



Manifesto

(October 2016)

LungA School

Estd. 2013

Seyðisfjörður

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Introduction

Briefly put, the LungA School is an independent, artist-led institution and situation where we experiment with artistic practice as a way of doing, thinking and being in order to cultivate, disturb, distort and transform our notions of aesthetics, learning, perception and good judgement.

A school can be many things, but the kind of school that we are making is one that deliberately exist outside all systems of production and instrumental logics and therefore can offer it's 'uselessness' as the virtue that, paradoxically, makes it valuable and useful. This is a school that insist on the value and existence of those things that cannot be measured and insist on making them felt. We insist on opening up the way we see, think and do. We insist that seeing, thinking and doing are not separate activities. We insist on the infinite potential that each situation and everyone in it holds and we insist on drawing out those potentials. We insist on giving time, space, support and amplification to everyone so that their own language, meaning the way they interact with all material and immaterial circumstances, may be developed and rooted in them and in their lives.

Origin

People meet and things happen. And the other way around.
It is strangely heart-warming that most stories can be boiled down to this.

The LungA School was an idea that arose out of a number of circumstances and as the rather surprising result of a meeting between a place and a community.

Seyðisfjörður. It is unknown how this town got its name, partly because it is unknown what it actually means. It could mean something along the lines of 'the mysterious mist between the mountains', but this would just be a guess. A more qualified suggestion is that Seyðis is a word that comes from the Sami word 'Sieidis' which means a sacred place that was worshipped as a gateway to the spirit world. A magical place, so to speak. Another suggestion is that it comes from the Old Norse word 'seid' which is one of two words that were used to describe magic as it was carried out by the few that possessed these powers, the powers to bridge the world of the gods with the world of men. Both seem quite fitting once you know the place.

This is the place, with its unpredictable currents, where all the streams and rivers meet before they rush into the ocean.
This is where we are.

Teaching and learning as artistic practice

A manifesto for the LungA School

The school is only there when the school is there.
And these words will only get us so far.
And that's fine.

I

The impossibility of describing a thing fully from one perspective.

II

Four voices is not all, but it is enough to create an image, an outline that is not solid, but not dissolving.

III

Four texts being read as one.
Four texts to be read simultaneously.

IV

Our futile attempts at describing this school have compelled us to write these texts. They take on various perspectives, various lenses, various languages. All of them touch upon what this place is. All of them fail to describe it completely.

School as an Act of art

I

This school is to be approached as an act of art. This school is also a fully functioning school. That, in this case, is the same thing. What we mean by that refers to the purpose of the school and how it unfolds. Teaching and learning here is a performative practice, a lived practice that unfolds unpredictably.

Here the skin becomes softer, becomes thinner, becomes stronger. In a world that constantly and uncomfortably reminds us that we have forgotten how to be human, we catch glimpses of what it means to live.

Perhaps it is not a good idea to call a school an act of art. Perhaps we condemn a school to irrelevance by calling it an act of art, because Art has become so thoroughly disconnected from most people's lives (or is it the other way around?). But perhaps by calling a school an act of art, we open it up, disclose its deeper nature, and it becomes visible and understandable.

II

An act of art is the unfolding of an artistic practice. An artistic practice is a certain way of being with materials in all their abstract forms. This way of being with materials is characterized by openness towards the potential of an interaction between you and these materials, and an awareness that this interaction has the power to transform you while you transform the material.

Experiencing an act of art is not about understanding a theoretical discourse on abstract matters, it is about engaging in an ethical and aesthetical discourse on daily life as practice.

An act of art is to be looked upon aesthetically, meaning for the sake of what it might open up when experienced. The LungA School is created for the sake of the possibility of opening up the experience of living while and through engaging in artistic practice.

There is no beginning and there is no end to this act. The purpose is life, therefore, the purpose is art.

III

Do schools today have more transformative potential than art? If any sort of transformative potential rests partly on the openness of the person who experiences, then, we have to ask whether there is more aesthetic openness when engaging in education than when engaging with art.

Even though most schools can hardly be considered as places for education anymore, but rather, as instruments in a system of production, there is still a philosophical foundation for understanding education as being a process wherein

an individual's spiritual and cultural sensibilities, as well as personal and social abilities and attitudes, are in a process of continuous expansion and growth. This notion of the goodness of education in and for itself serves as a reason for the openness that still exists towards schools from the general public. An openness that does not, in the same way, exist towards art.

However, this argument does not mean that we cannot consider a school an act of art, merely that, when doing so, we run the risk of changing the disposition that the students have towards the place when they enter a program. But it seems that there are essential parts of the school's nature that can only be explained through this logic and discourse, and not using it would mean a loss of aesthetic potential. Even the act of using this kind of language to describe the school partly reveals its nature, as the nature of anything is best understood by considering its actions.

IV

If an act of art is considered that which is performed for the sake of aesthetic appraisal, then making decisions becomes subject to aesthetic consideration; what kind of decision can be regarded as aesthetically interesting, and thus, potentially open up for a broader understanding that enriches experience?

A decision does not have to be logical to be good.

As we consider artistic transformative practice as that which charges into unknown territories, it cannot rely on established knowledge. It must follow the sense of truth that comes from a connection with the accumulated wisdom of a lived life manifested as intuition and will. And this is something that can be cultivated and refined.

Another element is the consideration towards the manner in which things are done. If we consider the work of art as not merely an artifact that is something in itself, but also as the accumulation of decisions and actions, it becomes clear that any work of art is simultaneously its own process. Similarly, if the school is considered an act of art, it too is engaged in a process of constantly becoming.

So we are not just faced with the questions of what a good decision or action might be, but also the question of what way to go about performing an action, or which way to talk about a situation. Art is not a charade, therefore, our decisions and actions cannot be either.

If art is to be connected to daily life, we must relate appropriately to the actual things that occur.

What we are inviting everyone into is, essentially, circumstances where things can occur and, what then occurs determines where we go next.

V

A program here is a composition, a set of arranged circumstances, notes on a string. Each note is in its right place, which could be any place, but then again, it could not. It is where it is. These circumstances have a beginning, but each of them unfold in largely unpredictable ways, filling out the empty space between the notes, creating a totality in the performance of a composition. And each performance is different from the other, though it is easy to recognize the composition as being a particular composition and not some other.

We are conscious while we surrender to unfamiliar logics.

VI

We abandon the formal qualities of artistic practice and let it sieve through our bodies, into all aspects of our lives, so our 'practice' becomes something more than where our works of art are created. Our practice reveals the blurred lines between our making and life.

School, an act of art.
Teaching, an act of art
Learning, an act of art.
Lives, acts of art.

School as Anarchist Practice

Anarchism: the name given to a principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government—harmony in such a society being obtained, not by submission to law, or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreements concluded between the various groups and individuals, freely constituted for the sake of generating culture that serves the pursuit of the multitude of purposes that exist within the range of humanity.

I

When talking about anarchist practices in relation to a school, we are talking about those ethical practices that relate to daily life, to a life where decisions are taken amongst members of a community relating to the particular instances within which they are being taken. These are related to practices that are not governed by universal ideas but by what we will call particularist ethics.

We are against rigid policy as ‘the way’ things must be done and instead insist on looking at every instance, every situation, every relation as something new, while naturally considering experiences through time.

Relating to situations in this way does not mean forgetting history, but rather embracing past and present history and embracing the uniqueness of every situation.

II

We are searching for ways of living that make sense. And this we have to find out for ourselves, all of us. Our thinking on the matter can only take us so far, so we will have to figure out what it looks like and what it feels like by engaging in it, by engaging in life.

