delineate a complex topography, rather, she constructs within her gothic edifices a remarkable—and cognitively focused—relationship between mind, body, and the physical world. Radcliffe embeds cognition into our experiencing of the gothic space. Though psychological meaning has long been connected to the physicality of the gothic, this interconnectivity between mental, corporeal, and spatial is now being recognized in new ways. Patrick O’Malley, for instance, argues that Radcliffe delineates memory in topographical terms to create a “spatialized memory.”²⁰ And, more germane to this study, Amanda Auerbach locates instances of embodied cognition in Radcliffe, demonstrating how thoughtless movement through the gothic space—enacted during moments of terror or awe—forms a kind of proprioceptive thinking in Radcliffe’s later works.²¹ Auerbach emphasizes in Radcliffe the meeting of space, movement, and the mind by centering the body, noting that “the gothic is oriented in the body” and “toward the aspects of our surroundings...that proprioception can bring into view.”²² These recent spatially-minded studies discern more nuanced ways of understanding how Radcliffe’s characters negotiate the struggles

²⁰ O’Malley, Patrick R. “‘It May Be Remembered’: Spatialized Memory and Gothic History in the Mysteries of Udolpho.” *Eighteenth Century*, vol. 59, no. 4, 2018, pp. 494.

²¹ Auerbach does not address *A Sicilian Romance*, and she is much more focused on the ways in which characters unconsciously and bodily perceive their environments than on what we might call bodily memory; however, she makes important and groundbreaking contribution to scholarly thinking about embodiment and cognition in Radcliffe.

²² Auerbach, 175.

of mental and physical orientation in the disorienting gothic space. They suggest that, in Radcliffe, a character's bodily movement through the world is neither arbitrary nor ancillary to plot but is instead a cognitively significant process. And, though not often studied, *A Sicilian Romance* is an early example of Radcliffe's philosophic melding of mind, body, movement, and world.

Radcliffe's *A Sicilian Romance*—similar to most gothic texts—is remarkably attentive to the minutia of the physical world, a fact clear from the directionally inclined opening pages of the narrative. Though the gothic space is often connected to the “dizzying speculation that results from the unattainability of reliable knowledge,” in Radcliffe, the gothic space also *contains knowledge*; it is a plane of cognition.²³ In introducing the Mazzini's, their home, and their familial history, for instance, Radcliffe carefully maps natural, geographic, and architectural space, describing in great detail, if not great accuracy, the spatiality of the Mazzini castle and its environs. Inside, Radcliffe explains that much of the castle was deserted—the south wing and presumably the east as well—and that Julia's rooms and closet “formed the western angle of the castle,” while Madame de Menon occupied rooms to the north that “opened up to both” the north and east “galleries.”²⁴ Geographically, the castle sat on the far eastern edge of Sicily, where it “commanded the straits of Messina.”²⁵ Here, it looked upon the Italian “shores of Calabria” to the east, a “great extent of the wild and picturesque” woods, and upon “Mount Etna” to the southeast. This close attention to the physical world embeds the characters in their environment

²³ Girtten, 720.

²⁴ Radcliffe, 5.

²⁵ Radcliffe, 6.

which allows Radcliffe to insert images of leaning into the castle's floorplan. This primes the reader for the world-involving model of cognition to come.

As she meticulously paints her characters' material surroundings, Radcliffe forcefully connects this worldedness to education—weaving castle and mind, landscape and thought—embedding cognition within the gothic floorplan. It is thus natural that as Radcliffe sketches the traditional account of her heroine's learning, she does so in spatial terms, situating Julia's education within her material surroundings; in this way, the first pages of *A Sicilian Romance* present a dance between world and mind. For example, immediately after she describes Julia's aptitude for learning, Radcliffe provides a spatial description: "The castle Mazzini was a large irregular fabrik [sic]...Its present family inhabited only a small part of it; and even this part appeared forlorn and almost desolate."²⁶ As the sketch expands, Radcliffe begins to weave learning more forcefully into her delineation of the material world, binding the cognitive to the spatial:

Julia, who discovered an early taste for books, loved to retire in an evening to a small closet in which she had collected her favorite authors. This room formed the western angle of the castle...The closet was adjoining her chamber, and was separated from the apartments of madame only by a short gallery. This gallery opened into another, long and winding, which led to the grand staircase, terminating in the north hall.²⁷

In describing Julia's favorite place of learning, Radcliffe denotes her environs in such great directional accuracy that the reader can mentally draw the castle's floorplan. Here, we see that

²⁶ Radcliffe, 5.

