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## UNKNOWN SOURCES OF ETTY HILLESUM'S SPIRITUALITY

**SUMMARY** – This article is a first exploration of Etty Hillesum's forty-three handwritten quotations as they appear in her copy of *Levenskunst: Gedachten van Week tot Week* ('Savoir-vivre: Thoughts from Week to Week'), compiled by A.J.C. van Seters. Next to remarkable similarities and differences with Hillesum's diaries, this research explores six unknown sources of her spirituality. Hillesum's copy of *Levenskunst* contains eleven quotations from six authors who are not mentioned in her diary: Ebba Pauli, Kees Schuurman, Frederik van Eeden, Giovanni Papini, Julia de Beausobre and Alexander Eastman.

The diaries of the Jewish Etty Hillesum (1914-1943) are known worldwide<sup>1</sup> and are characterized by a remarkable spirituality.<sup>2</sup> Hillesum drew her inspiration from many sources, which are mirrored in her texts.<sup>3</sup> The most dominant of these influences is the poet Rainer Maria Rilke,<sup>4</sup> and the person most frequently cited is the Jewish psychochirologist Julius Spier (1887-1942), the man who took her 'metaphorically by the hand' and showed her how to live.<sup>5</sup> This article is a first exploration of some of the unknown sources of Etty Hillesum's spirituality as they appear in her copy of *Levenskunst*.

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\* A first version of this article was presented at the Second International Etty Hillesum Congress in Ghent, Belgium, 13-15 January 2014. This congress was organized by the Etty Hillesum Research Centre (EHOC).

<sup>1</sup> Etty Hillesum, *Het werk* (ed. Klaas A.D. Smelik, Gideon Lodders & Rob Tempelaars), Amsterdam: Balans, 2012 (6<sup>th</sup> rev. ed.), 6; Etty Hillesum, *Etty: The letters and diaries of Etty Hillesum, 1941-1943* (ed. Klaas A.D. Smelik, transl. Arnold J. Pomerans), Ottawa, ON-Grand Rapids, MI: Novalis Saint Paul University-Eerdmans, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Klaas A.D. Smelik, Ria van den Brandt & Meins G.S Coetsier (Eds.), *Spirituality in the writings of Etty Hillesum*. Proceedings of the Etty Hillesum Conference at Ghent University, November 2008, Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Ria van den Brandt, "...comme dans mille éclats d'un miroir": le "bricolage" d'Etty Hillesum', in: *Religiologiques* 26 (2003) no.1 (special issue), 163-174.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Maria Goetze, *Etty Hillesums Rilke-Lektüre* (Master's thesis, University Utrecht), 2006; cf. Frits Grimmelikhuisen, *Alleen met heel je hart aanwezig zijn: De invloed van Rainer Maria Rilke op het kunstenaarschap van Etty Hillesum*, Deventer: Frits Grimmelikhuisen, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Hillesum, *Het werk*, 6; Hillesum, *The letters and diaries*, 6.

## FIRST EXPLORATION OF HILLESUM'S COPY

A number of books from Hillesum's library have survived the Second World War and are kept in the Jewish Historical Museum. One of these is *Levenskunst: Gedachten van Week tot Week* ('Savoir-vivre: Thoughts from Week to Week'), compiled by A.J.C. van Seters. It includes printed and unprinted pages. The citations on the printed pages are designed to encourage users to note down weekly thoughts about some theme or subject. The editor sees thoughts as forces and feels that the sharing and exchange of thoughts may lead to renewed feelings of community and belief in God: true renewal of life, a real *savoir vivre*.<sup>6</sup> The booklet's structure is simple: an introduction, followed by fifty-two short chapters corresponding to the fifty-two weeks of the calendar year and a concluding chapter entitled 'God en Mensch' ('God and Human Being'). Every chapter has a theme, a number of entries on the right-hand page and an unprinted left-hand page to make notes. The editor selected nineteen themes and spread them across the entire year, so that some themes recur regularly.<sup>7</sup> The editor intended readers to keep the booklet for one calendar year. *Levenskunst* was published by Ten Have on behalf of the Nederlands Godsdienstig Genootschap De Lichtdrager (Dutch Religious Society The Light Bearer) which, under a slightly different name, had existed for a long time.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Introduction by A.J.C. van Seters to *Levenskunst* (unpagged): 'Gedachten zijn krachten. Over onzichtbare bruggen gaan zij van mensch tot mensch, van geest tot geest, van ziel tot ziel, – heen en weder. (...) Want het [boekje] wil gemeenschap stichten of gemeenschap bewust maken. Telkens weer een heële week lang, met één reeks van op elkander aansluitende gedachten over één bepaald levensbelang. (...) En daarin iets laten zien, van wát, in een geloofsverhouding met God, *ware* levensvernieuwing en *echte* "Levenskunst" is'. ['Thoughts are forces. They cross invisible bridges from person to person, from spirit to spirit – to and fro. (...) For the booklet seeks to create community or to establish it at the conscious level. A whole week at a time, devoted to a single series of linked thoughts about one particular aspect of life (...) Giving a hint of what, in a faith relationship with God, *true* renewal and *true* "Levenskunst" are'.]