We are trying and failing and trying and failing.

We will never succeed in finding ‘A Way’. The way changes along the way.

So, we will let go of our longing for eternal answers to what makes a good life, and instead we will live and keep going ‘till we get it right and then continue, knowing that it will have to be created anew every instant.

We do not try to create theories to live by, but we do try to theorize our actions so as to understand them properly. Not in order to reproduce them and to frame our lives by them, but in order to have them visible, so we can move with them when it makes sense, and move beyond them when that is called for.

III

These kinds of anarchist practices belong to communities of human scale. Therefore, we are and will always be a small school, a small community. In order to properly, radically engage in a lived inquiry into the question of how to live together.

IV

Can we imagine a liquid terminology?

We are trapped by our own language and the lenses through which we feed our imagination. Perhaps only by dissolving our “truths” and sustaining them in a liquid state will we reimagine new ways for experiencing and existing.

There are terms that take on different meanings under different circumstances and situations, but in a particular field, their meaning is locked and holds everything in a state of pretense-equilibrium.

What we are suggesting here is not meaninglessness, and certainly not relativism, but the acceptance of the impossibility of universality in terminology and understanding. We pursue a way of looking at the world that sees every situation as truly its own, requiring consideration upon consideration without letting any universals establish themselves.

It is within the particular that we experience, that we feel, that we sense; and it must be here where we also make sense.

Uncertainty requires a collapse of understanding. A collapse that seems to be happening all around us, whether we want it or not. We can embrace this collapse and start listening and doing attentively, which includes both risks and possibilities. Risk of doubt and uncertainty, and possibilities for opening up to otherness within and without.

V

Anarchist practices create distance from established practices, but do not remove themselves completely from existing frames, rather they exist within them. We do not try to establish a utopian life outside the world, but strive to make a good life in the world.

Anarchism is the kind of practice that both allows and nurtures the individual in assuming the responsibility that comes with being alive as a being amongst other beings. Therefore, the most revolutionary practice must be engaged with making this existence visible and felt, with creating ways through which it can be acted upon.

VI

Our aim is to enable a community to pursue the multitude of purposes that exist within the range of humanity. A community in which the possibility exists to live out various conceptions of a good life is not a community that is held together by compromises. Rather, it is a community in which all members take into consideration all the others as well as themselves, and where ones actions are guided by the total understanding of ones situation. As a starting point we assume each others' consideration and humbly accept that one can never grasp the full consequence of ones own actions.

The Art School

I

Studying art means surrounding yourself with art and artists, and a conversation on art making and artistic practice. Materials and mediums are everywhere around us, as we live our lives. All situations are simultaneously their form and their potential forms.

Studying art is developing an interest in everything around you.

Studying art is not an academic venture.

Studying art is a sustained activity no different from doing art. It is the cultivation of an artistic sensibility, an artistic language (language understood here as a way of engaging with our surroundings) that becomes part of one's being.

Our foundation for art making is exactly this cultivated language that allows artists to engage in conversation with all the visible and invisible materials that make up their inner and outer life, that make up the experience of life.

II

Artistic life is a life of creation. It is a life in which we are constantly in the process of collecting, conversing, and experimenting. Artistic life is this process and not the works that come from it. The works are snapshots released during this process. They are creations that carry this process within them, while also being things in their own right, to be experienced for their own sake.
Every activity is a conversation.

In artistic life, you never know what to do before doing it. Knowing what to do before starting amounts to a muting of the conversation, an estrangement from the world. Artistic life is a way of being in the world that is in itself an opening up to the world while creating it.

III

Art is not about expression either of oneself or of an idea. Art is not *about* something. Art *is* something. It is not a discourse about abstractions; it is the giving of form to, and living out of, particulars.

IV

Art can only be when it insists on its own uselessness and meaninglessness. Only then can it become meaningful and useful. Only when it reflects and emphasises (not through process, form, or content but as a whole) the immediate existence of the observer in the world does it point towards assuming the responsibility that comes with being in the world.

The responsibility of artists is to insist on being useless, to simply insist on the realization of their art.

V

Contemporary art education must become an integrated, conscious, social practice of creating environments of experimentation while at the same time dissolving the boundaries of the institution. Art is not a spectacle removed from the viewer, but an integrated experience of the lives we live.

The artist serves a purpose in society not merely by what they produce, but by the way they practice and exist. In this way, the artistic practice is blurring the lines between life and art and breaks down the barriers of the art institutions and transform them into truly cultural institutions that works with the conscious creation of culture through artistic practice.

Here, teaching and learning becomes performative practices that calls for aesthetic appreciation, consideration and alteration.

VI

Studying art weaves a web of questions that forces us to remain conscious.

Studying art does not provide any answers.

On an Art of Living

I

As a human being you need to make a living (not to be confused with making money) which means that you have to engage in activities that sustain your own life as well as the people around and the ones dependent on you. However, logically, the question of making a living only makes sense after the question of 'why' has been addressed. Naturally, we have to be alive to even ask that question so chronologically we have to make a living before addressing the question of why. Ultimately, and practically, this means that these two questions, how to make a living? and why even live?, exist simultaneously and we realize that the questions are very much related, though not entirely the same thing.

Sustaining one's life must be put in service of living the kind of life that makes sense to live and can never be a purpose in itself.

School is a space outside of the system of production and instrumentalization. A place constituted for the sake of wondering about ways of living, about reasons for living and a place for abstract experimentation on these questions, seeking ways that make sense. And the path of experimentation is neither linear nor logical.

In a sense, schools are preparation for life, but in the same breath it needs to be said that schools do not take place outside of life and therefore must also, in themselves, constitute a way of life. They must serve as examples and everyone involved as exemplars of living consciously with these questions.

II

The school must be an interplay between structure and anti-structure, not meaning the opposite of structure but that which, when coming in contact with structure, dissolves both.

The structure is concerned with cultivating perception and actions while anti-structure comes from an attitude of openness and attention towards the particular moments. The tension between the two reveals the potentials that exist in any given situation.

The larger aim of schools must be to enable students to carry forward this interplay between structure and anti-structure and their art of living after leaving the school.

III

An art of living is concerned with altering the questions we normally ask and address the life you live as the fundamental practice of any artist, the foundation upon which everything you do takes place.

It is upon this foundation that one's life can be structured in accordance with those things that are worth striving for.

Life being in service of art while art (the conscious curation and production of culture) being the way of, and purpose for, life.

How can one make a living through living artistically?

IV

When we look around us we see the dominating instrumental and economic logic and discourse turning everything into means.

The ends we seek are abstractions we look for in the mirror. But you can never be the purpose of you own life without turning everything and everyone else into instruments.

Introspection and cultivation of oneself can only take place for the sake of qualifying one's presence and devotion to something that is outside of oneself.

Who and what are we something for?

V

Living is an activity to be felt. Only if things matter can they be felt. An art of living is a surrendering of cynicism, irony and the prejudices of modernity in favor of letting things matter in themselves and for their own sake.

VI

An art of living, being concerned partly with making a living, should be treated with the same artistic attention as any process of making. Our thoughts are bend from the object and back onto ourselves.

84 - A song for untrained voices

84 is the foundation and how it all began. 84 is now called ART.

84 is an ongoing investigation into what it means to live artistically, to live a life of creation, and it is a journey for each student in investigating their own practice and language, their own motivations and ideals, desires and purposes.

84 is 84 days. Twelve weeks.

“What would an extraordinary, artistic, experimental education look like that would provide the students with a strong foundation for their further artistic practice and life in general?”

This question does not seem to lose its relevance.

