

## 0. Introduction

*The chief role of creative intellect is to hold society together.* - Nicholas Humphrey (1976, p. 308)

Prior to undertaking my PhD research, the focus of my art practice as radio maker and media artist revolved around issues concerning the role of communication at the nexus of media, politics and subjectivity. This focus evolved with the PhD research – practical and theoretical – as I will discuss in this thesis. This change resulted from and in turn shaped the research in the context of my growing concern with ecological issues, thinking and artistic practices. My initial point of departure for my artistic inquiry has been my desire to explore the relationship between inner and outer worlds. Also central to this was the role that media play in this relationship, and the relationship between how we communicate and how this structures the way we relate to the environment around us. During the research process and my expanded understanding of ‘environment’, I came to understand these relationships through the poetic notion of *unrelated relatedness*. This notion conveys for me the sense of a mental confusion, a grappling on an individual level with an understanding of ecological interconnectedness, while at the same time, as a species, we keep pushing beyond the limits of planetary boundaries. It was this poetic notion that would hold together the series of art works in this thesis – works which helped to guide the theoretical research. As a result, my PhD, looking at communication from an ecological perspective, moved on from my earlier works investigating modes of communication within a more urban context. I became focused on phenomena such as the interrelatedness of ecosystems, which I explore as a shared space between humans and non-humans beyond the local.

The poetic notion of *unrelated relatedness* became, then, the leitmotif for structuring the writing of

this thesis and the title of a series of three works that form the artistic output of my practice-based research: *My City is a Hungry Ghost*, *Nature in the Dark* and *planet ocean*, which are discussed in Chapter 3. It was, though, actually only after completing the *Nature in the Dark* project that followed the *My City is a Hungry Ghost* installation that this understanding crystallised -- as this is often the case with practice based research.

Initially *Nature in the Dark* posed a structural challenge for my thesis. When I began the research for my PhD, my intention was to investigate sonic media art forms with a particular focus on radio and urban media practices. Now I found myself drawn to an art project that was primarily a visually driven project and did not involve any kind of radio. Facing this formal dilemma forced me to reconsider the context and to re-formulate my research question in order to facilitate the cross-connections between these different threads, beyond the formal criteria. With *Nature in the Dark* it became apparent to me that the conceptual framework of my communication oriented research was indeed an ecological one. This also meant that I had to work out a way to accommodate both the theoretical and artistic aspects of the research in an equal, but more importantly, a truly synergetic way. From this re-evaluation two aspects emerged from the underlying currents of my research: The first was that the notion of a poetics of *responsibility* became the key aspect for my theoretical inquiry into contemporary media arts practice and I needed to look at responsibility in communicational as well as spatial terms. Here I became particularly interested in the role that the acoustic side of responsibility plays here. The second aspect, which informed the first one, was that the art works provide the “practical base” of my research and that the theoretical side needed to accommodate the developments within the art making that forms its practical base.

As my research progressed, I realised that the poetic notion of *unrelated relatedness* to become the driver of the artistic side of my enquiry, it had to be reflected in the theoretical research. It was this

that prompted me to consider Greg Garrad's notion of a poetics of *responsibility*. In his discussion of the current state of affairs in ecocriticism, Garrad draws a distinction with regard to our contemporary living world (“lebenswelt”) and its associated poetics:

The poetics of *authenticity* assumes, against the evidence of ecology, that there is a fixed eternal standard we ought to try and meet. The poetics of *responsibility* recognises that every inflection of Earth is our inflection, every standard our standard, and we should not disguise political decisions about the kind of world we want in either the discredited objectivity of natural order or the subjective mystification of spiritual intuition. (Garrad 2004, p. 179, emphasis mine)

With the *unrelated relatedness* series I centred the exploration and discussion of my artworks on the connection between technology-aided sensitivity and political and ecological responsibility in the *Anthropocene*<sup>1</sup>. In my media art practice I emphasise sound because of its spatial and conceptual implications and I have come to consider these as qualities that can contribute to a poetics of *responsibility* as I elaborate in this thesis. Projects like *Nature in the Dark*, as I aim to demonstrate, resemble a media arts practice that on one hand draws its surrounding as dynamic, evolving, and something to engage with and intervene in, and on the other hand questions the anthropocentric purposefulness of technology and the orientational focus of its application.

