

HISTORIC EXAMPLES

History has not always shown disregard for the Super-gifted child. Twenty four centuries ago Plato pleaded for identification of the specially gifted and for their training which would prepare them as "guardians" of his famous "Republic". Ultimately he envisaged a world ruled by initiates, by highly integrated beings, who in their youth, had undergone the most careful preparation, education and rigorous tests to bring out their peculiar and particular gifts. He too realised the dangers implicit in democracy and the democratic processes.

In the days of earlier Greece when the Delphic religion had flourished, there had been some attempt at selecting and isolating certain children, gifted in a specialised way. Astrology was employed, amongst other techniques to help in their selection. In the instance of Delphi, it was for the selection of children who had the inherent super-normal capacity for intuitive insight. Children born in Cancer, especially those with Cancer rising and more especially girls, were set aside at the outset and brought up apart from other children. All their utterances from earliest childhood were noted, and they were never ridiculed or inhibited in this respect. It was from these, children super-gifted with intuition, that a selection was made to assist with the Delphic Oracle. Fumes from natural gases, mainly carbon dioxide, welled up from the earth near the temple and these were used to help enduce the necessary underlying physiological conditions for the intuitive outpourings of the young neophytes.

In the Sixteenth Century, in the Middle East, one Mohammedan ruler at least, selected the "fairest, strongest and most intelligent youth" to train as leaders and his efforts were well-rewarded.

Though perhaps not entirely relevant here, it might be worthwhile mentioning the age-old process of selecting warriors born in Aries with Scorpio rising for special and hazardous enterprises, the two Signs representing the super-gifts of "unbridled energy" and "unrelenting courage" respectively. The subtler and more meritorious qualities of the supergifted may also be indicated in the natal chart especially if the techniques of ESOTERIC astrology are used as well as those of mundane astrology.

The Renaissance and the Reformation saw esteem placed upon superior intellect but although this continued down to the Industrial Revolution, very little was done about special consideration for the super-gifted because of the absurd belief in

Sheridan "by common consent of both parent and preceptor was pronounced to be a most impenetrable dunce". Charles Darwin wrote, "I was considered by all my masters and by my father as a very ordinary boy, rather below the common standard in intellect". Leo Tolstoy was thought to be both uninterested and unable to learn. Anthony Trollope was moved from Harrow because of poor work. Thackeray was described as "less than mediocre" at Charterhouse. He was sent down from Cambridge without a degree.

Children destined to be famous were viewed with disapproval not only by their teachers but by their parents. Charles Darwin was told by his father, "You will be a disgrace to yourself and all your family." The Duke of Wellington was regarded as the dunce of his family. Edison was described by his father as "just stupid". When Sigmund Freud was seven, his father said, "that boy will never amount to anything." ‡

Precocious Children

Stalin, as a child, had an outstandingly good memory. It is said that he learnt his lessons without effort.

Goebbels also had a remarkable memory as a schoolboy and was top of the form.

Lord Macaulay, who was probably one of the world's greatest geniuses, had a remarkable memory. He had no interest in toys after the age of three.

Coleridge could read chapters from the Bible at three.

Dean Swift could read any chapter of the Bible when he was two.

Samuel Johnson could read easily at three.

John Stuart Mill knew Greek at three. At six he could read Aesop and Lucian.

Whittier had a precocious memory. At seven he could recite entire chapters of the Bible by heart, and his father made him demonstrate this at Quaker meetings.

Walter Scott's memory was said to resemble a sheet of blotting paper. He absorbed everything which he heard or read.