²⁷ Radcliffe, 5.

Julia's closet—a common metaphor for the mind—is connected to Madame de Menon's rooms, another local of learning; this oddly orientational and directional sketch is representative of Radcliffe's marked, and unique, attention to space. We must question, why is Radcliffe so attentive to the layout of the house? To what degree are we as readers required to have a cognitive map in mind while we read, and while the pace of the novel accelerates how do we take this spatial experience with us? At this early stage in the text, at the very least, this degree of

spatial and directional exactness—interwoven with the markers of education—alludes to the embeddedness of cognition; she models how we, as readers, must approach Julia's spatially attuned movement in *A Sicilian Romance*, with awareness that learning is embedded in the physical world.

Yet, if together body, mind, and world give rise to cognition, then movement is its catalyst; accordingly, in these early foundational pages—in which Radcliffe begins sketching her system of cognition—Julia's mobility, or lack thereof, is granted due attention. As contemporary philosophy suggests and as modern cognitive science affirms, cognition is triggered by our embodied interactions with the physical world; thus, Radcliffe takes this worlded-education and ties it to movement. We are told that Julia's "imagination was ardent, and her mind early exhibited symptoms of genius"; however, her intellectual development is also limited to the modicum of education that her father's "pride...seemed to dictate."²⁸ Exacerbating this limited education is Julia's immobility. At seventeen, neither Julia nor her sister have "ever passed the boundaries of their father's domains" and, thus, their experience is arrested at the border of their

²⁸ Radcliffe, 4.

diminutive world.²⁹ Though desirous of learning, Julia is immobile, unmoving. Such a restrictive environment should correspond to a weakened mental state; yet, “[b]eneath the gentle guidance of Madame de Menon,” Julia and her sister passed their time in happy tranquility, for they were ignorant alike of the sorrows and the pleasures of the world...Engaged in the pursuits of knowledge, and in the attainment of elegant

accomplishments, their moments flew lightly away, *and the flight of time was marked only by improvement.*³⁰

Physically removed from either the instruction or corruption of society, Julia and her sister work with their tutor to develop their intellect; and, it is of note that one of the few subjects of study named by Radcliffe is “geography.”³¹ This is not to say that at the beginning of the novel Julia and Emilia possess perfectly trained minds, rather, that they have minds open and interested in learning. And, if thinking is indeed action-centered, “in and of the world,” then it is not insignificant that Radcliffe positions her young heroine as naturally intelligent and eager to learn, but confined, unmoving, within “the bounds of [her] father’s domains.”³² It is only when Julia experiences a need for spatial relocation *into* the southern wing, bodily exploring her expanding

²⁹ Radcliffe, 6. As Allison Milbank notes and as Julia’s education makes plain, in *A Sicilian Romance* “the tyrannical characters of the novel” often deny “sight and understanding” to those under their power. But perhaps denial of movement is the more egregious offence. Milbank, Allison. “Ways of Seeing in Ann Radcliffe’s Early Fiction: *The Castle of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789) and *A Sicilian Romance* (1790).” *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism, and the Gothic Account*, edited by James Watt, Cambridge U P, pp. 94.

³⁰ My emphasis. Radcliffe, 14.

³¹ Radcliffe, 6.

³² Johnson, Mark. *Action, Perception and the Brain*, U of Chicago P, 2017, pp.165; Radcliffe, 6.

physical world, that this embodied and embedded mind that I have outlined is rendered fully visible.

Thus, into motion Julia must go. Though Robert Miles suggests that the marquis “sets the plot in motion when he arranges Julia’s marriage against her consent”, it is truly when Julia is forced into unexplored areas of the castle that both the plot and Julia are placed into motion.³³

Upon her return to the castle Mazzini, the marchioness—for whose sake the marquis imprisoned his first wife Louisa—is covetous of Julia’s and madame’s rooms because of the views “windows afforded” and of the “pleasantness of the gallery” that serviced the eastern and northern rooms; she thus decides that she will inhabit this segment of the castle herself, an area

previously devoted to Julia, Emilia, and madame. As a result, Julia and her companions are moved to rooms contiguous with the unused and mysterious “southern building.”³⁴ Notice that it is the marchioness’s envy of Julia’s *physical environs* that causes Julia to move into easy communication of the “supernatural”; here again, the physical setting is of the utmost importance, driving the plot, as Schmidgen so rightly claims.³⁵ Yet, I am suggesting that Radcliffe’s attention to the physical world does far more than move the narrative forward. While in the opening pages of *A Sicilian Romance* Radcliffe’s attention to space serves to embed her characters into the physical world, marking the gothic space as a plain of education, here it serves Julia’s embodied and embedded exploration of her expanding world.

