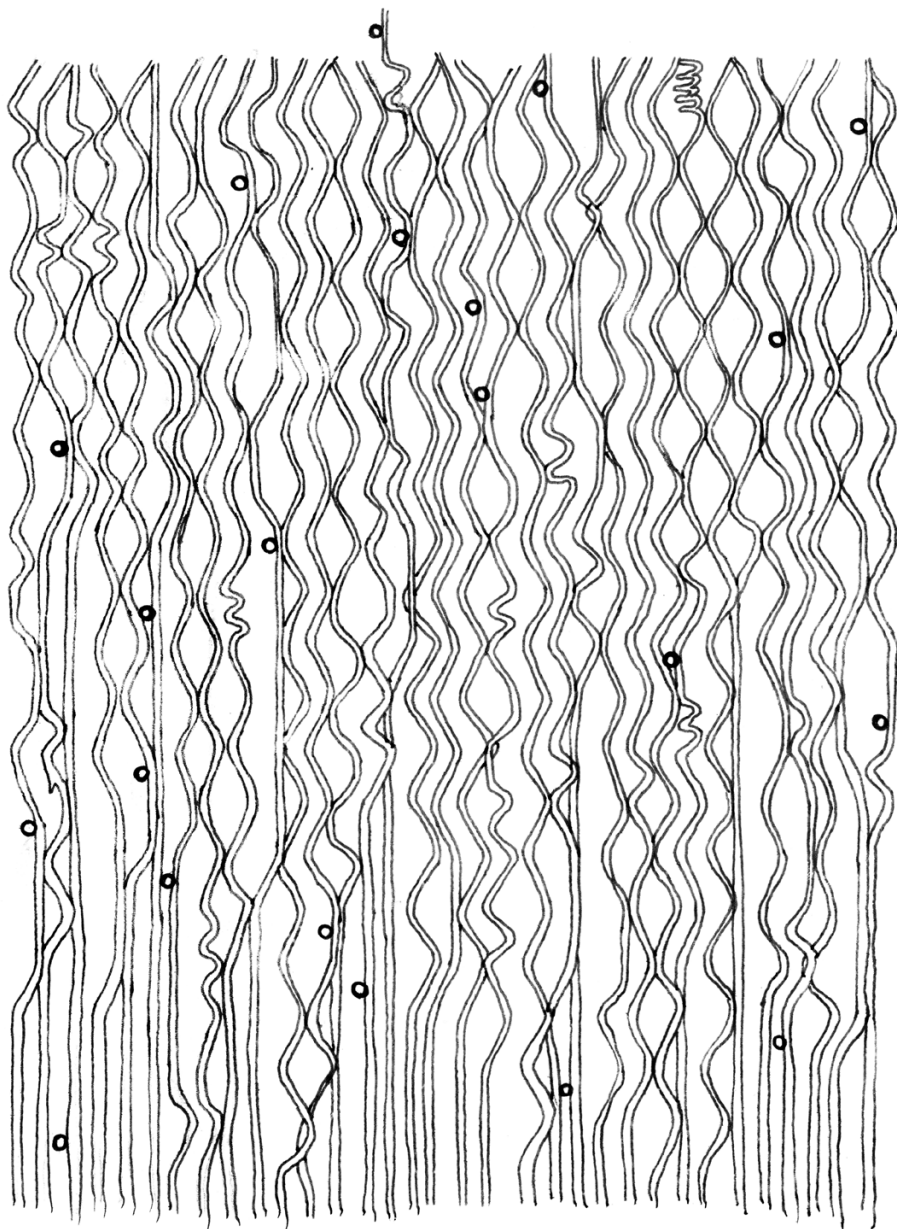
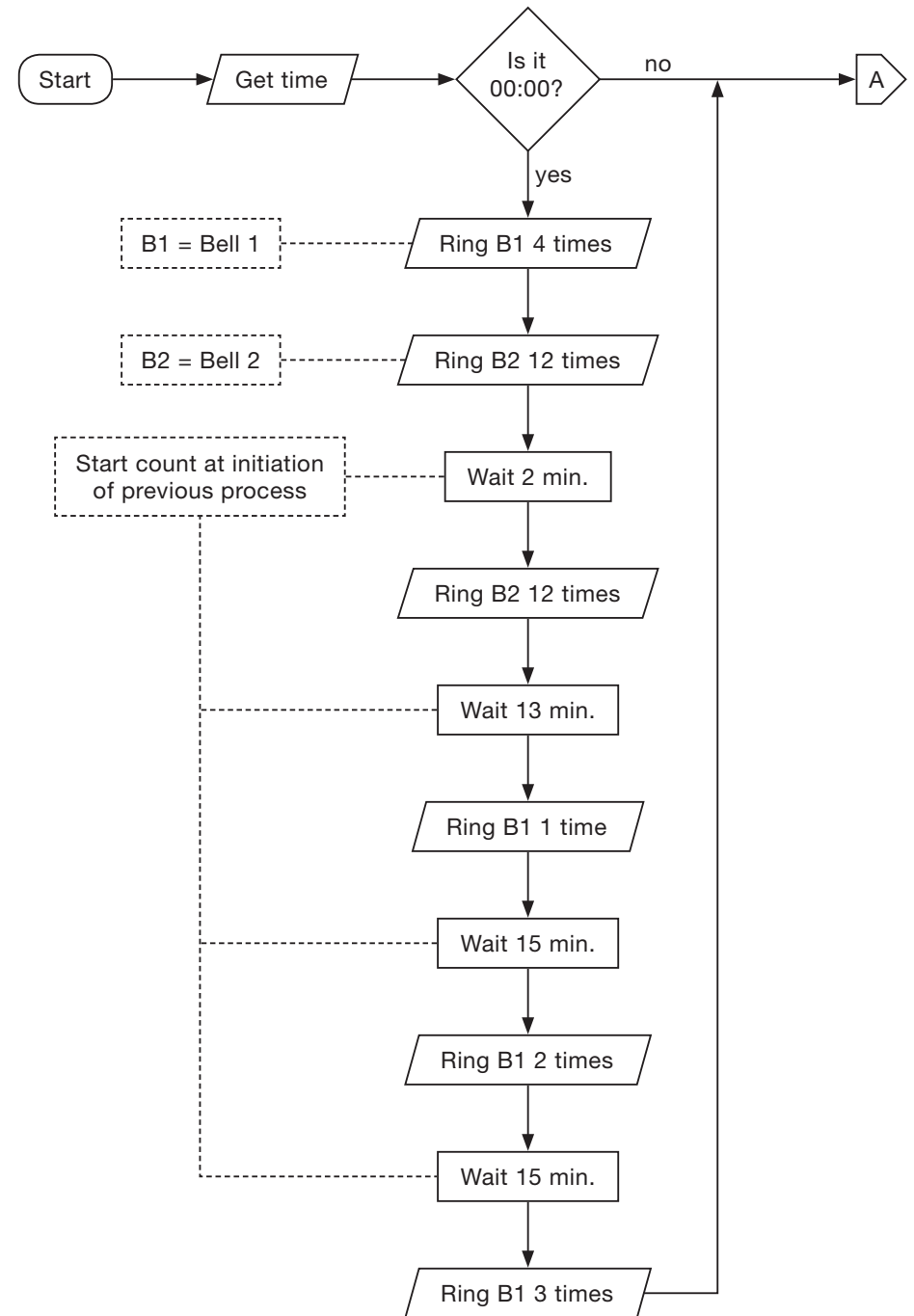
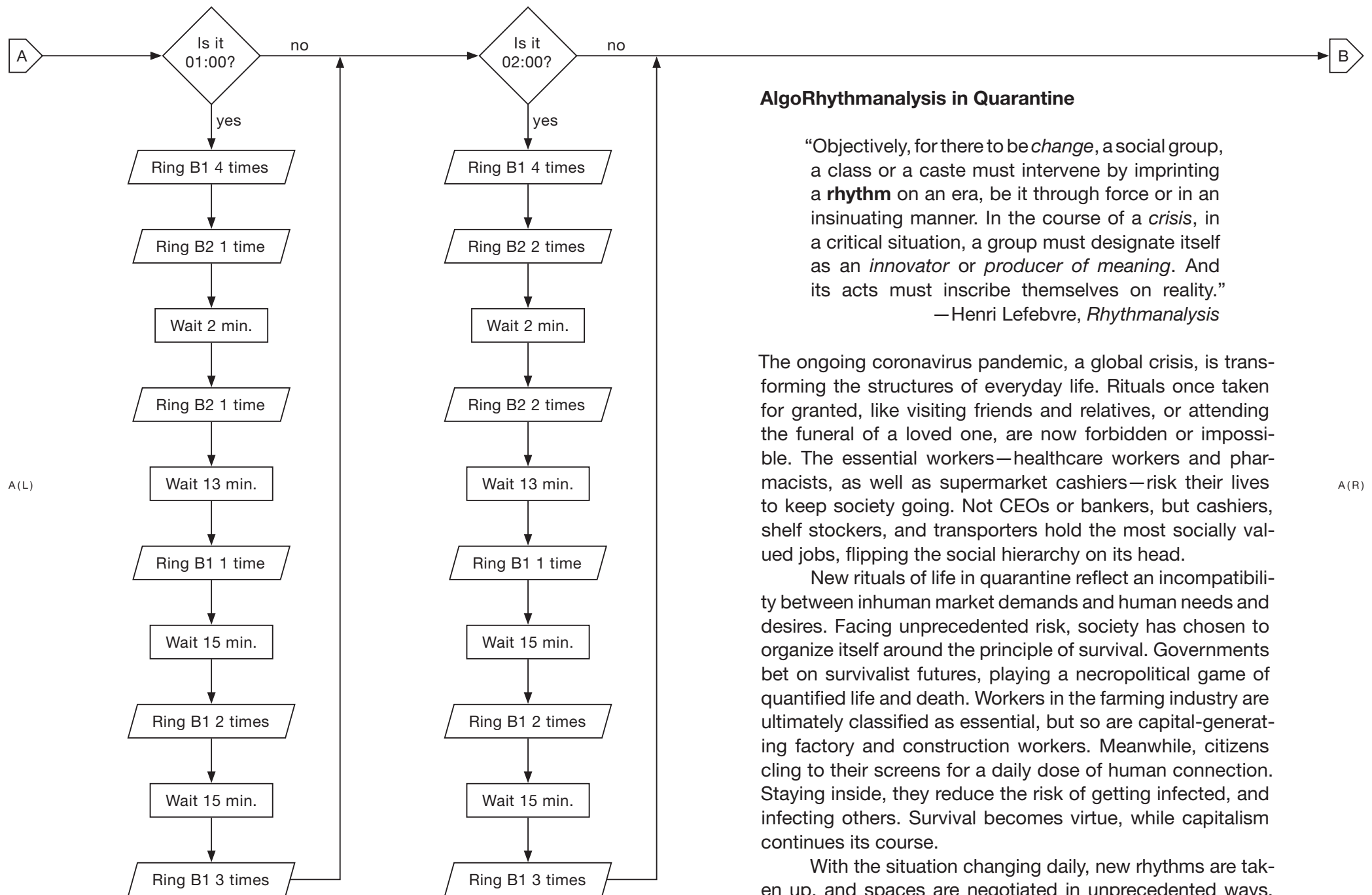


# AlgoRhythmanalysis

No. 1: Blanca







### Algorithm Analysis in Quarantine

“Objectively, for there to be *change*, a social group, a class or a caste must intervene by imprinting a **rhythm** on an era, be it through force or in an insinuating manner. In the course of a *crisis*, in a critical situation, a group must designate itself as an *innovator* or *producer of meaning*. And its acts must inscribe themselves on reality.”  
 —Henri Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis*

The ongoing coronavirus pandemic, a global crisis, is transforming the structures of everyday life. Rituals once taken for granted, like visiting friends and relatives, or attending the funeral of a loved one, are now forbidden or impossible. The essential workers—healthcare workers and pharmacists, as well as supermarket cashiers—risk their lives to keep society going. Not CEOs or bankers, but cashiers, shelf stockers, and transporters hold the most socially valued jobs, flipping the social hierarchy on its head.

New rituals of life in quarantine reflect an incompatibility between inhuman market demands and human needs and desires. Facing unprecedented risk, society has chosen to organize itself around the principle of survival. Governments bet on survivalist futures, playing a necropolitical game of quantified life and death. Workers in the farming industry are ultimately classified as essential, but so are capital-generating factory and construction workers. Meanwhile, citizens cling to their screens for a daily dose of human connection. Staying inside, they reduce the risk of getting infected, and infecting others. Survival becomes virtue, while capitalism continues its course.

With the situation changing daily, new rhythms are taken up, and spaces are negotiated in unprecedented ways.

The quarantined become students of time, aware of the routines that were given up, those that were retained, and the ones that are being created. They also become students of space, transforming their domestic sphere into a university, a nightclub, or a hospital. They imagine how things could play out differently, and those ideas are used to conceive alternative spaces that have an impact on the world.

### Rhythmanalysis, AlgoRhythmanalysis and Notation

Late in his life, Henri Lefebvre wrote about a technique he called rhythmanalysis, which uses rhythm as a mode of analysis—rhythm as a *tool* rather than an object of analysis. It starts from the embodied position of the rhythmanalyst, who does not analyze the body as a subject, but uses the multi-sensory human body as the first point of analysis, as a metronome, or a sounding board that registers rhythms (sounds, movements, visual changes, material transformations).