The wider discussion about the concept of the *Anthropocene* has not yet completely settled but its aim is to describe the scale of the impact that human activities have reached in geological terms.<sup>2</sup>

What this means is that geologists are looking for markers in the sediments of earth layers that

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<sup>1</sup> The atmospheric chemist and Nobel Prize-winner, Paul Crutzen (Crutzen & Stoermer 2000), proposed the Anthropocene as the name for a new geological epoch to replace the Holocene. The Holocene began 11,700 years ago; it embraces all of humankind’s recorded history, from our origins as hunter-gatherers to agriculturists to the world that we live in today.

<sup>2</sup> Acknowledging the role the term already plays in different scientific communities, the Sub-commission on Quaternary Stratigraphy at 34th International Geological Congress postponed the decision to officially declare the Anthropocene as the geological epoch succeeding the Holocene. At this meeting in Brisbane in 2012, it was noted that more research has to be done to find a consensus within the geological community, which would take at least four more years.

allow them to identify certain time epochs. The concept of the *Anthropocene* proposes that for future geologists these markers in the Earth's sediments that will allow them to identify our current epoch will either originate directly from or at least be widely influenced by human activities. The high distribution of plastic across the planet, for instance, could function as such a speculative marker. Beyond this, the concept of the *Anthropocene* implies that the activities of mankind have become such an omnipresent environmental force that they manifest geologically. Until then, this was predominantly reserved to climatic conditions alone. The concept of the *Anthropocene* plays into and more or less covers the terrain of other concepts that are still being fought over like man-made climate change and related phenomena like, for instance, global warming -- as they all aim to depict the human influence on climate conditions of our current time. Given that, according to the vast majority of climate scientists, the world is on the brink of a climate collapse adds to the urgency of this debate. In response to this awareness, there has been an immense interest in ecological questions across many disciplines including economics, politics, philosophy, cultural studies and the arts.

Before I discuss examples of *tactical media* inspired art practice, in order to support my claim of their contribution to the wider quest for a poetics of *responsibility* in the age of the *Anthropocene*, I introduce here the concept of media arts practice as an *extremophile* aesthetic. My concept of an *extremophile* aesthetics aims to position media arts practice in the wider debate about the *Anthropocene*. Following Stefan Helmreich's concept of transduced sensing and Sophia Roosth's concept of fluid listening, the concept of an *extremophile* aesthetic in media arts is meant to theoretically connect the *unrelated relatedness* theme of my own arts practice with the wider quest for poetics of *responsibility*. The question that I pursue in my art practice is what kind of situated awareness arises here. Roosth's research suggests that by studying the sounds of yeast cells we

begin to understand cells as “dynamic, environmentally situated, and experiential”. These cells resonate in musical terms in the range from the C sharp just above middle C to the following D and this resonance is inaudible to the human ear. Given that our human bodies are built of similar cells, the question arises: how can we understand ourselves in our bodies as “dynamic, environmentally situated, and experiential” (Roosth 2007)? And if we can, then how can such insights into these acoustic milieus provide enough *fluidity* to fuel our thinking towards our own embeddedness in our environments, and in the longer run to produce lived instances of a poetics of *responsibility*?

When listening to cells stresses their biological interchange with their milieu, it becomes apparent that the split of inner and outer perception of humans is a psychological mechanism. Psychologist Margaret S. Mahler observed a disparity between the timing of biological and psychological birth in humans. In contrast to the relative speed of physical birth, psychological birth is a slowly unfolding intrapsychic process of separation and individuation from one's environment (Mahler 1980). Although this is often considered to be a lifelong process, the initiation of this psychological realisation, usually happens during two acute periods between the 4th and 5th and 30th and 36th months following birth. It is then that the infant learns to emotionally separate from his or her surroundings, in this case from the biological mother. From then on it becomes an ordinary experience for a “normal” adult to comfortably oscillate between the poles of total absorption in the outside world or complete separation from it, or to simultaneously experience a combination of both of these experiences.