<sup>7</sup> Themes/subjects: Het leven als taak [Life as a task] (week 1, 15, 28, 41), Verhouding tot God [Relationship with God] (week 2, 16, 29, 43), Persoonlijkheid [Personality] (week 3, 17, 30), Levensovergave [Surrender to life] (week 4, 18, 31, 40, 45, 50), Vriendschap [Friendship] (week 5, 19, 32), Levenswaarheden [Truths of life] (week 6, 20), Geloof [Belief] (week 7, 21, 33, 44), Dienen [Service] (week 8, 22, 34), Liefde [Love] (week 9, 23, 35), Blijdschap en geluk [Joy and happiness] (week 10, 25, 37), Lijden [Suffering] (week 11, 24, 36, 49), Ootmoed [Humility] (Week 12), Moeiten des levens [Labours of life] (week 13, 26, 38), Bidden [Prayer] (week 14, 27, 39), Zonde [Sin] (week 42, 46), Levenshouding [Attitude to life] (Week 47), Eenzaamheid [Loneliness] (Week 48), Troosten [Comfort] (week 51), Gehoorzaamheid [Obedience] (week 52).

<sup>8</sup> Before 1934: Nederlandsch Godsdienstige Traktaat-Genootschap [Dutch Religious Tract Society] and before 1821: Amsterdamsch Godsdienstige Traktaat-Genootschap [Amsterdam

Hillesum's copy of this booklet was used, not – as has long been supposed – by a group of friends<sup>9</sup> but, as we have stated in an earlier publication, by two persons only: Etty Hillesum and Henny Tideman ('Tide').<sup>10</sup> The writings on the left-hand page are by two people. The big handwriting that recurs throughout is Henny Tideman's; the smaller, less frequent and less legible handwriting is that of Etty Hillesum (see Fig. 1). Henny Tideman gave the book to Etty on 15 January 1943. On the title page she wrote:

Veel mooie woorden, geef ik zonder woorden	Many beautiful words I give without words
Tide	Tide
15 Jan. 1943	15 January 1943

It is likely that Tideman and Hillesum both noted down their citations in 1942, the only full year of their friendship. If Hillesum and Tideman have followed the calendar year structure of *Levenskunst*, we may exclude the years 1941 and 1943. It is clear that 1943 falls away: from June 1943 onwards, Etty Hillesum did not live in Amsterdam. As for 1941, the two women were not acquainted during the early months of 1941 and, once they had met, time was needed to establish a relationship. It was not really 'friendship at first sight'.<sup>11</sup> Hillesum became sincerely fond of Tide around the turn of 1941-1942 despite perceiving her as quite the opposite of herself.<sup>12</sup> Along with this growing affection, Hillesum appears to have become more religiously aware. We assume that both women began noting down ideas in *Levenskunst* at that time, a perception reinforced by textual parallels in Hillesum's diaries.<sup>13</sup>

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Religious Tract Society]. The membership list goes back to 1820. Cf. 'Historisch Documentatiecentrum voor het Nederlands Protestantisme (1800-heden)', Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, collection number 51.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. earlier editions of *Het werk*, 732 (note 86); cf. Hillesum, *The letters and diaries*, 690 (note 81).

<sup>10</sup> Ria van den Brandt, 'Vriendschap op het tweede gezicht: Aantekeningen bij de vriendschap van Etty Hillesum en Henny Tideman', in: Ria van den Brandt & Klaas A.D. Smelik (Eds.), *Etty Hillesum in context*, Assen: Van Gorcum, 2007 (*Etty Hillesum Studies* 2), 4-15. The first version of this essay was published in *Tijdschrift voor Humanistiek* 5 (2004), 79-87.

<sup>11</sup> Van den Brandt, 'Vriendschap op het tweede gezicht'.

<sup>12</sup> Hillesum, *Het werk*, 235 (11 January 1942): 'Tide en ik zijn de twee naasten, en zulke twee tegenstellingen. We moeten van elkaar ook maar veel houden'. Cf. Hillesum, *The letters and diaries*, 226: 'Tide and I are closest to him, and yet we are quite different. We must be very fond of each other'.

<sup>13</sup> These textual parallels will be further researched in the expert seminar 'De bronnen van Etty Hillesum en Henny Tideman in het vriendenboekje *Levenskunst*: Onderzoek naar een spirituele praktijk van twee vriendinnen in oorlogsjaar 1942' ('Sources of Etty Hillesum and Henny Tideman in their joint booklet *Levenskunst*: A study of the spiritual practice of two friends during the war year 1942'), Radboud University, 26-27 November 2014.

LEVENSOVERGAVE	I	LEVENSOVERGAVE
WEEK 4	WEEK 4	WEEK 4
<p><i>Ich will dieses wohl größte Leid Meines Lebens, das jegg Leiden, Auf mich nehmen und es kleinlich kriegen.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Jedem Spein: im Kerke</i></p> <p><i>Groten het leed, boren de hje Verzet het overcomt gemint, Dat wijd, dat alle minnelike fjell, den draagt sja leed in dard wijd mard.</i></p> <p><i>Boren de hje, boren het leed Is oft jik, de gode ten aldene dard, Dat het vrom vrom, want alle minn wijd Dat by vrom vrom, dat ten atard.</i></p> <p><i>Klein jf de dard, maar adent de wijd Die leed wijd, wijd in jik de wijd, Wiekam jik, warden dard wijd.</i></p> <p><i>Als den aldene in dje vrom Ten wijd, dat den ten honden wijd Die dard van dard wijd wijd aldard vrom.</i></p>	<p><b>WE</b> are not here to make a living but a life. J. R. Miller</p> <p>¶ Nur eins habe ich noch nicht überwinden können: den starken Widerwillen gegen fertige Menschen.</p> <p>Fertigen Menschen ist der volle Reiz des Lebens verschlossen; sie kennen nicht die Lust des beständigen Wachsens und Werdens. Sie haben für alles eine fertige Formel zur Hand und wollen nichts mehr lernen.</p> <p>Diesen Leuten gehe ich aus dem Wege, denn ich empfinde ihre Nähe als Lebenshemmung.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Wilhelm Bithorn</p> <p>¶ Dass ich zu mir selbst komme, dass ich ein ganzer Mensch, ein Mensch der Wahrheit und Klarheit, ein Mensch der Kraft und Treue werde, ist wichtiger als alles andere.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Heinrich Rendtorff</p> <p>¶ Roeping is een rots van rust in een zee van onrust. G. F. Haapels</p> <p>¶ When I see a matter to be a duty, I go on regardless of my feelings. David Livingstone</p>	<p>LEVENSOVERGAVE</p>