Rhythmanalysis allows a passing through different scales, from micro to macro, always returning to the scale of the body, the situated point of analysis. Across these scales, repetition takes two combining forms: cyclical and linear. Cyclical repetition originates in the cosmic, in nature (days, nights, seasons); it indicates movements of long intervals at the heart of shorter, more individual, alternating rhythms. Linear repetition comes from social practice, from human activity (the monotony of mundane activities, movements to and from). “Everywhere where there is interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is a rhythm,” writes Lefebvre.

For the rhythmanalyst, the sensible is not the apparent, but that which has presence. A product of the media, “the present” is merely a representation, contrasted to authentic “presence” as an irreducible element of lived space. The act of rhythmanalysis transforms everything into presences, it

“integrates these things—this wall, this table, these trees—in a dramatic becoming, in an ensemble full of meaning, transforming them no longer into diverse things, but into presences.” By inviting the complexity of the whole in a process of dramatic becoming, the rhythmanalyst comes closer to the poet than the psychoanalyst, and still more than the statistician.

Lefebvre writes that only in suffering does a bodily rhythm break apart, wherein analysis comes more closely to pathology: “In order to grasp and analyze rhythms, it is necessary to get outside them, but not completely: be it through illness or a technique.” He identifies three types of rhythms: *isorhythmia* (complete synchronization, e.g. that of a symphonic performance), *eurhythmia* (that of the living body), and *arrhythmia* (breakdown, crisis, and de-synchronization). The three rhythms associate to form the polyrhythmic body.

A partial homophone, the word **algorithm** is derived from the name of Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi, the 9th century Persian scholar who introduced Hindu numerals to the West together with corresponding techniques for their calculation (algorithms). Throughout history, algorithms developed into more and more sophisticated sets of rules or procedures to be carried out in a logical fashion. As a procedural form, algorithms have a start and an end and can repeat in different ways, for example through looping and recursion.

Algorithms can describe mathematical processes, but they can also chart everyday routines. They relate to notation, whose well-known musical and choreographic formats of the score and the script can be used to both document and project action. The Fluxus instructions, which through their choreography bring everyday gestures into the realm of fine art, can also be seen conceptually as algorithms that document and project. Similarly, works by avant-garde composers generate novelty through formally experimental

B(L)

B(R)

C

notation and its interpretation. This interpretation becomes a crucial moment in the life of the work, as an act of differentiation on behalf of the performer following an algorithm. Even a recipe can be seen algorithmically.

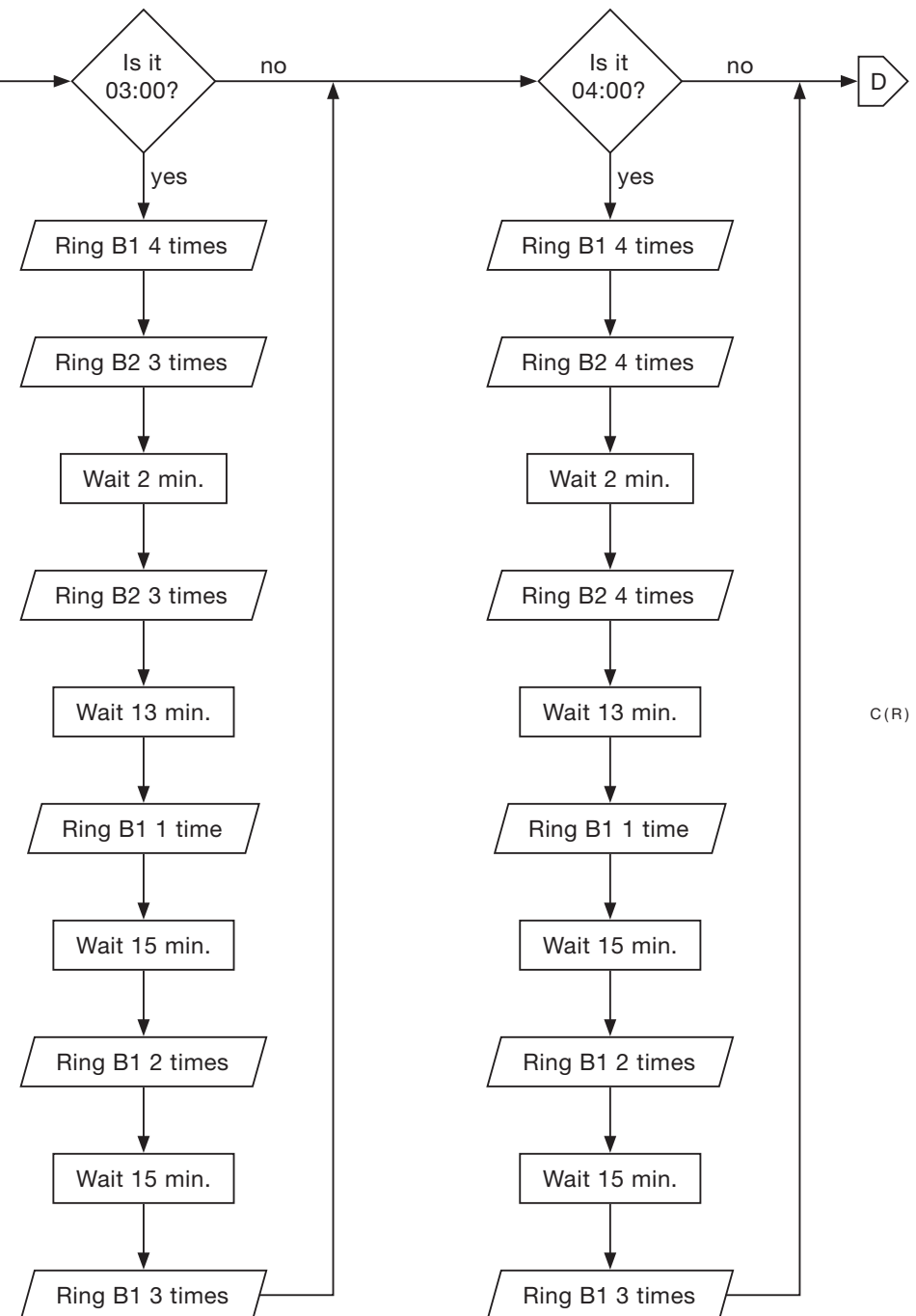
**AlgoRhythmanalysis** is an approach to studying the relations between rhythms—those of the body, society, and the environment—and algorithms—sets of instructions. It seeks to make visible the routines, choreographies, and automated processes that underlie the everyday, as part of a methodology of restoring harmony within difference. It uses the techniques of rhythmanalysis combined with tools for describing (and designing) algorithms, namely their visual representation in flowcharts. At an early stage of AlgoRhythmanalysis, these charts can be used to register observed (poly)rhythms in daily life. Later on, they can be used to propose new rhythms or new arrangements of existing and/or not-yet-here rhythms—utopian polyrhythms.

C(L)

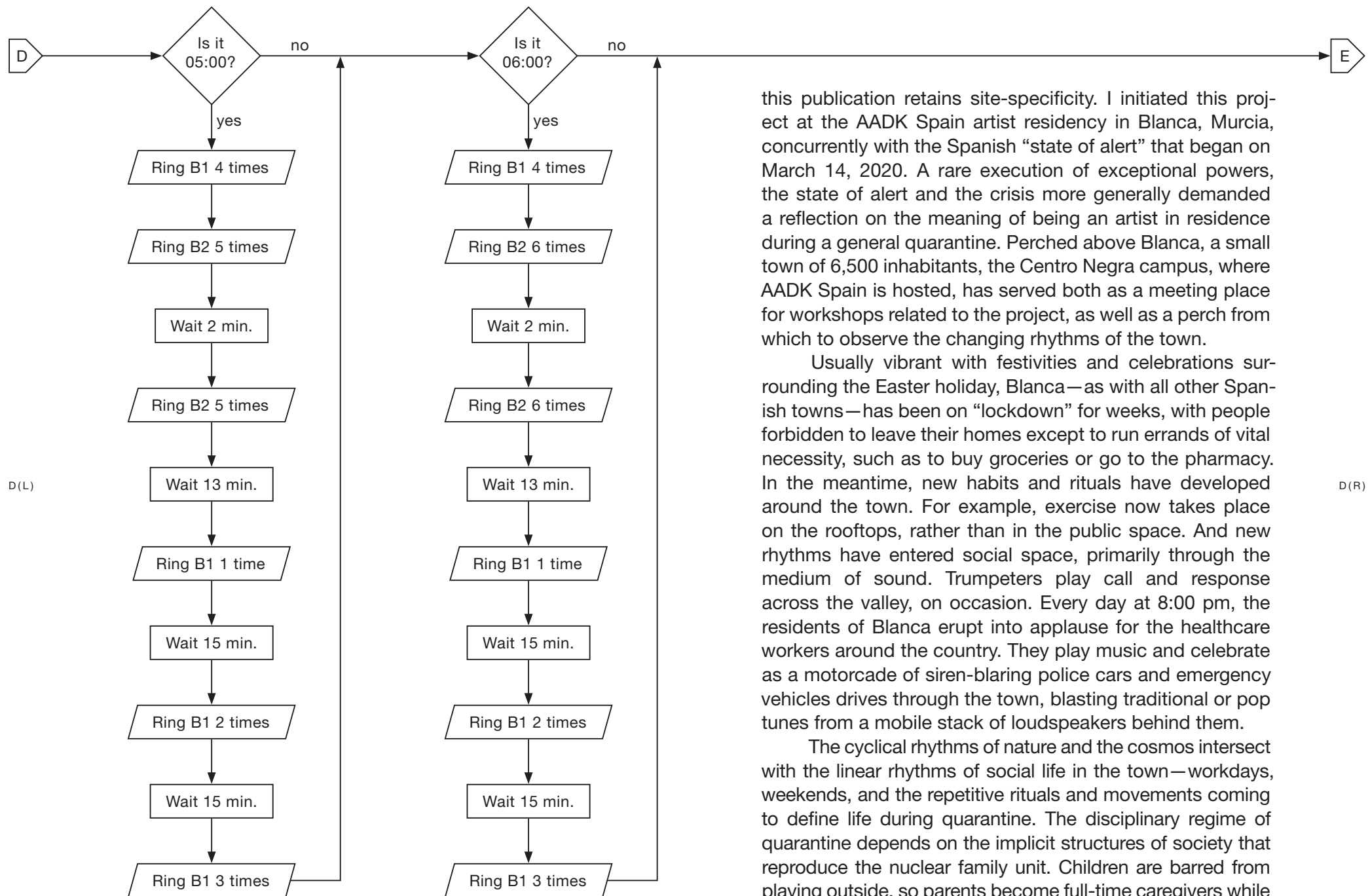
When the cyclical time of the quarantine day intersects with the linear time of lockdown society, arrhythmia becomes a dominant force. New routines being enforced at a moment's notice introduce chaos into the polyrhythmic body. For Lefebvre, rhythmanalysis has an objective: to strengthen or re-establish eurhythmia, the harmonic rhythm of the healthy living body. Survival itself is not a rhythm, but a basic condition. Eurhythmia, when it is present, elevates bare survival to meaningful social life. The goal then of AlgoRhythmanalysis is to learn from the emergent routines of the quarantine day and, from a situated place, to propose harmonically restorative ones that acknowledge the complexity of social life beyond the baseline of survival.

### Blanca, Murcia and the Time of Quarantine

While the analysis of (algo)rhythms can be conducted anywhere, it is important to take a situated approach, therefore



C(R)



this publication retains site-specificity. I initiated this project at the AADK Spain artist residency in Blanca, Murcia, concurrently with the Spanish “state of alert” that began on March 14, 2020. A rare execution of exceptional powers, the state of alert and the crisis more generally demanded a reflection on the meaning of being an artist in residence during a general quarantine. Perched above Blanca, a small town of 6,500 inhabitants, the Centro Negra campus, where AADK Spain is hosted, has served both as a meeting place for workshops related to the project, as well as a perch from which to observe the changing rhythms of the town.

Usually vibrant with festivities and celebrations surrounding the Easter holiday, Blanca—as with all other Spanish towns—has been on “lockdown” for weeks, with people forbidden to leave their homes except to run errands of vital necessity, such as to buy groceries or go to the pharmacy. In the meantime, new habits and rituals have developed around the town. For example, exercise now takes place on the rooftops, rather than in the public space. And new rhythms have entered social space, primarily through the medium of sound. Trumpeters play call and response across the valley, on occasion. Every day at 8:00 pm, the residents of Blanca erupt into applause for the healthcare workers around the country. They play music and celebrate as a motorcade of siren-blaring police cars and emergency vehicles drives through the town, blasting traditional or pop tunes from a mobile stack of loudspeakers behind them.

The cyclical rhythms of nature and the cosmos intersect with the linear rhythms of social life in the town—workdays, weekends, and the repetitive rituals and movements coming to define life during quarantine. The disciplinary regime of quarantine depends on the implicit structures of society that reproduce the nuclear family unit. Children are barred from playing outside, so parents become full-time caregivers while

being expected to remain full-time workers—that is, if they have not been made redundant. Cases of domestic abuse become more frequent worldwide. Silvia Federici's materialism incorporates the role of women's work in the reproduction of capitalist social structures, where child-rearing and housework have long been taken for granted as unpaid work done by women. These duties are called upon once again.

Mechanical time forges on as an automated datum for daily alternations, an algorithmic grid on which new, sometimes previously unfathomable exceptions are hung. This time is embodied in the sonic function of the church's bell tower. Persistently, and with slight variation on Sundays, or in the case of death, the bell sounds and resounds, ringing every fifteen minutes, persisting against the backdrop of near complete standstill. This mechanical time was introduced to industrial society as a mechanism of production, for water management and eventually for managing shifts at the factory. Electricity and mechanical time enabled around-the-clock value extraction, extending the workday beyond the natural daylight hours. The time of quarantine is neither a return to natural time nor an undisturbed continuation of mechanical time, but a drag in time.