Relating this experience to the context of the wider debate about the *Anthropocene* forms the starting point for the artistic and theoretical research presented in this thesis and is encapsulated in the poetic notion of *unrelated relatedness* in that it describes a rather ambiguous psychological state. Through my research into sonic arts and the experience of listening, I want to tackle an

important question: does media arts practice have the potential to generate instances of lived experiences of a poetics of *responsibility* in aesthetic and ethical terms?

Some have argued that ecological problems are primarily scientific and that they fall under the disciplinary domain of ecology. John Passmore, in his book *Man's Responsibility for Nature* (1974), was already aware of the potentially delicate issue around disciplinary competence and agency. This led him to draw an important distinction. For Passmore, there are “problems in ecology” that need to be resolved by ecologists in a scientific manner. In addition, there are “ecological problems” that manifest as “features of our society, arising out of our dealings with nature, from which we should like to free ourselves, and which we do not regard as inevitable consequences of what is good in that society” (Passmore 1974, p. 44 cited in Garrad 2004, p. 5).

Given the urgency of these questions, I want to make the argument in this thesis that they should be explored from a broad transdisciplinary perspective in order to contribute to a diverse and nuanced understanding of the issues and challenges ahead. Therefore I propose to extend Garrad's literary focus towards a poetics of *responsibility* from a contemporary media arts perspective. This will ultimately contribute to the wider field of what could be described as an aesthetics of *responsibility*. In order to discuss and think through a possible aesthetic of *responsibility*, in the context of the wider ecocritical discussion, I will refer to the concept of what the philosopher Bruno Latour calls *post-global aesthetics*, in conjunction with what the cultural theorist Timothy Morton depicts as *dark ecology*.

As a creative practitioner and researcher, I will approach the environmental discussion, opened by Garrad, from the perspective of my own contemporary media arts practice, with its particular focus on sound. This focus recognises limitations in the way the global environmental discussion relies on

metaphors that are predominately invested in the visual domain, which limits our thinking. Having chosen sound as a conceptual interface for this new eco-aesthetic arena, I will elaborate on how this sensorial position differs from the vision-centric by adding more sensual diversity to the discussion. I also draw attention to the quality of situated awareness that arises with this shift. The discussion that I will present in this thesis highlights a feature of sonic media arts practice that can be described as “extremophile” as I mentioned. With this I want to emphasise the ability of certain sound technologies to probe into different kinds of spatial scenarios. The potential range for this is from extreme environments like outer space or the ocean to the deepest level of the human body, as well as to the very core of our own perceptual sensorium or beyond inter-species boundaries. In my view the creative explorations of such media technologies can lead to experiencing these spaces as a shared territory – something I label in my art practice as “sharing space sonically”, which is discussed in Chapter 3. Positioning the discussion around ecocriticism as an entry point to the wider environmental debate in humanities, my research will use examples of contemporary sonic media arts to investigate how a poetics of *responsibility* can manifest. The question of aesthetics and in particular the political implication of aesthetics in media arts practice will be explored in Chapter 2. It is the tactical appropriation of media technologies at one’s disposal which is symptomatic for *tactical media* and which informs my own approach to media arts as well. I consider that this experimental and DIY approach to media production, which is sensitive to the “extremophile” aesthetic as well as to its political context, makes an important contribution from a contemporary media arts perspective to the ecocritical discussion.

