

GENIUS STATE OF MIND – DETERMINATION OR EFFECT?

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ABSTRACT. Genius State of Mind – Determination or Effect? Through this paper I put together philosophical aspects and also medical ones regarding Nietzsche's mental disorders. The analyze is based on three different discussions on modeling or creative suffering, bipolar disorder and altered states of consciousness – extended consciousness and will show us some interesting findings, one of them is that the bipolar disorder II that Nietzsche was suffering of, could be the trigger point for it's genius state of mind. Also in the discussions chapter some questions regarding genius are raised.

Keywords: *genius, creative suffering, bipolar disorder, extended consciousness, Nietzsche*

We are starting a discussion on which we apply inevitably a medical print. Although we could be accused of laicization an demythisation of genius, it is a challenge for thorough philosophical understanding of possible sources for genius.

Regarding this subject, in order to be able to generate an answer towards the origin of genius, it will be taken into consideration a triad of elements. Taken individually or mixed together, each of these elements could lead us to the origin of genius: pain, bipolar disorder and modified state of consciousness.

During this study I propose a physiology approach of genius. Where physiology express a medical term used to describe possible causes and trigger mechanisms of an entity that we suppose to be a normal state, in other words, physiological state of being.

The elements of the triad taken into consideration, interrelated, could lead us to an answer regarding the origin of genius or, at least, to an augmentation of this state of mind: pain, bipolar disorder and modified state of consciousness. The

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study proposes to discuss whether there is an interrelated link between these constituents of the triad or one is the consequence of the other and also some hypotheses that are meant to offer another point of view, possible solutions or just new trigger points in this field.

Through the medical point of view, the discussion over intra-familial genius (cross-generational linked genius) is intentionally omitted. This alone could be a field of study, taking into consideration also psycho-genealogical aspects or educational ones. Also, transcendental knowledge is taken for granted, while aspects on extended consciousness or intuitive knowledge cannot be denied.

The analyse of the origin of genius and genius is a part of the holistic understanding of man and philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, the subject of my research. This is the reason why reference, motivations, explanations will come to sustain his genius. By taking into consideration the theme of the genius, also from a medical point of view through neuroscience or evolution of the nature sciences in the last decades, I do not want to change the sacred status of the writings of great geniuses of the world but I hereby sustain a better understanding of the mechanisms that leads us to genius and the genius as a creator. Although, Otto Weininger made a good observation on those who analyse others: *to understand a man one must have his nature in oneself. One must be like the mind one tries to grasp. It takes a thief to know a thief, and only an innocent man can understand another innocent man. The poseur only understands other poseurs, and sees nothing but pose in the actions of others; whilst the simple-minded fails to understand the most flagrant pose. To understand a man is really to be that man.*¹

If we are about to accept the definition of the genius given by A. Schopenhauer: *the essence of genius will result in the perfection and in the energy of intuitive knowledge. [Genius] searches more profound the world in front, the world that appear more objective in his mind, therefore more pure and more clear,*² then we accept also the transcendental knowledge of things as a way of knowing, as it flows out of this definition. Also, we do accept the possibility of opening more fields for studying the hypotheses of origins for genius and creativity including here modern techniques such as quantum physics or genomics (interdisciplinary field that focuses on the study of human genome).

Again A. Schopenhauer says that *genius consists of the fact that the faculty of knowing developed considerable stronger than the service of the will requests.*³

¹ Otto Weininger, *Sex and character*, A. L. Burt Company Publishers, New York–Chicago, p. 105.

² Arthur Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, Hauptwerke Bd. I, Köln, Parkland Verlag 2000, Kap. 31 Von Genie, p. 953–976.

³ *Idem*, p. 953–954.

If the genius consists of considerable development of the faculty of knowing, then we put on debate three possible trigger points for this development or three pathways that one man is capable of knowing, other than formal education. Objective understanding of things and phenomenons through superior development of faculty of knowing could lead us to knowing through revelation. What is the source of these revelations?

Speaking of revelations, synchronicities (as seen by C.G. Jung as a coincidence of physical and psychological phenomenons apparently without causal link between them), experiences beyond physical barrier, then there are some landmarks regarding also Friedrich Nietzsche.

