Figure A.2.1 The fifth saunter: strange strolls.
A.2 A discussion of the exhibition strange strolls and my work

To Meander and back

Artists as diverse as Janet Cardiff and Nigel Helyer have explored the use of sound and spatial technologies to make artworks about places. In these artworks the movement through space of the viewer/participant is integral. The audience listens to linear (or sometimes more interactive) sound works via personal headphones allowing them to make alternative journeys through spaces. Appendix A.2 describes the strange strolls sound art walking exhibition at the Moores Building Contemporary Art Gallery in 2005 and the walk that I developed for it called To Meander and back (P. Phillips, 2005c). The exhibition involved 16 artists from around the world making 30-minute sound walking tours of the streets of Fremantle. In strange strolls the strongest audience impression was astonishment, either when the fidelity of the sound techniques made people feel as though they really were in a distant land, or when tiny serendipitous happenings linked the seen and the heard in circumstances magnified by the general disjunction of places.

This Appendix introduces the concepts of the soundscape and Don Ihde’s (1976) field of vision and field of sound, before considering the way that the strange strolls works articulated the differences between viewscapes and soundscapes. It examines the nature of the disjunction produced when the local sound-scape (the here of Fremantle) is overlaid with the away-scape of the there (the sounds of London, Istanbul, Shetland or the walkingcountry). I argue that the away place was imbricated into the local (Fremantle) place.

The notion of “transformation” discussed in Section 3.4 of the Exegesis is expanded to include not only the imbrication of two places but also to include the transformation of the participant during and after the soundwalk and the trajectory of the artwork outwards into the public sphere as other people encounter the participant/walker in public spaces. The idea that listening as an act of kindness is also presented. The soundwalks demonstrated a performed sense of site specificity aligned with Kaye (2000) and Kwon (2002). By walking, the bodies of each listener “performed” the artwork into existence: the artwork had a life beyond the dimensions of the material art object.

This Appendix discusses the difference between translation and transformation of one place to another that was introduced in Section 3.4 of the Exegesis. It works through some of the findings through sound art walks: artworks where the viewer or participant walks through spaces listening to sounds set in place by artists. I contend that to make a distinction between translation and transformation is not just a semiotic fancy, but reflects a change in the way that art objects, audiences, artists and environments interact with each other. To begin I will set the scene by describing examples of existing sound and walking artworks.
A.2.1 Walking and sound

A.2.1.1 Janet Cardiff and Nigel Helyer

The works of Janet Cardiff and Nigel Helyer are two examples of the diverse use of sound art walks that renew the experience of places through reworking and reimagining existing places. Canadian artist Janet Cardiff (working with husband George Bures Miller) has made sound walking artworks using pre-recorded sound tracks on portable CD players. The audience listens to linear sound works via personal headphones allowing them to make alternative journeys through spaces. Her work is characterised by strong narrative development often using detective or film noir devices and a montage of fact and fictional sound sources to suggest past or future mysteries that may have transpired.

Figure A.2.2 Janet Cardiff, *The missing voice (Case Study B)*, 1999, *(Lingwood & van Noord, 1999, p. 18)*. Catalogue image, Whitechapel Library.

*The missing voice (Case Study B)* (Cardiff, 1999) starts at the Whitechapel library where you skim the pages of a detective novel before departing on a walking tour of the streets outside that is part stream of consciousness narrative and part historical account. Human voices are a prominent feature of her work. Often Cardiff’s voice speaks directly to you, creating the impression that you and she are alone on an adventure. In *The missing voice (Case Study B)* it begins by Cardiff introducing a story about a found photograph of a girl with long red hair. Later a male detective speaks of trying to find this woman. A number of separate fragments and narratives are layered over the streets of Spitalfields. And as you go along Cardiff’s voice fractures into multiple personae – a guide, a third person character, a confessor and a distinctive lo-fi voice recorded on a Dictaphone. Each of these voices speaks from slightly differing perspectives. Who is the lady with the long red hair? The walk ends up at Liverpool Street Station where the [a?] female narrator gets onto a train.

