

...*briefly on* segon quartet de corda...

Almost half way through the piece, there is a moment in my second string quartet that is crucial to understand its further development and conclusion. After the long opening solo for viola and a whole-quartet interaction where multiple minute structures coexist and struggle against each other, an impasse occurs: the cello gets stuck—for approximately one full minute—applying extreme bow overpressure on the low strings. This, paired with practically no horizontal bow speed, results in a scratchy noise that a priori, under these conditions, could last one second or thirty years (nothing in the sound seems to indicate that it should go somewhere else). Eventually, *out of nowhere*, the impasse resolves into a completely different space, where the violins and the viola interact with each other by using a quite wide palette of materials, while the cello is accompanying them performing a basso continuo.

In my view, this dead end is the most significant moment of the piece. It is in fact the most decisive moment and to some extent, the most beautiful moment (if by beauty we understand the possibility of truth). That impasse expresses that a previous process must have led to it; that before making a decision with regard to *what to do next* (a decision the participant subjects must have based on the inner logic of the previous process), an external, disruptive situation suddenly appeared; a situation that questioned those potential paths to be followed inferred from the inner logic of the previous process.

How the impasse emerged remains unknown—it could have simply been a *deus ex machina*. But I believe there are also enough hints in the sections before the impasse to suggest that perhaps, *almost magically*, it occurred as a consequence of the effort made by those subjects who participated earlier.

In any case: things could have gone very differently; the quartet could have ended in an opposite way. However, for that full minute, all potential futures existed together.

-J