Since industrialization, the clock has been habituated as an organizing principle of everyday life, with value extraction pervading all spheres of life through the media. Days become structured around the 24-hour news cycle, around video conference calls and social media interactions. The world outside projects itself into the private sphere, yet it lacks presence. The screen replaces the window or the door as the primary interface to the world, a social space that is no longer tangible. What would this quarantine look like without the internet? In digital quarantine, the clock's meaning shifts. Social life as spatial practice is suspended, and time takes on the features of a memory, a souvenir of social reality.

In queer theory, the question of temporality plays an important role. For Jack Halberstam, there exists both straight time and queer time, the former reflecting the normative progression of heterosexual life in modern society ("the narrative coherence of adolescence – early adulthood – marriage – reproduction – child rearing – retirement – death"), the latter reflecting the experience of time for non-reproductive, queer subjects. The impasse of quarantine, while falling back on implicit gender roles and reproductive expectations of straight temporality (family care), it also affects queer temporality. Spaces of queer congregation are closed, replaced by mediated virtual interactions in isolation, potentially leading to further alienation. The feeling of being part of a queer family, a comrade of queer time, buckles under the weight of straight time's persistence in quarantine.

The crisis creates, however, a disturbance in both straight time and queer time, putting reproduction on pause and removing the possibility of community, at least beyond the screen. There is a utopian potential in refusing the *time* of quarantine: "social distancing" does not inherently mean social isolation or tacit acceptance of the situation. Anarchist forms of organization, such as affinity groups and networks of mutual aid, can be adopted to foster hope. As José Esteban Muñoz demonstrates in *Cruising Utopia*, the function of *hope* in Ernst Bloch's conception of utopia, which promotes an idea of "concrete utopia" that can only emerge from the present material conditions of society, need not be naïve or romantic. By maintaining social closeness among small groups of people who share trust and a common understanding of how to behave during the crisis (e.g. members of the same shared apartment or house, or people who are close but do not necessarily live together), it is also possible to better participate in networks of mutual aid co-constituted with other affinity groups, without increasing others' risk.

E(L)

E(R)

When instilled with feminist and queer affinities, these groups and networks can reduce alienation and suffering during the crisis and bring hope.

The pages below were compiled collectively by individuals and affinity groups participating in a network of mutual aid taking the form of an artist residency in quarantine. Many of the analyses in this publication are observations of perceived or personal rhythms, while some venture out into a utopian space and time beyond the confines of quarantine. They adopt the form of the algorithmic flowchart to delineate routines, but some also queer the form or introduce “software bugs” into the sets of processes, and some refuse the form altogether. The analyses are structured around a design that represents the 24-hour rhythm of the church bell, an unignorable fact of everyday life in Blanca, drawing them into ad-hoc relations with mechanical time.

For the (algo)rhythm analysts published here, aim has been to restore eurhythmia, to re-establish a general libidinal balance in this time of crisis. When society breaks down, new formations take shape that are often durable. New social practices must neither be built on the preexistent necropolitical structures of exclusion that are already responsible for the drowning of refugees in the Mediterranean and the widespread undervaluing care workers, who are also mostly women. Nor must the crisis to be taken as an opportunity for the advancement of disaster capitalism and generalized surveillance. The post-pandemic society is already forming. It is not enough to organize it around the sole principle of survival. Now is the time for demanding feminist and queer futures that break from the status quo of crisis.

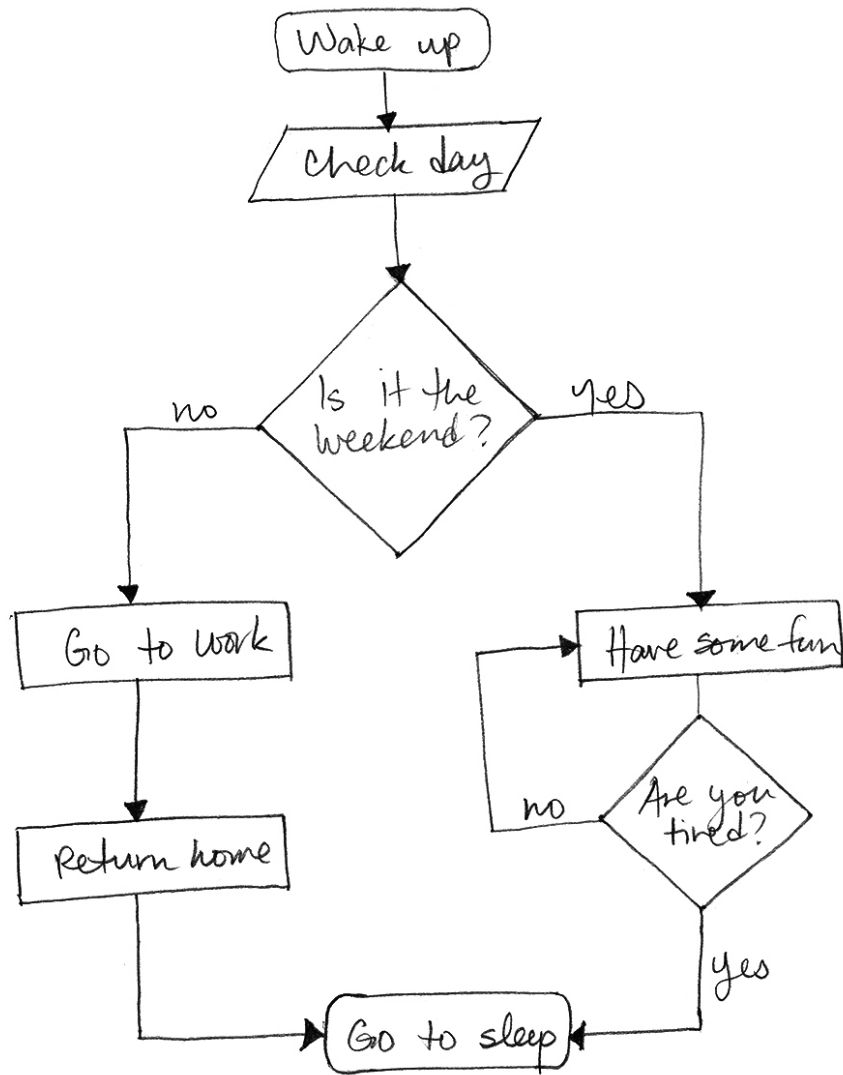
Benjamin T. Busch  
April 21, 2020

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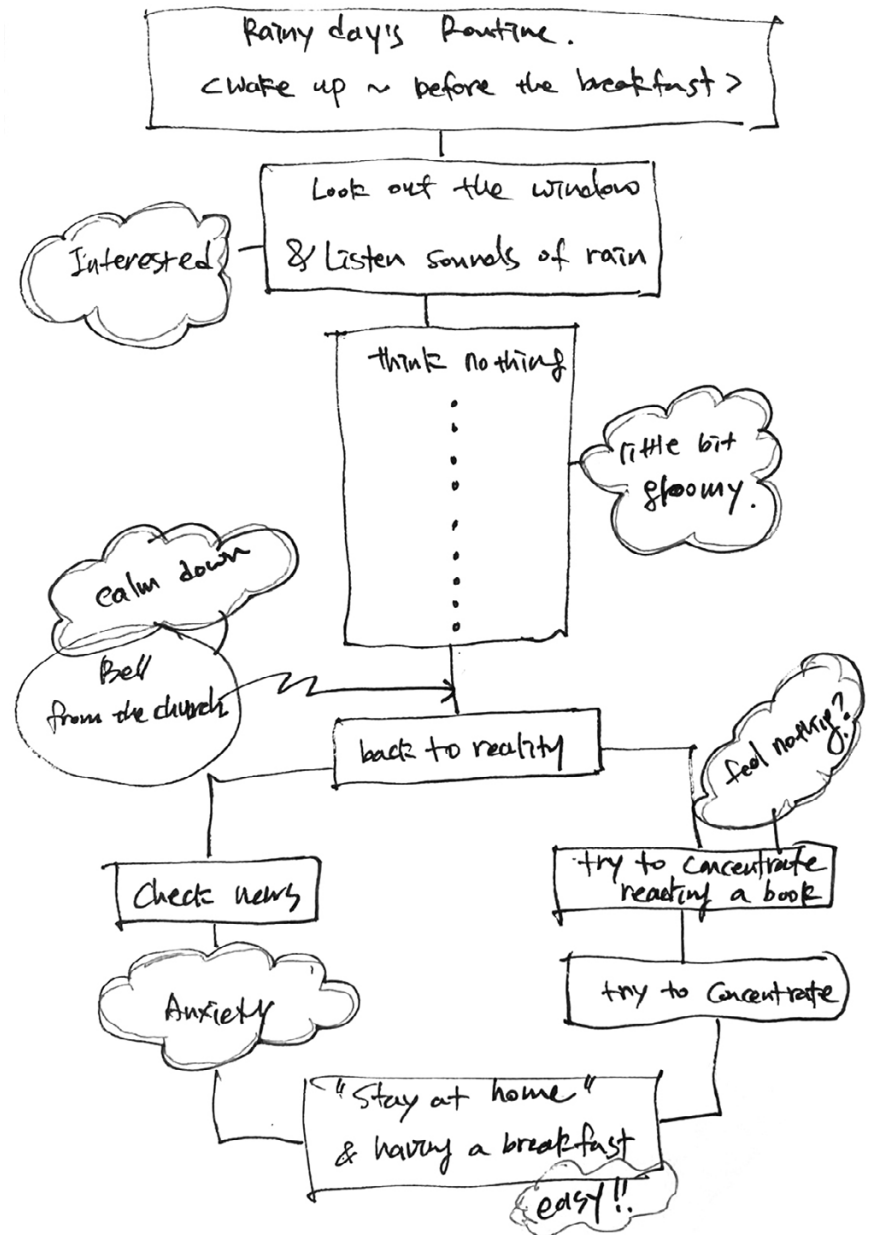
### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dísá Björnsdóttir, Vanessa Gravenor, Manuela Koelke and Richard Pettifer for their tele-correspondence and collective readings during this worldwide weird time. As well, I want to thank to Elena Azzedin for her constructive input, encouragement, and care during this residency, Joel for his musical assistance, and Julius for his moral support. Finally, my humble thanks go out to all the residents whose (algo)rhythm analyses appear in this publication. Their participation in the development of this methodology has been a great inspiration.

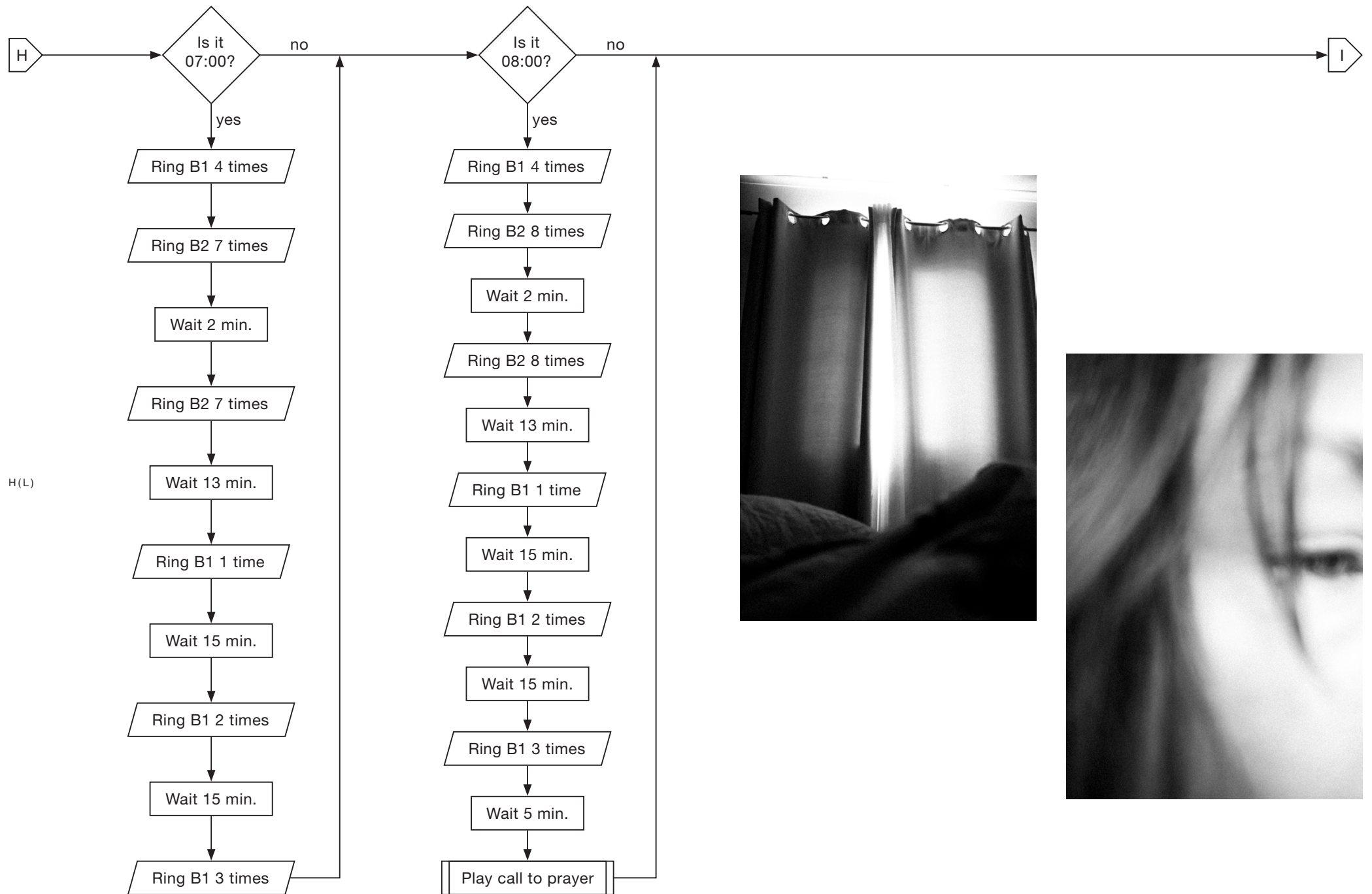


"Daily routine"

