INDEX

Abbott, H. Porter, 9, 28, 37, 45, 117
Abelson, Robert P., 24
actants, 8, 31, 68, 156. See also functions
Alber, Jan, 19
*Ambassadors, The* (James), 113–14
Amery, Leo, 200
*Amongst Women* (McGahern), 38
*Anna Karenina* (Tolstoy), 41
anthropology, 8, 182
*Arabian Nights, The*, 12
Archilochus, 19
artificial intelligence (AI), 6, 50
Ashbery, John, 44
Asperger syndrome, 21
*Atonement* (McEwan), 36, 183–84, 186, 199
Austen, Jane, 146, 159, 164, 171, 177, 180–81. See also *Emma; Persuasion; Pride and Prejudice; Sense and Sensibility*
autism, 21

Bachman, Maria, 166
Bakhtin, Mikhail, 16, 86, 106. See also word with a sideways glance
Bal, Mieke, 8, 11, 27
Bamberg, Michael, 143
Bateson, Gregory, 43, 130
behaviorism, 18, 30, 51–52
Behn, Aphra. See Orinokoo
beliefs, 19, 11, 22, 29–31, 56, 84, 97, 161–62
Berlin, Isaiah, 19
Blackmore, Susan, 13
blues, the, 200
brain, the, 50–52, 184
Brontë, Anne, 180. See also Tenant of Wildfell Hall, The
Brontë, Charlotte, 159, 180. See also Jane Eyre; Shirley
Brontë, Emily, 180. See also Wuthering Heights
Brown, Dan. See Da Vinci Code, The
Bruner, Jerome, 13
bundles of habits, 30
Butte, George, 154

Carruthers, Peter, 21
Carter Family, The, 200
Case, Alison, 42–43
causality and causation, 9, 25, 28; forward causation, 162; backward causation, 162; and minds, 32, 56, 96, 98, 136, 142, 168
Cezanne, Paul, 75
Chalmers, David, 43
characterization theory, 9, 11–12, 200; and attribution theory, 20, 182; and cognitive frames, 24–26; and dispositions, 5, 27–29, 31; in relation to Enduring Love, 185, 194; in relation to Middlemarch, 67, 97, 101
Chatman, Seymour, 8
Chicago School, 157. See also rhetorical and ethical approaches to literature
Chinese Room experiment, 50
Churchill, Winston, 200
Cinderella, 198
Clark, Andy, 43, 51
classical view of the mind, 8. See also internalist perspective
cognitive approaches to literature, 5–8, 159
cognitive frames. See frames, cognitive
cognitive narratives, 12–14, 88, 90–92, 94, 97–98; double cognitive narratives, 12, 77, 88, 92, 95, 97, 99–103, 190
cognitive poetics, 6
cognitive stylistics. See cognitive poetics
cognitive turn in the humanities, 5
cognitivism, 7, 23, 52
Cohn, Dorrit, 8, 28, 49
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, 200
colleagues, work, 2, 41, 47
collective thought. See intermental thought
Collins, Wilkie, 164–65, 175, 180. See also No Name
communal voice, 45
computers, 50
Conrad, Joseph, 180. See also Nigger of the ‘Narcissus,’ The
consciousness presentation in fiction. See thought and consciousness presentation in fiction
consensus, 48, 82, 144, 190; in relation to Middlemarch, 69, 73, 75, 77, 82, 86, 90, 99; in relation to Little Dorrit, 123, 133
continuing consciousness frame, 10–12, 26, 40–41, 94
control messages, 161–63
control, 5, 64, 163, 173; in relation to
Enduring Love, 186, 188–89, 196;
in relation to Little Dorrit, 110, 115, 123, 125, 130–31; in relation to
Middlemarch, 71, 102
country and western music, 200
Cranford (Gaskell), 167
Crying of Lot 49, The (Pynchon), 126
cue-reason words, 137
Culler, Jonathan, 27
Culpeper, Jonathan, 26
cultural approaches to literature, 7, 14,
157, 181
culture, 22–24, 67, 135, 139, 181–82,
201
Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night
Time, The (Haddon), 21

