

MSI notes 15/10/2020

Then at last, when the trouble . . .

p. 62, continuing the theme of weakened power of the objective mind, i.e. at its most extreme, losing the will to live!

Concentration

Is it possible to think of two things at once?

‘People who chronically multitask believe they are good at it.’ However, the heavy multitasker continues to display various expressions of cognitive dysfunction without the slightest awareness that anything is wrong.

A neural network within the frontal lobes acts as a ‘central bottleneck’ of information processing that limits our ability to multitask (Vanderbilt). Since the brain actually processes information sequentially rather than concurrently, multitasking always involves negative performance consequences. The more people multitask, the worse they do; they’re more distractible; they can’t reliably distinguish relevant from irrelevant information; they are more disorganized.

Depth clarity and cohesion of thought take time and require focussed attention. Failures in any of these factors lead to degradation in the quality of knowledge. Skim-talking and skim-reading lead to skim-thinking.

In summary, it seems that we can’t think of two things at the same time (or at least not consciously, however, much it feels like that). And attempting to do so can be highly inefficient, as with extreme multitasking, or distressing in the presence of unwanted thoughts. So when we try to think of more than one thing at a time, we should consider the consequences. (*Mind: The Big Questions*, Richard M. Restak. Quercus 2012: 117-123)

A genuine interest in what one is doing keeps the mind on the job in hand. Compare Alexander’s definition of true happiness at opening of *CCCI*, Part IV:

‘THE characteristic note of true happiness is struck when the healthy child is busily engaged in doing something which interests it. It may be the little girl washing and wiping her tea-cups, or dressing and undressing her doll, or the little boy setting to work to make a toy train or cart with the aid of a piece of wood and a string . . .’

p. 65 tendency to return to old manner of working . . .

Neural plasticity analogies: (1) moving a gate at the far side of a field, so that a new track has to be created; (2) neglected pathways overgrown by brambles.

p. 65-6, Eugenics leading onto next chapter, “Race Culture . . .”. (1910, p.95; Chapter VI, p.98-121.)

MW