MARCO TRAMONTANA

Melanconia

2008

I had come to the end of the day, and I was still alive and partly lucid. I lifted the motionless cloth that lay over the painting. I studied it for a long time, looking for some imprecision that might help me understand whether it was *Melanconia* or a possible temporal derivation of it. At the time of its creation we had gone very deep into the concept of time. “Time does not exist,” he confided to me as he stared into space. After all, it was an acceptable and not so trivial solution.

That evening I realised that the painting spoke a different language, distant and familiar at the same time. I tried to decipher it as far as I could conceptualise each of its layers: the vision, the forms, the concepts, the emotions, the colours, the densities, the fractality, the chemical waves and the probability amplitudes. Inside and outside, above and below, light and dark, linear and differential. It was all there, on a single canvas, the motionless expression of possible and alternative versions of the reality in which we *feel* we are immersed. “Time does not exist, but it is not a constant,” I added in a flash. “Time and space influence each other through zones of localisation of greater or lesser density.” By now the spirit that had characterised one of the most interesting people I have ever known was gone. I watched him as he fought against the idea of the end, as he tried to alter as much as possible the entropic distance that was gradually narrowing. It was an unequal fight and I watched helplessly. He pointed to a small dark notebook held together by a lace, lying on the floor next to the pomegranate vase. I picked it up and began reading a page at random. [.. does the simplest possible plane figure, the triangle, exist as such, or does it exist insofar as it can be made? If we respect the geometric constraints underlying the construction of a triangle, are we sure that once it is made – drawn on a sheet of paper – it represents the concept it claims to arouse in every observer? A plane defines a geometry from which arise the objective conditions (axioms) that define the layer on which that specific reality rests. The very concept of curvature is foreign to the context of the “geometric plane”, while every line and every point achieve that approximation which suits the human intellect so well. On the other hand, we live on a planet that three-dimensionally approaches the concept of a sphere, and therefore no triangle, however infinitesimal, will be flat if it is made on a sphere. Now I find it possible to redefine the idea of the triangle as “the possible and indeterminate idea”. Yesterday the curvature of space-time whispered in my ear, without any shame, the nature of its existence..] He explained to me that the vase represents the use one can generally make of a generic container: every person can be expressed as *content* and *container*. In fact every spirituality and every personal consciousness shapes the prototype *vase* into what we are. Besides the human figures he usually referred to in his paintings, this time he had also included inanimate, decorative, serial natural elements. Geometric series born of the mother of all deceptions. There it was in front of me, listless but imposing. A painting in which nature took on form and outline was all he was leaving to the world. He was collapsing, and with him the wave function of human thought. I turned to look for some emotional foothold. He had stopped speaking and his gaze was growing ever dimmer. In the secluded figure at the bottom

right I caught himself, frightened but at the same time curious about what was happening outside – in the centre of the painting – where characters organised on pyramidal models altered and manoeuvred the lives of unaware human beings, bent over to gather what seemed to them to lead to the foundations of existence. I was rather amazed at what he had achieved. Many of the conversations we had begun in recent months had sprouted into a concrete work. After all, it was right that I should be there trying to loosen the intricate pictorial weight bearing down on the painting: I had unknowingly contributed to its conceptual genesis and now I had to complete its intention. [.. once the concept of "event" is established, we can define the identity between two points. Hence non-identity is the very concept of the straight line. Applying this reasoning recursively we quickly move on to three dimensions and arrive at our starting point, the "probable" fourth dimension ..] He had noted down everything that could not be painted but could be conceptualised. *Melanconia* changes the layer on which its meaning rests, instant after instant. There was an area, the one at the top behind the street lamp, that had strangely remained blank. Only probability waves and tetrahedral orbitals to explain its insubstantiality. And sitting on the bed. I felt my left wrist being squeezed, so I turned round. His determined gaze defined the final surge: he was ready, while I was completely dazed. I understood that I had to complete the painting. He needed it in order to leave. I took a pencil and began to write. From that moment on I cannot say for certain whether the events that followed were consistent with the laws of this world. ".. from the point to the line, towards the minimal two-dimensional figure, passing through the square until its sides increase exponentially. The circle as the last state of enlightenment.." π becomes what one strives towards in order to connect perceived rationality with the irrationality suggested by the infinitely small and the infinitely large. Linear superpositions of equally probable states, defined by probability amplitudes, which smile at the idea that an observer might try to imitate them. To observe is to perturb; the only solution to existence is sharing. Nature fulfils itself through quadratic laws. The discrepancy between the area of the square and the area of the circle relates every circumference to every diameter regardless of the scale of observation, and therefore regardless of the observer. Uncertainty violated! I felt the equivalence between energy and localised mass density growing ever stronger. The upper limit was suddenly broken; I fell to the ground and forgot who I was. When I opened my eyes again there were more or less elegant people explaining *Melanconia* to an uninterested audience. Some drunk, some lascivious, some pseudo-satisfied in their ego, some disappointed by a cowardly life led without a jolt, some deluded that they are better regardless, some dying in a room full of corpses, some still too curious to understand who is going to screw them, some lost in an all-too-experienced womb, some convinced they can get in and out of any situation, some too attached to their roots and some envious of funerals, some who have solved equations and some who pass off other people's results as their own, some tired and some just born, but all in the end more alike than they think. The method is the method itself, and *Melanconia* was about exactly this. Now all I could make out in the crowd was a blank canvas about two metres by one and a half, on which anyone could draw anything at all.

— Marco Tramontana, Melanconia, 2008