Da Vinci Code, The (Brown), 18
Damasio, Antonio, 6, 9, 16, 30, 40,
159–60
Darwin, Charles, 187
Davidson, Donald, 142
Davies, Stevie, 159
day job, my, 50
de Clerambault’s syndrome, 185,
188–90
decisions, 59, 96, 112, 138–39, 159, 161,
163, 196; intermental, 33, 43–44,
48, 55, 72, 148–49, 152, 168, 175–76
Defoe, Daniel. See Robinson Crusoe
Dennett, Daniel C., 6, 9, 13, 16, 30, 43,
51, 106, 116
desires, 9, 11, 22, 55, 139, 161
deuteronomy, 63
dialogicality, 40, 58, 74, 95, 99, 106–7,
130, 146. See also Bakhtin, Mikhail
Dickens, Charles, 105, 164–65, 172, 175,
180–82. See also Hard Times; Little
Dorrit
direct thought, 93
discourse. See story and discourse
discursive intermental rhythm, 80–85,
Index

162, 186–88
evolution, 21
experiences, 9, 12–13, 24, 29, 40, 55–58, 62, 105, 139, 160
experientiality, 11
extended cognition. See intermental thought
externalist perspective, 2–4, 8, 26, 34, 38–42, 49, 52, 180–84, 200; on Little Dorrit, 35–36, 105–8, 144; on Middlemarch, 69; on Persuasion, 147; on various novels, 58, 60, 165, 167–68, 170–71

fabula. See story and discourse
families, 2, 25, 41, 47, 49, 175; Corleone family, 198–99; family systems therapy, 41; in Little Dorrit, 4, 35, 37, 111–12, 118, 120–23, 126; in Middlemarch, 73, 76, 82, 95; in Persuasion, 147, 149–50, 153, 176
“Farther Along,” 201
Faulkner, William. See “A Rose for Emily”
feeling rules, 59–63
feminist approaches to literature, 7
Ferguson, Sir Alex, 141
fictional minds, 7–12, 14, 31, 40, 44, 64, 97, 198–200; and the externalist perspective, 49, 156, 160–61; history of, 17, 180, 182, 184; in Men at Arms, 55; and real minds, 19, 26; and social minds, 49, 52, 144
Fielding, Henry. See Tom Jones
films, 6, 37, 63, 95, 182, 198–200
first-person narrators. See narrators
Fludernik, Monika, 6, 8, 11, 25, 28
focalization, 8, 12, 40–41, 57, 186, 190–91; intermental, 84–85, 176; in relation to Little Dorrit, 124, 127, 141; in relation to Middlemarch, 65, 68, 70, 76–78, 87–88, 92–94
folk psychological narratives, 22–23
Ford, Ford Madox. See Good Soldier, The
frame narratives, 12
frames, cognitive, 11, 24–26, 46, 49, 55, 57, 153, 177, 194; in relation to Middlemarch, 67, 73, 96–97; in relation to Persuasion, 147, 155. See also continuing consciousness frame
free indirect discourse, 8, 31, 39, 156, 161, 180; intermental free indirect thought, 67, 71, 77, 87, 177; in Middlemarch, 74, 87, 89, 93, 100
free indirect thought. See free indirect discourse
Freudian unconscious, 59
friendship, 2, 41, 47–49, 76, 149, 156, 170, 174; in Little Dorrit, 109, 132–33; in Middlemarch, 79, 101; in Persuasion, 148, 151–52, 154–55
Frith, Chris, 43
functionalist perspective, 50
functions, 8. See also actants
fundamental attribution error, 196
gappiness: in relation to consciousness, 13; in relation to narrative, 93–94, 145
gaps in storyworlds, 11, 25, 57, 61
Gaskell, Elizabeth, 164, 171, 180. See also Wives and Daughters; Cranford
Geertz, Clifford, 30, 43
gender, 158, 182, 185, 197
genre, 25–26, 182, 200
Gillet, Grant, 142
Gone with the Wind (Mitchell), 94
Good Soldier, The (Ford), 12, 183
gospel music, 200
Gothic, 159
individual thought. See intramental thought
inner speech, 8, 93, 106
inner thought. See intramental thought
intentionality (philosophical sense), 57, 161
interior monologue, 8, 31, 39–40, 67, 74, 156, 180
intermental attributional breakdowns, 49, 125, 127, 152, 184–85
intermental encounters, 2, 46–49
intermental minds, 48, 50, 56, 58, 60, 172, 176; in Little Dorrit, 120, 131; in Middlemarch, 70, 75, 80, 88–89, 99
intermental typology, 46–49
intersubjectivity, 20, 22, 41, 201; deep intersubjectivity, 154
intramental thought, 4, 35, 40–44; in Little Dorrit, 106–7, 121, 131, 138; in Middlemarch, 67, 72, 74–75, 80, 82–91, 99; in Persuasion, 146; in various novels, 56, 58, 164, 173, 177, 190, 192