Fig. 1: Hillesum's copy of *Levenskunst*

*Levenskunst* has not attracted much attention up to now. It is a rather inconspicuous document, archived by the Jewish Historical Museum as an example of Hillesum's library.<sup>14</sup> It probably had the status, all along, of an unimportant pious protestant booklet with some handwritings rather than something of any relevance to the thought of Etty Hillesum. At first sight it looks uninteresting: the citations on the printed pages seem far away from Etty Hillesum's world of thoughts, the handwritten citations from Tideman read largely as echoes of Spier, and those from Hillesum – more difficult to read – resemble those from the diaries. At a superficial reading, there is nothing much there. Close reading and further research have cast new light on this unpretentious booklet. It has disclosed some remarkable sources of Etty Hillesum's spirituality, unknown up to now. The following section concerns some similarities to and small differences from the diary.

### *Similarities and Minor Differences*

Etty Hillesum noted down citations in thirty-four chapters, equivalent to thirty-four weeks. Some pages have more than one citation, bringing the total to forty-three.<sup>15</sup> Like the diary, *Levenskunst* is dominated by quotations from Rilke, and many source names are familiar. At first sight the similarities are striking, though the content is different. Hillesum refers to Rainer Maria Rilke's writings eleven times;<sup>16</sup> a quartet of citations comes from German translations of Dostojevski,<sup>17</sup> three from a Dutch translation of the gospel of Matthew.<sup>18</sup> Two quotations on the same page are from Dutch translations of the work of Stanley Jones,<sup>19</sup> and two are from Walter

<sup>14</sup> Jewish Historical Museum, Amsterdam, record 00005126.

<sup>15</sup> Citations of Etty Hillesum in *Levenskunst*: week 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 (2 citations), 8, 9 (3 citations), 10, 11, 12, 14 (2 citations of the same source), 15, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23 (2 citations), 25, 26, 28, 30 (2 citations), 31, 32 (2 citations), 34, 35, 37, 41, 42 (2 citations), 43, 44, 47 (2 citations of the same source), 48, 50 (2 citations of the same source).

<sup>16</sup> Week 5, 12, 21, 22, 26, 28, 31, 34, 42, 43, 44.

<sup>17</sup> Week 6, 9, 23, 37.

<sup>18</sup> Week 8, 9, 50.

<sup>19</sup> The American Eli Stanley Jones (1884-1973) was a Methodist and Christian missionary in India, known through his interreligious lectures. Hillesum knew the Dutch translator of his works (Johanna E. Kuiper) and cited two fragments from it in Week 47 (Attitude to life):

[1] 'Wie terugslaat als hij geslagen wordt, wekt in zijn tegenstander de vechtininstincten. Wie wegvluicht als hij geslagen wordt, wekt de jachtininstincten van zijn vervolgers, maar wie de andere wang toekeert, wekt de diepste, de tederste instincten op'. We traced this first translated fragment to: E. Stanley Jones, *Christus en het menselijk lijden* (trans. Johanna E. Kuiper), Amsterdam: Paris, 1934, 78. Cf. Hillesum, *Het werk*, 759 (note 316). The original English text can be found in: E. Stanley Jones, *Christ and human suffering*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1933, 112: 'To strike back when struck arouses the combative instinct in your

Schubart.<sup>20</sup> We also find one excerpt from, respectively, Carl Gustav Jung (week 2), Julius Spier (week 3),<sup>21</sup> Albert Verwey (week 4), Thomas a Kempis (week 6), Saint Paul (week 9), Walther Rathenau (week 11), Francis of Assisi (week 23), Simon Vestdijk (week 30) and Friedrich Rittelmeyer (week 32). All these names are familiar from her diary, though there she mentions some of the authors just once, in passing, and gives no excerpts. Thus the name of Thomas a Kempis – a favourite author of Julius Spier – is mentioned in the diary, but none of his texts are quoted. In *Levenskunst* Etty Hillesum did quote a sentence from Thomas a Kempis. We have identified her exact phrasing as a coming from Isaïc van Dijk's Dutch translation of *De imitatio Christi: De navolging van Christus* (1909):

Hoe meer een mens onverdeeld van hart en innerlijk eenvoudig geworden is, des te meer en des te hoger dingen zal hij zonder moeite verstaan, omdat hij van boven het licht der kennis ontvangt.<sup>22</sup>

[The more a person has an undivided heart and inner simplicity, the more and the higher things shall he understand without difficulty because of the light of knowledge from above.]

Another author, mentioned in the diary but never quoted there, is the Dutch writer Simon Vestdijk. She mentions his name once, on 8 March 1942, to

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antagonist, to run away when struck arouses the hunting instinct in the pursuer, but to turn the other cheek arouses the deeply tender instincts in him'.