My angle of approach is twofold. The first proposition I want to make is that a contemporary media arts perspective makes a vital contribution, when addressing the issue of mediation and simulation in the ecocritical discussion. This is because media arts practice is traditionally situated at the nexus

of politics and technology. The second related proposition is that the heated public debates about the *Anthropocene* and associated ecological problems, such as global warming and man-made climate change, underline the political dimension of the aesthetic. This assumes one adheres to the definition of aesthetics as being the ability to perceive, combined with an attitude of being concerned with, what is happening ontologically. Traditionally aesthetics have been associated with the arts and a notion of beauty and/or the sublime, while more contemporary approaches in the arts have contested such notions.<sup>3</sup> In my discussion I am interested in aesthetics as a mode of making visible what is usually invisible within a society. It is the political dimension inherent in the aesthetic and vice versa, as theorised by philosophers like Jacques Rancière (2004), that leads me to conclude that a politically aware contemporary media arts practice can indeed make a contribution to the discussion that Garrad is outlining.

I recognise that the transdisciplinary vastness of the subject of ecological problems can create a challenge, particularly to the usual interdisciplinary protocols. It requires more than the typical interdisciplinary execution of tasks according to each professional discipline. It also requires additional transdisciplinary encounters along the way. Artists, with their creative working methods, are often associated with a potential to create such “creative intersections” (IFACCA 2011) between different disciplines or stake-holders along the way. In 2011, for instance, I attended the Fifth World Summit on Arts & Culture in Melbourne,<sup>4</sup> organised by The Australia Council for the Arts, and The International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA). It was titled:

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<sup>3</sup> See, for example, the discussion around the book edited by art theorist Hal Foster (1983): *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*. In this discussion the aesthetic serves as a near-synonym for Modernism itself. By doing so, it problematises Modernism's commitment to value. For an overview of the current development of the aesthetic/anti-aesthetic discussion in the arts since Foster's book, see: Elkins, James & Montgomery, Harper (eds) (2013) *Beyond the Aesthetic and the Anti-Aesthetic*.

<sup>4</sup> The website of the 5th World Summit of Arts and Culture is found here: <<http://2011.artsummit.org/>>, last accessed 18 Feb 2014.



“Creative Intersections: Partnerships between the arts, culture and other sectors”. This summit invited artists and policy makers to meet, discuss and reflect on the cross-sectorial dimension of contemporary cultural work and

to look at the ways that artists are working in diverse settings (from communities through to the commercial sector) and the nature of partnerships ('intersections') that exist between the arts and other sectors. (International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA) 2011, p. 1).

I see this interest in “creative intersections” between different disciplines and stakeholders in connection with the nature of current challenges to society such as globalisation, global warming or AIDS, which defy departmentalisation. The organisers of the *Creative Intersections* summit understood this as a particular quality of artistic practice and creative research methodologies. Such methodologies enable the initiation, if not the facilitation, of a space for this to happen and to nurture this quality, with the potential for the activities and outcomes generated to go beyond the disciplinary boundaries of art making.

Within this transdisciplinary context, this thesis is guided by the theoretical and artistic synergies of my own research. I argue that contemporary media arts practice and accompanying creative research in academia can contribute to more than the facilitation of “creative intersections” between different disciplines that encourages people to think *outside the box*. Beyond the invention of innovative project work, the more important aspect of an artistic and creative research contribution, as presented in this thesis, is to address what Rancière calls the “distribution of the sensible” (Rancière 2004). In his view this describes the political dimension inherent in the aesthetic and vice versa.

At the same time, I discuss parallel trends in the ecocritical debate and in contemporary media arts

that question and experiment with the politics of human subjectivity in the age of the *Anthropocene*. Similar trends are also reflected in related academic discussions of, for instance, the parliament of things, new materialism, posthumanism, speculative realism or the growing popularity of animal-human studies. These discussions and trends provide a wider context to position the research presented in this thesis.