Habermas, Jürgen, 139–40
habits, 29–30, 34, 51, 60, 116
Haddon, Mark. See Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time, The
Hamilton, William, 60
hard cognitive sciences, 8
Hard Times (Dickens), 117
Harré, Rom, 142
Heider, Fritz, 20
Helen (Edgeworth), 1–2, 4, 14, 164–66, 170
Herman, David, 6, 8, 17, 25, 45, 78, 157, 184
Herman, Luc, 28
heterodiegetic narrators. See narrators
High Noon, 197
Hilton, Paris, 21, 138
Hirschfeld, Lawrence, 43
historical approaches to literature, 7, 17, 36, 179–82
Hogan, Patrick Colm, 157
Holmes, Richard, 200
homeostasis, 25
homodiegetic narrators. See narrators
Hutchins, Edwin, 9, 27, 43
Hutto, Daniel D., 22–24

ideology, 11, 48, 88, 118, 120, 123, 182
Idiot, The (Dostoevsky), 94
implied author, 14, 127, 146
indicative description, 137

Gould, Stephen Jay, 19
graphic novels, 182, 198
group biography, 200
group thought. See intermental thought
groups, 16, 20, 25, 41–48, 52, 139–41, 176, 190, 200; in Little Dorrit, 4, 36, 107, 118, 120, 182; in Men at Arms, 54, 56, 58; in Middlemarch, 69–72, 75–78, 80–92, 98–100, 172; in Persuasion, 147–49, 155
groupthink, 44, 141
introspection, 29, 40, 125

Jahn, Manfred, 25
James, Henry, 105, 133, 164, 170–71, 180–82. See also Ambassadors, The; Portrait of a Lady, The; Tragic Muse, The
James, William, 30
Jane Eyre (Charlotte Brontë), 42
jazz, 200
joint thought. See intermental thought
Joyce, James. See Ulysses

Kafalenos, Emma, 9
Keane, Roy, 141
Keen, Suzanne, 28, 196
Kelley, Harold, 20
Knapp, John V., 8, 31, 41, 45, 47
Kolligian, John, 159
Kuhn, Thomas, 201

Laclos, Pierre Choderlos de. See Liaisons Dangereuses, Les
Lanser, Susan Sniader, 45, 167
Lawrence, D. H. See Sons and Lovers
Le Doux, Joseph, 159
Liaisons Dangereuses, Les (Laclos), 41
linguistic turn in the humanities, 5
linguistics, 6, 31, 156; psycholinguistics, 7, 9, 16; sociolinguistics, 8, 182
literary studies, 2, 5, 24, 31, 46, 82
Little Dorrit (Dickens), 3, 35–38, 42, 48, 64; action in, 10, 27, 134–44; comparisons with other novels, 76, 94, 145, 153, 164, 172, 174–77, 189; film of, 95; large intermental units in, 117–20; physically distributed cognition in, 116–17; small intermental units in, 120–34; social minds in, 14, 42, 44, 105–8; visible thought in (including the face, the look, and nonverbal communication), 108–16
Lloyd George, David, 200
Lodge, David, 8
“Lonesome Valley,” 200–201
Lothe, Jakob, 28