When we are talking about a strong foundation for art and life, we are talking about a general development of both skills and competencies, as well as character and disposition that together builds on the artistic capacity, the ability to live in and through the creative act. We direct our intention and practice the following:

1. Our familiarity with a range of mediums, tools and ideas through the experimentation with these in our work.
2. Our ability to navigate and act in settings and times characterized by uncertainty as well as the ability to act without fully knowing what will come of those actions.
3. To open, unravel and discuss the lenses through which we understand the world.
4. Our applied understanding and the ability to practice good judgement in any given situation, knowing that this means an ongoing renegotiation with the situation.
5. A broadening of our conception of the kind of lives that we can choose to live and our pursuit of these.
What are the innumerable purposes which can constitute a good reason for living and which are the innumerable ways in which such a life can take form?
6. Our use of language, understood as our ability to live and interact with all material and immaterial aspects of our surroundings.
7. Our ability to form meaningful relations and to engage in a community.
8. Our ability to live artistically, to live fully and to live like it matters.

Structure

And so we get to the problem of structure.

And we return to the composition.

The program moves through different stages. These are characterized by a difference in language, a difference in content and a difference in focus, but also by a similarity which allows for several cycles to occur during the program and several opportunities to revisit an idea or a medium in order to experience the changes in perception that occurs over time.

The stages occur chronologically, but are overlapping and seamlessly woven together so that the journey through them becomes one continuous movement.

The problem of engaging with the multiple levels of consideration that lies in each little detail of the program led us to the decision of creating the program as composition.

What follows is a graphic score detailing this particular program. The score has been created from a basis of six structural spaces:

the collective

the individual

the active/effective

the reflective

the invasive/disruptive

the formally informal

These six spaces constitute the programmed space. The empty space in between is where everything slowly becomes something. The structure exist for the sake of the uncontrollable and unpredictable life that unfolds in between it's elements.

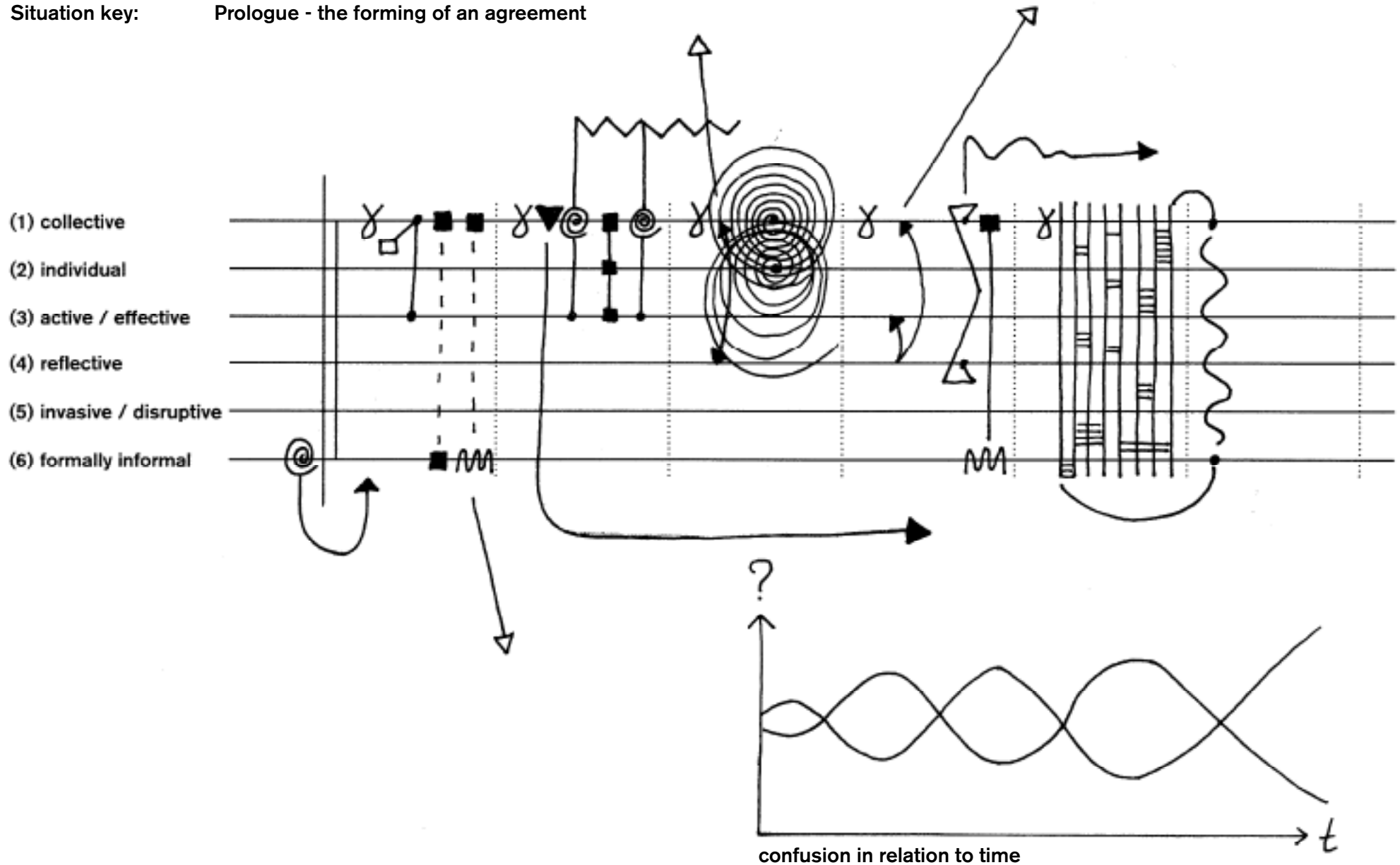
The graphic score speaks multiple languages simultaneously. The elements of the composition reflects the particular content while the graphic expression speaks to the nature of the intention.