³³ Miles, 88.

³⁴ Radcliffe, 27.

³⁵ Notably, the only physical space that the marchioness allows Julia to keep is “her favorite closet” where she “collected her favorite authors” (27, 5). Harkening back to Locke’s mental “closet,” Julia’s mental store is the only locale *not* taken from her; thus, as Julia traverses the gothic labyrinth, developing cognitively in the process, she is armed only with her past education.

Given what we know about embodied movements role in the formation of cognition, it makes a certain sense that when we revisit the text, we find that it is at this moment—when she moves in the gothic space—that Julia unknowingly begins to revolve around her mother’s void. Take for instance the following scene:

The rooms to which they removed were spacious, but gloomy; they had been some years uninhabited...Julia observed that her chamber, which opened beyond madame’s, formed a part of the southern building, with which, however, there appeared no means of communication...One day that she was arranging some papers in the small drawers of a cabinet that stood in her apartment, she found a picture which fixed all of her attention. It

was a miniature of a lady, whose countenance was touched with sorrow, and expressed an air of dignified resignation.³⁶

As Julia interacts with her new rooms, searching the contents of drawers—as one does in a new space—she discovers an almost animate picture of her mother. In fact, Julia notes that, “[s]he almost fancied that the portrait breathed” and she begs Madame de Menon to “disclose the cause of that sorrow which so emphatically marked” her mother’s visage.³⁷ Understanding that Julia is “yet ignorant,” madame explains that Julia’s mother, Louisa, was in love with madame’s bother Orlando, but he refused to propose marriage to Louisa because he was her financial inferior. After Orlando’s death, “unwilling to withhold” happiness from her father, Louisa married the

³⁶ Radcliffe, 27.

³⁷ Radcliffe, 27.

marquis Mazzini, submitting to his “unfeeling authority.”³⁸ Though madame’s story does not reveal Louisa’s full fate—or even fully illuminate the destructive power of patriarchal men—it does reveal that love is often thwarted by a combination of money and male-controlled will. This scene is often read in sociopolitical terms—as indeed it should be—however, I want to note that even this social story is tied to physical space. As soon as Julia moves into the southern wing, she locates her mother’s portrait through her worlded interactions.

What is Orientation in the Gothic?

Suggestively, what we see in Radcliffe’s gothic—this world-involving, movement-centered model of cognition—is not restricted to the supernatural pages of fiction; rather, cognitive science similarly highlights the generative power of embodied movement and the link

between physical and mental orientation. I therefore wish to take a slight detour, briefly exploring contemporary cognitive science as well as Kant’s contemporary essay *What is Orientation in Thinking* (1786) to help us think with Radcliffe’s moments of spatial excess, to better view these scenes as spaces of cognition. Long before cognitivists gave it voice, the body’s movement through the physical world was tied to thought; language itself signals this connection. As Mark Johnson notes, many common metaphors for thought are grounded in movement-based terminology. Similar to the body, the mind “wanders,” “strays,” has “flights of fancy,” “gets stuck,” goes in “circles,” or can’t “reach the point.”³⁹ Recent scholarship

³⁸ Radcliffe, 33.

³⁹ Johnson, 160.

illuminates that this intuited, linguistic connection between body, movement, and thought is buttressed by modern theories of the mind. Indeed, we are finding that the bodies navigation through the material world generates many levels of both conscious *and unconscious* cognition. Cuddy-Keane, for instance, contends that, “[e]mbodied cognition is a crucial component in human spatial navigation, or ‘way-finding’” because understanding one’s physical orientation isn’t merely about memorizing geographical landmarks or recalling the layout of a room, rather, it “involves the body’s exploratory,” often unconscious navigation of its environment.⁴⁰ And—important for the mobile gothic heroine—in moving through the world, subjects are “devising non-conscious strategies for spatial navigation” that later activate “schema for the navigation of mental space.”⁴¹ Simply put, the body does, indeed, think and movement is its catalyst; this movement creates strategies for navigation that correlate to our own mental orientation. With this in mind, it becomes easier to think about Julia’s incessant—and often thoughtless—movement

through the gothic space as physical catalyst for cognition. As readers, we can now ask, how could Julia’s early movements create a schema for her later discovery of her mother?