### 0.1. RESEARCH PROBLEM

In the new eco-aesthetic arena of what philosopher Bruno Latour calls the “new sensitivities” (Latour 2013) of the *Anthropocene*, I am aiming to bring the current political media art discourse, which I observed in the discussion of *tactical media (TM)*, into conversation with ecological thinking in humanities. The reason for this is that the *dislocating* and virtual nature of new media and their related art forms could be seen on a more local level as contributing to a bigger problem: the human *disconnect* from the environment. The latter has been widely identified as a partial driver of the current ecological problems. At the beginning of the 21st Century, the ecological crises form global risks (Beck 1992), which force the global human population to re-imagine the planet as an interconnected whole. As I will show in Chapter 1, scholars tend to resort to metaphors borrowed from media technology in attempts to fully grasp the global dimension of ecology and the related phenomena of the *Anthropocene*. I am interested in aesthetic concepts of situated awareness that a political media arts practice like *TM* and current ecocritical literature theory bring forward, and particularly in how such concepts influence each other. In addition, I am interested in questioning how a media arts practice like *TM*, (itself rooted in this technological framework) can contribute to a critical reflection on the role and usage of technology. I am also interested in its impacts on society and the environment and how this shapes our sense of situated awareness in a wider ecological setting. Does media arts practice as the tactical employment of the “new sensitivities”

(Latour 2013) have the potential to generate instances of lived experiences of a poetics of *responsibility* in aesthetic and ethical terms?

I chose *TM* in the context of contemporary political art practice because it represents an approach that is conscious of the political dimension of both media aesthetics and communication technology. I restrict my discussion of tactical media arts practices to the area of sonic and radio related art forms, which also informs my own media arts practice. I do so as I recognise limitations in the use of metaphors in global environmental discussion that has been predominately invested in the visual domain.

## 0.2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As an artist-researcher I have based my argument on a three-phase methodology. Firstly I have engaged with the theoretical writing from selected theorists. Secondly I have turned to a discussion of particular art works, including from my own practice, and thirdly I have referred to the experimental space created through the conversation between these two elements on a mutual level. The point of departure for my artistic output in the context of my PhD was the intention to examine sound as a conceptual interface for a new eco-aesthetic arena and its possible contributions to the wider quest for a poetics of *responsibility* in the age of the *Anthropocene*. Fostered by the feedback that I have received on my artistic experimentation in my *unrelated relatedness series* works, I argue that this split of inner and outer perception also relates to the issue of the ecological human alienation which is at the heart of the concept of a poetics of *responsibility*. It is also symptomatic of the process of working with electronic and digital media.

I understand that the role of creative practice as research is to confront the analytical part of the research with a milieu that provides a dynamic, experientially and situated engagement, with the

research question that I am addressing in this dissertation. Here, the process of art making serves as a catalyst for prompting problems, new associations or correlations between aspects of the research. This results from the confrontation between the process of artistic production and the situated awareness that comes with it. To engage with aspects of the experiential and material situatedness of the research not only complements but also helps to refine the orientation of the analytical work of my PhD thesis.

The experience as a student led me to the conclusion that a close to ideal situation is achieved when the space defined by the PhD project itself enables both the analytical and artistic mode to take the lead at different times: both dynamically shape the research. In my opinion this flexibility as an essential part of creative research allows the different modes of enquiry to mutually influence the scope of the research, instead of being compartmentalised and then assembled in a consecutive manner.

By engaging with my own production of media arts, my enquiry shifted to question how the split between inner and outer perceptive structures how we relate to our surroundings. I have come to understand that this split is actually deeply connected to the discussion revolving around a poetics of *responsibility* and the at times disjunctive relationship between humans and their environment. One reason for this can be seen in the tendency towards what artist and philosopher Paul Carter characterises as “dry thinking” (Carter 2008). He refers here to the human ability to produce imaginary inner worlds based on the medium of language, for instance, that by self-referencing tends to decouple itself from its actual material situatedness.

