J: So, I read about it – I read about the performance structure and I'm familiar with generally what it was like, but I was wondering if you can tell me what it was like for you and how you experienced it?

A: I think I'm going to start with explaining a little bit of what happened. So this can help me relive my experience. So… we gathered all in this one big Zoom call and Lotte van den Berg explained to us the purpose of the performance, how we were going to do the actual performative conversation and the practicalities that we were going to be separated into two breakout rooms in order to experience the actual conversation – a conversation that is not with words, it's a nonverbal conversation, but with sounds. How do we create a third cyberspace with sounds? That is why it is important that during the actual performative conversation in the breakout rooms to go behind our Zoom-cameras, our laptop cameras, and just focus on our sense of hearing in order to experience the conversation. So, we were creating one big theatre stage, created by Zoom calls and different apartments. So, all these apartments, all these Zoom-rectangles are becoming one big space for talking online – without words but with sounds. And it was a unique experience for me because it was the first time I was participating in an online performance and what really stood out I think for me, was the fact that I was being alone in my room but at the same time together with other people in the Zoom call. And you have this contradiction, being alone but also being together.

J: So when you were in these breakout rooms you were sitting not in front of your camera but behind the screen?

A: Yes, behind. In a place that I cannot see my camera, but only hear the sounds that are coming from the laptop, which were coming from I don't know which apartment, or which person.

J: Ah yes, so you couldn't see the screen, you couldn't look at the Zoom call itself basically.

A: Yes, so this happened for an hour and after one hour passes we were supposed to go back to the Zoomcall, come together, and then take a five minute break, just to get some fresh air on our balconies or backyards, and then come back to the breakout rooms and reflect on what happened. And this hour – you know, time is so relative. I think the time passed so quickly for me and it was an hour. So it was a very weird experience also concerning how time flies and how we can sense time.

J: Yes, because it is relatively long, an hour I think, the duration of the piece is really–

A: Yes, when I first heard it I said one hour, that's a lot of time. What will I do in this hour? But it was something different, something new to explore.

J: And so, what happened in that hour?

A: Noises coming from my laptop, noises coming from my home and it was blending with each other. Noises coming from my head, because I was also thinking about stuff. I was in so many different dimensions during that time that exactly these kinds of things made the hour pass very quickly.

J: And what were the things you were thinking about?

A: I was just thinking that – I was checking my clock and I was thinking 'o, 10 minutes past, that was quickly'. I was thinking about what are we doing? Am I alone? I am also in this Zoom meeting. I don't want to make too much noise so that they can hear me. Because, you know, Zoom generates the loudest noise to the rest. And I was trying to be as quiet as I can but at the same time there were coming noises from other people in my house, because they were talking. And I was also observing my room. I was trying to hear the noises that were coming from the laptop. It was the unknown – where does it come from, from which room? And, yes, you know, it was an experience that doesn't happen regularly.

J: It is also making me think of – this performance was at the beginning of our program. And it's making me think of the lectures that we have on Teams and the silences that we have there, all the time. We talked about this also in class, how we needed to rethink what an awkward silence was, because silences happen so much more easily online.

A: Yes, I was also thinking that there is no such thing as absolute silence, because you are always going to hear something. Even the beat of your heart of a noise coming from outside your window, or the computer is making sound. My computer is also old and was making sounds. I was thinking that my computer was definitely going to die during the performance because it was making so much noise. But yes, silence is also something relative. I think. We tend to see silence more from an egocentric approach, because they say when I am not talking, and you're not talking, there is silence. So we also set the term of silence by people… I don't know if you know what I mean?

J: Yes, yes yes, that is also like the saying of "if a tree falls in the woods and there is no one there, does it still make a sound?

A: yes, yes.

Silence.

J: But did you try to make sounds on purpose?

A: No, because I am an introvert and I was super worried to feel like someone was hearing me. So I always like to observe things and not talk a lot, so for me this was also thinking that I didn't want to make sound, I didn't want to be exposed somehow, even with noise. So I was being very quiet and just wanted to hear sound from other apartments – Zoom windows.

J: But if you would have made a sound, then no one would have known it was you, right?

A: Yes.

J: So you could also have started singing, that it was the perfect chance for you to practice singing and no one would have known it was you.

A: yes but I still wouldn't feel comfortable. I was also afraid that the sound from my house, the ambient noises from my other rooms, would somehow burst into the Zoom call, and I was also feeling very uncomfortable about that. But I don't think they actually heard something.

J: And why do you think that that made you uncomfortable?

A: Because I would feel exposed. And I know that they won't know that it's coming from me, because we don't see from which room it is coming, but I didn't want to share my sounds.

J: And is this something that you experienced as unpleasant? That feeling of trying to be quiet?

A: No, I think it was playful. I was trying to –

J: A playful uncomfortableness.

A: yes yes. It was like hide and seek. I was also trying to hear the others, so I was making this a little bit playful.

Silence.

J: I can also imagine that you would feel like you needed to do something, that you feel like you needed to make sounds to start the conversation.

A: You mean, what was my role?

J: No, not specifically – well maybe, yes, what do you think that your role was? I can imagine that you can also feel like you needed to make sounds in order to have a conversation, that the sounds that are already there were not enough, or that you should add on to that.

A: Yes, I wasn't making sounds, but all the other things in my room and people outside my room, were making sounds.

J: So they all became part of that conversation, everything.