She’s getting on the train. He runs along the platform. Just as it’s pulling out of the station she sees his face in the window and tries to hide. As her train picks up speed she turns her head to watch him fade in the distance (Cardiff, 1999).
The experience of doing the soundwalk in 1999 proved to be a key event in the development of my art practice. I found the work both absorbing and disquieting. For example, I was struck by the synchronicity of the banana peel on the ground and in the soundtrack — “here’s another banana peel on the ground… that’s about fifty banana peels I’ve seen this week…” (Cardiff, 1999) -- I wondered if it was part of an elaborate hoax by the artist. The boundary of the artwork (see Figure 1.41) was unclear. A pythonesque parade of kazoo players passes you by on the back streets of Spitalfields. Approaching the last viewing point above the station concourse at the very end of the walk I am by this stage completely immersed. Cardiff hisses, “there’s a man in a black suit walking behind you” (Cardiff, 1999). I spun around in genuine alarm\(^1\). Cardiff “appropriates your present and insinuates into it a virtual world, providing a dual experience that is both in and out of sync with the environment you are in. The more involved you become, the more you realise that the power of these installations and audio-walks resides in the singularity of your perception and experience” (Scott, 1999, p. 4).

In a more technologically involved approach Australian artist Nigel Helyer is also working with sound and space with the aim of developing locationally sensitive mobile immersive audio experiences (Helyer, c. 2000). Between 1999 and 2001 Helyer worked with the Lake Technology Company programming stereo sound tracks into a system that could register the position of a listener within +/- 2 cm accuracy (using differential GPS) and could respond to the direction that the head was pointing to a similar degree of accuracy. The result was a field of virtual sound that responded precisely to the position of the listener. This allows the participant to walk through a space listening to sounds that are locationally specific – changing as the participant turns her head and moves along. The project was prototyped in St Stephen's graveyard in Newtown, Sydney (see Figure A.2.4). The experience of the participant was of perceiving gravestones that talked and sound that seemingly circled around the historical obelisks in the graveyard.

\(^1\) Am I annoyed at being manipulated or do I enjoy the fantasy?

**Figure A.2.3 Janet Cardiff, The missing voice (Case Study B), 1999. Spitalfields streets (Catalogue image, Lingwood & van Noord, 1999, pp. 36-37).**
Helyer writes,

Here we are engaging with a seemingly live sonic organism that is responsive to our presence, our orientation and the traces of our wanderings, and which appears uncannily embedded in the site itself (Helyer, c. 2000).

Helyer is currently working with the University of New South Wales on the audioNomad project. Again using differential GPS and advanced computer programming, the project's aim is to develop hand-held technology. Similar to Cardiff, Helyer uses an extensive repertoire of pre-recorded fact and fiction, past and present, to montage place. In this case it is non-linear, essentially interactive depending upon the path of the viewer, and can even be edited by the artist in real-time.

In March 2006 I made a research visit to a pilot for audioNomad, Syren for Port Jackson. Figures A.2.5 to A.2.9 show shots of Syrens that trialled the developing technology in this case installed on a ferry moving around Sydney Harbour. The coloured circles on the display screen represent the spatial field for each sound element. These can be large or small, loud or soft. They can overlap other sounds. The sound fields can be irregularly shaped polygons. A stack of individual sounds files can be linked to play randomly or consecutively at each sound element. Sounds can be made to move along a track within the spatial field. This track can be relative to the centre of the sound field or relative to the listener. In this trial the audience sat in the passenger area surrounded by a 12.2 (i.e., 12 speakers and 2 sub woofers) speaker sound system. Some of the sound associations were literal – cannons at Fort Denison --- and others were more poetic -- a thunderstorm just off Kirribilli House.

Also currently in development (May 2006) by Helyer is Talking Stick at the San Francisco Exploratorium in association with an exhibition about listening. This time using induction coil technology, an internal space will be overlaid with different sound stories that are accessed by walking around with a stick with an ear-phone (see Figure A.2.10). Helyer writes

Each visitor will avail themselves of a “Talking Stick” from an array of various heights, selecting one that matches their own height, placing the small speaker horn mounted at the stick’s upper tip … next to the ear whilst the lower tip grazes the floor. The Talking-Sticks themselves are minimal objects without interface, buttons or instructions – the visitor proceeds into the “Listen” exhibition area… by slowly sweeping the floor the visitor gradually discovers “pools” of audio at different locations each with a differing sonic narrative… Each visitor shall, in their own fashion, “perform” the work, slowly building up a memory map, gradually piecing together a spatial network and sonic narrative. This “Sleuth-like” activity brings together, listening, memory and spatial skill, without the aid of textual reminders or visual cues, activating abilities and faculties we frequently ignore (Helyer, 2006).

