Abstract:

In this paper I develop the concept of ‘narrative thinking’. Narrative thinking occurs when the brain is in default mode and not task-focused. It features autobiographical remembering, future thinking, and what I will term ‘fictionalization’ of the self. Four attributes of narrative thinking are coherence, meaningfulness, perspective and emotion. It is thinking we default to when cognition is not driven by a specific task and I suggest that it is critical in maintaining a dynamic and healthy self. I consider how this conceptualization of narrative thinking can be used to give new insights into memory impairment following brain damage and the generation of fictional or false memories.