The presence in one man's life of turning moments could lead to several questions but also could make him claim his origins of life and, of course, of knowledge. Lifelong turning moments can have a very large spectrum of trigger points: from an shared experience after reading a book up to an accident that can threat your life and taking you to the limits of consciousness or even an out-of-body experience. *[Nietzsche] once writes his sister that still during childhood period Zarathustra's image revealed. Other time he wrote: when I was 12 years old I saw God in all his splendour,*⁴ notes Ernst Bertram in his work *Nietzsche, Attempt at a Mythology*. Also E. Bertram captures another characteristic of Nietzsche's intuition: *There is no hazard. If I'm thinking of somebody, politely I receive at my door a letter from that person... In my life there are now curious facts that rely on some hidden meaning of chance, that have no equal.*⁵

Nietzsche appreciates immaterial intra-familial, transgenerational acquisitions from his father. These have the same purpose of superior stimulation of sensory organs corroborated with his fine tuning on observing intra-familial environment. Nowadays these aspects are studied through a branch of psychology, the psychogenealogy. *I regard it as a great privilege to have had such a father: it even seems to me that this embraces all that I can claim in the matter of privileges—life, the great yea to life, excepted. What I owe to him above all is this, that I do not need any special intention, but merely a little patience, in order involuntarily to enter a world of higher and more delicate things. There I am at home, there alone does my inmost passion become free.*⁶

The experiences beyond physical barrier don't stop here. As E. Bertram notices that *crucial meeting with the capital work of Schopenhauer happened not without the shadow of a demonic work [...] in an book store in Leipzig he finds a*

⁴ Ernst Bertram, *Nietzsche – Versuch einer Mythologie*, Bei Georg Bondi, Berlin, 1920.

⁵ *Idem.*

⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, T. N. Foulis Edinburgh, 1911, p. 16.

*book totally unknown to him: "I don't know what daemon whispered: take this book at home. This happened, however, despite my old habit not to rush into buying books". Synchronicities theory, issued later by C. G. Jung, theory that links two or more psycho-material facts or events leading to the development of positive aspects or, on the contrary, negative ones, presented as "happenings" in Nietzsche's life and noticed by himself or by those who are analyzing his works. Also, T. Vianu captures Nietzsche's inclination towards the issue of chance: *the analyst of the human soul continues his work guided by the new ideals of the affirmation of life, of the cruel and dominant instincts that support it even in the souls who have come to understand the dire necessity of how events are linked in the world.*⁷ Within the theory of synchronicities we can also fit relational reciprocity regarding affinities or, on the contrary, mutual scorn: *The one I despise guesses that he will be despised by me; through my simple existence, I become annoying for all those who have impure blood in their veins.*⁸*

As Tudor Vianu also notes the practice of transcendental meditation is not unknown to Nietzsche as meditation is also the trigger point of some productive revelations: *tot cum meditația este și cauza unor revelații productive: The days of intense meditation in the strong air of the peaks were alternated with reading Spinoza. During one of these days [...] Nietzsche's revelation of eternal return of all things and events in the world came, but not as a theory, but as a shaking concrete intuition.*⁹

Modeling or creative suffering

First source of these revelations creating superior knowledge could be suffering. Modeling suffering, fertile, germinating, culminating in the installation of the results in the next moment, the moment of convalescence. Convalescence in this context must be understood as a period of recovery after the traumatic experience of suffering. Therefore I have chosen as the first of the criteria applied to possible sources of genius. Nietzsche was exposed to severe suffering since his childhood, *his father died when he was only 5 years old. Then, another death preceded by a premonitory dream marked him: his brother, only two years old.*¹⁰

⁷ Tudor Vianu, *Opere 9*, Ed. Minerva, 1980, p. 123.

⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, Ed. Humanitas, 2012.

⁹ Tudor Vianu, op. cit. p. 122.

¹⁰ Safranski Ruediger, *Nietzsche – Biografie seines Denkens*, Spiegel Verlag, 2000.