Paragraph 1

Duration: 174 hours

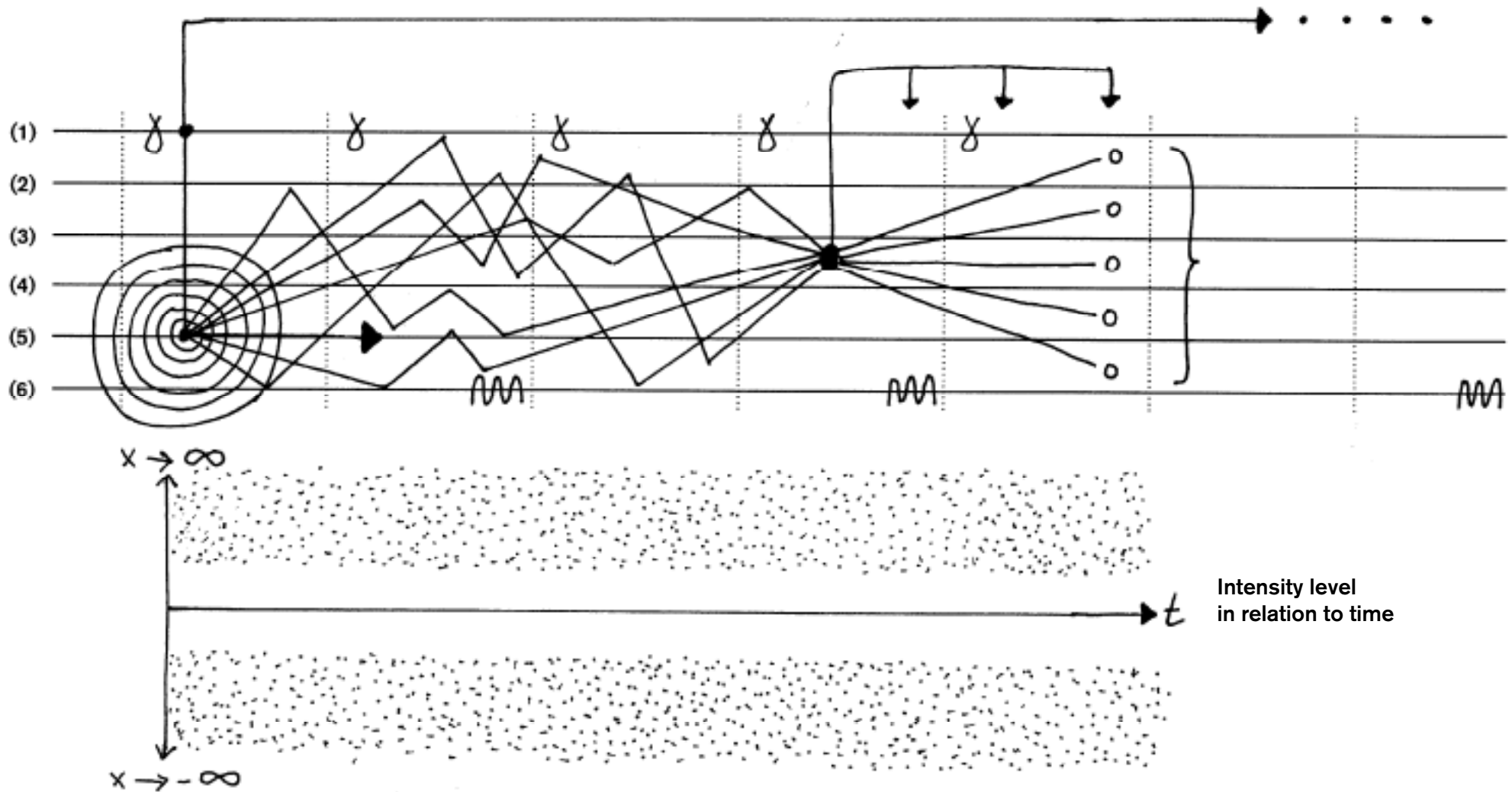
Performance key: Salute - entry - salute

Situation key: Prologue - the forming of an agreement



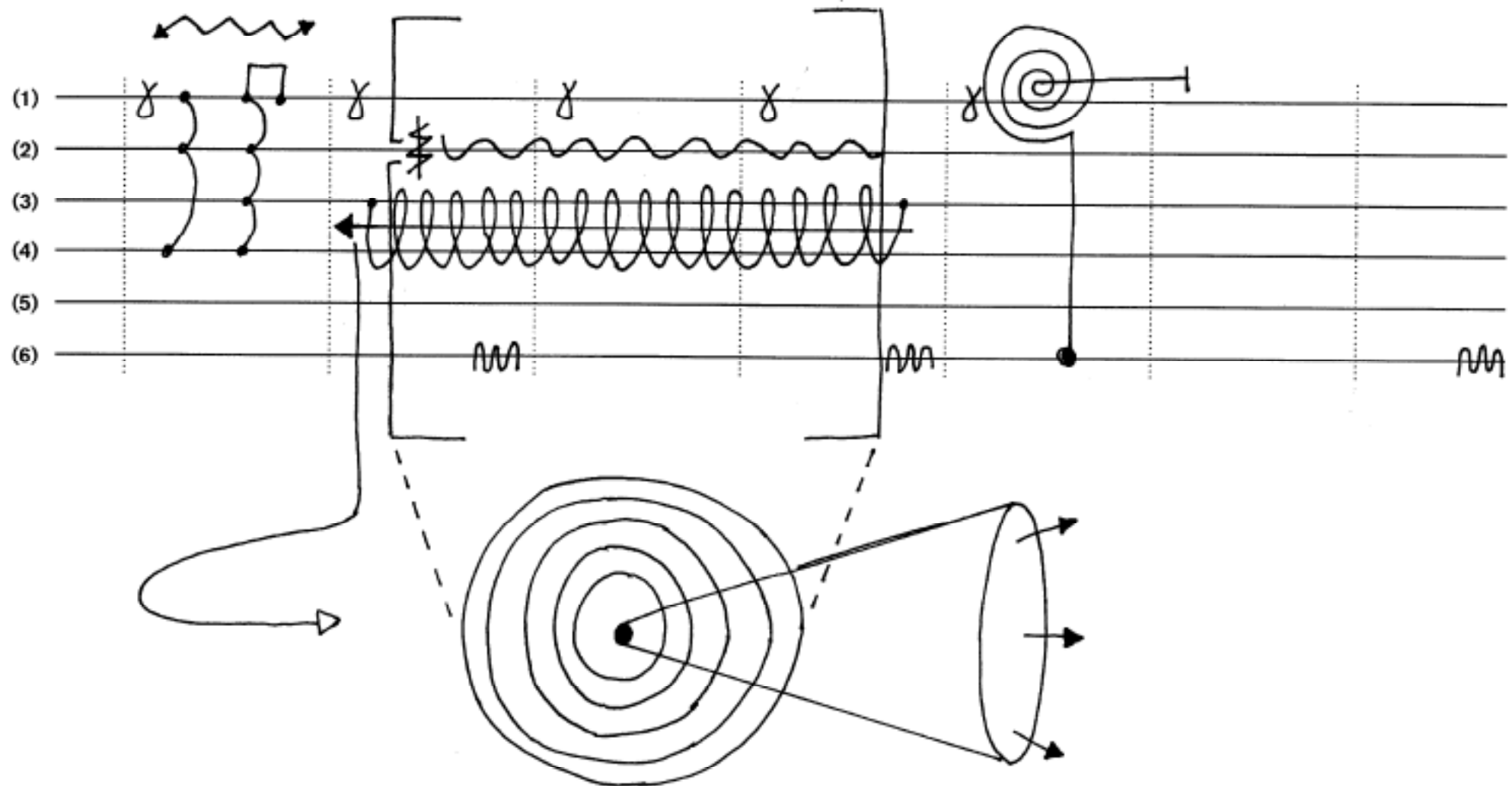
Paragraph 2

Duration: 168 hours
Performance key: Rearrange orientation of senses
Situation key: Formation of language and invincibility