G(L)

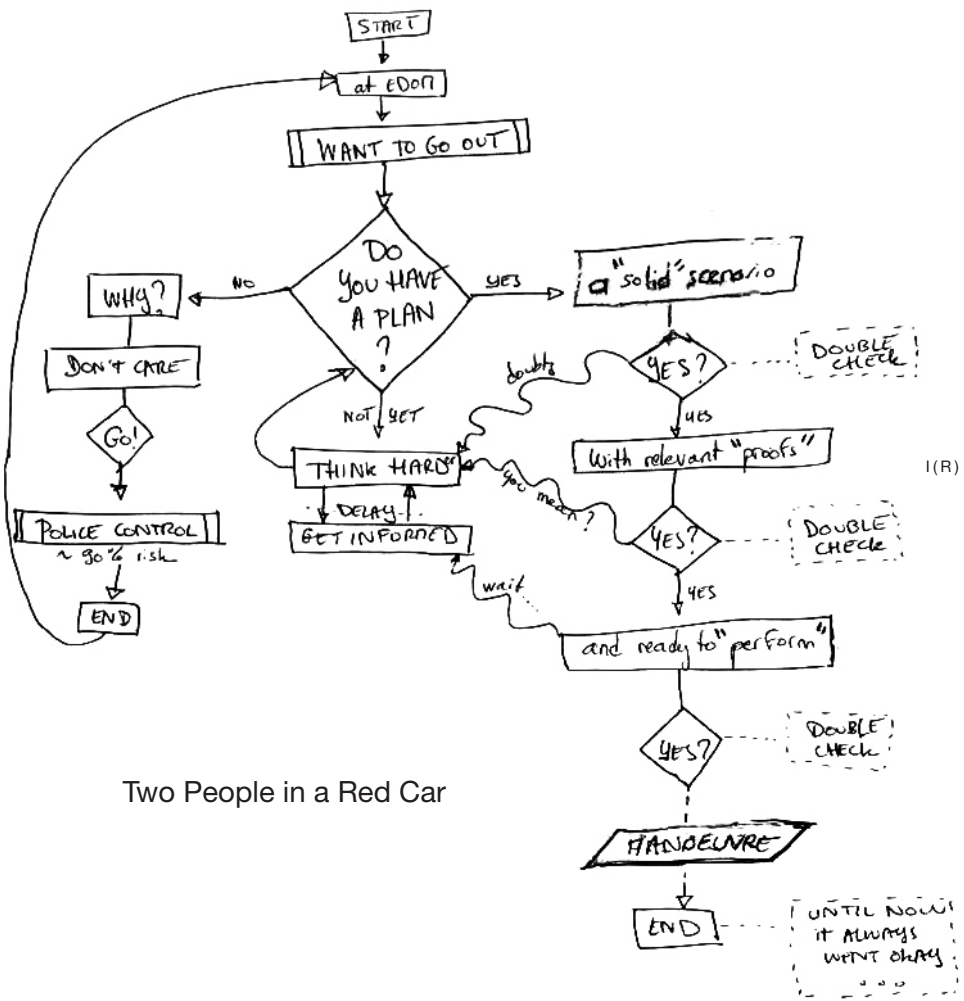
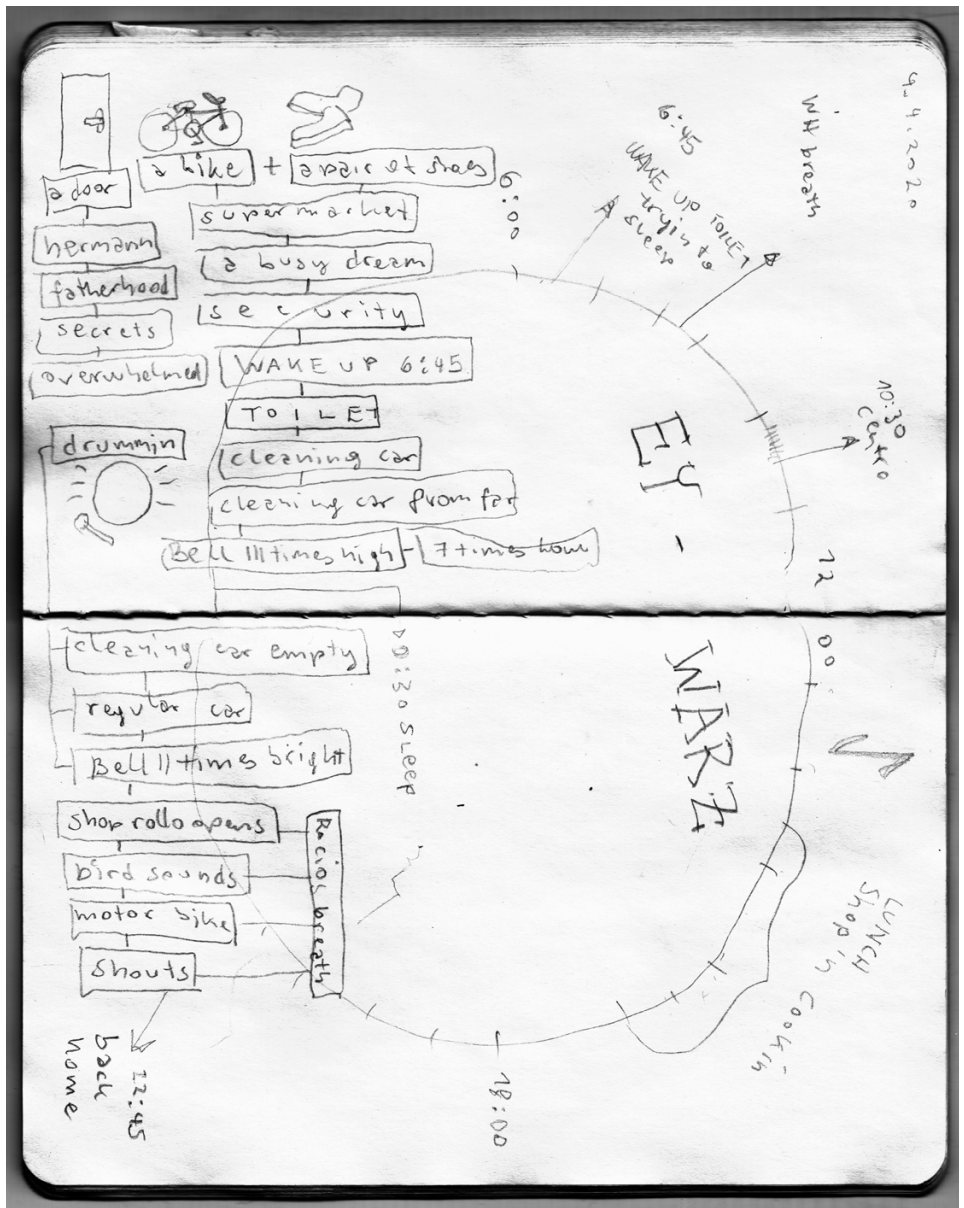


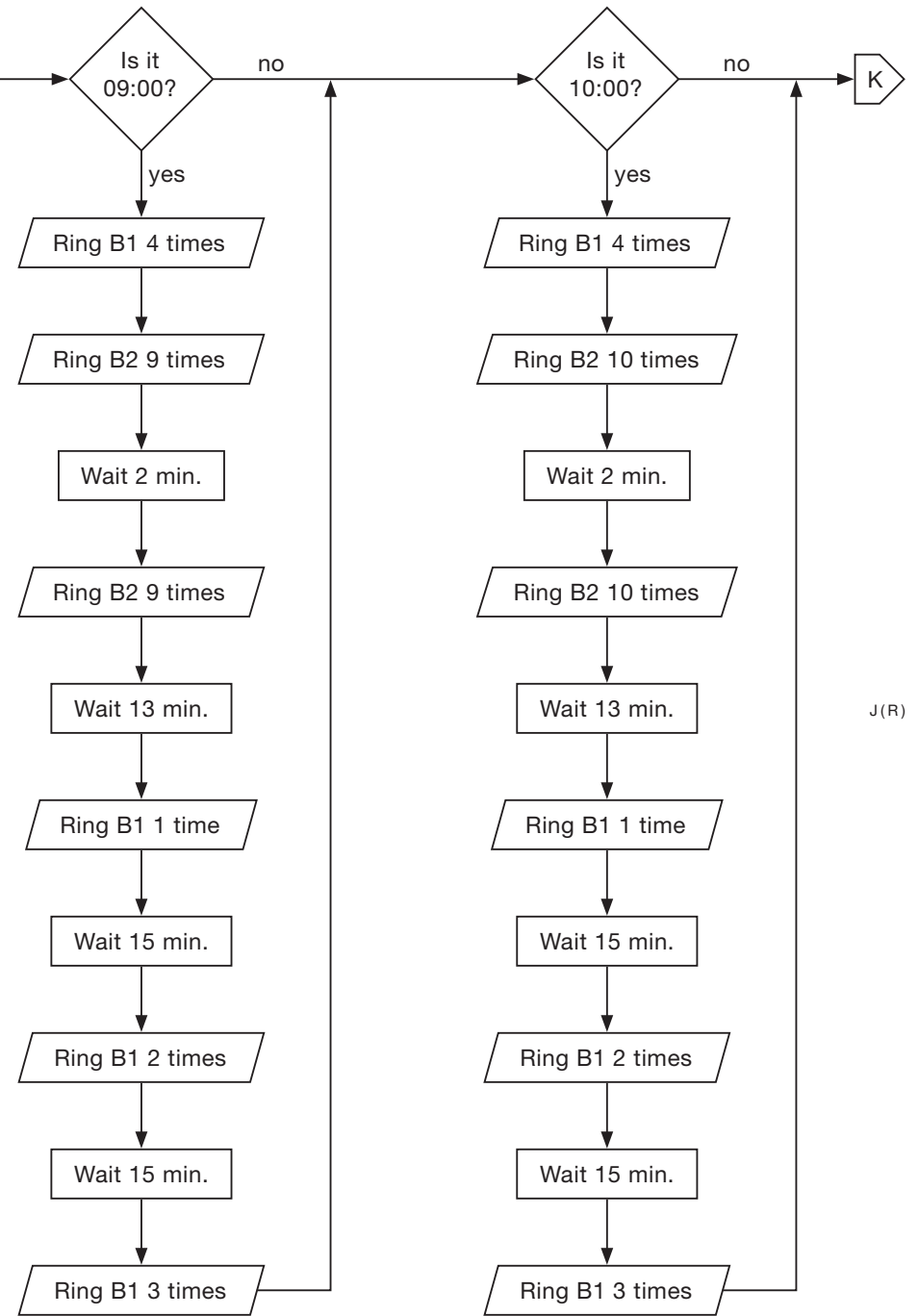
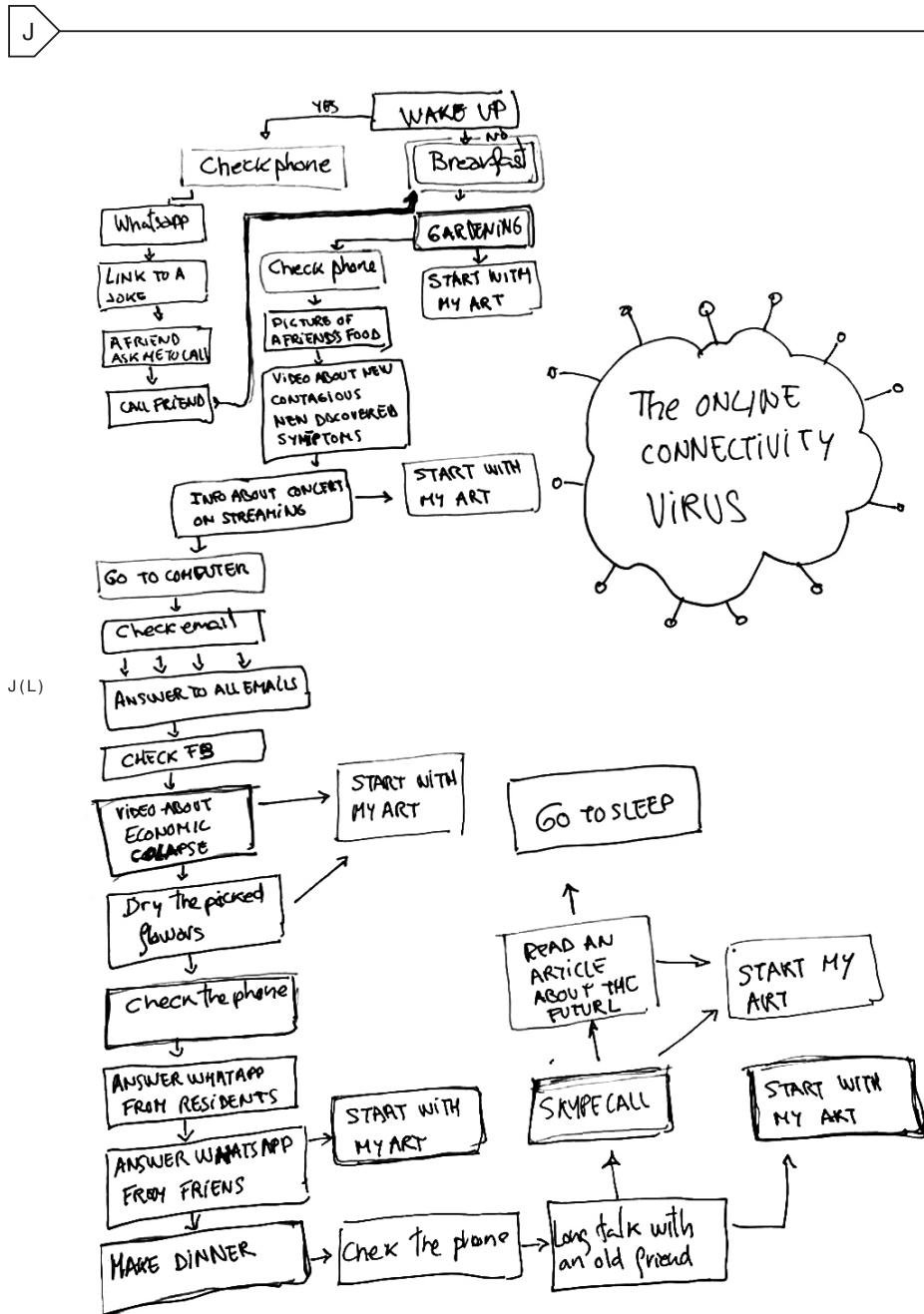
G(R)



H(L)







## Two Songs • Dos canciones

María del Carmen Sanchez

The first lyrics are from an old Palo religion song, a religious system of Bantu origins, developed by slaves from Central Africa who were brought to Cuba. Under similar circumstances, the Yoruba religion from the Gulf of Guinea area arrived in the Cuban colony, which was syncretized with the Christianity of the time.