When we speak of suffering, we mean deep suffering, which produces a *constant shaking of the entire being*¹¹, not the aesthetic superficial suffering that is only meant to attract attention to yourself, as defined by Cioran: *all those who think small dissatisfactions of life as suffering, giving proportions to some contradictions and spiritual anxieties about instability and uncertainties of ages, claiming to be tortured without haunting perspective of death, all of them suffer aesthetically*.¹²

Instead, *the intense experience of pain cannot be achieved without favorable conditions from outside*,¹³ from human interactions (such as the relation of Nietzsche and Wagner, Lou Salome etc.) up to weather conditions. Knowing also the change of his disposition depending on the weather conditions, Nietzsche, otherwise a fine observer – *finds that genius is conditioned by dry air, clear sky – that is, fast metabolism, the possibility to create, again and again, for himself, large quantities, even huge ones, of force*.¹⁴

An external role, also important in triggering suffering, is represented by the treatments or the consumption of substances with psychotropism (even without the existence of chronic poisoning). Substances that have psychotropism are: tobacco, alcohol, depressants of the nervous system, stimulants, hallucinogens etc. These may be legal in nature (alcohol, tobacco, various drugs such as chloral, tramadol, morphine, etc.) or illegal. Andrei Oişteanu states that *not knowing its psychotropic properties, the chloral was incorrectly prescribed, especially for long-term uses. It causes a lot of addiction and has negative effects on the mental state. Friedrich Nietzsche was one of the known victims of the chloral but not the only one. [...] Freud treated his own depression with cocaine*.¹⁵

Invoking the experience of life even when it is negative or, especially when it is negative, has a creative, revealing role. *All the complete formulas and reading of ten libraries do not equate to an intense experience of pain*,¹⁶ states Cioran. If we go further in what it means to invoke the experience of life in order to develop certain capacities to what it means mystics or shamans in different areas of the world, *even when the vocation is inherited, Siberian shamans must go through an individual initiation, in order to gain knowledge and supernatural help. Visited by spirits, the shaman initially goes through a period of profound mental depression and illness, before gaining shamanic powers, the Inuits go through a severe depression and a shocking experience on the verge of death*.¹⁷

¹¹ Emil Cioran, *Revelațiile durerii*, Ed. Echinox, Cluj-Napoca, 1990, p. 91.

¹² *Idem*.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 88.

¹⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, op. cit. p. 38.

¹⁵ Andrei Oişteanu, *Narcotice în cultura română*, Ed. Polirom, 2014. p. 192–193.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 91.

¹⁷ Ioan Petru Culianu, *Otherworldly Journeys from Gilgamesh to Albert Einstein*, Boston, Shambhala, 1991, p. 82–83.

Bipolar disorder

From the general picture of suffering, it turns out that depression and suffering through depression are sine-qua-non criteria for increasing inner feelings. The release of creative flows, in contrast, occurs at a stage other than that of deep disarticulation, but in which the role of the first is essential. It is like as you were sowing (during the time of suffering) and then, in the next stage, you reap the fruits.

*From a scientific point of view,*¹⁸ what we call the generic term of madness (which is no longer used since the beginning of the 20th century in the medical field), corresponds to a classification in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. The limits of normality, defined in human medicine, are quite lax, a definite diagnosis being based on the sum of several objective or differential criteria observed over a certain period of time, so that the categorization is certain.

Two of the philosophers' observations on how the disposition of the creators is modified have been taken into account and are also relevant for the definition of bipolar disorder: one of them is O. Weininger who asserted that *results from the periodicity the fact that, in genius people, the sterile years preceded the productive years, they were again followed by sterility, the barren period being marked by psychological self-deprecation, by the feeling that they are inferior to any other human being;*¹⁹ and also the observation of E. Cioran, according to which there is *no authentic lyricism without a grain of inner madness. It is characteristic that the onset of psychoses is characterized by a lyrical phase in which all the usual barriers and boundaries disappear to give rise to a most fruitful inner drunkenness. This explains the productivity of the early stages of psychoses. Madness could be a paroxysm of lyricism.*²⁰

Where is the connection with suffering, then? Well, the inner disarticulation, the self-depreciation, reaching the meaninglessness of life, during the depressive periods, that is, the barren ones as Weininger asserts, represents the period of deep, unesthetic suffering. *From the multiplicity of organically rooted soul states, the depressive ones have the highest capacity for revelation, because in them is included the progressive division of the ego of the world.*²¹ The lack of meaning of life, coupled with deep suffering, during this period, however, determines the autolytic tendencies, which in many have been manifest and even, cynically, effective. *Then, however, when man is burned to the very substance of his being by the flame of pain, when consciousness acquires a great capacity for selflessness because it is released from the vital*

¹⁸ *DSM of Mental Disorders*, Vth Ed, American Psychiatric Association, Washington / London, 2013.