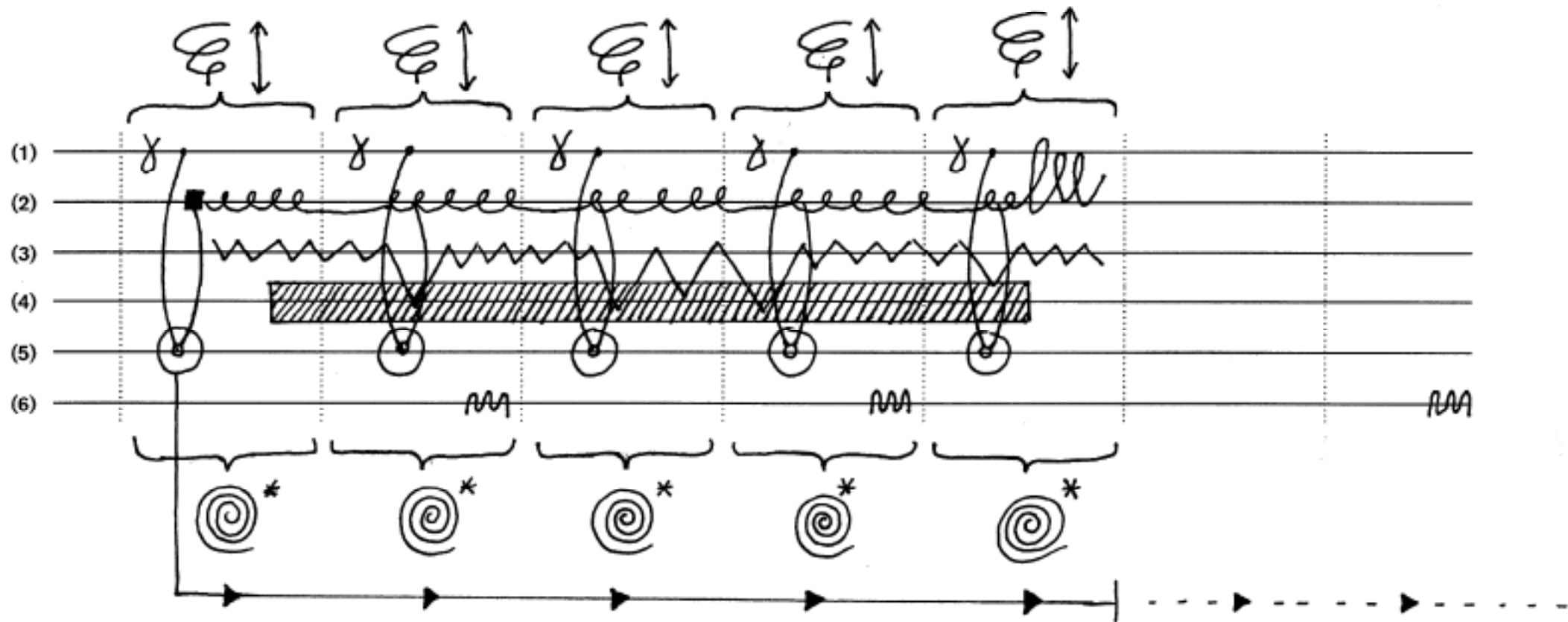
Paragraph 3

Duration: 168 hours
Performance key: Hyperawareness of existence and origin.
Situation key: Past as material

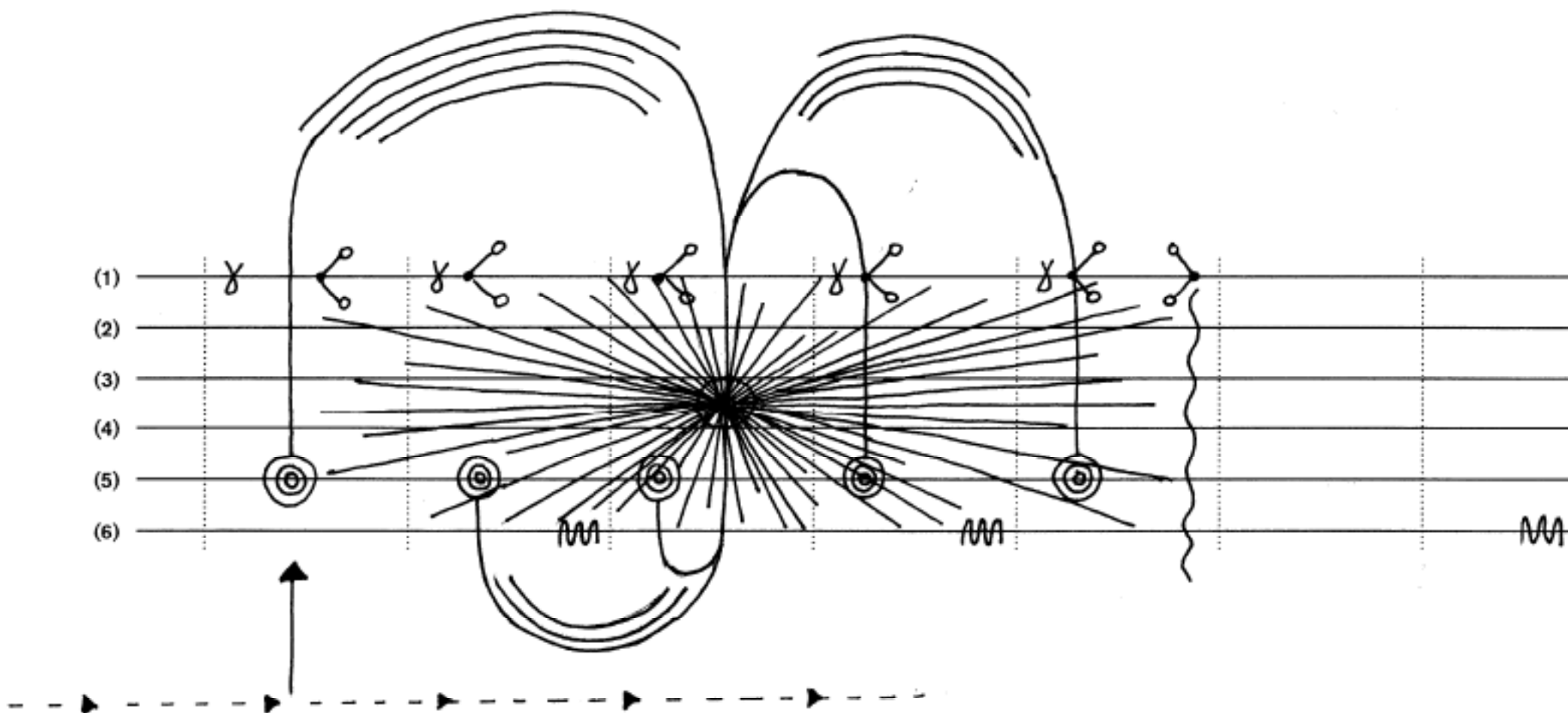


Paragraph 4

Duration: 168 hours
Performance key: Abandon habits, then do something.
Situation key: Constant disturbance