Amongst remarkable legendary geniuses were Christian Heineken and Jeanne Cardiac, who were contemporaries. Christian Heineken was born in Lubeck in

‡ *The Normal School Child*, by R. S. Illingworth (William Heinemann Medical Books).

has been forced into circumstances hostile to soul-expression. An example of this last run of lives is given diagrammatically (opposite). The soul, in pralaya spent a long period in devachan and then emerged, under the driving force of the Will-to-Be (of the Logos) for its final series of incarnations. Having had resurgences of expression in Egypt and oriental vehicles, the effort is now thrown into the western civilisations. A life as a law-giver (Lycurgus) gives place to one in which law and system is introduced into medicine on the island of Cos. Then, in the life that follows, the elements of mental hygiene, so essential as a forerunner to the scientific method, are introduced by Socrates and continued, without any recess in Plato. A life in circumstances hostile to soul-expression aborts in Rome about 60 B. C. Under Celsus, the healing arts reach new heights . . . etc., etc. Whereas the many earlier lives in the many races and subraces might be seen, in the biology of spiritual development, as the unfoldment of leaves on the great stem of soul growth, the final run is concerned with the most expressive parts of the delicate organism of the soul. These are the petals of the egoic lotus which exist only embryonically or as a mere bud in the young soul. The opening of the petals is of supreme importance in the psychology of discipleship.

All super-gifted children have a high degree of soul-development and contact but for these qualities they have, until lately more often been looked upon as pathological rather than the most precious flowers of our race. Very little has been written about them. Sometimes they and their problems have been described in books along with the treatment of handicapped children! In one book "Special Education--The Handicapped and the Gifted, of 513 pages only 13 referred to the Gifted.

At the outset, we should distinguish between the GIFTED and the SUPER-GIFTED. The former represent about ten per cent of the population. In general, their qualities, their problems and their recognition are understood and catered for. Some research work has been done into their peculiar characteristics. In education, there exists for them, scholarships, some special schools and special instruction. In a country like England, such children are given every opportunity to reach and surmount university level.

But there is a second, much smaller group and these are the SUPER-gifted. They may include the Gifted but not necessarily so. This may appear to be a contradiction in terms. The Gifted however, are selected mainly on their I.Q. rating, whereas the SUPER-gifted need not necessarily have outstanding rating in I.Q. This apparent anomaly arises through the fact that I.Q. tests do not take into account creativity in their assessment whereas Creativity is the quality par excellence in the SUPER-gifted.

It is the opinion of Dr. Paul Torrance, one of America's foremost authorities on creativity and intelligence that : -

I.Q. tests do not measure creativity By depending on them we miss a high proportion of our most creative youngsters It is true that outstanding creativity is seldom found among children of below average I.Q. But our research shows above 115 or 120 I.Q. scores have little or no bearing on creativity. Creative giftedness may be found anywhere along the scale except, possibly at the bottom. The child with the so-called genius I.Q. of 180 is in reality no more likely to make outstanding creative achievements than the child with a slightly above average I.Q. around 120.

The SUPER-gifted represent one tenth of one per cent of the population or about one in a thousand. They are far more difficult to recognise than the merely Gifted, who in general, can be assessed by I.Q. and other simple tests. The I.Q. of the Gifted is above 135. The I.Q. of the SUPER-gifted is not a pointer to their capacities except in rare instances when the mental body is highly developed and synchronised with the Soul. I.Q. does not measure emotional development. It doesn't measure drive and initiative. It doesn't measure temperament or talent. It doesn't point to leadership. In fact, the best leaders often do not score more than 135.

In education, we have not yet learnt to measure the degree of a child's capacity for emotional discipline (as being distinct from emotional capacity). We have not yet learnt to measure the degree of a child's **love** nature. Both of these are often powerful in the SUPER-gifted. At this stage it becomes necessary to attempt a definition of the SUPER-gifted.

Definition of SUPER-gifted Individuals

The SUPER-gifted, are those rare individuals who manifest powerfully, one or more specific qualities which have not arisen solely through the interplay of the individual's environment and hereditary equipment but from a third, little-understood factor which is spiritual in essence and inward in nature.

The Third Factor

We are all well aware that current psychological attitudes assess two main factors in the building of the human personality. These are the Hereditary Equipment (H) and Environment (E) into which the child is thrust at birth. Thus, as the child grows his

$$\text{PERSONALITY} = H \times E$$