My own artistic enquiry started by looking into the modes of situated awareness in media arts practice and the notion of shared space. It developed in two parts. The first part involved

experimenting with mixed media formats presenting auditory or audio/visual scenarios that help to locate the split between inner and outer perception in situated everyday communication. The second part focussed on how media arts practice responds to the notion of shared space, something that I call sharing space sonically. My concern here is centred on spatial imaginations that a sonic emphasis invokes. I am interested in how this is reflected in the resulting sound and video works and/or architectural settings, in short, their situated awareness. As indicated earlier, the narrative thread to my argument takes up the image of following the long distance travel of sound and radio waves. They extend from the extreme environment of outer space to the underwater depths of the oceans and along cross species boundaries – while departing from and returning to the sound of the what media theorist Friedrich Kittler calls the “psychedelic space inside the head” (Kittler 1999, p. 103). Following this narrative strategy, I must stress that, although I focus on sound as the leitmotif for my investigation, the examples that I will discuss blur the disciplinary boundaries between artistic practice in the area of sound, video, sculpture and architecture. This echoes Tim Ingold's assertion that human sensory perception is an intersensory affair, which cannot easily be separated into its component elements (Ingold 2011).

### 0.3. CHAPTER SUMMARY

In the first Chapter *Processing the Poetics of the Anthropocene* I introduce the ecocritical discussion as a departure point for my own research into the wider environmental discussion in humanities. I have chosen this discussion, as it recognises one of the most pressing challenges in the current time of ecological crisis, which the eco-philosopher Freya Mathews has called “the re-negotiation of our relationship with reality” (Mathews 2010, p. 8).

At the same time Greg Garrad recognises a “failed promise of authenticity” (Garrad 2004, p. 172) in the majority of the ecocritical writing of the beginning of the 21st Century. Here Garrad

problematizes how we meaningfully relate to our surroundings beyond the local and beyond something that is not directly accessible to us via our senses and how this is then dealt with in literature. Following Garrad's observation of the "failed promise of authenticity" (Garrad 2004, p. 172) in the popular environmental, as well as ecocritical, discussion I take up his call for a conceptual shift from a poetics of *authenticity* to a poetics of *responsibility*. I further elaborate on Garrad's poetics of *responsibility* by correlating it with theories by other ecocritical writers including Ursula Heise, George Monbiot and Timothy Morton. Here I focus on Morton's theory of *dark ecology*, Heise's concept of *eco-cosmopolitan environmentalism* and George Monbiot's concept of *rewilding*. Combined these elaborations become the testing ground to examine whether contemporary media arts practice can contribute to the quest for such a poetics. I do so, by introducing to Bruno Latour's *post-global aesthetics* (Latour 2013). This notion is of particular significance to the development of my argument, because it criticises the mere visual representation of the globe as sphere. In addition I discuss environmental and spatial aesthetics of listening in current contemporary art and media theory. Here I will contrast the theoretical work of art historian Grant Kester, who stresses the creative role of listening in his concept of *dialogical aesthetics*, with the writings of media theorist John Durham Peters. Peters sees the 20th Century as marked by a *distortion of dialogue* through contemporary media that connect us across time and space, and with the dead, animals and aliens. In order to knit together the different theoretical elaborations I focus on how they deal with the notion ambiguity. It becomes the red thread running through this chapter.

In the second chapter *Fluid Thinking in Waves – Art, Politics and Tactical Media* I deal with the media arts practice known as *tactical media (TM)*. I am foremost interested in *TM* in the wider quest for a poetics of *responsibility*, because it creatively works with new media as well as addressing media work politically. I consider the perspective of such a political media arts practice

as crucial in the era of the *Anthropocene* and in view of our ongoing dependency on computer models and media simulation in this matter. My discussion of *TM* will concentrate on the writing of the media theorist Geert Lovink, who identifies in *TM* a certain form of aesthetic, an aesthetics that “goes beyond questions of taste” (Lovink 2008, p. 188). I will unpack the wider implications of Lovink's aesthetics in this chapter.