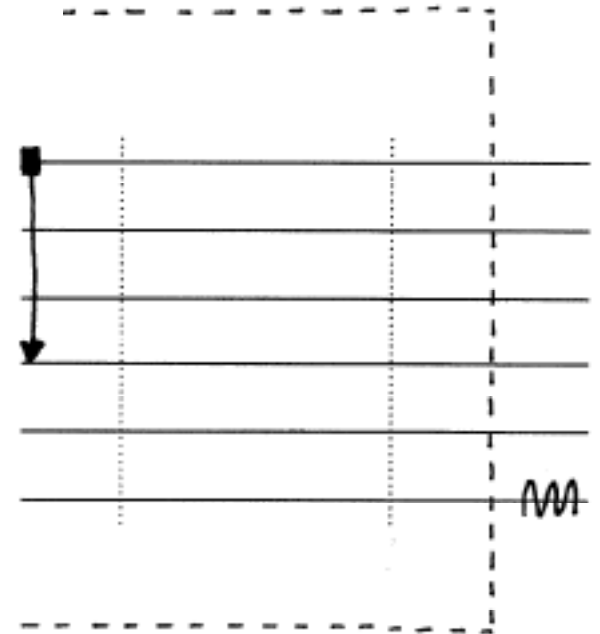
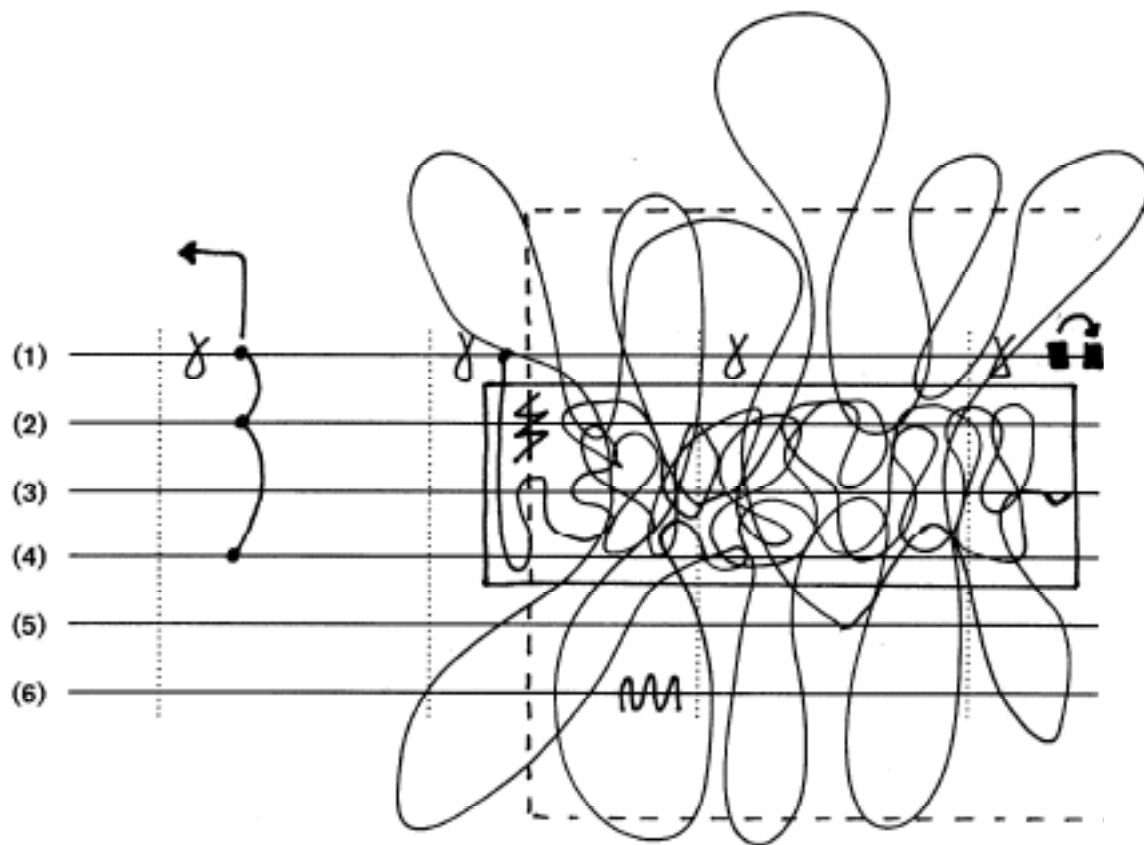


* = At any point inside or outside of interval



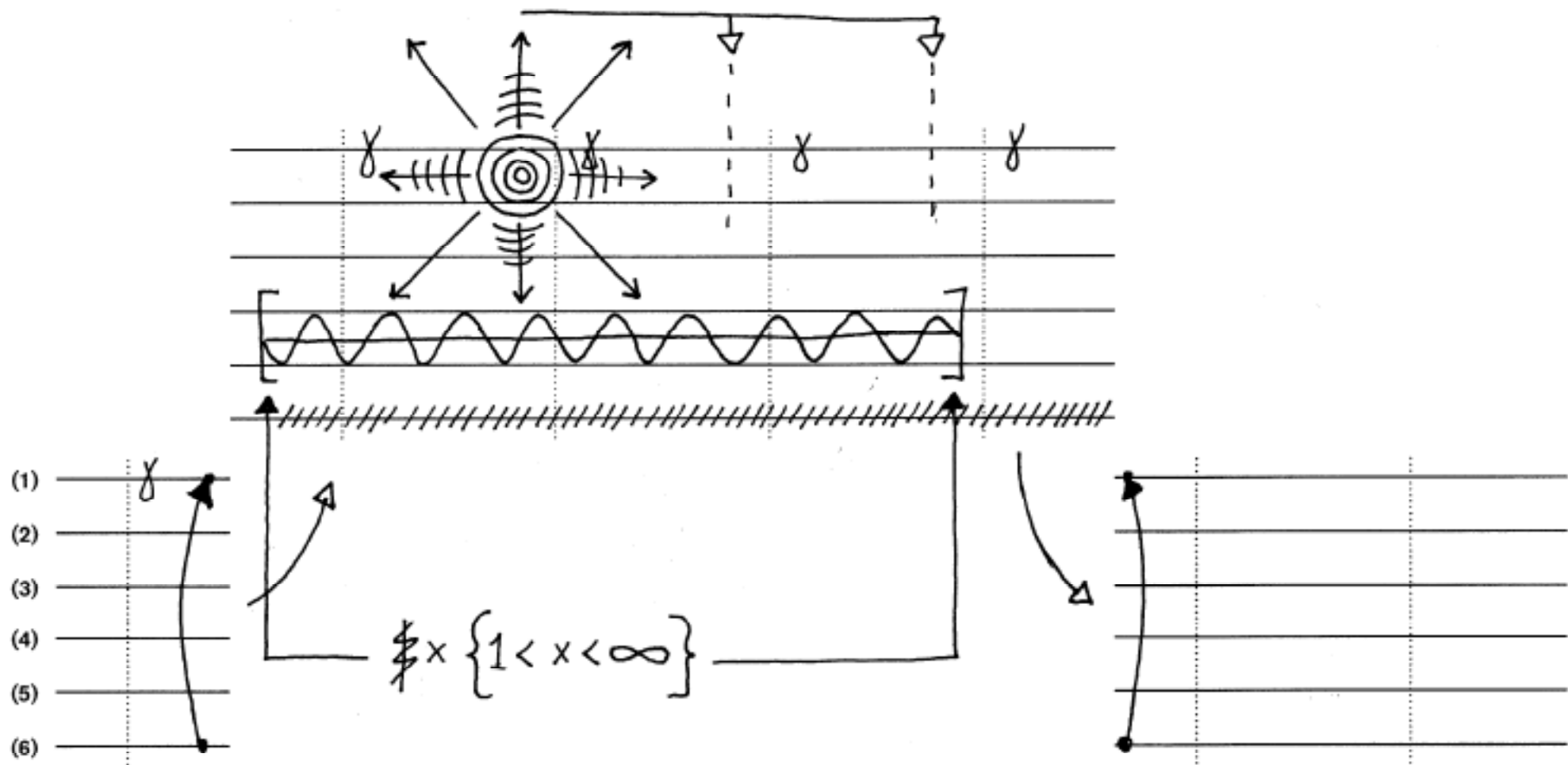
Paragraph 5

Duration: 168 hours
 Performance key: Moving further in and/or further out
 Situation key: Explosion and/or implosion



Paragraph 6

Duration: 168 hours
 Performance key: Hyperawareness of all performed actions
 Situation key: Reflection of being