MacIntyre, Alasdair, 13
Marcus, Amit, 45
Margolin, Uri, 27, 45
marriage, 35, 47–48, 126, 141, 166–67, 169, 174; in Little Dorrit, 107, 120, 133; in Middlemarch, 35, 72–73, 75–76, 79–80, 89, 92, 96, 102–4; in Persuasion, 152
Marxist approaches to literature, 7
mass hysteria, 141
McEwan, Ian, 184. See also Atonement; Enduring Love
McGahern, John. See Amongst Women
McGinn, Colin. See Mindfucking
McHale, Brian, 49
media, 37, 179, 182, 198–200
Men at Arms (Waugh), 35, 41, 44, 52–63, 65, 89
mental events, 9, 28–31, 33–34, 60, 97, 101, 108–9, 137, 172
mental functioning, 3–4, 7–9, 17–18, 23, 27, 36, 39, 55, 135–36, 199; intermental, 20, 41–42, 44, 46–47, 58–59, 65, 69, 72, 74; in Little Dorrit, 4, 106, 109, 119, 130–31, 133, 135; in Middlemarch, 65, 69, 72, 74, 76, 78–79, 82–85, 88, 93, 97; in Persuasion, 146, 150, 156; in various novels, 164–66, 168, 177
mental network, 9, 22, 56, 136
mental states, 20, 24, 30, 57, 142, 146, 168, 183, 187
metaphor, 6, 44, 65, 74, 141
metarepresentation, 15
Middlemarch minds, 48, 75–93; social minds in, 141
Mikkonen, Kai, 198
Mildorf, Jarmila, 16
mind beyond the skin, 42–43
mind blindness, 21
Mindfucking (McGinn), 133
mindfucking, 173
mind inside the skull, 42, 74
mind reading, 2, 21–24, 46–47, 165, 170, 173, 191; inadvertent, 47; in Little Dorrit, 124–25, 127, 133, 137; in Middlemarch, 72–73, 100–101; reciprocal, 47
mind-ruts, 30, 106
Mitchell, Margaret. See Gone with the Wind
mob rule, 141
Modernism, 34, 180, 183–84
moments of embodied transparency, 47
Moretti, Franco, 78
motives and motivation, 9, 11, 22, 24, 32–33, 64, 136–43, 173; and emotions, 160–63; in Enduring Love, 185, 187, 196–97; in Middlemarch, 65, 98–99, 101; in Persuasion, 155
multiparty talk, 78–79
multiperspectivalism, 84
multiple drafts of consciousness, 13
narrative comprehension, 6, 17–18, 25, 54
narrative imperialism, 14
narrative practice hypothesis, 23
narrative theory. See narratology
narratology, 19, 42, 160, 198, 201; classical or traditional, 4, 6, 8–12, 14, 17–19; cognitive, 5–6; fault line in, 27–29, 31; structuralist, 135, 156
narrators, 9, 14, 64; heterodiegetic or third-person, 20, 46; homodiegetic
neuroscience, 7–9, 160; social neuroscience, 43
new view of the mind, 8. See also externalist perspective
Nietzsche, Friedrich, 141
Nigger of the ‘Narcissus,’ The (Conrad), 167–68, 175, 177
nineteenth-century novel, 17, 36–37, 42, 70, 179, 185; social minds in, 4, 46, 64, 145, 164–67, 170, 172, 175
No Name (Collins), 164–66, 172
non-conscious thought, 59. See also unconscious thought
nonfiction, 6, 200
Nünning, Ansgar, 84
Nussbaum, Martha, 157
Oatley, Keith, 159–63
Occam’s razor, 52
Orinokoo (Behn), 139
parallel discourses, 9
party, the (in Persuasion), 48, 147–49
passive voice, 71–72, 86, 123, 178
Perry, Menakem, 46, 73
personality, 10, 20, 28–33, 60, 196; in Little Dorrit, 108, 115, 128, 131; in Middlemarch, 97
Persuasion (Austen), 35–36, 38, 113–14; character of Anne Elliot, 27, 64, 88, 94; emotions in, 156–64; social minds in, 42, 44, 48, 76, 145–56, 172, 175–77
Phelan, James, 14, 28–29, 157, 185
phenomenology, 160
Index