The second song was created by me, to invoke Ishtar, the Mesopotamian goddess of beauty and love, but also of war.

Working with the vibratory quality of old traditional songs, in the precision of their details and rhythms, awakens your ancestral memory; in this way, it is not you who composes the music, but it is the music that shapes you.

K(L)

•

La primera letra es de una antigua canción de religión Palo, sistema religioso de orígenes bantúes, desarrolladas por esclavos de África central que fueron llevados a Cuba. En similares circunstancias llegó, en la Cuba colonial, la religión Yoruba proveniente de la zona del Golfo de Guinea, que se sincretizó con el cristianismo de la época.

La segunda canción fue creada por mí para invocar a Ishtar, la diosa mesopotámica de la belleza y el amor, pero también de la guerra.

Trabajar con la cualidad vibratoria de las viejas canciones de tradición, en la precisión de sus detalles y ritmos despierta tu memoria ancestral, de ese modo no eres tú quien compone la música, sino que es la música la que te da forma a ti.

## 1.

Lumbe Lumbe – **Nsala Malekum Congo**

Nsala Malekum Congo – **Nsala Malekum Congo**

Lumbe Lumbe – **Nsala Malekum Congo**

Nsala Malekum Congo – **Nsala Malekum Congo**

Chapeando mi cantero – **Yo me encontré una Briyumba**

Yo me encontré una Briyumba palo – **Yo me encontré una Briyumba we**

Chapeando mi cantero – **Yo me encontré una Briyumba**

Yo me encontré una Briyumba palo – **Yo me encontré una Briyumba we**

Gallina macuena Lango – **Con qué?**

Gallina macuena Lango – **Con qué?**

Gallina macuena Lango – **Con qué?**

Gallina macuena Lango – **Con qué?**

K(R)

Nsala Male Male – **Nsala Male Malekum Nsala**

Nsala Male Male – **Nsala Male Malekum Nsala**

**Ntondele Maria Ntondele**

**Ntondele Maria Ntondele**

**Ntondele Maria Ntondele**

**Ntondele Maria Ntondele**

## 2.

**Ishtar**

**Anteriori a**

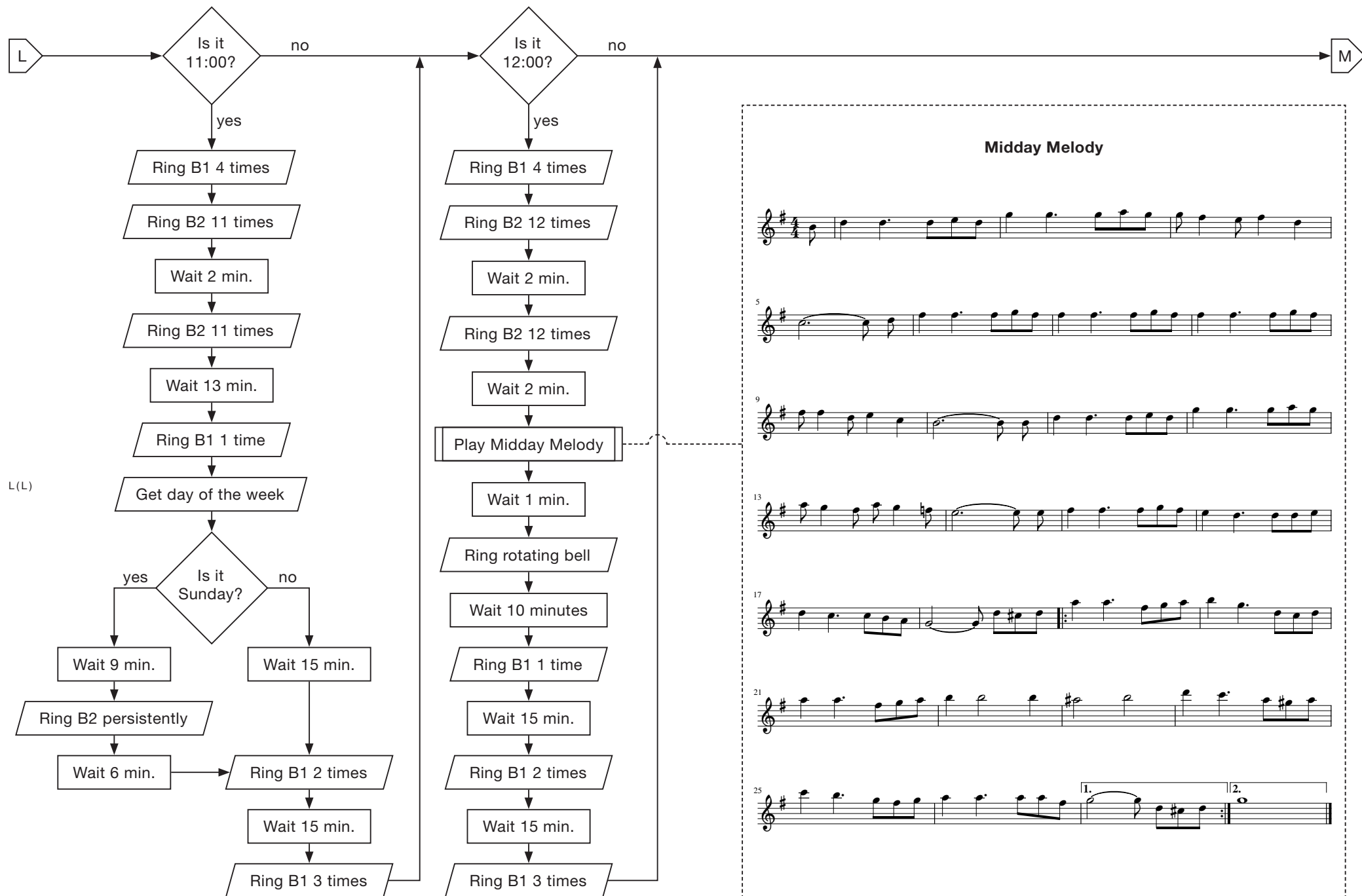
**Anteriori araha**

**Anteriori araha**

Download media:

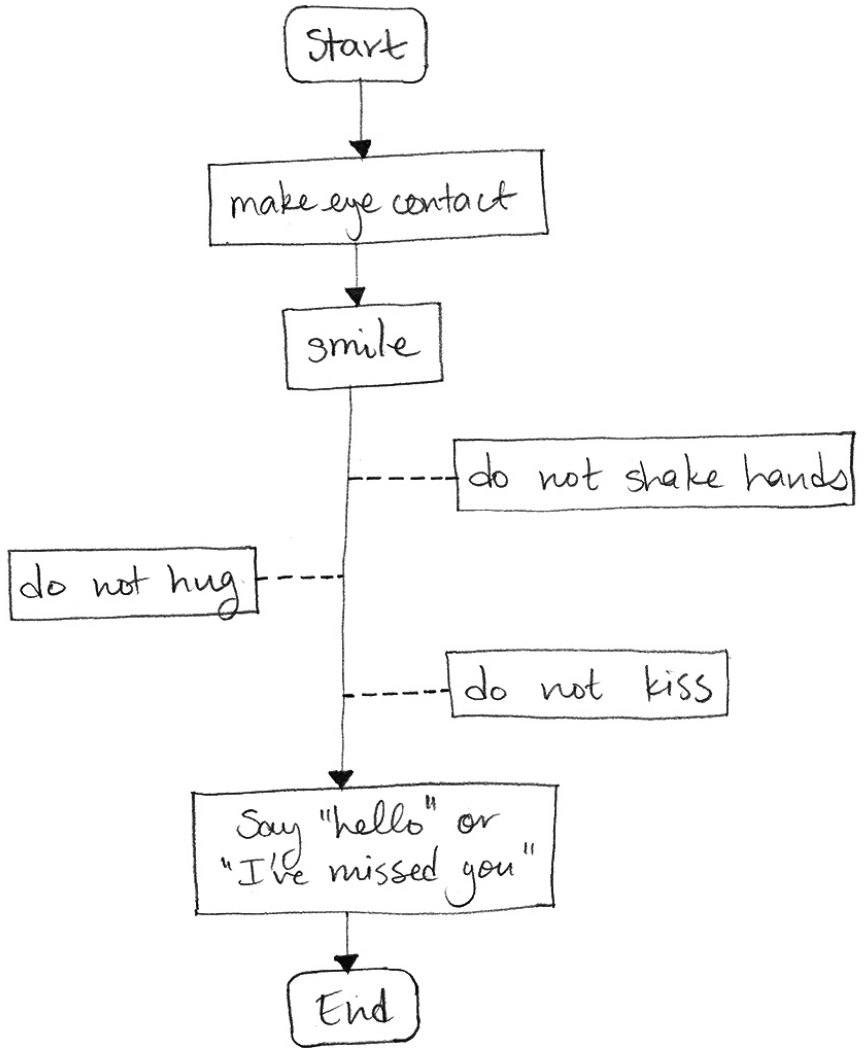
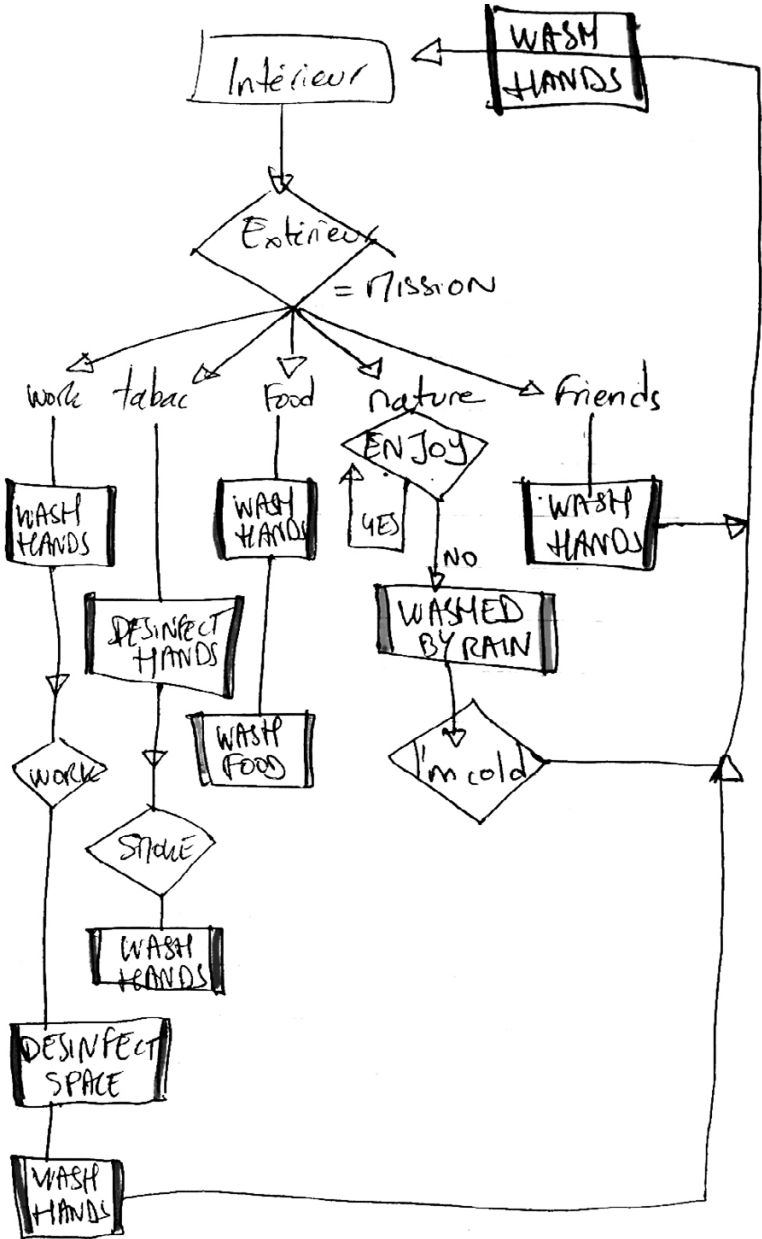
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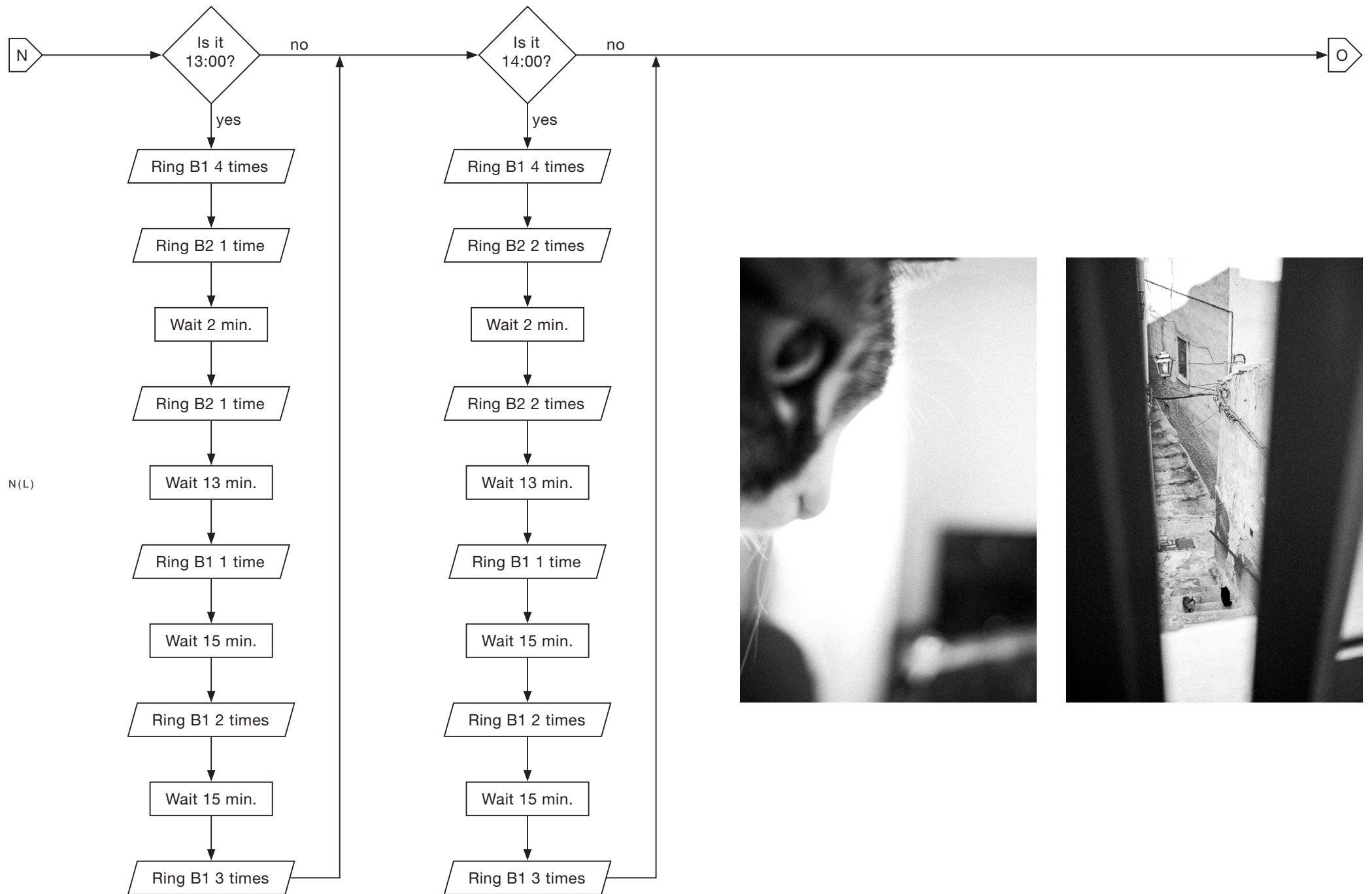