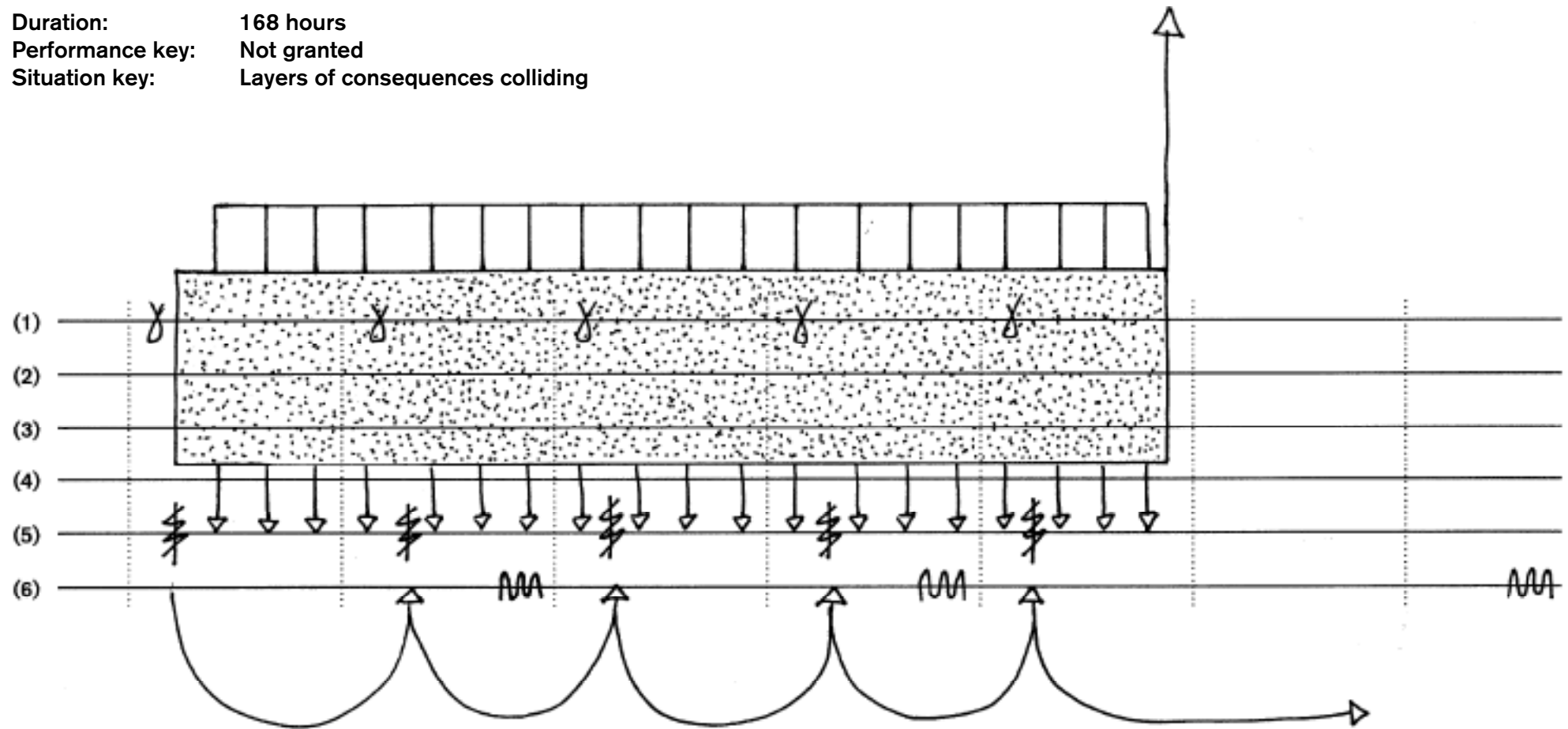


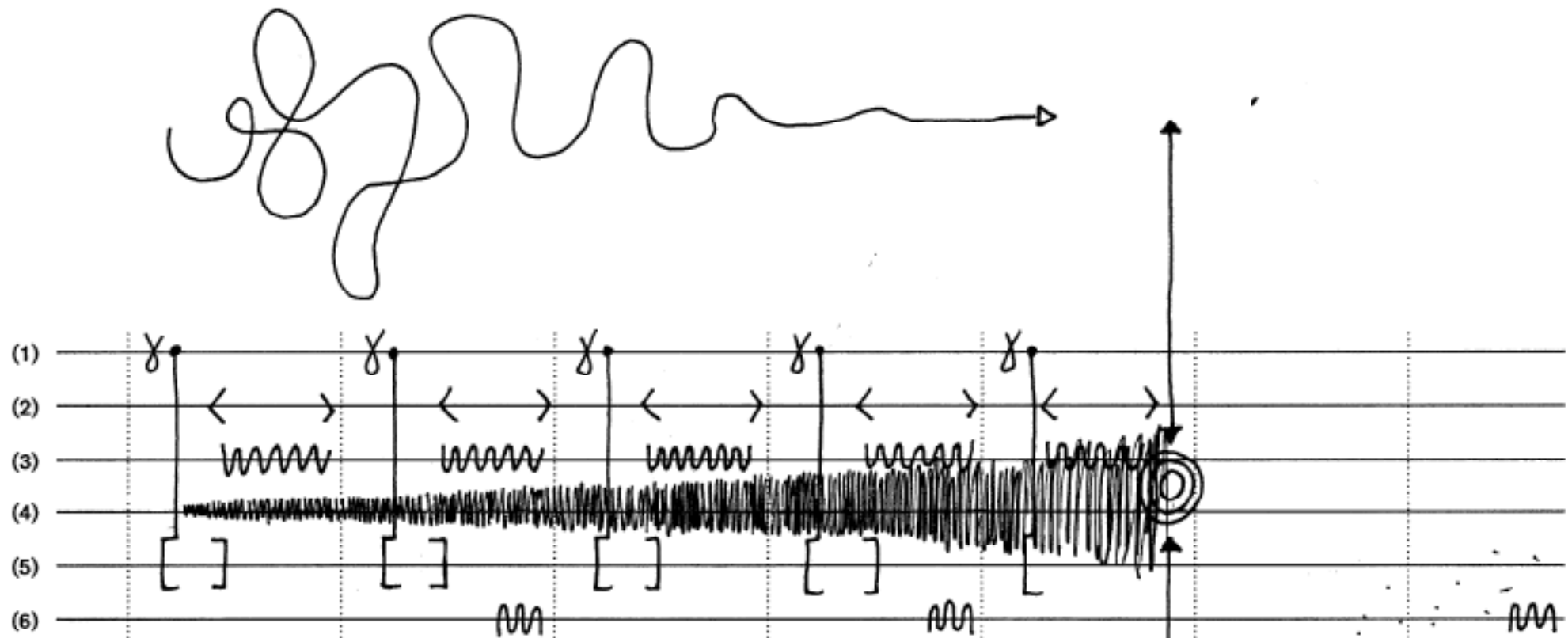
Paragraph 7

Duration: 168 hours
 Performance key: No dancing with the dogs, please.
 Situation key: Skálanes