¹⁹ Otto Weininger, op. cit. p. 107.

²⁰ Emil Cioran, op. cit.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 89.

*connections, when the vision acquires a purity that captures the essence, the understanding for the vital phenomena of life it reaches the purest expression.*²² Gaining this awareness of the capacity for selflessness as Cioran calls it, if not necessarily accompanied by vision and understanding, will induce in a “weak” autolytic tendencies.

Related to the subject of our analysis, namely Nietzsche, *his illness undoubtedly evolved for almost fifteen years in a unipolar depressive manner, then a bipolar alternation and a terminal manic-delirious decompensation,*²³ remarks Dr. Philippe Brenot, psychiatrist, author of several medical studies, including in the work *Bipolarity and creativity* the pathognomonic cases of several personalities of world culture. This includes Friedrich Nietzsche. For Nietzsche, we could talk today about a bipolar disorder II with a family predisposition on the maternal side. Nietzsche’s bipolarity certainly participated in his prodigious creative energy.²⁴

Altered states of consciousness – extended consciousness

In George Berkeley’s vision, *there could be no pain that no one feels, a sound that no one hears, a taste that no one enjoys, a color that no one sees. Perceptions make up the external world. There is no other world than that of the perceiving beings.*²⁵ Nothing more wrong. I believe that we have mechanisms through which we can perceive much more than through the basic senses. Of course, it depends on how well and fine this mechanism is tuned to the surrounding nature. If there is no other world than the one lived by the perceiving beings, then the scientific discoveries have no meaning, have no relevance. Logical deduction or revelation or intuition as a way of perceiving and knowing the world would not fit here. And then where can we place them?

Research in recent years in particular, has shown the existence of completely new worlds, with laws other than the perceived Newtonian world. This is the world of quantum, and according to Stephen Hawking, *there are questions for philosophers, but philosophy is dead. Philosophy has not kept pace with the development of modern science, especially with physics: How can we understand the world we are in? How does the universe behave? What is the nature of reality? Where did all this come from? Does the universe need a creator?*²⁶ We do not perceive the quantum world. We perceive its effects on us and on the perceptible world.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 90.

²³ Philippe Brenot, *Bipolarité et créativité*, Editura L’Esprit du Temps, 2008, p. 48.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 48.

²⁵ George Berkeley, *Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision*, p. 29.

²⁶ Stephen Hawking, *Marele plan*, Ed. Humanitas, 2012, p. 1.

Regardless of which process we use to expand consciousness (prayer, meditation, holotropic breathing, psychotropic substances etc), said Cioran about *those oriented toward Dionysian exaltation, erotic living or htonic assimilation, they instinctively tend to eliminate everything that is in the sphere of pain.*²⁷

Regarding the connection between psychotropic substances and bipolar disorder and suffering, Dr. Philippe Brenot stated that *before any beginning of alcoholism, it is imperative to look for a possible bipolar disorder available. We can say that many other toxins such as drugs and cocaine, widely used in the creative world for their stimulant effects, and among them bipolar to appeal to the manic phase, to activate hypomania or to avoid diminishing the disposition.*²⁸

As we have shown before, shamans and mystics to reach knowledge go through a deep suffering, this aided not infrequently by psychotropic substances, specific to the area.

An experimental way of extending consciousness, among others through holotropic breathing, was also refined by Stanislav Grof,²⁹ one of the founders of the field of transpersonal psychology. He has conducted experimental studies that, according to his own statements, have helped to cure many pathological states of the human psyche. Unlike psychotropic substances that induce depression, the working methods developed by St. Grof come to help, from improvement, to healing.