courses, 7, 9, 16, 42, 200–201
rhetorical and ethical approaches to literature, 7, 157, 182, 185. See also Chicago School
Richardson, Brian, 9, 19, 45
Rimmon-Kenan, Shlomith, 8, 27–28
Robinson Crusoe (Defoe), 41
“Rose for Emily, A” (Faulkner), 41, 46
Ross, Martin, 39, 44
Rowe, Keith, 44
Rumsfeld, Donald, 192
Ryan, Marie-Laure, 6, 11, 45, 55, 198
Ryle, Gilbert, 30, 96
scapegoating, 44, 122–23, 165, 176
Scarry, Elaine, 6
Schank, Roger C., 24
schemas, 24. See also frames, cognitive
Schuyler, James, 44
Scott, Walter, 43, 164. See also Waverley
Searle, John R., 9, 12, 16, 50
secrecy, 2, 63–64, 164, 166, 171, 173; in Little Dorrit, 106, 108, 123, 128, 134, 172; in Middlemarch, 95; in Persuasion, 146
Secret History, The (Tartt), 41
self, the, 13–14, 28–32, 40–42, 60, 139, 175; in Little Dorrit, 110, 120, 126, 129; in Persuasion, 148
semantic messages, 161–63
Semino, Elena, 6, 48
semiotics, 19, 31, 45, 54, 56
Sense and Sensibility (Austen), 167
Seurat, Georges, 75
shared thought. See intermental thought
Shaw, Harry E., 42–43
Shelley, Percy, 200
Shirley (Charlotte Brontë), 36, 164–66,
169–70
Silas Marner (Eliot), 167
simulation theory. See theory of mind
Singer, Jerome, 159
situated cognition. See intermental thought
situated identity, 10, 15, 30, 40–41, 64, 164, 200; in Little Dorrit, 129–30; in Middlemarch, 90, 93, 97; in Persuasion, 148
sjužhet. See story and discourse
skills, 11, 22, 30
Skinner, B. F., 18
Smith, Brian Cantwell, 8
social class, 111, 175, 177, 182; in relation to Middlemarch, 70, 72–3, 75, 78–82, 85–87, 89, 97, 103
social minds, 4–5, 16–17, 34–46, 49, 201–2; and characterization, 27; history of, 179–84; in Little Dorrit, 104, 111, 129, 131; in Middlemarch, 76, 80; in Persuasion, 145–47, 153, 155; purposes of, 63–64; and real-mind discourses, 8–9; and the unconsciousness, 58; in various media, 198–201; in various novels, 14, 32, 164–66, 168–69, 173, 185, 187
socially distributed cognition. See intermental thought
society, 181–82; in Little Dorrit, 117–19; in Middlemarch, 71, 79, 88; in Persuasion, 48, 147
socio-geography, 78, 177
sociology, 182
soft cognitive sciences, 8, 26
Somerville, Edith, 39, 44
Sons and Lovers (Lawrence), 41
soul music, 200
speech category: approach, 8, 180; trajectory, 180
Sperber, Dan, 43
stereotypes, 26, 31, 61, 67, 93
Stockwell, Peter, 6
story analysis, 8, 12, 68
story and discourse, 11–12, 17, 96, 135–36, 138, 198
storyworlds, 18, 25, 135, 162, 199–200; and fictional minds, 4, 8–12, 14, 20–21, 40–42, 63–64; in Little Dorrit, 108, 128, 140; Lydgate storyworld, 35, 91, 93–104; in Middlemarch, 67, 74–75, 78, 88; in Persuasion, 145; in various novels, 52–61, 171, 177, 186, 194, 197
Strawson, Galen, 13–14
stream of consciousness, 8, 13, 31, 34, 39–40, 67, 74, 156, 180
subjectivity, 11, 14, 40–41, 136, 139, 165, 184
Summerscale Kate. See Suspicions of Mr Whicher or the Murder at Road Hill House, The
Suspicions of Mr Whicher or the Murder at Road Hill House, The (Summerscale), 181
Tartt, Donna. See Secret History, The
teleology, 89, 139, 156, 160–63, 199
Tenant of Wildfell Hall, The (Anne Brontë), 159, 165
timeless order. See teleology
teleology. See theory of mind
third-person narrators. See narrators
Thomas, Bronwen, 79
thought and consciousness presentation in fiction, 8, 12, 28, 63, 182
thought report, 67, 74, 80, 93, 180; contextual, 96, 106–7
thought-action continuum, 10, 136
Tolstoy, Leo. See Anna Karenina
Tom Jones (Fielding), 10
Tragic Muse, The (James), 170–71, 181–82
Trainspotting, 63
Trevorthen, Colwyn, 179, 201
Trollope, Anthony, 164, 181. See also The Warden
Turner, J. M. W., 75
Turner, Mark, 6