Paragraph 8

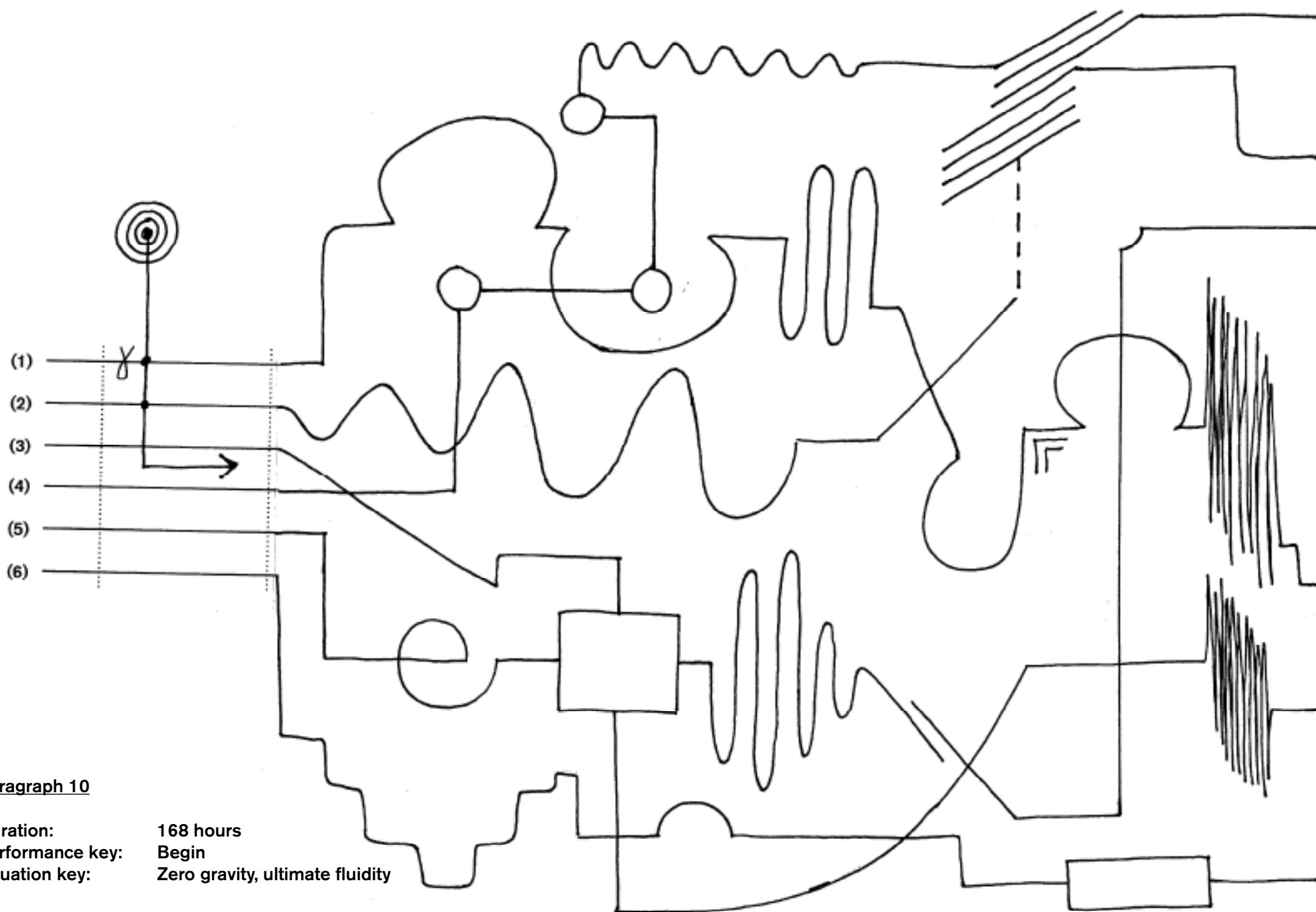
Duration: 168 hours
Performance key: Not granted
Situation key: Layers of consequences colliding





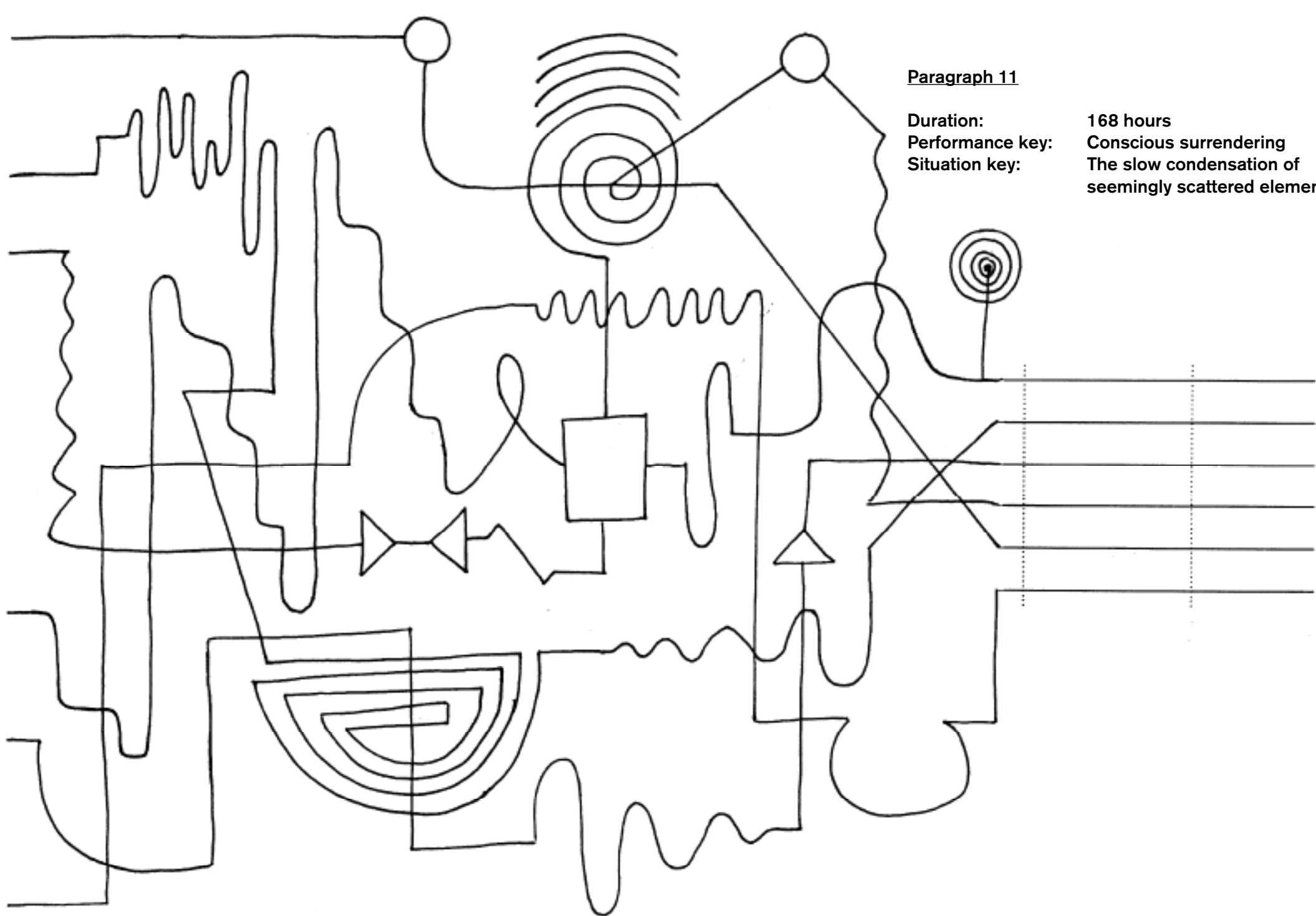
Paragraph 9

Duration: 168 hours
 Performance key: Oscillation between learning and unlearning
 Situation key: Unraveling the fabric of Reality/reality



Paragraph 10

Duration: 168 hours
Performance key: Begin
Situation key: Zero gravity, ultimate fluidity



Paragraph 11

Duration:
Performance key:
Situation key:

168 hours
Conscious surrendering
The slow condensation of
seemingly scattered elements.

Epilogue

Pt. 1

We now have this document, but that is not what matters. What matters is that it has been made.

All resignation has an element of relief and this conversation is necessary in order to keep going.

The purpose of a document like this must be to reflect the existence of a thing rather than representing it. In this mirror we see our own shortcomings and in the actual thing we see the limits of the mirror.

Pt. 2

There was no other way of doing this at this point. Once the thought presented itself it would have been betrayal not to go with it.

Pt. 3

We sincerely thank you for your generous reading.