By positioning *TM* in the wider contemporary arts context, I further elaborate on the notion of *tacticality* and what can be learned from a *TM* perspective, for the discussion of creative research and an arts practice within the context of academia. Throughout Chapter 2, I develop my argument to affirm this connection between *tacticality* as a *modus operandi* and as the productive employment of moments of ambiguity. In addition I argue that, within the context of a political media arts practice, such moments of ambiguity relate to De Certeau's notion of the tacticality of the everyday but also can become a political weapon in a contemporary art context following the claim of artist Liam Gillick. Finally, I weave together these different threads of tactical *modus operandi*, incorporating political media arts practice like *TM* and its productive employment of moments of ambiguity, through the figure of *fluid thinking in waves*. This figure is meant to highlight both the creative and subversive misuse of a given technology that consequently follows through on the full potential inherent in the technology. It aims to depict a media arts practice (and creative research in academia) that by doing so it combines reflexivity with a tactical and pragmatic approach in order to go beyond the rigid dichotomies of binary thinking.

In the third Chapter *Sharing Space Sonically in an Extremophile Age* I discuss selected examples of media practices and work by tactical media artists, including my own *unrelated related series*. This discussion includes the audio/video installation *My City is a Hungry Ghost*, the video project *Nature in the Dark*, and the sound installation *planet ocean*. I am interested here in media arts

practices that combine technology and sensory perception, in order to extend, refine or simply shift human sensory perception. I analyse these examples according to the sense of situated awareness that they create. By doing this, I aim to support my argument for the vital contribution that a situated awareness offers to the discussion of a poetics of *responsibility* from a media arts perspective. Such an awareness is created through the artistic and tactical employment of the “new sensitivities” (Latour 2013). In Chapter 3 I also explore media arts practice that draws its surrounding as a dynamic and evolving environment, which is something in which to actively engage with and intervene. Here, both artistic practice and creative research help to locate the situated awareness of these “new sensitivities”, in a context that is experiential and publicly accessible, while simultaneously renegotiating the defining boundaries of such a context. The wider quest for a poetics of *responsibility*, as with the tactical employment of “new sensitivities,” becomes a political act. This forms Rancièrian *tactical* “communities of sense”, with the potential to transform into a tool for a politics that does not yet exist.

Chapter 3 traverses the vast distance of sound and radio waves from the extreme environment of outer space to the depths of the oceans and cross species boundaries. It does this through discussing sonic and radio related media practices, beginning with the early 20th Century radio amateur movement, interspecies communication research and the work of tactical media artists including Natalie Jeremijenko and Marko Peljhan. Given that sound represents only a small biologically mediated fraction of all physical vibrations of the “vibrating world” (Sterne 2003, p. 11), the role of media technology has been instrumental in exploring and gaining direct experience of the range of inaccessible places previously described. It is the psychedelic space inside the head and our own oscillation between the “the inner and outer worlds that we inhabit” (Brüggemeier 2013) that can be considered as extremophile.



#### 0.4. CONCLUSION

My thesis aims to demonstrate how that political media arts practices like *TM* offer an important contribution for the investigation into a poetics of *responsibility* in the time of the *Anthropocene*. Firstly, it contends that media arts practices like *TM* present a mode of spatial exploration that creates a sense of situated awareness that draws its surrounding as a dynamic and evolving environment, which can support our understandings of the human embeddedness in a wider ecological system. Secondly, following Garrad's assertion that we have to see the Earth as a process rather than an object, it argues that *becoming responsible* also means acknowledging “contingency and indeterminacy at a fundamental level” (Garrad 2004, p. 178). In both cases I am convinced that art practice can generate instances of lived experiences that resonate with the wider quest for a poetics of *responsibility*. The specific contribution of a *TM* inspired media art practice lies in its tactical pondering between sensory experience and its political context.

In summary, my investigation examines ways that the tacticality that is inherent in the *TM* approach can enable a productive employment of these moments of ambiguity, as described by Garrad, in our oscillating between familiar and unfamiliar and separate and interrelated states of being. Through my research, I came to depict the examples of this media arts practice as *fluid thinking in waves*.

