

# Ticker Thoughts

## On Frank JMA Castelyns' *Ticker Tape*

### Description

We see ticker tapes mostly in commercial contexts, as billboards on the streets, illuminating signs in shop windows. Therefore, Jenny Holzer used them in the middle of New York to spread messages within the capitalist centre like: PROTECT ME FROM WHAT I WANT (1985). Frank JMA Castelyns is designing his illuminating messages differently: not one message is shared each time, in clear distinct letters, he intertwines four statements on two levels, in changing rhythms apart from each other as well as in overlapping, crisscrossing sequences. We can read singular statements, we get them layered by further statements, presented from left to right, like an invitation to read in the traditional occidental way, and reversed, too, from right to left, as a feedback from oriental habits. The four statements are philosophical ones, in classical Latin: *Si fallor, sum, Cogito ergo sum, Amor fati* and *Amor mundi*. The first one – *Even if I am mistaken, I am* – is coming from St. Augustine's "City of God" (ca. 420), where he claims that if he might be totally misled, he cannot be misled in his joy of existing. The second one is well-known, by René Descartes, *I think, therefore I am*, from his "Meditations on First Philosophy" (1639), where he states that if an absolute being would like to fool me it still needed my thinking, exactly to fool it! So, I am never fully trapped, or in the words of the Enlightenment: I am free! Friedrich Nietzsche is famous for promoting the third one, the love of fate, in his "Gay Science" (1882), steering into the abyss of what he saw as the world's eternal recurrence. And then we have the love of the world, put on the foreground by Hannah Arendt in her "Thinking Journal" (1950-73): "Love of the world—why is it so difficult to love the world?" Frank JMA Castelyns is mixing these thoughts, their contexts, in an interplay of fore- and backgrounds, in signaling big red and blueish letters, as a stream of passing, maybe forgotten consciousness, a counter-intuitive stream of back and forth, of left and right, of light and shadowless blackness. It is this formal, moving grit that catches the eye, to read, to understand, to overlook, to be overruled by the mechanism of the programme,

the ongoing machine, the electronic device. *Give us a rest*, you might ask, *the rest of a book*, you might think. But no, the medium triggers the thinking, in this conceptual artwork. The slogans of philosophy interrupt themselves, stand in their way, build up concrete poetry of signs you can read, in an unspoken language, literature as such, dead letter. The tempo demands fast reading, as if the dead letter must be reanimated, quick! The tempo pushes the spectator back, manifests the distance, reminds of a musical presto...

## Depiction

*Four voices.* A piece for four voices. You could perform it as a choir. It is written music without sound. Sheet music for your head. Hear it. Imagine it. Can you hear in-between fore- and background? The overlap? Echoes? The in-between opens a world – *mundus*. It is a love song. By a female philosopher, reflecting on a church father, rejoining the world – *amor mundi*. Love of the world. While she said that the love of two people excludes the world. Excommunicate yourself from the world, by loving absolutely, passionately, loving just this other person, neglecting all the others. There must be a way, back to the world, for lovers, in-between them. Where just the world carries them, protects them, from falling into pieces. *The others they are for themselves.*

Rimpels kan je strelen, kan je zelf gladtrekken, door de huid van het gezicht naar achteren te trekken, opnieuw te verweven, met een chirurgische ingreep. Een hand kan je niet liften. Een hand ben jij, wie je was, bent, zult geweest zijn. Een hand is het blijvend veranderende, eenheid van verschil. Microscopische wederkeer van cellen, organische groei van verval. De hand die streelt, een teken van liefde. Zacht, genegen, teder. Een Italiaanse hand die zingt: *amore! Amor fati*. In Turijn heb ik het begrepen. Handmatig, letterlijk, met de greep van jouw hand, toen je me redde, voor de bus die opeens verscheen, uit een zijstraat om de hoek. De liefde voor het lot is een dans ermee, zich niet zomaar te laten bedwingen.

Die Freude an etwas geglaubt zu haben, kann mir niemand nehmen. Wenn auch alles Täuschung war. Ich freue mich des Lebens, noch dieser Täuschung zu entkommen. Ich bezweifle die Gewissheit der ersten Täuschung. Wer zweifelt an der Liebe, wenn die erste schon nicht mehr blüht? Der Frühling kommt wieder, die Freude. *Ich kann mein Ende*

*nicht denken, kann meine Unendlichkeit nicht denken – wie soll ich das eine gegen das andere behaupten?* Das Denken mag sich selbst entkräften, die Skepsis blüht in Ironie.

Un jeune homme est venu nous voir au ciel. Il dit que *Je suis un Autre*. Un poète des temps plus récents. Même à mon époque, il y avait de tels plaisantins, aux Pays-Bas. Vous vous en souvenez ? *Tractatus philosophicus DE NIHILO*. Il s'appelait Martinus Schoockius. Quel nom ! Mais pas si stupide, comme nous l'avons découvert plus tard dans l'au-delà. Cette rhétorique absurde a peut-être impressionné les anciens pères de l'église. Il n'aurait pas pu penser à ses trucs si ce n'était pas pour lui, son Ego. Et sans mon Cogito, nous ne serions au ciel que des anges pâles sans voix ni chant.

*Volkmar Mühleis*