Discussions

1. Nietzsche's sensitivity is clearly influenced, according to him, by various external factors, the seasonal ones being predominant. *Within the group of bipolar disorders, however, the seasonal pattern seems to be more likely in type II bipolar disorder. For some individuals, the onset of manic or hypomaniacal episodes may also be related to a particular season. Age is a strong predictor of seasonality, with younger people being at higher risk for winter depressive episodes.*³⁰

Any small change in the external environment can produce a huge change in sensitivity and disposition. Let's imagine the trays of a balance: if we suddenly leave a sufficiently heavy elastic ball on one of the trays of the balance, the ball falls and then due to the elastic force it will jump out of the balance; the action was short and intense enough to produce a change. This action will cause a balance imbalance, which, until balanced, the indicator will oscillate from one extreme to

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 89.

²⁸ Philippe Brenot, op. cit., p. 19.

²⁹ Stanislav Grof, *Psychology of the Future*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000.

³⁰ *DSM of Mental Disorders*, p. 426.

the other. If, instead, the tray had a shock absorber, then the oscillation of the indicator needle from one end to the other would no longer occur.

So on the hypersensitivity of certain people, on whom if the intervention of an external factor is applied, can produce huge changes of disposition or on the contrary, to those that according to social customs we call balanced (similar to balance trays with shock absorber), slight changes. The hypersensitivity Nietzsche invokes denotes a high emotional intelligence quotient.

In this context, what would the treatment of all the depressive periods of a man imply? If by this treatment we no longer have depressive states, then we no longer allow the altered states of consciousness? If the suffering is revealing, through it the higher knowledge state of mind is produced, then by treatment do we stop the knowledge or, on the contrary, do we stimulate it in a healthy way?

2. *The Newtonian laws of physics are not applicable in quantum physics. If the theory of relativity shows us that time is different depending on the observer and energy can be transformed into mass, at the quantum level the atomic or subatomic particles have a different behavior enough to generate other theories. Knowing, for example, the disposition of a human being can be modified by electromagnetic waves of a certain frequency*³¹ (taking into account, for example, as we have shown, the weather conditions or listening to a special piece of music), does not the dawn of another philosophy, a new paradigm, open up the conditions of the discoveries of the natural sciences of the last period? For example, if we have an Internet reception device (personal computer, smart phone, smart watch, etc.), it plays on the screen, visibly, and you can access any information you want, information that is around us, information that without this device, decoder, we can not see it. Do we, as humans, have not – in fact similar to these reception devices – a receiver for phenomena that happen and which otherwise take the expression of genius?

The applicability of quantum physics in knowing the functionality of the human brain, for example, is revealed by a model specially designed to explain the interference of a “soul” or an “consciousness” external to the material medium. *Thus, we have two neurons interconnected. Either neuron can transmit impulses to the other. The effects would be: if transmitting from A to B the left hand will be raised and if the nerve impulse is transmitted from B to A the right hand will be raised. In this case, however, the situation is critical, because either neuron could generate impulses. And yet, it is assumed that there is a “soul” in another immaterial world, which will effectively determine which state will be obtained and therefore which hand will be raised. The “soul” is not part of this world then, but it can influence it.*³²

³¹ Preliminary opinion on possible effects of electromagnetic fields on human health, European Commission, adopted by SCENIHR July 2006.

³² Cristian Presura, *Fizica povestită*, Ed. Humanitas, 2014, p. 264.

3. If the theory that the three aspects of suffering, bipolar disorder and extended consciousness were not the cause but the effect of genius? Then, surely, *the principle of error of confusion of cause and consequence would apply*³³ as Nietzsche stated. This confusion, he calls it a perversion of reason itself. If genius, by nature, does attract what we call “suffering”? If intuitive, brilliant knowledge requires the model of bipolar disorder to explain the creative periods, then bipolar disorder is the consequence of genius and not a cause of it. An unwritten principle of psychiatry says: where it does not exist, it has nothing to ruin. Who determines who? Genius – disorder or disorder – genius?

4. The deep suffering followed by the creative period, defined in the medical literature as bipolar disorder, produces higher knowledge through mechanisms that produce altered states of consciousness; also, the consumption of psychotropic substances produces altered states of consciousness; also, the experimental methods that holotropic breathing produce altered states of consciousness. If these altered states of consciousness are to some extent responsible for higher knowledge, then genius could in fact be a physiological state, that is, normal. To what extent could a fundamental human right be then? The right to genius?

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³³Friedrich Nietzsche, *Amurgul idolilor*, Ed. Humanitas, 1994, p. 478.

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