M(L)

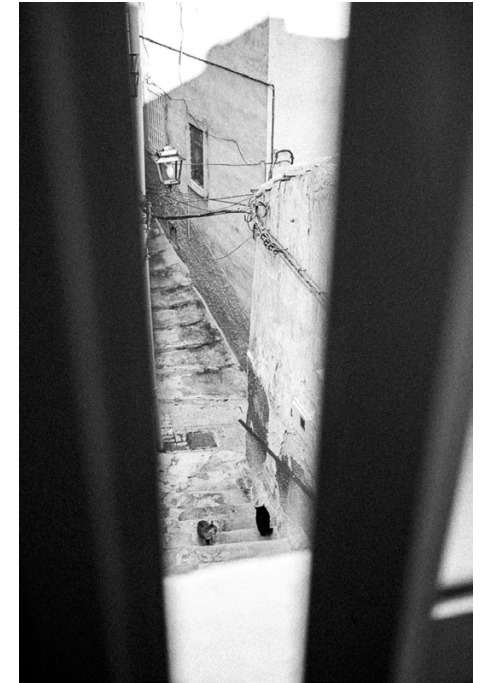
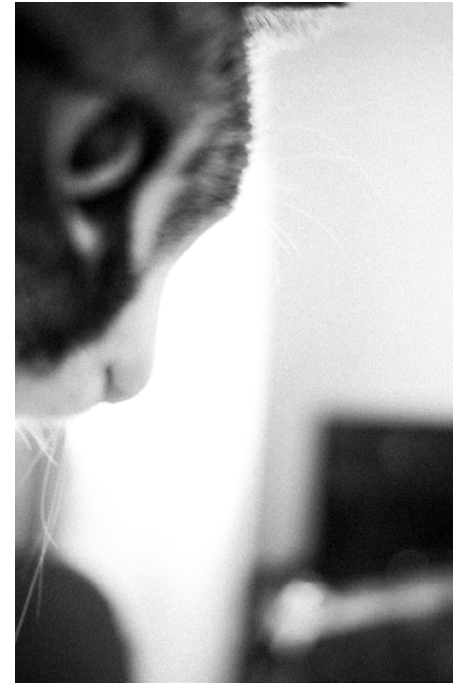
M(R)



"Greeting a friend"

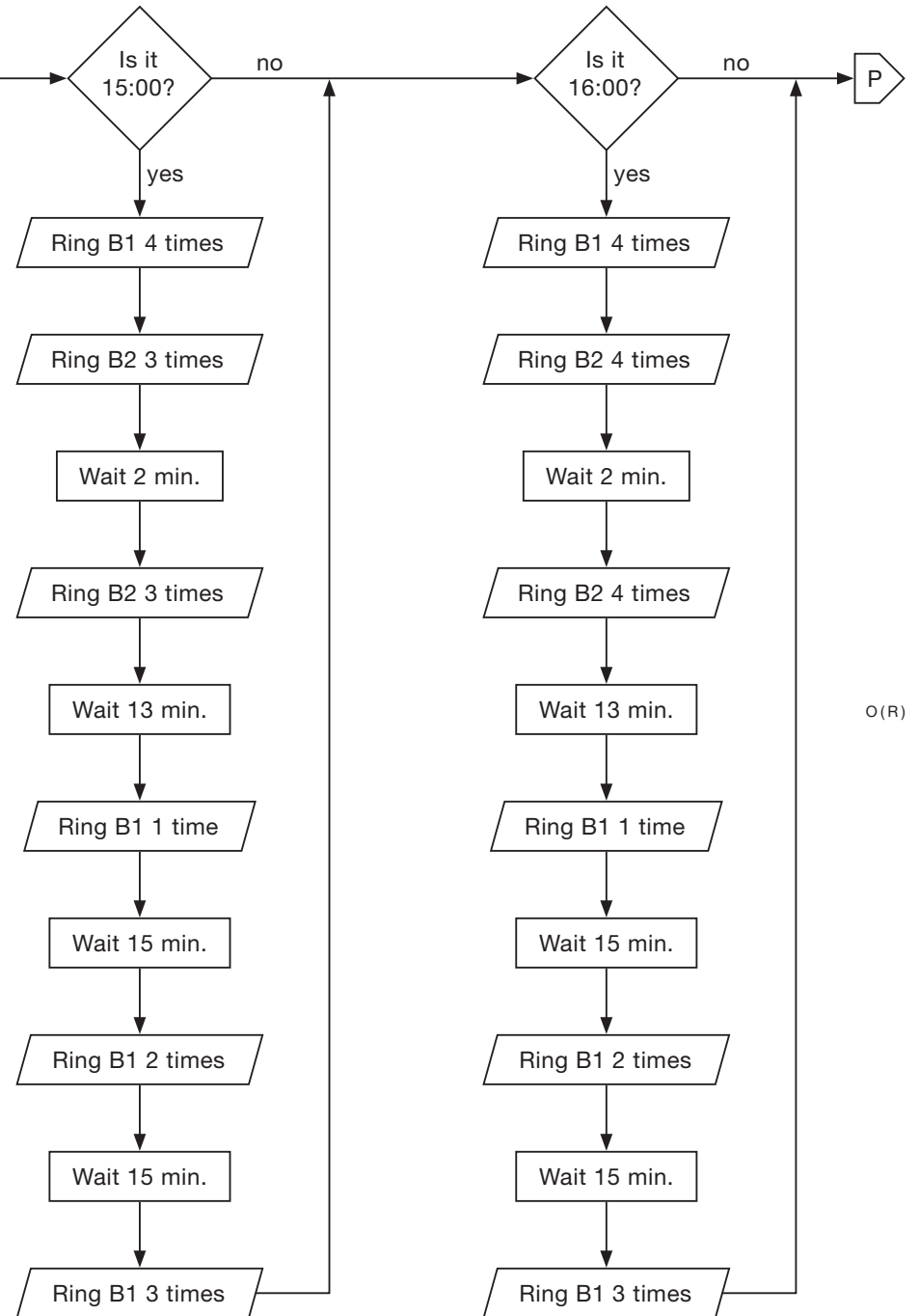
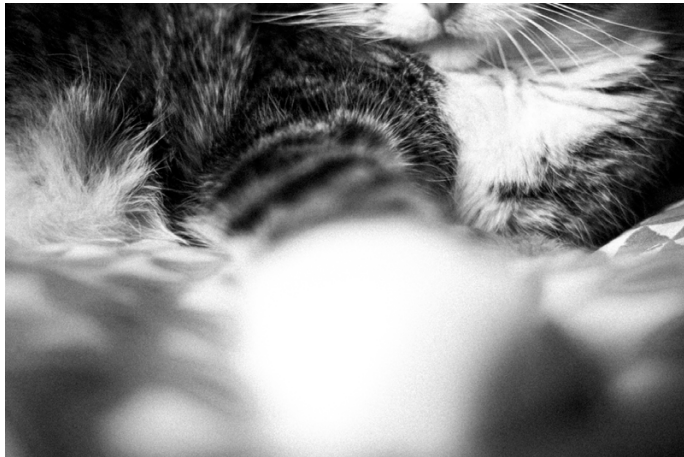


N(L)





O(L)

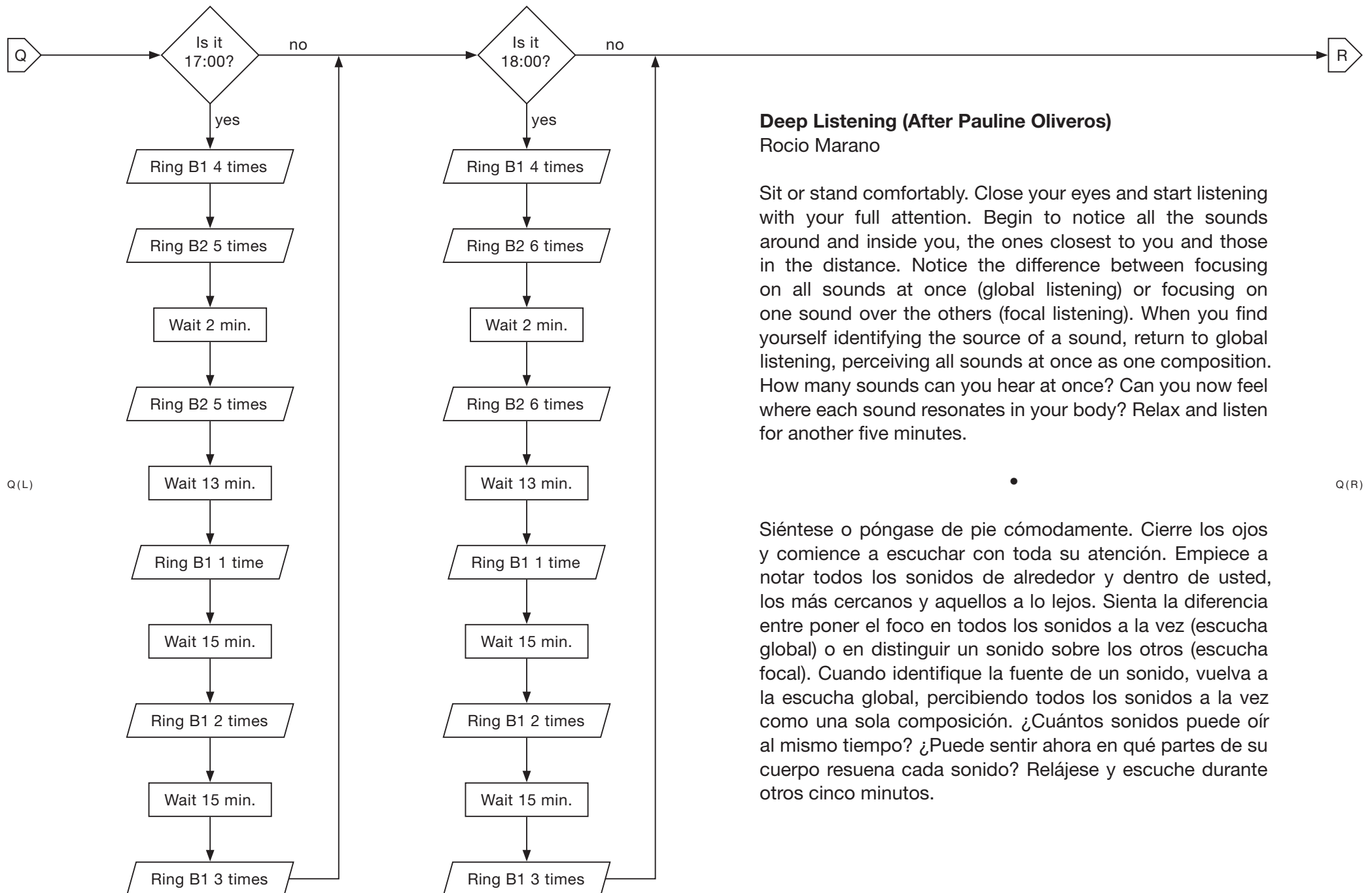


O(R)



P(L)

P(R)



## Deep Listening (After Pauline Oliveros)

Rocio Marano

Sit or stand comfortably. Close your eyes and start listening with your full attention. Begin to notice all the sounds around and inside you, the ones closest to you and those in the distance. Notice the difference between focusing on all sounds at once (global listening) or focusing on one sound over the others (focal listening). When you find yourself identifying the source of a sound, return to global listening, perceiving all sounds at once as one composition. How many sounds can you hear at once? Can you now feel where each sound resonates in your body? Relax and listen for another five minutes.