Though it may seem untenable to apply modern cognitive science to the eighteenthcentury gothic, contemporary philosophical grounding exists for such a comparison. Just as Mark Johnson argues of metaphoric language, eighteenth-century philosophy, too, implies a worldinvolving model of thought. In Kant’s essay *What is Orientation in Thinking?* (1786)—in which he redefines “space as a form of intuition” that is bodily understood—we see a contemporary model of cognition that is congruous with Radcliffe’s movement based, world-

⁴⁰ Cuddy-Keane, 685.

⁴¹ Cuddy-Keane, 685.

involving model of thought. While Locke famously delineates the mind as a *tabula rasa*, Kant insists that the human mind is not an entirely blank slate. Rather, there are certain native elements of cognition that enable some cohesion in human thought. To rephrase, there are aspects of our world that humans intuitively understand *before* experience furnishes the mind. For Kant, one such native intelligence is our intuitive grasp of space and time which, as scholars like Jennifer Mensch, Sven Bernecker, and Peter Woelert have demonstrated, is both dependent upon bodily intuition (*embodied*) and grounded in the material world (*embedded*).

For Kant, spatial understanding of the physical world is the foundation of knowledge, as important to human life as it is to the gothic plot. Such intuited knowledge is equal opportunity, just as accessible to the gothic heroine as to her patriarchal father. In *Orientation*, Kant isolates bodily movement as the hub of cognition. When speaking to this spatial orientation, for instance, Kant posits that in order to distinguish between cardinal directions, the knower “must necessarily be able to feel a difference within [his] own subject, namely that between [his] right and left hands.”⁴² In this decidedly spatial example, Kant explores how physical orientation is arrived at by the knower’s cognizing of cardinal direction in relation to the body. If, for instance, I know north is ahead of me, I can then discern all other directions using my body as a guide: “Thus, in spite of all the objective data in the sky, I orientate myself geographically purely by means of a *subjective distinction*.”⁴³ For Kant, the knower is grounded in space, able to navigate the world—gaining perception in route—because the knower’s bodily-generated intuition allows him to orient himself within his physical environs. And, since most knowledge stems from perceptions

⁴² Kant, Immanuel. *The Works of Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy*, “What is Orientation in Thinking?,” Cambridge U P, 1996, pp. 239.

⁴³ Kant, 239. Emphasis mine. This embodied understanding is not only explained in *Orientation* but is similarly present in Kant’s *Concerning the ultimate ground of the differentiation of directions in space*.

gained through our bodily movement in space, this intuited orientation is the basis of all understanding.

In gothic scenes, where sight is taken away, Kant isolates a kind of bodily, kinesthetic cognition that facilitates human's peripatetic orientation in space. For Kant, because we have this intuited understanding of the physical world, even when sight or knowledge is taken away, we are capable of constructing a mental map—an immaterial assemblage of the material world that aids our physical orientation. As Kant notes, “This is what happens if I have to walk and take the correct turnings at night on streets with which I am otherwise familiar, but in which I cannot at present distinguish any of the houses,” the embodied, embedded mind supplies the way.⁴⁴ We have all experienced scenarios such as this: without conscious thought, you drive yourself home, not recalling how you arrived. A kind of bodily memory takes over, a bodily memory that is unconscious and central to Radcliffe's gothic. If spatial orientation and embodied movement do indeed hold close cognitive ties—as suggested by modern cognitive science, Kant, and

Radcliffe—then an ambulant plot and an itinerate heroine are not necessarily indicators of poor plotting but are instead reflective of a dynamic model of cognition.