Ulysses (Joyce), 10, 18, 34, 182–83
unconscious thought, 35, 52–54, 58–63;
Freudian unconscious, 59
unnatural narratives, 19, 199
unreadable minds, 44–45, 187
unreliable narrator. See narrators
Usual Suspects, The, 199–200

van Dijk, Teun, 140–41
Venn diagrams, 45, 83
Vervaeck, Bart, 28
Victorian Literary Studies Archive, 113–14
Vile Bodies (Waugh), 43, 101, 104, 136

Warden, The (Trollope), 23, 36, 164–65, 167, 169–70

Warhol, Robyn, 157
Waugh, Evelyn. See Men at Arms; Vile Bodies
Waverley (Scott), 3
“we” narratives, 45, 168
Wertsch, James V., 9, 43
wetware, 50–51
Whitman, Walt, 15
whole mind, the, 9, 28–31, 39, 109, 159
Wilde, Oscar, 1, 4, 105
Wilson, Timothy, 20, 58–62, 199
Wittgenstein, Ludwig, 30, 120, 136
Wittgenstein's question, 136
Wives and Daughters (Gaskell), 36, 164, 166–67, 169–70, 173, 176–77
Woloch, Alex, 27
Wolpert, Daniel, 43
word with a sideways glance, 73, 76, 86, 90
Wuthering Heights (Emily Brontë), 12

Yates, Frances, 51

Zlatev, Jordan, 22
Zunshine, Lisa, 6–7, 15–16, 21, 47
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Social Minds in the Novel is the highly readable sequel to Alan Palmer’s award-winning and much-acclaimed Fictional Minds. Here he argues that because of its undue emphasis on the inner, introspective, private, solitary, and individual mind, literary theory tells only part of the story of how characters in novels think. In addition to this internalist view, Palmer persuasively advocates an externalist perspective on the outer, active, public, social, and embodied mind. His analysis reveals, for example, that a good deal of fictional thought is intermental—joint, group, shared, or collective.

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Alan Palmer is an independent scholar and an honorary research fellow at the Department of Linguistics and English Language at Lancaster University in the United Kingdom.