•

Siéntese o póngase de pie cómodamente. Cierre los ojos y comience a escuchar con toda su atención. Empiece a notar todos los sonidos de alrededor y dentro de usted, los más cercanos y aquellos a lo lejos. Sienta la diferencia entre poner el foco en todos los sonidos a la vez (escucha global) o en distinguir un sonido sobre los otros (escucha focal). Cuando identifique la fuente de un sonido, vuelva a la escucha global, percibiendo todos los sonidos a la vez como una sola composición. ¿Cuántos sonidos puede oír al mismo tiempo? ¿Puede sentir ahora en qué partes de su cuerpo resuena cada sonido? Relájese y escuche durante otros cinco minutos.

## WAITING LINE

Typical:

Meet in the grocery store.

Greet friends.

Speak loudly.

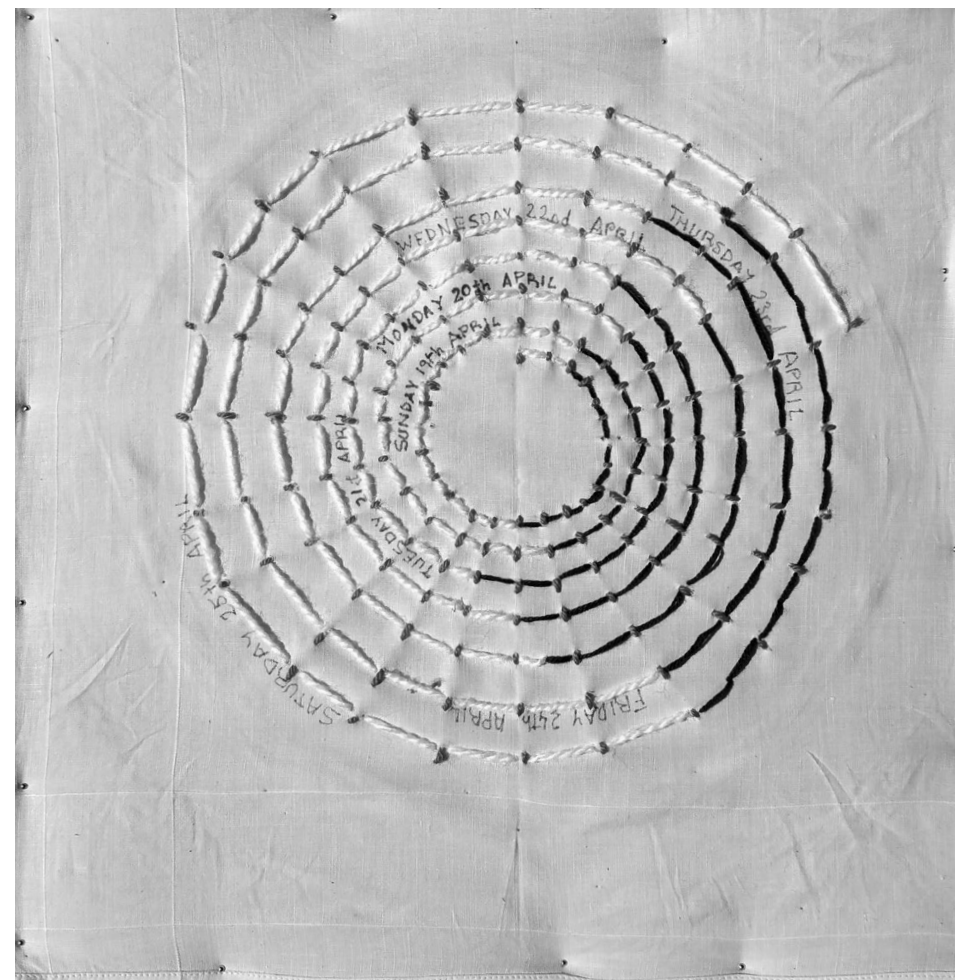
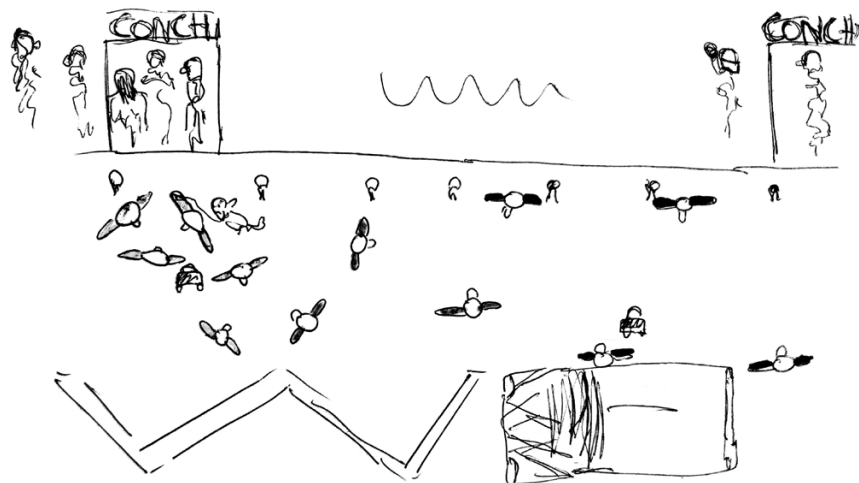
Exceptional:

Meet in front of the grocery store.

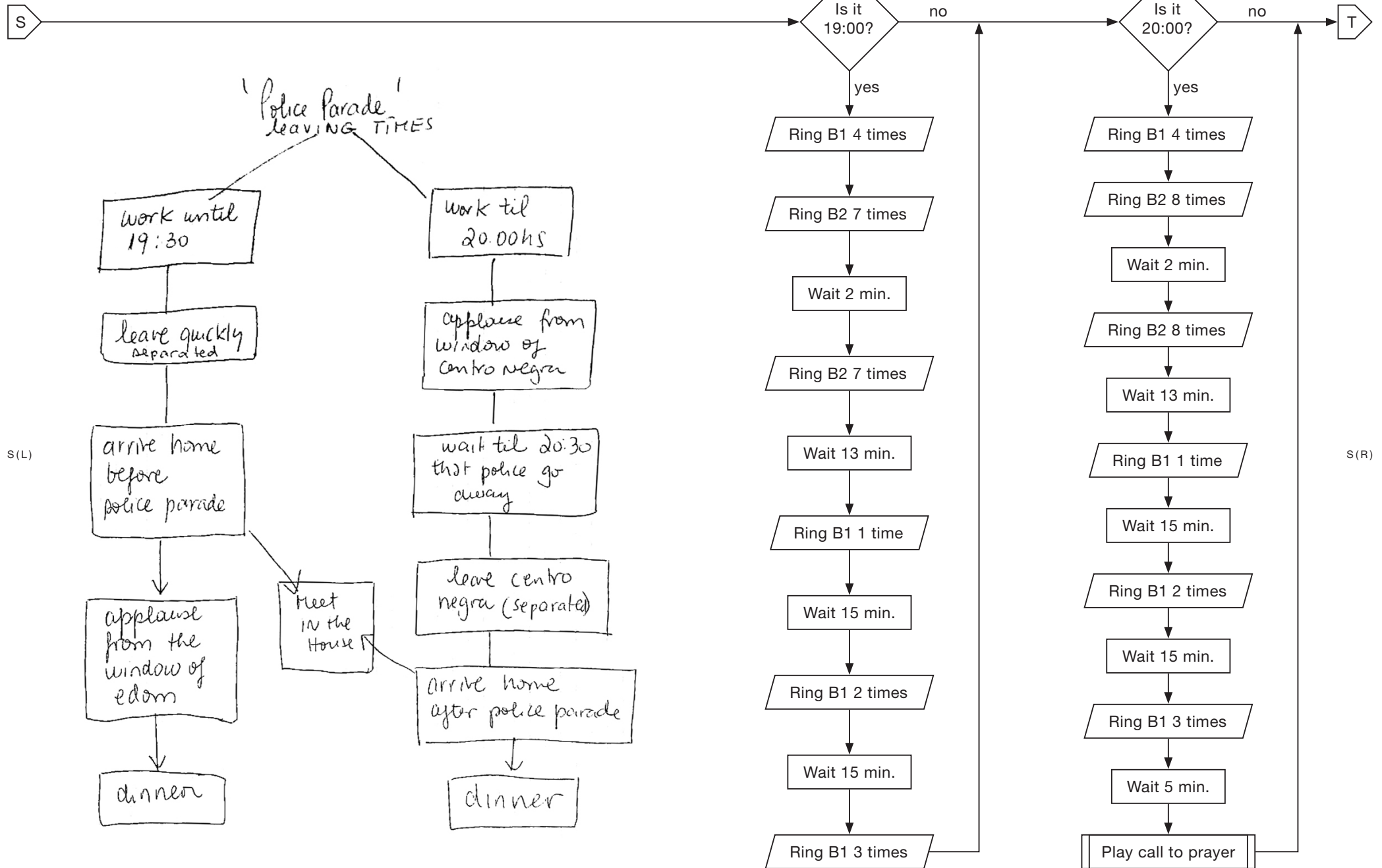
Keep 1 m distance.

Speak loudly.

R(L)



Spiral of Day and Night Dreaming



IN THE EVENING ~ 8 PM

LEAVING CENTRO NEGRA TOGETHER

BEFORE THE QUARANTINE

DURING THE QUARANTINE

GET OUTSIDE

GO OUTSIDE BUT SEPARATE

WALK TO THE SUPERMARKET

NEGOTIATE WHO GOES FIRST

LOCK THE DOOR AND CLOSE THE SHUTTER

AVOID MEETING PEOPLE AND MOST IMPORTANT AVOID THE POLICE

HAVE SOME TAPAS

... AND A GLASS OF WINE TOGETHER

8 PM POLICE PARADE

LEAVE 30 MIN BEFORE

LEAVE 30 MIN AFTER

MAYBE U MEET A FRIEND OR U MAKE A NEW ONE

SUPERMARKET ALREADY CLOSED

ONLY ~~one~~ POSSIBLE OPTION

WALK DIRECTLY HOME

U CAN EAT THE LEFTOVERS OF YESTERDAY

HOME AT EDOM

definitely totally stressed out!

maybe a bit tipsy

T(L)

'WAY BACK HOME'

leaving Centro Negra at 20:30 hs (after police passed)

deciding who goes first

Rocio goes first

Thomas waits 1 min

In the narrow street, by pass two men.