[2] 'De moeilijkheid zit niet in het toekeren van de andere wang, de moeilijkheid zit in het opgeven van het eigen ik. Doe dat, en het toekeren van de andere wang is een noodzakelijke en vanzelfsprekende consequentie'. We traced this second translated fragment to: E. Stanley Jones, *Christus op den berg*, Amsterdam: Paris, 53. The original English text can be found in: E. Stanley Jones, *The Christ of the mount: A working philosophy of life*, New York-Cincinnati-Chicago: Abingdon, 1931, 71: 'The rub is not at the place of turning the other cheek; the rub is at the place of letting go the essential self. Do that, and turning the other cheek is a necessary and natural outcome'.

<sup>20</sup> Walter Schubart (1897-±1941) was a German cultural philosopher, a university professor in Lithuania. Etty Hillesum cited him in weeks 16 and 30. See below: note 25.

<sup>21</sup> Quotations from Julius Spier are abundant in Hillesum's diary but not equally so in *Levenskunst*. Henny Tideman, on the other hand, refers to Spier 36 times.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Thomas a Kempis, *De navolging van Christus* (trans. 'Dr. Is. Van Dijk'), Haarlem: Willink, 1909, 7. This publication, reprinted many times, was very popular in protestant circles. The copy used may have been Henny Tideman's. With Spier, Etty Hillesum read a German translation of Thomas a Kempis. Cf. Hillesum, *Het werk*, 58: '(...) later las hij iets voor uit Thomas a Kempis, terwijl ik op z'n schoot zat (...)'; cf. Hillesum, *The letters and diaries*, 55: '(...) later he read me something from Thomas a Kempis, while I sat on his lap (...) (freely translated). Isaïc van Dijk (1847-1922) was a protestant theologian and professor.

record her disagreement with Vestdijk's perception of Rilke.<sup>23</sup> In *Levenskunst* she did quote a philosophical statement by Vestdijk which we traced to Vestdijk's *Strijd en Vlucht op Papier* ('Battle and Flight on Paper'):

Het is nu eenmaal zo, dat de zich onnaspeurlijke wijzigende tijdgeest zich enkel en alleen, ongewild, openbaart in het waardenscheppend individu, dat gehoorzaam blijft aan eigen structuurwetten.<sup>24</sup>

[The untraceably changing spirit of the *Zeitgeist* invariably reveals itself – simply and solely, unintentionally – in the individual human being who creates values, obedient to his own structural laws.]

It is equally noteworthy that Hillesum – who loved quoting from the German – twice quoted Walter Schubart's German text in a Dutch translation.<sup>25</sup> In her diary she quoted him in German.<sup>26</sup> This means that, when noting this citation in *Levenskunst*, she did not have her usual copy of Schubart's *Europa und die Seele des Ostens* to hand; she probably was not in her own room but in Henny Tideman's, and she may have used a Dutch translation from Tideman's library.<sup>27</sup> This goes also for her Dutch citation of Thomas a Kempis.<sup>28</sup>

At home Etty Hillesum had many German books at her disposal, some of them from the library of Julius Spier.<sup>29</sup> Probably the two women wrote down their citations in Tideman's room at 60 Euterpe Street. In her diary Hillesum

<sup>23</sup> Etty Hillesum read Vestdijk's essay on Rilke and was irritated by the opinion he expressed. Cf. Hillesum, *Het werk*, 284; cf. Hillesum, *The letters and diaries*, 273.

<sup>24</sup> Etty Hillesum quoted this sentence from: Simon Vestdijk, *Strijd en vlucht op papier*, Maastricht: Stols (Ursa Minor Series), 1939. Cf. <http://www.svestdijk.nl/proza/essays/strijd-en-vlucht-op-papier.html#kunstenaar>

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Week 16 (Relationship to God): 'Verschrikkelijker dan het Godsgericht is het gericht dat de mensheid, die zich van God heeft afgeweerd, over zichzelf houdt'. [Freely translated: 'More dreadful than the Divine Judgment is the judgment which mankind pronounces on itself by turning away from God'.]

Cf. Week 30 (Personality): 'Het lichamelijk welzijn weegt niet op tegen het verlies van de geestelijke vrijheid'. ['Corporal well-being does not compensate the loss of spiritual freedom'.]

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Hillesum, *Het werk*, 531: 'En nu: "Europa und die Seele des Ostens". (...) – Die Verkümmerng des Rechtsgeföhls seit der Tartarenzeit hat unerwartet auch eine günstige Wirkung gehabt, (...)'.]

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Walter Schubart, *De komende Europeesche Mensch*, Haarlem: De Librije (s.a.). The original *Europa und die Seele des Ostens* was published in Luzern (Vita Nova Verlag), 1938. The Dutch edition was translated by W.J. Merckens.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. note 22.

<sup>29</sup> Since his own living quarters were too small, Spier's books had been taken to Han Wegerif's big house. Hillesum was pleased: 'More than one thousand books. Every day there will be another figure who will give me this dreamy, unreal feeling. I live with books. They color the atmosphere around me. A name or a few pages can rule my whole day'. Cf. Hillesum, *Het werk*, 118, 111, 736; Hillesum, *The letters and diaries*, 114, 111, 695.

repeatedly mentions Henny Tideman's sunny room; we know that this was an important place to her. Thus she wrote to Tideman: 'I'm sitting in your room. The sun shines in as it always does. I will carry this room in a corner of my soul and retire to it often'. Tideman's room, the availability of Tideman's books and the absence of her own<sup>30</sup> may have influenced Hillesum's choice of quotations. Besides, what she wrote there was addressed not to herself, as in her diary, but to her friend Tideman. All these elements must have influenced Hillesum's choice of citations. Her personal canon was in part a shared canon, an exchange of spiritual thoughts.

