

*on a one month-long dawn / listening for the sake of listening /  
three manifestations of love / tools to highlight information / screaming listening /  
semantic satiation / storytelling and manipulation / Jerusalem obsession /  
repetition / placelessness*

with Chiara Duchi, Luisa Pisetta, a waiter  
27 may 2021 [r]

*an ongoing collective exploration / learning from experiences of togetherness and uncertainty / reflecting on listening – with Chiara Duchi, Luisa Pisetta, Matteo Zoccolo – 27 may 2021  
matteozoccolo.net/on\_listening/conversations.html*

**CD:** So how did this path start for you? What triggered you to found radiosqu, and where did it start?

**LP:** I perfectly remember that day.

**MZ:** Actually, I don't exactly remember the day...

**LP:** I don't know if it was Easter or something like that. It was a Sunday. And I remember that we called each other just to...

**CD:** Were you listening to the bells?

**LP:** Oh, one moment, this is a spoiler! We called just to know how we were doing and, you know... I already sent you a piece of music I made from recordings. You were like, "Oh, I'm also into sound, let's do something together!". Maybe we called each other also to speak about that. It was midday, 12 o'clock, and the bells started such a loud concert that we couldn't communicate. You were living next door to the Latin Patriarchate and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, right? And so, it was lasting something like 5 min, but it felt way longer. I was recording the call, and I actually used that sound for the first broadcast we did for the radio. The sound of the bells was the beginning of everything.

**MZ:** I also remember that Luisa and I were both critical towards the use of images at the time. We both studied at the photography department in Bezalel, in Jerusalem, which made us question many things. And we both had a lot of time because there was a lockdown, both in Jerusalem and in Bolzano. We were just calling every day, there was very good energy in the air. We spent hours and hours in talks, we started to design the website, to call other people, to gather ideas, to write texts. And after a few weeks, radiosqu was broadcasting online.

**LP:** After one month, exactly. You remember we called the first broadcast 'one month-long down pt.1'.

**MZ:** True!

**LP:** You said we had a lot of time, but actually I don't think it was just a matter of time. We just had an urgent need. Actually, I didn't have so much time. I had to study German and English to pass all the language certifications, I had exams, I was attending a studio... I just gave priority to this idea, because I had such an urgent need. I was living at home and feeling in a cage. My family wasn't truly understanding my feeling about Jerusalem, I was really missing that place. And so, working with you was to bring back a little piece of Jerusalem in my life. For me, it was a way to travel. I was traveling.

**MZ:** And Chiara, what do you think about this project? Because later you also took part in the organization, right?

**CD:** So, it was an interesting opportunity to take part in the project later on. It was an experiment. I never took part in a project dealing with sound art and radio. I actually took part first in the broadcast that went online on the 16th of June 2020, titled ‘rrr(rrrrrrrrr)’. During those days Luisa and I were talking about the dematerialization of language and categorization labels. Especially after working together in the Studio Image we had many interests in common. And it was a constant tryout and improvising...

**waiter:** Ecco a voi. Vi porto tre piatti?

**MZ:** Certo, grazie.

**waiter:** Prego.

**CD:** And what I like about this project is that it was a kind of constant improvisation. We didn’t prepare much. We just experimented with sounds. And, yes, it was very, very spontaneous. This is what I really liked about radiosq in general, the fact that it was not all very well thought out, but very improvised and seizing every occasion, opportunity to work with people. When I took part in the group, we created a WhatsApp group together, and that was another tryout. At first it worked, then we didn’t know how to develop it. It was very fascinating how many people gathered in that group, from all around the world. It was an opportunity to put together a lot of different stories, people and sounds.

**LP:** Our collaboration with Chiara happened really naturally. We were just having lunch together, on the balcony, and we started to talk about the topics that we then tackled in our broadcast. We wanted to work at it, we had that need.

**MZ:** Do you think that throughout this process we managed to use listening as a tool?

**CD:** I think you often managed to use listening for the sake of listening. So, without second aims. Also, if I think about our work ‘rrr(rrrrrrrrr)’, which was about the dematerialization of language, it didn’t really have a second aim, we just created it to infuse something. It was a whim.