A: Yes, everything becomes a part of the conversation, not only me as a person, but my laptop, the trees outside of my window for example, everything is taking part in the performance, in the actual conversation. So my role was also trying to hear those sounds.

J: So you were actually trying to listen more than to partake.

A: Yes, for me, yes, it was more about listening.

J: And maybe that is also of course being part of the conversation.

A: Yes.

J: The listener. Because as you said you are never completely silent. Because you still hear your heartbeat and other things.

A: Yes exactly.

J: And what did this performance provoke for you? Your participation in this.

A: Since it was at the beginning of my Master's Program and we were doing the program online, as it was decided due to Covid-19, it really made me think that we can actually explore the social media video-sharing performance a little bit more, and trying to make it a little more bearable. And that it can be another genre. And it's actually – it is not about who is better, theatre in person or online theatre. But what other things this experience creates, different from theatre in person. So during the whole time, I was thinking that I felt the connection as I would have felt in an actual performance, but different. And I was thinking also that I was participating in a performance in The Netherlands, but I am here in Greece, in my house, and I really felt like I was part of a performance, even though I was away. And I was really glad we were creating something with people, even online, and also – especially because a lot of my classmates were also attending the performance so I felt more intimacy. And I actually did something with my classmates even though I have never seen them.

J: because it was so much at the start.

A: I felt like I was being part of a group.

J: Yes, maybe even because it is online and it is in this Zoom environment, or this digital environment, that you feel even more, a stronger connection, because it is so amplified that you are there and not there at the same time. That it is actually making the connection and the being together stronger.

A: Stronger yes.

J: Because there is such an emphasis on being together and not.

A: Yes. And you are so – you are making a specific choice to log in into the Zoom call and participate in the performance. You are willing to give back, you are willing to be part of a team during these performances and online in general. And you can see everyone, rather than being in a big classroom where you don't really observe all the people.

J: No, when I go to a performance in a theatre, I am not thinking about "what a special occasion, me and all these people are here together, sharing this experience", that is not something that's on your mind there, and that is an amplified connection in that Zoom space. That is really interesting actually.

A: Yes it is, you describe my thoughts perfectly.

J: Haha, good. And so, because it was at the beginning of our studies, did you approach these online lectures differently. Than for example me, because I didn't do Digital Silence.

A: After the performance, you mean?

J: Yes, after.

A: Yes, I was a little bit influenced the next weeks, trying to hear the ambient noises coming from everyone's windows, you know, the Teams rectangles. And I also kept thinking that we're creating a – we are doing a course in a digital environment and it doesn't really have to have this negative - you know, because people think that this digital environment is just a solution for Covid-19, which it is, but they see it as a negative thing. I was trying to see it as – and generally in my life I am always trying to see the positive things. And it might be a little bit new, I understand that, but it doesn't need to have this negative essence and to hate it. And just because we have it right now, just try to make it more bearable and see what it can create and what new things it can provoke. And Digital Silence made me see that. That even though one of the main features of Zoom is to see each other, how we can use that to not see each other and use it in a different way. Because the main feature of this video sharing platform is to see each other, but how can we make a connection through this by not seeing each other. Because sometimes by not seeing each other, you create more intimacy. So, what if we don't see each other and can still make a connection and a

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nice intimate relationship between us. And it also made me think of, being part of a clique during the performance – because we were separated in different breakout rooms and I had my group and the other breakout room was the other team, and this experience only became hearable or visible to these people only. It cannot be repeated. Only if you record it, but it is still can't be repeated as actual theatre. Because something will always – something new will always come up. Even if you record something, it still can't be repeated because something different will be in the setting where you watch that recording, so again, you can never repeat a performance or a situation.

J: So it is also that unique experience that you now share with this group of people. That will never come back in that same form, but that is something that you share with these people forever.

A: Yes exactly.

J: And what do you feel was your portion in that? Because you said that you were mostly concerned with listening, so was it – it's making me think of if you felt more of an audience member and the other people in the room, or the other things in the room, where performing for you. Or if you were part of – do you understand what I mean?

A: Yes, I understand what you're saying. I think the roles kept switching during the whole performative conversation. There was – I cannot say that I was completely only an audience member, even though maybe I wasn't doing so much noise. I was also the audience, I was also the performer, I was also the third person watching something. There was a fluidity.

Laughter.

A: also, my laptop was performing, so to say. Everything was performing, my laptop was also performing. I think it had the most crucial role during the performance.

J: Your laptop?

A: Yes, my laptop, because it was the medium to actually broadcast the performance. Also, the Zoom was performing. Yes, everything. Even the items in my room were performing.

Silence.

J: And then the actual conversation would be different for every participant, because they would have –

A: A different setting.

J: Yes, their own objects in their room that would also be a part of it for them.

A: But isn't it also in actual – in every performance. That everyone has their own objective, objective like experience?

J: Yes, of course. Maybe that is also something that is amplified by this piece.

A: Yes, because we are definitely in different rooms, so we are definitely having different experiences. And it is also, what you said, more visible in an online performance than in a theatre venue when everyone is sitting in the same theatre square and watching a performance. But again, everyone, based on their background, on the thoughts they are thinking during the performance, has a different experience.

J: Yes. I really like that you said that your thoughts were also making sounds. But that's just for you in your head.

A: Haha, yes. When I'm thinking I'm always speaking to myself?

J: Yes. It's really nice. Well, that is actually all the questions I have.