### *The Unknown Sources*

In addition to the established similarities and minor differences, there are eleven quotations from six authors who are not mentioned by name in her diary. Most of these, though not all, are now forgotten. Two of them – Ebba Pauli and Kees Schuurman – were mentioned in an earlier publication.<sup>31</sup> The other four are Frederik van Eeden, Giovanni Papini, Julia de Beausobre and Alexander Eastman.

#### Ebba Pauli

The first quotation in Hillesum's handwriting in *Levenskunst* occurs in the first week and refers to 'De Kluzenaar' ('The Hermit') – a bestseller of the period by the Swedish author Ebba Pauli (1873-1941): *Eremieten och andra berättelser*. This book, published in 1919, was translated into Dutch in 1930 by Nora Basenau-Goemans and has been reprinted many times.<sup>32</sup> The central character is a medieval hermit, living on a mountain and counseling those who come to him. Ety Hillesum must have read *De Kluzenaar* frequently, for her quotations are indeed borrowed from this bestseller. The theme of the first week is 'Het leven als taak' ('Life as a task'):

<sup>30</sup> Although Ety Hillesum always carried some books with her. Cf. Betty Roger's interview with Liesl Levi (literal transcription of spoken text): 'Also, Ety always carried around three or four books, but she didn't need. And when she went shopping or when she went eating, always. I said to her once you only can read one book. I see you read when you are eating or shopping or on the street, always. Ah, it's a habit of hers. She carried them in old bags from Linden'. This transcription can be found in the Ety Hillesum Research Centre, Ghent University.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. note 10. Cf. also Ria van den Brandt, *Ety Hillesum: An introduction to her thought*, Münster: Lit, 2014, 54-55.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Ebba Pauli, *De kluzenaar*, Zeist: Ploegsma, 1930. Nora Basenau-Goemans (1876-1967) was a Dutch writer and translator.



Er bestaat een oneindig verschil tussen: het leven ingaan en onze eigen goede daden doen, aan wier mogelijkheden wij twijfelen en van wier gevolgen wij niets afweten, – of de wereld ingaan en een reeds volbrachte Godsdaad weerspiegelen, die wij hebben gezien in het verborgene.<sup>33</sup>

[There is an infinite difference between [1] going forth into life and doing our own good deeds, doubtful as they are and with unknown consequences, or [2] going out into the world and reflecting an already completed divine deed which we have seen in secret.]

In weeks 14, 15, 25 and 35 we find five more quotations from *De kluzenaar*.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Pauli, *De kluzenaar*, 178.

<sup>34</sup> Week 14 Bidden (Praying):

“Men moet niet slechts kunnen bidden”, zeide de kluzenaar, “men moet ook de gebedsverhooring kunnen ontvangen. Ga naar huis en bid niet meer, maar neem in plaats daarvan Gods gave aan!”. Cf. Pauli, *De kluzenaar*, 9. [“One must not only be able to pray”, said the hermit, “one must be able to receive the answer to the pray. Go home and do not pray anymore, but accept instead God’s gift”].

‘Begrijp je dat nog niet, je hebt om het goede gebeden, maar aan het kwade geloofd en zodoende daarnaar je handen uitgestrekt. Zelfs de Allerhoogste kan geen mens verlossen buiten diens eigen bewustzijn. Zelfs de Allerhoogste kan ons geen goede gaven geven, wanneer onze handen steeds gevouwen zijn voor gebed, maar nooit opengaan om datgene waarom zij hebben gebeden, in ontvangst te nemen’. Cf. Pauli, *De kluzenaar*, 10. [‘Do you not yet understand, you have prayed for the good, but believed in the evil and thus stretched your hands to it. Even the Almighty can’t redeem a man without his own consciousness. Neither can the Almighty give us good gifts when our hands are always clasped for prayer, but never open to accept the gifts that they have prayed for’].

Week 15 Leven als taak (Life as a task):

‘Niemand kan ten onder gaan in zijn levensstrijd, zonder het slechter te maken voor anderen. En niemand kan overwinnen, zonder het beter te maken voor anderen. Wij mensen zijn hechter aan elkaar verbonden dan wij denken’. Cf. Pauli, *De kluzenaar*, 123. [‘Nobody can perish in his struggle for life, without worsening life for others. And nobody can win, without making life better for others. We, human beings, are more attached to one another than we think’].

Week 25 Blijdschap en geluk (Joy and happiness):

‘De heilige lichtzinnigheid, ja, die maakt dat wij ons woord kunnen zeggen, en onze daad kunnen volbrengen, onbekommerd of allen, of velen of weinigen, of een of niemand ons begrijpt en ons volgt. Deze maakt, dat wij de vrijmoedigheid, de hoop en de vreugde kunnen behouden. De heilige lichtzinnigheid. O, als er maar meer heilige lichtzinnigheid bestond op de wereld!’ Cf. Pauli, *De kluzenaar*, 179-180. [‘The holy lightheartedness, yes, that makes that we can say our word, and can fulfil our deed, unconcerned whether everyone, many, few, any or nobody understands us and follows us. It makes that we can keep frankness, hope and joy. The holy lightheartedness. Oh, if there could be more holy lightheartedness in the world!’]