Both Nigel Helyer and Janet Cardiff harness the strengths of sound and installation art in their work. Sound is inherently spatial: we hear, more or less, in 360
Figure A.2.5 Nigel Helyer, *Syrens for Port Jackson* as part of Helyer’s audioNomad, Collaborative Research Project with the University of New South Wales, March 2006. Detail of on-board display on the M.V. Regal (Principal researcher Daniel Woo on right).

Figure A.2.6 Nigel Helyer, *Syrens for Port Jackson* as part of Helyer’s audioNomad, Collaborative Research Project with the University of New South Wales, March 2006. Screen close-up of Circular Quay. The black circle is the M.V. Regal.
degrees. In ideal conditions we inhabit a half hemisphere of reception, a dome of comprehension with its edges being the horizon of silence. Sound is immersive – we have no earlids – and dynamic\(^2\). Its temporal nature gives us particular access to the precognitive, to memory and dreams. Installation is an invitation to move through space and thus create a trail of personalized experience. And as we have seen, when the viewer/participant becomes mobile, walking becomes the central motif.

A.2.1.2 Some points on walking

Walking is one of the most basic apprehensions of place and an everyday experience that many people share. Whilst our boots are tools (see Michael, 2000), walking is much less mediated than other common ways of travel such as cars. Walking traverses space at a certain speed (for most humans averaging 4.5 km/hr). Simon Pope (2003) argues that walking should be seen as an informational technology that is speculative in nature. Its movement demonstrates our aliveness and emphasises our bodily reach and dimensions. I have mentioned sound and vision. Walking makes us attentive to other senses: proprioception (body awareness), equilibrioception (balance), thermoception (heat) and nociception (pain)! From a phenomenological perspective walking

\(^2\) Sound is as much about impermanence and fading as obdurate sight is about existing in the present.

Figure A.2.7 Nigel Helyer, Syrens for Port Jackson as part of Helyer’s audioNomad, March 2006. Screen close-up of the many sound elements represented graphically by coloured sound fields. Opera House in centre with Harbour Bridge top left.
draws the body together in a kinaesthetic whole, at the same time (by passing through the world) makes explicit the connections that we have with the world. Walking maps places. Rebecca Solnit (2000, p. 276) stresses “the way walking reshapes the world by mapping it, treading paths into it, encountering it.” Walking “reflects and reinvents the culture in which it takes place.” In his recent book *Earth-mapping: artists reshaping*
landscape (2005) Edward Casey has repeated his emphasis on the role of walking in places that was mentioned in The Fate of Place: A philosophical history (1997). Through walking places become “scenes in motion” where neither space nor time dominated but come together. He states

Body and motion constitute mapping in a place; they constitute a place as a map. A given place is always at once spatial and temporal; or better it triumphs the putative priority of space or time... by combining both in a scene of motion (2005, p. 24).

A.2.2 strange strolls

In the two examples above Cardiff and Helyer have tailored works of art that are site specific in the sense of being responsive to the sensual and cultural environments that they exist within – both interacting with “place” and imaginatively extending it. Both have been influential either formally or conceptually in my work. But returning to the theme of here and there in Section 3.4, what exactly happens when one place is “formed on”, or “emplaced in” another place? In Section 3.4 I employed the concepts of the here and the there. In this Appendix I have reframed the discussion more specifically in terms of the local place and the away place. I have used the terms awayscape and Fremantlescape to refer to the sounds of these two places.

With an interest in walking and sound I invited fifteen other artists to participate in the strange strolls sound art walking exhibition at the Moores Building Contemporary Art Gallery in Fremantle in 2005. The 14 artworks were made by four Western Australian artists, three eastern states artists and nine international artists/pairs of artists. Similar to some of Janet Cardiff’s projects, the audience hired out a standard Portable CD player for a thirty-minute excursion through the streets of the West End. The work could be on any theme. The only parameter set for the artists was that it had to contain the navigational directions for the viewer/participant. I should point out that the artists came from a variety of backgrounds: from emerging to mid-career; from electronica and sound/music backgrounds to visual artists working primarily in installation. Some had no prior experience in sound art. A few of the artists were specifically interested in walking as an art medium.

