

FEELING LIFE: ETTY HILLESUM BECOMES WORD

dr. Maria Gabriella Nocita

"I shall no doubt find my own words, or rather my words will perhaps find me one day"

At the beginning of her diary, ETTY Hillesum writes that she is looking for her own words; she needs to discover the way to express herself, to find herself. With Rainer Maria Rilke ETTY learns that writing is a way to know her own inner world, with him she scrutinizes her "Weltinnenraum".

Learning to scan the "Weltinnenraum" ETTY would like to arrive to a "new meaning" of things drawn "from the deep wells" of her soul. She writes: "I do have a talent, if one may call it that, for experiencing everything a human being can experience and feel and suffer, not just in my own way but also like many others". In her "Weltinnenraum" ETTY finds her great talent: feeling the life.

She experiences "life, body and soul, from minute to minute, with all its twists and turns and colours and sounds", but not only, she experiences people and also she experiences the suffering of people. ETTY lives the life to the full, but after the summer of 1942 she feels all the responsibility that her talent entails: "I feel ever more strongly that I am being forced to assume growing obligations towards what I might call my talents" - but - "it is no longer enough to live for the day, something more has to be added". So ETTY finds out that, in order to give a sense to the atrocities of the moment, it is not enough to live intensely, to feel life. ETTY comes to understand that it is necessary to offer to the other the new meaning discovered and, above all, to communicate life deeply, to transmit the sense of life.

In taking care of Philosophy of Education and Pedagogy of Expression, I was attracted to ETTY Hillesum existential communication, that it can pass time and space.

For those concerned about human education, her gaze is precious because she is able to contact the depth of human interiority, she is able to go beyond the borders and discover the common essence in the various human creatures.

In this context I would like to reflect together with you on two mysterious inner motions of ETTY Hillesum: to feel life and to communicate life.

<http://www.ehoc.ugent.be/Congress2008>

<http://www.ehoc.ugent.be/index.php?id=164&type=content>