Thomas leaves centro (second)

Fasten the pace of walking

in the narrow street, by pass two men

Bypass the woman with the dog

By pass the woman with the dog

At the square, the car turns around and parks

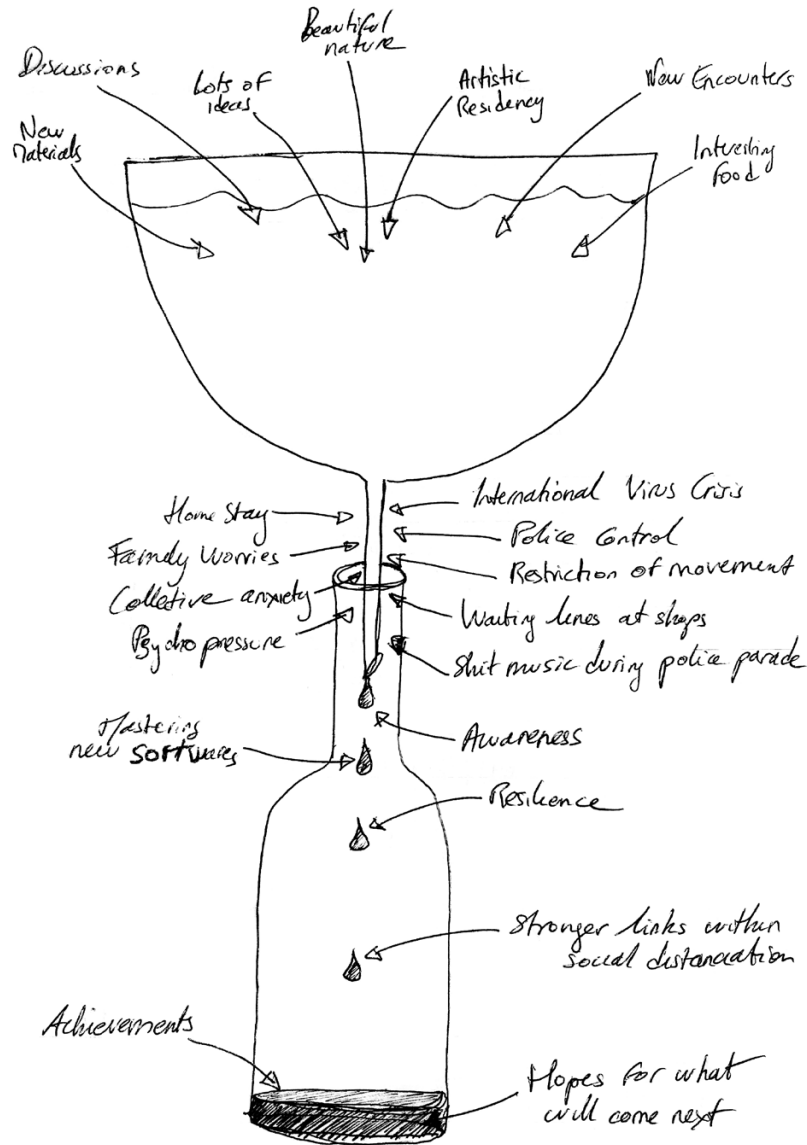
At the square, car turns around and parks

The man with packets of past or rubbish bag

by pass the man with packets of past or rubbish bags

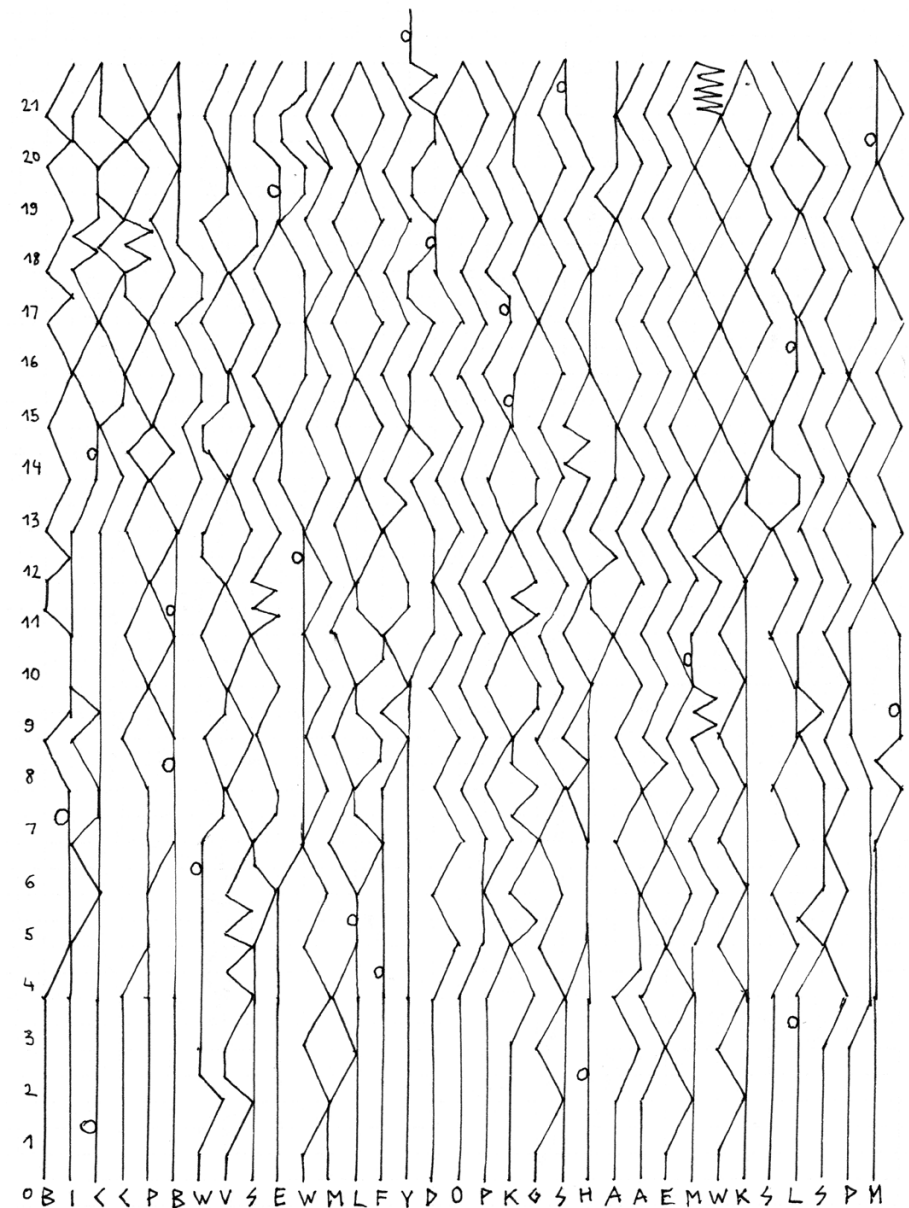
Meeting in front of Edom and open the door

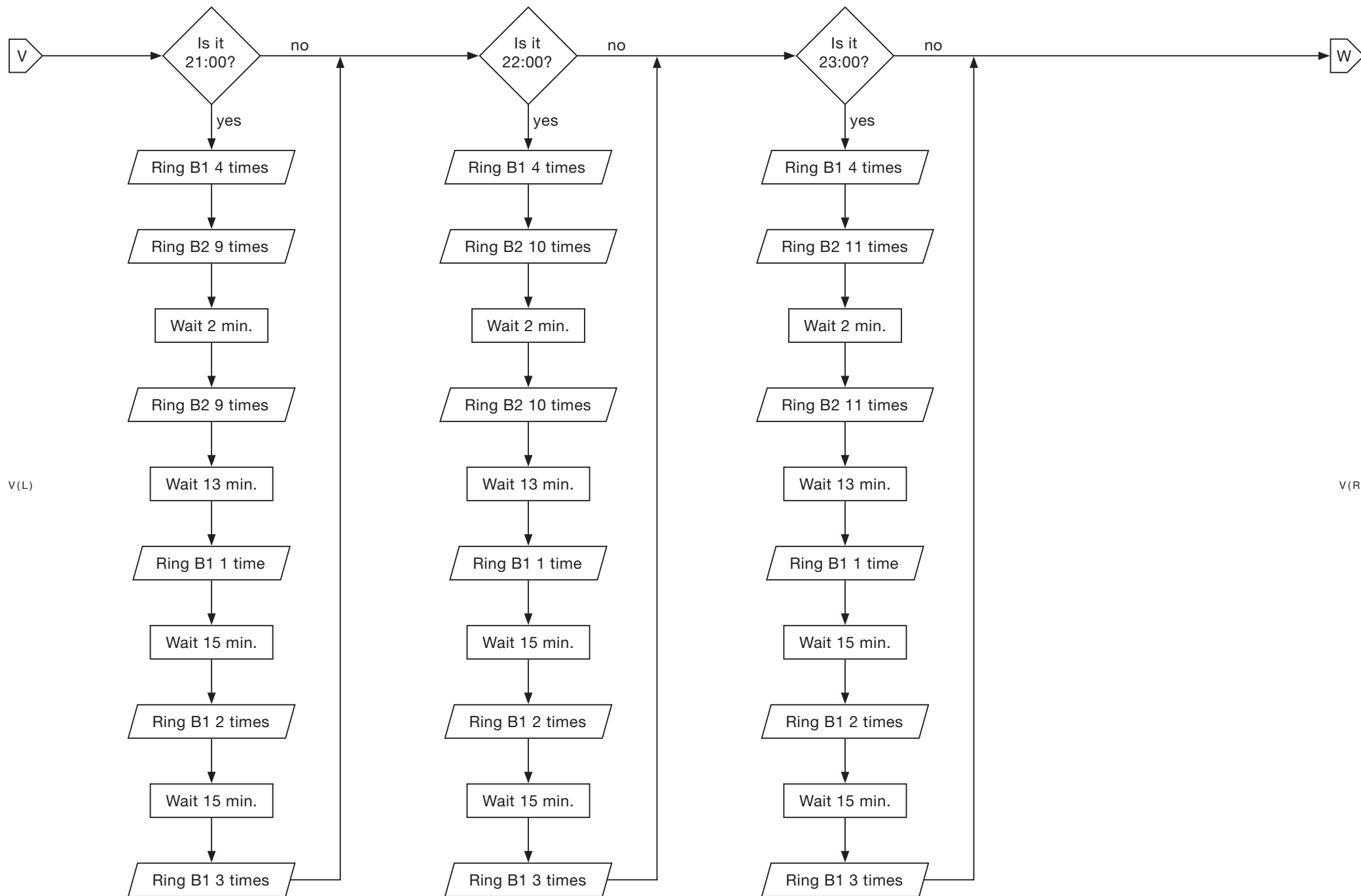
T(R)



Contraints Integration & New Freedom Space  
vs Fatalism & Procrastination

30th July 2020



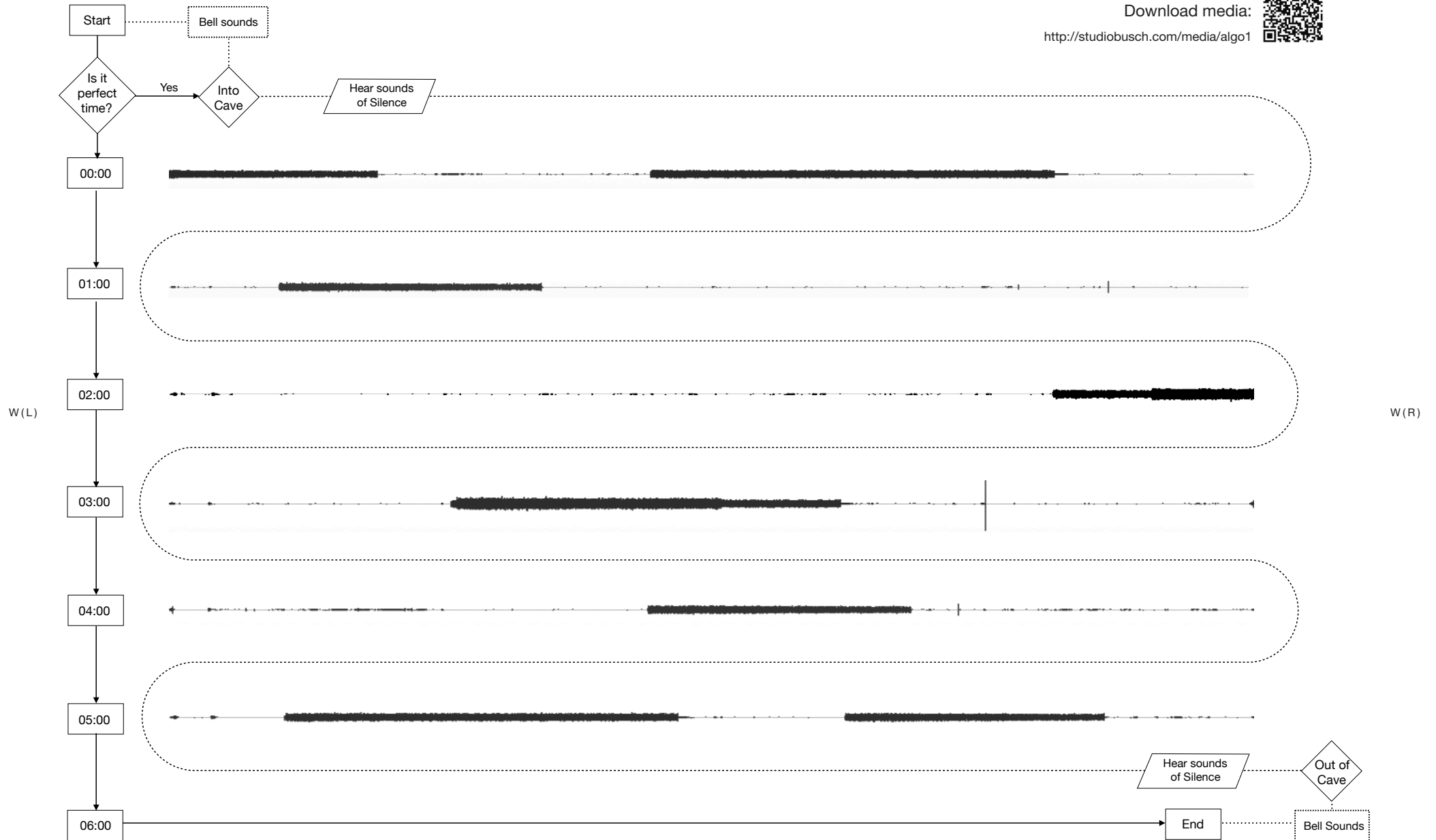


V(L)

V(R)



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A l g o R h y t h m a n a l y s i s

N o . 1 : B l a n c a

# Colophon

## AlgoRhythmanalysis No. 1: Blanca

Edited by Benjamin T. Busch

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**“AlgoRhythmanalysis** is an approach to studying the relations between rhythms — those of the body, society, and the environment — and algorithms — sets of instructions. It seeks to make visible the routines, choreographies, and automated processes that underlie the everyday, as part of a methodology of restoring harmony within difference.”