**waiter:** Macchiato?

**LP:** Per me, grazie.

**CD:** It actually was a sort of whim, and I really like this about radiosq. We didn’t use listening as a tool to get to a second aim, but just for the sake of pure listening. That was very genuine, I think. This is what we managed to do with the WhatsApp group too. We created a sort of trash bin of audios where people could connect with their sounds and also just listen to other people’s everyday life, allowing this flow of sounds to go on without any aim. We didn’t

want to get anywhere, we just wanted everyone to connect, but without getting somewhere specifically.

**MZ:** Um...

**CD:** But I don’t know, maybe you intend listening as a tool in two different ways. To me, it appears to be a negative concept.

**MZ:** Actually, I don’t know how I intend listening as a tool. It’s a bit difficult for me to explain. Maybe we could better say ‘listening as methodology’.

**CD:** Oh, that sounds better.

**MZ:** So, listening is an active action that makes interaction and engagement possible. For example, Luisa and I were listening to our needs when we first initiated the radiosq project. And later on, we were listening to the people we were collaborating with in order to produce each broadcast.

**CD:** So, listening as a tool is not like hearing. Is hearing a part of listening as a tool? Like when you hear the songs in the elevator, is it listening as a tool?

**MZ:** I would say no. I would say that listening and hearing are, very clearly, two different things, maybe opposite.

**LP:** I agree with you that they are very, very different, but not opposite. When I went to Rome, I went to the Vatican City to listen to Pope Francis. He was speaking about three verbs that are the manifestation of love. The first one is...

**MZ:** To fuck!

**LP:** To kiss, to bite!

[laughings]

**MZ:** Ok sorry. What are those verbs?

**LP:** First, to touch. He was talking about Jesus and his wounds. OK for me is another thing. But he also said, “Lovers touch each other. Touch is loving.” the second, to eat. Because of the ritual of eating together, the sharing of such basic human needs. And this is also connected to sex, I mean, it’s also sharing a very basic and instinctive need. And the third one, to listen. And then he added, “To hear is not to listen” It’s different.

**CD:** Listening is active.

**LP:** He told us exactly that. You listen to your lover, to your mother, to the people that you really care about.

**MZ:** I think it’s very, very interesting how we look at this project with an eye on art, because we consider it an

‘independent artistic project’. But actually, listening has also very Christian roots. The act of listening is basically what Jesus was doing all the time.

**CD:** Active listening is also very much connected to manipulation, in some way. Well, also talking about religion, but in general, the way you say or listen to something can manipulate information.

**MZ:** I would say that manipulation can be also seen in a positive way. But concerning listening, I definitely think it happens on the passive side of being manipulated, rather than to actively manipulate. So, who speaks manipulates, who listens is manipulated? Or maybe not, actually. Can you manipulate through listening?

**CD:** Well, if it’s really active, then it can manipulate.

**MZ:** A few days ago, while walking in the mountains, we were speaking about the difference between manipulation and seduction. And maybe it gives an interesting reading to listening.

**CD:** Is listening seductive?

**LP:** Well, it can manipulate the way you perceive your past experiences in a way that it becomes attractive to the other person. Also in anthropology we mentioned the fact that in relation to the context they are in, people tend to highlight some part of their past, hiding others. So, what we remember of our past basically creates our present image. But to come back to listening, I don’t know if you ever had the feeling that, when you are reading something or when you are listening to something, you think that is so significant that you want to scream it to the whole world. Have you ever had this feeling?

**MZ:** Personally, when I read, this feeling translates into underlying and highlighting with many colors, putting arrows and writing down at the side of the page, “WOW!”. The exclamation point is crucial.

**CD:** But what if you are listening to this information, and you cannot underline?

**MZ:** Then it turns into frustration. I always regret I didn’t record that thing to keep it, as a trace or a documentation. So that I can listen again and again to that thing. Which never happens, by the way, I rarely listen back to the recordings I made.