Thinking on your Feet

Now, let's shift back to *A Sicilian Romance*, bringing Kant's subjective understanding of orientation with us into the gothic space. In Radcliffe's early exploratory scenes, when the supernatural is still central, Julia and her compatriots (though unbeknownst to them) are doing important cognitive work; in moving through the gothic space, they orient themselves within the

⁴⁴ Kant, 239.

southern wing by subjective means. For, instance, when Julia first hears noises emanating from her new rooms, she calls upon her brother to aid her in discovering its source. As they explore, they locate a passage between Julia's apartment and the southern wing; however, a locked door bars their path:

[Ferdinand] stood gazing on the door, and inwardly lamenting, when a low hollow sound was heard from *beneath*. Emilia and Julia seized his arm; and almost sinking with apprehension, listened in profound silence. A footstep was distinctly heard, *as if passing through the apartment below*, after which all was still.⁴⁵

Here, Julia begins to isolate the source of the mystery and, importantly, she does so by subjective means—orienting the supernatural sounds in relation to her own body. When standing at the border of her apartments and the southern wing, the mother is moving *within* the southern wing and *below* their current orientation; as these explorations continue, this directional pinpointing becomes both more precise and more seeped in Radcliffe's intensely worlded descriptions.

The next evening, Ferdinand forcibly removes the border to the neglected building, breaking the lock that separates Julia's apartments from the southern wing; with this physical act, then, Julia and her siblings can now move into the gothic space. Thinking again of movement as the catalyst of cognition, Julia and Ferdinand transition into the gothic space, using unconscious way-finding strategies to generate new understanding. As the Mazzini siblings move through the derelict passages into "a large and gloomy gallery," special attention is paid to delineating the directional orientation and, more particularly, to the distinction between right and left, up and

⁴⁵ Radcliffe, 39. Emphasis mine.

down which—as seen in Kant—is an embodied (or subjective) navigatory strategy. In her descriptions, Radcliffe emphasizes this directional movement, noting what the young Mazzini’s visually see—“on the *left* appeared several doors,” or “A door on the *right* attracted his notice...which led to a hall *below*”—what they hear—“a voice from *below*”—and what they feel under foot—“the looseness of the stones rendered a footing insecure.”⁴⁶ Displaying something similar to Kant’s model of embodied movement, as the young Mazzini’s traverse the disorienting, gothic space, they use their bodies as a guide, experientially exploring through movement. It is this embodiment that allows for the navigation to take place and for the mother’s prison to be isolated:

Ferdinand descended a large vaulted hall; he crossed it towards a low arched door, which was left half open...The door opened upon a narrow winding passage; he entered, and the light retiring, was quickly lost in the windings of the place. Still he went on. The passage grew narrower, and the frequent fragments of loose stone made it now difficult to proceed. A low door closed the avenue, resembling that by which he had entered. He opened it, and discovered a square room, from whence rose a winding stair-case [sic], *which led up the south tower of the castle.*⁴⁷

Here, again, Radcliffe’s aesthetic of spatial excess is on full display; however, we now see that it serves an almost cartographic function. It allows Julia and Ferdinand to cognitively map their surroundings and (unknowingly) isolate their mother’s prison. Because Ferdinand can intuitively discern between left and right, as he navigates through this gothic space—despite him being

⁴⁶ 47 Radcliffe, 40-41.

⁴⁷ Radcliffe, 40.

“lost” in the “winding” space—he is able to orient himself to the “south tower.”⁴⁸ He even concludes that the mystery must stem from whatever is up this tower. Though, here, the narrative, focuses upon Ferdinand, it is important to note that Julia is with Ferdinand during this journey, and even when Julia flees in fear, she retraces Ferdinand’s steps, experiencing the same kinesthetic cognition as Ferdinand, arriving with him at the base of the south tower.

It is difficult to overemphasize how disconcerting these wandering passages seem upon a first reading; yet, in these scenes, Julia and her siblings—without consciously knowing it—are generating cognition, carving out the same mental pathways that allow Kant to intuit his way in the dark. And, if their movements are given proper attention, it becomes clear that with each new venture into the gothic space, the young Mazzini’s are isolating the locale of their mother’s prison with ever increasing precision. After Ferdinand attempts to ascend the southern tower, for instance, he realizes that it is impassible and leaves off his search; yet, having ruled out ascent, he reasons that the mystery must lie beneath the southern tower, beneath his own feet. Returning the next night, Ferdinand looks around the base of the southern tower where “he perceived a door, which was partly concealed by hanging stairs, and which till now had escaped his

notice.”⁴⁹ Though the door is locked, barring movement into the mother’s prison and, thus, full discovery, this door does render important information. Here, Ferdinand, “knocked, and the hollow sullen sound ran in echoes through the place, and died away at a distance,” and, from this sound, Ferdinand concludes that “beyond this door were chambers of considerable extent.”⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Radcliffe, 40.