Week 35 Liefde (Love):

‘Wanneer twee elkaar op de goede wijze liefhebben, dan kan God telkens en telkens weer een gave neerleggen in de hand van de een om de ander’. Cf. Pauli, *De kluzenaar*, 203. [‘When two people love each other in the right way, God may time and again put a gift in one’s hand because of the other’].

## Kees Schuurman

In the tenth and thirty-second weeks we find two texts from 'dr. C.J. Schuurman'. The name 'C.J. Schuurman' refers to the physician-bacteriologist and psychiatrist Kees Schuurman (1898-1979), who settled in Amsterdam as a psychiatrist in 1939.<sup>35</sup> He probably had connections with Spier and his circle.<sup>36</sup> In 1941 Schuurman published the book *Perspectief der ziel: Weet ik werkelijk niet waarvoor ik leef?* ('Perspective of the Soul: Do I Truly not Know what I Live for?')<sup>37</sup> Schuurman's treatise and his choice of words – self-awareness, living process, inner world, outer world, the self, to be at one with the universe – fit in perfectly with Hillesum's spiritual-therapeutic development during that period. Certainly she must have read the first edition of *Perspectief der ziel*, in part or as a whole, for in *Levenskunst* she twice quoted Schuurman's work. In week 10 she cited him on 'Joy and happiness', in week 32 on 'Friendship'. We have traced both fragments.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Cf. C.J. Schuurman, *Uit mijn leven*, Amsterdam: Perseus, 1982.

<sup>36</sup> Hanneke Starreveld knew Schuurman very well (interview with Ria van den Brandt, May 30, 2002).

<sup>37</sup> Arnhem: Van Loghum Slaterus.

<sup>38</sup> Week 10: 'De voornaamste en eerste verandering is, dat men zich niet meer afhankelijk voelt van enige omstandigheid of situatie, van enig mens of wet, van enig gebeurtenis of macht, omdat men zich één voelt met het scheppende leven, waaruit alle dingen zijn voortgekomen en dat in staat stelt naar eigen bezieling iets van deze wereld te maken. Het accent is verplaatst van afhankelijkheidsgevoel naar een besef van levend vermogen. Het is of men eindelijk z'n eigen aanleg gevonden heeft en de vreugde voelt, daaruit te mogen leven. Het is geen wil om iets tot stand te brengen, maar een bezieling om iets te doen, wat men niet laten kan, het is geen vurige behoefte, de wereld en z'n medemensen te verbeteren, maar een door-gloed zijn van een warm besef, dat het in de wereld anders kan dan het gaat en uit dit besef leven'. Cf. Schuurman, *Perspectief der ziel*, 66. [The most important and first change is that one does not feel dependent anymore on circumstances or situations, neither on any human being or law, nor on any event or power. (This) because one feels united with the creating life, from which all things stem and this (feeling) enables one to work from one's own inspiration in this world. The accent has moved from a feeling of dependence to an awareness of vital ability. It is as if one has finally found one's own talent and feels the joy of living from within this ability. It is not a will to establish something, but an irresistible inspiration of doing something. It's not a burning need to improve the world and one's fellow-men, but a being inspired by the warm awareness that the world can be changed and that one can life from this awareness'.]

Week 32: 'Hoe vaak is "vriendschap" niet een onbewust wederzijds compromis, waardoor men elkaar in staat stelt, de werkelijkheid te ontvluchten. Intussen, al is dit zo, in een sympathieke ontmoeting kan ook de vreugde in het wonder van een ander mens de boventoon voeren en dan is zij het uitgangspunt van een voortgaand proces van wisselwerking, dat het verborgene aan het licht brengt, in dienst staat van begrijpen'. Cf. Schuurman, *Perspectief der ziel*, 99. [Is "friendship" not often an unconscious mutual compromise, through which we create for one another the possibility to escape reality. Nevertheless it's meanwhile possible to

## Frederik van Eeden

In week 20 we find a citation of the Dutch author and psychiatrist Frederik van Eeden (1860-1932). The theme reads 'Levenswaarheden' ('Truths of life') and the quotation runs as follows:

Wie grote kracht voelt is zacht. Alle ruwheid of scherpte is zwakte.

[Those who feel great strength are gentle. All rudeness or sharpness is weakness.]

Van Eeden's writings were very popular in the thirties and forties. This quotation confirms our hypothesis that Etty Hillesum was indeed a reader of Frederik van Eeden's writings, especially his diaries. The two short sentences above are quoted from the first part of Van Eeden's *Mijn Dagboek* ('My Diary'), first published in 1931. Researcher Annette van Dijk pointed out that the fragment comes from Van Eeden's notes of February 1899.<sup>39</sup> Either Etty Hillesum or Henny Tideman must have possessed a copy of this first part of *Mijn Dagboek*.

## Giovanni Papini

In week 41 ('Life as a task') we come across a quotation in German from someone called 'Papini'. It turns out to be Giovanni Papini (1881-1956), and the quotation starts with the third beatitude from the gospel of Matthew:

'Selig sind die Sanftmütigen, denn sie werden das Land erben'.

Der Soldat, der sich schlägt um Erdengüter, muß zorngrimmig sein; wer hingegen innerhalb seines eigenen Ich kämpft um das neue Land, den neuen Himmel, der darf sich nicht dem Rasen überlassen, das zu jeder Untat rät, nicht der Grausamkeit, die die Liebe verleugnet.