**CD:** That’s what I do, too. It’s for fear of missing something, for fear that my memory might fail. So, I record it. And then I never listen to that, but I know that it’s there. So, if I miss it, I can go back and still find it.

**MZ:** But you never go back!

**CD:** That’s true.

**MZ:** And I think it’s actually interesting to transcribe audios. You lose data, you lose a huge amount of information that is in a recording, in a soundscape, in a voice, but you gain accessibility.

**LP:** For me, the most important tools to use when I see, listen to or read something that is so significant to me, and that I want everyone to know about, it’s repetition. Repetition plays a really important role in my life. For example, the speech of the pope was so significant to me that I repeated it to every person that I meet, I put it in every kind of conversation, like I did before. Repetition is the tool to highlight something. I’m really obsessed with repetition. And it’s interesting because every time you repeat something verbally, it changes every time in relation to what I really want to say and the people I’m speaking with. And another thing concerning listening is that, for me, it is a tool. It was a tool to build this radio. For example, when I was listening to and recording my grandmother who was telling me her story, I was really listening with the aim to make other people listen to it through the radio. Listening as a tool to create a need, to scream.

**CD:** I agree on what you said about repetition. But sometimes, I think that repetition can also get into satiation, semantic satiation. So, when you repeat something many, many times, it loses its meaning.

**MZ:** To me, this is all about storytelling. And it’s something I can really relate to when I try to describe my one-year stay in Jerusalem to people who’ve never been there. I end up telling the same three stories over and over again and I have the feeling that this repetition is useful to remember, but yet is diminishing the importance of these and other happenings.

**CD:** I was never in Jerusalem, and all I know about Jerusalem is what Luisa and you told me about that! I have this idea that is modified, kind of manipulated by you, because I don’t know much else.

**MZ:** And every time I tell the same three stories, I’m pretty sure I’m modifying and shaping my past.

**CD:** I’m sure Luisa has a lot to say about that...

**LP:** Ok guys, this is what I’ve been busy with the past year. Well, there’s so much to say. For me, Jerusalem is an obsession, and obsession is always connected to repetition. I spent much more time remembering and telling rather than living. So, for me, it became like a mythological travel I did, a holy and magnificent thing that now seems like a long dream. I repeated these stories so many times that for me they are present, I think of them every day.

**CD:** Did the story acquire or lose meaning through this repetition?

**LP:** Through repetition, it becomes present. Repetition is a way to create and to conquer a territory. My past conquers my present, it invades and shapes my present. And this is also what Deleuze and Guattari affirmed in 'A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia', and specifically in the chapter '1837: of the refrain'. Repetition is a way to circumscribe a territory, to create an identity. And it's also a tool which countries use to build a solid identity. They do it through repetition.

**MZ:** And do you think that repetition also shapes the reality of people who listen to the story, and not only the reality and memories of whoever tells it?

**LP:** Well, reality is always shaped by words. When I told Matteo, "Yeah, come here because this place is fucking amazing!" he got a very specific point of view. If he had listened to a friend of mine who wasn't feeling so good in Jerusalem, maybe he wouldn't have come. What the fuck is Jerusalem? I can't really understand what it is. Everyone tells their own experience. You can't really understand what reality is.

**CD:** What is reality?

**MZ:** Luisa, I think it's so interesting that we actually started radiosqu as an opportunity to build a bridge between a city, Jerusalem, and us. But we did it through the medium of radio, which we discovered, is placeless. So, we were talking about a place with a medium that embodies placelessness. Pretty crazy, right?

**LP:** At the time, I really liked the word 'placeless'. For me, it is the crucial word of this project. Maybe, thinking of one year ago when I was in Trentino after being in Jerusalem, I wished that place wouldn't exist. Because I only wanted to be in Jerusalem. In my head, I was there, and the physical place where I was did not exist. This radio has no place and is in every place at the same time. I didn't really need to be physically there with this project. I can always be in Jerusalem with my mind and with a project that is placeless, which can be anywhere. Everywhere I want to be.