⁴⁹ Radcliffe, 46.

⁵⁰ Radcliffe, 46.

This seems such a small incident. Ferdinand explores, his way is bared, and he leaves off his search: this could describe a dozen incidents in *A Sicilian Romance*. Yet, when we go into a reading with knowledge of the mother and, more importantly, with an understanding of the educational power of movement in this text, then we see this incident for what it is, a cognitive event. And, importantly, spatial experience does not have to be first-hand. Because Ferdinand “related the circumstances of his late adventure” to Julia, she now knows that underneath the southern tower lies a vast space, a gothic space that contains the “supernatural.”⁵¹

It is at last time to fold the narrative, time to connect the striking, spatially-attuned opening scenes of *A Sicilian Romance* to Julia’s startling discovery of her mother. By converging beginning and end, it is clear to see that Radcliffe’s odd moments of spatial excess—so remarkable for their prioritization of physical description over interiority—serve as moments of cognition. As I have charted, Julia and her siblings quite literally orbit around Louisa’s prison as they explore the gothic space: they are *to the side* of their mother’s prison when Julia inhabits her new southern rooms, they inch ever nearer, hovering *above her cell* as they isolate the “supernatural” to beneath the southern tower, and, finally—in an additional scene—Ferdinand even finds himself *below her local* when he is locked in the dungeons. Because Julia’s and

Ferdinand’s bodily movements are so embedded in the physical world, they create a cognitive map, an immaterial representation of the material world. As cognitive science suggests, bodily navigation “may instigate the shifts we make between” spatial “way-finding strategies” and

⁵¹ Radcliffe, 47.

thought—bodily movement enables “cognitive change.”⁵² Julia, no longer the immobile girl from the start of the narrative, is now ready to reenter the castle.

As the novel comes to a close, entering its final chapters, Julia and Hippolitus are cornered by the Duke de Luovo, forced to flee “along the valley” into “the mouth of a cavern.”⁵³ Reminiscent of earlier ranging scenes of spatial excess, both Julia and the reader experience a kind of *déjà vu*, enduring again a flight from tyranny that places Julia into a cavernous, gothic space that she must navigate despite obstructing doors and labyrinthic passages; yet, this echo of Julia’s previous world-embedded movement, which may seem to signal repetitious plotting, is an important component of Radcliffe’s cognitive model. This repetition creates a kind of muscle memory. Even though there is little evidence that Julia is consciously aware of the process at hand, her body is. She has walked similar paths before, she moved within these exact mountains as she fled the castle Mazzini, and she (with Ferdinand’s help) has unknowingly isolated her mother to the cavernous rooms below the southern tower of the castle Mazzini. Further, because of the knowledge she acquired during her flight through Sicily—the many inset narratives so well charted by Robert Miles—Julia now knows the realities of patriarchal greed and control, a lesson reiterated time and again. Using her muscle memory, or bodily generated cognition, Julia’s body has way-finding strategies not registered in her conscious mind. It is the many small moments of spatial excess, magnified by repetition, that allows this bodily cognition to take

place, that allows the body to conduct way-finding strategies that are not yet consciously understood. Like Kant navigating home in the dead of night, intuited bodily understanding

⁵² Cuddy-Keane, 685.

⁵³ Radcliffe, 172.

facilitates orientation. Thus, as we enter upon the end of Julia’s adventure, we see 1) that repeated experience allows for unconscious navigation and 2) that, as perceptive lacunae are filled, Julia’s embodied mind has generated unrealized cognition, allowing her to bring knowledge into “light and life.” In other words, Julia’s kinesthetic mind does not only generate mere sparks of cognition but can also be transferred into sustained knowledge.

Now combining past bodily, spatialized movement—as exemplified in the castle scenes—with the experience gained in traversing Sicily, Julia melds these two types of learning together to create new knowledge. And, importantly, even when articulating this firmer knowledge, Radcliffe demonstrates that it is generated and confirmed by Julia’s spatial experiences. As Julia enters the cave, she knows to look around, and as she moves through the cavernous passage, she “perceived that it was terminated by a door.”⁵⁴ Where in the past, such doors barred her way, inhibited discovery of truth, now that Julia is armed with experience, “[t]he door yielded to her touch, and she suddenly found herself in a highly vaulted cavern, which received a feeble light from the moon-beams that streamed through an opening in the rock above.”⁵⁵ Julia travels a great distance in this long cavernous passage until she feels that she simply cannot move any further. Though she is lost, “[t]he remembrance of her former wonderful escape inspired her with confidence” (173).

