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gaugin swallowed  
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People expect geniuses to be odd and queer. Why, they prove it themselves. Didn't Van Gogh cut off his ear'? And Gaugin swallowed arsenic, ran after women, deserted his family'? Poet Byron lived a wildly immoral life and boasted that there was hardly a royal family in Britain which did not carry his blood in its veins. If people think that genius is wicked, mad or queer, they get the impression from the geniuses themselves. Voltaire points out, " You must have the devil in you to succeed in any of the arts.

" All that he is implying is that in order to be good at arts you must know what is bad. More so what is evil? Vice, then, is the virtue of the genius. Genius is a personal force and energy of an outstanding order, leading to extraordinary achievement. It possesses qualities, which ordinary people do not have. Or one may say that the genius has a greater amount of qualities that are found only in some degree in most others. The man of genius is far from normal and has even been termed pathological. Many a genius has shown alarmingly abnormal behaviour linking it to " near madness".

There was a constant queer on Thomas Campbell's thin lips, Peter the Great suffered from convulsive movements which horribly distorted his face. Socrates often danced, and jumped in the streets without reason. Richelieu, in a fit, believed he was a horse, and neighed and jumped.

Men and women of genius are tools for the transformation of society. They create new forms in all the ways in which human will and intellectual power is expressed in art, literature, science, philosophy, law, religion, politics, invention and exploration. Often, in creating the new, genius either denigrates or destroys the old. Byron can be cited as an example who was

creative but also led a very irregular sex life. He destroyed established moral norms though he enriched English poetry. Genius does not conform and society is often unkind to the non-conformist. Christ was crucified, Gandhi was shot dead and Socrates, who held the genius possessing "divine madness," was given a cup of hemlock. Genius, by his nature, moves in to the unknown and the dangerous.

That is why he meets with violence, opposition and disapproval. Conflict with society is inevitable. It is defined as creative ability of an exceptionally high order as demonstrated by actual achievement. Eminence is its best measure, provided it is not transitory. It must have been won through personal attainment of a superior order. It is distinguished from talent though sometimes the two words are used as if they meant the same thing.

Talent refers to an inborn attitude for some special kind of work. It implies quick and easy acquisition of a skill. The former involves originality, creativeness and the ability to think and work in areas not previously explored whereas the latter reproduces the stated fact. It aims at a point which seems difficult to reach. Genius aims at what is not perceived by others.

Genius creates. Talent re-states. Francis Galton studied 400 distinguished persons of his time including judges, musicians, generals and statesmen to find out whether genius could be bottled and intellectual dynasties established.

He provided statistical evidence that the exceptionally endowed owed much to their family line. Robert Albert, a California psychologist, says that there is <https://assignbuster.com/people-ear-and-gaugin-swallowed-arsenic-ran/>

a correlation between family and great achievers. His finding is: " First-born and only children are the ones how end up in Who's Who." However, this view excludes the important role played by education, opportunity, environment and hard work.

The great achievers have been a combination of several factors. The potential for exceptional achievement may come from the family-line but it comes to maturity after education, training, persistent hard work and inter-relation with great minds William Blake often retired to the sea shore to converse with Moses, Homer, Vigil and Milton. When asked about their appearance, he replied, " They are shades full of majesty, grey but luminous, and much taller than the generality of men". Is it that the inspiration of the great, inter-relation with other great ones, and the elements of insanity fuse and result in a single product? Is that when inspiration and high spirits fail that the genius sinks into the utmost depth of depression? It is proverbially said that to feel sorrow more than others constitutes the crown of thorns of genius. Goethe has said, " My character passes from extreme joy to extreme melancholy". He could not recall that in all his life he had passed more than four pleasant weeks.

Eminent men have recorded the effect of nature on their achievements. Tolstoy was in a mood to write in sunny spring weather. Goethe did his thinking while walking.

Nietzsche could think and write only under the clear sky. In his own words, it was as if he had bathed in a natural element. The great achievers need long

spells of " incubation in isolation to peruse their creativity. They also borrow from others.

Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice came from Gesta Romanorum. Goethe confessed that he owed a lot to Schiller. He frankly admitted, " The great genius will never amount to anything if he wants to limit himself to his own resources." There is an unacknowledged link between great achievement and dreams because in many cases the mind works sharpest during sleep. English romantic poet, Coleridge, composed his famous poem, Kubla, Khan, in a dream. He wrote it out later. Jules Henri, a mathematician, dreamt that he was lecturing to a distinguished gathering on a problem, which had defied solution for long.

He got up from the bed; put his dream lecture on paper. He had solved the problem; presto! Yet another factor, which plays a great role in the achievements of the brilliant men and women, may be summed up in two words: " inspiration" and " perspiration." Is it a spell of " divine madness," however transitory, which illumines the mind and makes the man or the woman to pour out their soul in a frenzy? Is it, on the other hand, sheer hard work, persistency, and a crab-like tenacity, which results in big achievements? Both play an important role.

Hard work however plays a greater and more significant role than fitful spells of inspiration. The success of the " moody" finally turns out to be a flash in the pan. Very few people can claim like Byron that they got up one morning and found themselves famous. It is because creativity demands extraordinary effort. The genius knows it.

Even a simple idea, before it crystalises, has to be shorn off many contradictions and prejudices, A writer has said even when he had to write a simple sentence, “ It is obvious, he knew he had a hard day’s labour at hand” Inspiration does not take birth out of a vacuum. It is the offshoot of steady and hard work. It is “ a late link and the climax in the chain of diligent and sustained effort.” The factors, which give birth to inspiration, enter into relationship with each other because a lot of effort has already gone into it. The famous incident that the mere falling of the apple inspired Newton to find the law of gravity overlooks that he had been working on it for 17 years. The “ inspiration” came not from the falling apple but from his study of a book, which enabled him to measure degrees and give proof. Balzac, Spencer, Tolstoy, Johnson and Flaubert are all on record that they owe their success to sheer hard work rather than „ that much used and misunderstood word “ mood” or “ inspiration.

” Many greenhorns in the fields of writing, though highly talented, fall by the wayside because they belittle the role of hard work. It is amazing because when we think of mastery, say in playing a musical instrument, we readily agree that hours of gruelling practice is required over years before one can hope to achieve the zenith. But in the case of writing, we think that mastery should come without effort.