Die Sanftmütigen, die das Mitsein der Bösen ertragen, und auch das eigene Sein, das manchem noch schwerer zu ertragen ist als das fremde: die lehnen sich nicht auf gegen die Bösen, sondern überwinden sie mit Geduld; sie werden nicht zum Tier beim erstbesten Widerstand, sondern besiegen das Tier in der eigenen Brust, mit jener heiteren Ausdauer, die mehr Kraft erfordert als die plötzlichen, nur zerstörenden Ausbrüche.

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have a predominating experience of the joy of the miracle of another person in a sympathetic meeting. This may be the starting point of an ongoing process of interaction, unveiling the secret in function of a better understanding']

<sup>39</sup> February 19, 1899. Cf. *Mijn dagboek: Eerste deel* (My diary: Part One), Amsterdam: Van Munster, s.a. [= 1931], ; cf. Frederik van Eeden, *Dagboek 1878-1923*, Part I (ed. H.W. van Tricht), Culemborg: Willink-Noorduijn, 1971, 454.

['Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth'].

The soldier who fights for earth needs to be fierce; but he who fights within himself for the conquest of the new earth and the new heaven may not abandon himself to anger, the counselor of evil, nor to cruelty, the negation of love.

The meek are those who endure close contact with evil men and with themselves – often harder to bear – who do not break out into brutish rage when things go badly, but conquer their inner enemies with that quiet perseverance which, more than sudden sterile furies, shows the force of the soul.]

The Italian thinker Giovanni Papini has become known (even notorious) on a number of scores, including his flirtation with Mussolini and his antisemitic behaviour in the thirties and early forties. In the context of Hillesum's quotation it is relevant to know that Papini became famous on account of his novel *Storia di Christo* ('Life of Christ'), published in 1921. Up to 1921 Papini had been averse to every form of religion, but in *Storia di Christo* he preaches a new form of catholicism based on love. Our hypothesis that Hillesum's quotation can be found in the German translation of *Storia di Christo* (entitled *Lebensgeschichte Christi*)<sup>40</sup> is confirmed by Van Dijk's research. Hillesum did indeed read *Lebensgeschichte Christi*, and she quoted Papini's text<sup>41</sup> in *Levenskunst* in the late fall of 1942. Papini's personal interpretation of the life of Christ has been translated into almost thirty languages.<sup>42</sup>

Julia de Beausobre

'Sin' is the subject in week 42. Besides a citation from Rainer Maria Rilke, we find a somewhat awkwardly formulated English quotation:

It is unperdonable [unpardonable] that anyone should be tortured, even you – if you merely leave it at that. But, surely, when you overcome the pain inflicted on you by them, you make their criminal records less villainous. But when, through weakness, cowardice, lack of balance, lack of serenity, you augment your pain, their crime becomes so much the darker and is darkened by you.

This fragment seems to be a lesson on how the victim of torture may diminish the torturer's crime. The almost illegible name under this quotation – initially difficult to decipher – refers to the Russian Orthodox Christian Julia de Beausobre (1893-1977). In her autobiography *The Woman Who Could not Die*

<sup>40</sup> Giovanni Papini, *Lebensgeschichte Christi* (trans. Max Schwarz), München: Allgemeine Verlagsanstalt, [1923].

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>42</sup> The English translation of the cited fragment is made by Dorothy Canfield Fisher. Cf. Giovanni Papini, *Life of Christ* (trans. Dorothy Canfield Fisher), New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1923. Cf. Cath. Ypes, 'Giovanni Papini 9 januari 1881 – 8 juli 1956', in: *Levende Talen* 24 (June 1958), 1-17 (offprint).

(1938) she tells about her experience in prison and concentration camp during the Stalinist era.<sup>43</sup> A central theme is her spiritual way of dealing with evil. Her book immediately appeared in several languages; in Dutch it was published by Ploegsma.<sup>44</sup> Hillesum nevertheless quoted the English text and, when we compare her text with the original, she appears to have left out one short sentence. Did she do so on purpose or by accident? After the sentence 'But, surely, when you overcome the pain inflicted on you by them, you make their criminal records less villainous', the original text by Julia de Beausobre reads: 'Even more, you bring something new into it – a thing of precious beauty'.<sup>45</sup> Hillesum – wittingly or unwittingly – omitted this sentence. Nonetheless, her choice of this passage about the victim's moral attitude is noteworthy. The thoughts of the Russian Orthodox De Beausobre are in line with Hillesum's thoughts about suffering and her spiritual coping with evil and the evildoer.<sup>46</sup> It is also in accord with Hillesum's idea that the Russian soul in particular can bear suffering and knows how to cope with it. It is understandable, therefore, that she cites Dostojevski in the sixth week of *Levenskunst*: 'Denn wenn ich selbst gerecht wäre, gäbe es vielleicht auch den Missetäter nicht, der vor mir steht' ('If I myself were right-minded, then perhaps the criminal standing in front of me would not exist').

At the time when Hillesum wrote down the passage from De Beausobre, she also interrupted the writing of her diary. We do not really know much about her diary writings after 13 October 1942, but we do have some quotations in *Levenskunst* after this date, though practically no diary annotations since the break have survived.<sup>47</sup> In these quotations, another new name emerges: the sixth new name in *Levenskunst*.

<sup>43</sup> Julia de Beausobre, *The woman who could not die*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1938.

<sup>44</sup> Julia de Beausobre, *Een mensch overwon*, Amsterdam: Ploegsma, 1941.