Now able to force open the doors that earlier “interrupted her progress,” Julia spatially orients herself, wandering through hidden caves to find “the pale and emaciated figure of a

⁵⁴ Radcliffe, 172.

⁵⁵ Radcliffe, 172.

woman, seated, with half-closed eyes”; Julia discovers her mother’s sorrowful portrait animated into existence, a living monument to the destructive power of patriarchal will.⁵⁶ At first, this unexpected image disorients Julia’s mind and she cannot reason her perceptions into comprehensible knowledge. As Radcliffe notes, “A multitude of strange imperfect ideas rushed upon her mind, and she was lost in perplexity.”⁵⁷ As Julia examines “the features of the stranger,” however, she perceives “the resemblance of” her sister Emilia and begins to use her past experience—of both the spatial “supernatural” and social—to orient her reason:

Truth now glimmered upon the mind of Julia, but so faintly, that instead of enlightening, it served only to increase her perplexity... ‘Is the marquis Mazzini living?’ continued *the lady*. These words were not to be doubted; Julia threw herself at the feet of *her mother*, and embracing her knees in an energy of joy, answered only in sobs.⁵⁸

It is not until “the lady” mentions the marquis Mazzini (a model of patriarchal authority) that Julia transforms her glimmering “Truth” into firm knowledge; gradually corroborated by her late experiences, Julia correctly reasons that her mother is alive and has been kept so by her authoritarian father. Bringing her act of cognition full circle.

Though this event is often read in socio-political terms, I want to sit with it a moment to think about its spatial implications, to question how Radcliffe’s earlier scenes of spatial excess facilitate Julia’s quick understanding of her mother’s situation in ways not currently recognized

⁵⁶ Radcliffe, 172.

⁵⁷ Radcliffe, 174.

⁵⁸ Radcliffe, 174. Emphasis mine.

in scholarship. As the “marchioness eagerly inquired after her children,” Julia relates her story thusly:

Julia gave a short account of the preceding adventure, and her entrance into the cavern; and found, to her inexpressible surprise, that she was now in the subterranean abode belonging to the southern building of the castle Mazzini! The marchioness was beginning her narrative, when a door was heard to unlock above, and the sound of footsteps followed.⁵⁹

Here, it is not when Julia initially recognizes her mother that she understands her spatial location; rather, it is only after she has revisited her previous adventures, most of which are profoundly embedded in the gothic space, that she is struck with understanding. We can read this exchange in one of two ways: 1) we can assume that—though Louisa Mazzini has not yet begun her “narrative”—she confirms their location below the southern building without Radcliffe explicitly stating so 2) or we can read it as a moment where various memories of spatial excess converge in Julia’s mind, creating new understanding of her physical surroundings, and that Julia is surprised at her own sudden realization. After closely tracing Julia’s and Ferdinand’s embodied movement through the gothic space, it seems clear that Julia’s discovering of her mother is not the unfounded conclusion to a directionless narrative but is, instead, the culmination of Julia’s many cognitive moments—both embodied and profoundly embedded—coming together to produce knowledge.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Radcliffe, 175.

⁶⁰ This assertion is only reaffirmed when Radcliffe asserts that “[t]he narrative of [Louisa’s] suffering, upon which she now entered, entirely dissipated the mystery which had so long enveloped the southern buildings of the castle” (175). Louisa only elucidates what Julia already understands.