Some examples include local Freo artist Minaxi May who devised a walk titled Fashionistic Consuming where you took a strange strolls showbag and toured a number of hip youth clothing stores where you were given promotional items or May’s hand-made art objects. In 2untitled2 Maria Manuela Lopes and Paulo Bernardino flew from Portugal to Australia prior to the show and compressed the plane trip into a route around Fremantle that also connected up existing Portuguese landmarks. The spaces that they recorded were the non-places of transit lounges and rows of anonymous economy class seats. Viv Corringham took the same twists and turns in the streets of London and sung and described what she experienced there in City Switch. Lawrence English’s work Ghost Towns was a sveltely composed and quite abstract sound experience based on the

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3 The “away” place need not have “physical” existence elsewhere.
sounds he found in, and generated from, deserted ghost towns. Feminist geographer Begum Basdas narrated the streets of the Beyoglu district of Istanbul as you perambulated the South Terrace café strip in *Femme Strolls*. All the artists created works rich in intention, meaning and story (which regrettably I cannot discuss here), but despite the variety of subject matter and levels of sound recording and editing technology used there is a clear theme of disjunction between the *local* (Fremantle) place and the *away* place.

Please listen to Tracks 1 and 2 on the accompanying CD. These are extracts from Viv Corringham's work *City Switch*.

Of her work a participant writes,

*Enjoyed the tour. Points that worked especially well were when the questions as to what I was looking at – Marine Terrace – “I wonder if you can see the sea?” Your “busy people” or “idle smokers” made me look at people near me.*

The first thing I should say is that Corringham's work, along with several others, was created using binaural microphones⁴. These microphones are designed to be placed in the ears of the person recording the sound (or a dummy⁵) at the same distance apart, as would be the ears of the viewer/participant wearing headphones when played back. In such a situation the playback effect through headphones is a stunningly realistic 360 degree effect because the binaural microphones replicate the bodily dimensions of our hearing⁶.

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4 Or mixed down to a binaural output.
5 These dummies usually have hair and often have accurately modelled pinnae (the fleshy ridges of the outer ears). The latter play an important role in modifying the frequency balance of sounds to help us understand the direction of a sound.
6 Of course when you play them back through stereo speakers the effect is negligible.
In general, the artworks in the exhibition were well received (Boase, 2005; Hately, 2005; Ihlein, 2005, 2006; Jorgensen, 2006; K. Phillips, 2005; Uhlmann, 2005). The strongest audience impression was astonishment. Most frequently this was associated with binaural effects. Sometimes this was because the sound that triggered the reaction was closely aligned to what was going on in the local environment. For example, a motorbike going past in London, making a ghostly appearance in Fremantle. At other times strong reactions arose when the recorded sound was evocative but vastly different to the surrounding landscape. An example would be Dorothee von Rechenberg's <Snow> walk through snow in Switzerland. This was quite jarring at the beginnings of a Perth summer. Even without binaural, the fidelity of the sound techniques made people feel as though they really were in a distant land. These sorts of effects produce a kind of frisson associated with the disjunction of places. By frisson I mean that there was a brief intense reaction – excitement, recognition, possibly a physical shudder or thrill, almost imperceptibly edged with fear.

Conversely there were expressions of pleasure at tiny serendipitous happenings. Small things in the “seen” and the (recorded) “heard” lined up. An odour example might be when in Begum Basdas’s work when we walk past the fresh smells of a Turkish restaurant. Of course these circumstances were magnified by the general disjunction of places but the reaction to these happenings was slightly different. Delight was the underlying emotion. The perception of the viewer/participant was shifted and became “fully present and open” to possibilities (Hove, 2002). This is the delight of wonder. When even the tiniest wonder comes it brings us to a standstill. The physical objects of our wonder “reveal themselves to us in an active and compelling sense” (Hove, 2002). As explained in Section 3.2.4, the process involves moving through feelings of delight, inspiration and perplexity until we come finally to disquiet. Released from wonder the world is rewoven in a uniquely different way.

Even the artworks made by local artists in situ with much more consciously place-aligned local sounds, were new adventures every time they were walked. Time had passed since the local sounds had been recorded. For example, Ric Spencer’s work, Keeping on your right side was based upon recordings of Fremantle edited and given a conceptual twist.

Tracks 3 and 4 are short extracts of Ric Spencer’s Keeping on your right side.7

7 Spencer also had a specific idea in his work of showing how it was like to be deaf in one ear: in his catalogue statement he writes “…when I walk with someone I always have to walk on their right side, this is because I can’t hear at all in my right ear, so I always position myself to hear out of my left hear – otherwise I would be walking with my head turned sideways trying to capture the conversation and I’d always be walking straight into things” (Spencer, 2005b). By shifting the output almost exclusively to one ear Spencer disrupts the balance between here and there. Art interrupts the flow of the life-world and makes us aware of the world’s very presence.
Of Spencer’s work a participant writes.

I particularly like the interchangeability between the soundtrack and the real-life surrounding sounds. