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Title: Spontaneous thought & mental autonomy

Abstract: We spend up to 50% of our waking lives mind wandering, or lost in spontaneous thoughts and daydreams. When our minds wander, attention drifts away from ongoing tasks and environmental demands, and thoughts unfold dynamically and without deliberate intentional guidance. Mind wandering also appears to compromise introspective awareness, and we often remain unaware that our minds have wandered even after the episode has terminated.

Mind wandering is sometimes construed as opposed to attention, control, and introspective awareness and thought to undermine our ability to be autonomous cognitive agents. I propose an alternative way of construing the relation between mind wandering and mental autonomy. In this view, spontaneous thought is central to our mental lives and is the root of attention, cognitive agency, and mental autonomy.

Bio: Jennifer M. Windt is a lecturer in philosophy at Monash University. She is the author of *Dreaming* (2015, MIT) and edited, with Thomas Metzinger, *Open MIND* (2016, MIT; an open access version is available at open-mind.net). She is currently working on an ARC-funded research project on mind wandering and spontaneous thought across the sleep-wake cycle.