<sup>45</sup> De Beausobre, *The woman who could not die*, 86; cf. the complete (but also a bit awkward) Dutch translation from *Een mensch overwon*, 73: 'Het is onvergeeflijk, dat iemand zou worden gemarteld, zelf jij en jij zou dat ondergaan zonder meer. Want zeker is het, dat als je het leed overwint, dat je door *hen* wordt aangedaan, je daarmee hun schurkachtigheid minder maakt. Meer zelfs doe je: je brengt er iets nieuws in, iets van kostbare waarde. Maar als je door zwakheid, lafheid, onevenwichtigheid of gebrek aan zuiverheid je smart vermeerderd, dan wordt hun misdaad nog zooveel donkerder en die wordt donkerder gemaakt door jou'.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Hillesum, *Het werk*, 268-269; cf. Hillesum, *The letters and diaries*, 258-259.

<sup>47</sup> But we do have a collection of Hillesum's letters after October 1942.

## Alexander Eastman

The German quotation for week 48 (theme: loneliness), was written down shortly before Hillesum's third departure for Camp Westerbork in 1942.<sup>48</sup> It reads as follows:

Und wie die Krankheiten, die in überfüllten, ungesunden Wohnungen entstehen, fürchtete er den Verlust geistiger Kräfte, der sich immer bei zu enger Berührung mit den Mitmenschen einstellt. Jeder, der viel in der freien Natur gelebt hat, weiß, daß es eine magnetische Kraft gibt, die in der Einsamkeit wächst und sich beim Leben unter Menschen schnell verflüchtigt.

[And like illnesses, emerging from overcrowded and unhealthy dwellings, he feared the loss of spiritual power that always arises from too close contact with one's fellow-men. Everybody who has lived much in the open air knows that there exists a magnetic power that grows in solitude and is rapidly dissipated by life in human society.]

In *Levenskunst* we read, under this German citation, 'Eastman in *Die Seele des Indianers*'. This work concerns a translation into German of *The Soul of the Indian*, written by Charles Alexander Eastman (1858-1939), also known as *Ohiyesa* (meaning: winner). Eastman was a native American author, physician and political reformer. His books are about the history of the Sioux. Etty Hillesum read the German translation of *The Soul of the Indian*, edited by the Insel-Verlag in 1938 (Inselbücherei No. 536). Her quotation recalls the earlier positive notions of 'loneliness' or 'solitude' in her diary.<sup>49</sup> The cited fragment comes from the first chapter of *Die Seele des Indianers*, entitled 'Das grosse Geheimnis' ('The great mystery'). Etty Hillesum read this first chapter and must have been inspired by Eastman's conception of loneliness as a spiritual force. Eastman wrote about 'that solitary communion with the Unseen' which was 'the highest expression of our religious life' – partially described in the word 'hambeday', which may be interpreted as 'consciousness of the divine' or

<sup>48</sup> Etty Hillesum had a position with the Jewish Council, which has been established by the German occupiers in February 1941 as a Jewish organization to administer the Jewish community in the Netherlands. Hillesum was working at the department 'Social Welfare for People in Transit' in Camp Westerbork. Through her function with the Jewish Council she had a 'privileged' position in this transit camp, allowing her to travel back and forth to Amsterdam. Her third departure is around the 20<sup>th</sup> of November 1942. She came back on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 1942. Her fourth and last departure was on June 6, 1943. She never came back and was deported to Auschwitz on September 7, 1943.

<sup>49</sup> The Dutch word is 'eenzaamheid'. Cf. Hillesum, *Het werk*, 87, 117 and 318; cf. Hillesum, *The letters and diaries*, 82, 110 and 305.

'bewußtes Fühlen des Göttlichen'.<sup>50</sup> Hillesum probably recognized her own religious state of mind in Eastman's text and hoped to keep her 'magnetic power' in the 'overcrowded and unhealthy dwellings' of Camp Westerbork.

The themes in the above quotations may be familiar to readers of Hillesum's diaries, but the sources are certainly not. Hillesum read texts by Pauli, Schuurman, Van Eeden, De Beausobre, Papini and Eastman, but she never referred to them in her diary. Her personal canon is even richer than we thought. She partly read different texts in Tideman's environment and sphere of influence. Her quotations in *Levenskunst* also provide an insight into Hillesum and Tideman's conversations in 1942. One important topic appears to be the war: how to cope with evil. Hillesum's spiritual attitude of nonviolence, evident in her diaries,<sup>51</sup> repeatedly emerges in these quotations. This and other topics in *Levenskunst* will be further researched in the near future, and a detailed study of Hillesum's sources (known and unknown) will be published in 2015.<sup>52</sup> This article is the beginning of that research.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Eastman, *Die Seele des Indianers*, 10: 'Jene in der Einsamkeit vollzogene Verbindung mit dem Unsichtbaren, die den höchsten Ausdruck unseres religiösen Lebens darstellte, ist zum Teil in dem Wort *hambeday* ausgedrückt – wörtlich "geheimnisvolles Gefühl" – , das auf verschiedene Art, durch "Fasten" oder "Träumen", übersetzt worden ist. Besser wäre es wiedergegeben als "bewußtes Fühlen des Göttlichen".'

<sup>51</sup> There are a few textual exceptions though, but Hillesum's notes in general present a strong belief in nonviolence. Cf. Hillesum, *Het werk*, 560: 'En laten we ervan doordrongen zijn, dat ieder atoompje haat, dat wij aan deze wereld toevoegen, haar onherbergzamer maakt dan ze al is'; cf. Hillesum, *The letters and diaries*, 529: '(...) And remember that every atom of hate we add to this world makes it still more inhospitable'.

<sup>52</sup> This study will be edited by Peter Nissen and Ria van den Brandt (Hilversum: Verloren).