By folding the narrative, then—by viewing the spatially immersive opening chapters as moments of cognition that inform the conclusion—Radcliffe’s final reveal of the mother can be read anew. Louisa’s imprisonment is no longer an unfounded discovery, rather, her unearthing is

almost meticulously grounded, understood through Julia’s and Ferdinand’s spatially-attuned movements; such knowledge is cognitively mapped, able to inform Julia’s final realization of her spatial surroundings. Read thusly, worlded movement becomes part of a philosophic project that depicts the complex network of mind-body-world interactions that generate cognition. It gives Julia the power of self-created knowledge. With this then, we may begin to ask new questions of Radcliffe’s works and of the gothic itself. In the recent novel *Mexican Gothic* (2020), which positions itself as a feminist reimagining of the gothic, the heroine Noemí declares, ‘I do my best thinking when I’m in motion.’ Perhaps, this is what I propose: a reading of the gothic that searches out and celebrates the cognitive and feminist potential of movement. When we center embodied and embedded cognition, it necessarily shifts the power dynamic of the gothic because it reimagines the many entanglements between heroine, patriarchy, and the supernatural; gothic spaces are not merely spaces of repression but are also locals of *generative* moments of cognition. Read in such a way, a heroine’s movements are about more than terror or fleeing from repression, they are also moments of intense interaction between body and world. This is how we must approach the gothic. We must look for the cognition in flight, for knowledge isn’t held stationary, but created by our embodied interactions with the world.

Works Cited

- Auerbach, Amanda. "Getting Lost: Proprioception and Thinking in the Gothic Novel." *European Romantic Review*, vol. 31, no. 2, 2020, pp. 157–76.
- Brabon, Benjamin A. "Surveying Ann Radcliffe's Gothic Landscapes." *Literature Compass*, vol. 3, no. 4, 2006, pp. 840–45.
- Bernecker, Sven. "Kant on Spatial Orientation." *European Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 20, no. 4, 2012, pp. 519–33.
- Cuddy-Keane, Melba. "Narration, Navigation, and Non-Conscious Thought: Neuroscientific and Literary Approaches to the Thinking Body." *University of Toronto Quarterly*, vol. 79, no. 2, 2010, pp. 680–701.
- Ding, Katherine. "'Searching After the Splendid Nothing': Gothic Epistemology and the Rise of Fictionality." *ELH*, vol. 80, no. 2, 2013, pp. 543–73.
- Girten, Kristin M. "'Sublime Luxuries' of the Gothic Edifice: Immersive Aesthetics and Kantian Freedom in the Novels of Ann Radcliffe." *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, vol. 28, no. 4, 2016, pp. 713–38.
- Johnson, Mark. *Action, Perception and the Brain*, U of Chicago P, 2017.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Kant: Political Writings*, edited by Hans Reiss, translated by H. B. Nisbet, Cambridge U P, 1991, pp. 235-249.
- Kramnick, Jonathan. "Presence of Mind: An Ecology of Perception in Eighteenth-Century England." *Mind, Body, Motion, Matter: Eighteenth-Century British and French Literary Perspectives*, U of Toronto P, 2016, pp. 47–51.
- Kukkonen, Karin. *4E Cognition and Eighteenth-Century Fiction: How the Novel Found its Feet*, Oxford UP, 2019.
- Labourg, Alice. "Reconstructing Gothic Architecture in Ann Radcliffe's Novels: From Decorative Details to Picturesque." *Polysèmes*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2019. pp. 1-23.
- Mensch, Jennifer. "Embodied Cognition in Berkley and Kant: The Body's Own Space."

- Distributive Cognition in Enlightenment and Romantic Culture*, Edinburgh U P, 2019.
- Milbank, Allison. "Ways of Seeing in Ann Radcliffe's Early Fiction: *The Castle of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789) and *A Sicilian Romance* (1790)." *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism, and the Gothic Account*, edited by James Watt, Cambridge U P, pp. 85-99.
- Noë, Alva. *Out of our Heads: Why You are Not Your Brain and Other Lessons from the Biology of Consciousness*, Hill and Wang, 2009.
- O'Malley, Patrick R. "'It May Be Remembered': Spatialized Memory and Gothic History in the Mysteries of Udolpho." *Eighteenth Century*, vol. 59, no. 4, 2018, pp. 493–512.
- Rees, Emma. "Varieties of Embodiment and 'Corporeal Style.'" *Talking Bodies*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, pp. 1–15.
- Schmidgen, Wolfram. "Ann Radcliffe and the Political Economy of Gothic Space." *Eighteenth Century Fiction and the Law of Property*, 2009, pp. 150–85.
- Silver, Sean. *The Mind Is a Collection: Case Studies in Eighteenth-Century Thought*, U of Pennsylvania P, 2015
- Woelert, Peter. "Kant's Hands, Spatial Orientation, and the Copernican Turn." *Continental Philosophy Review*, vol. 40, no. 1, 2007, pp. 139–50.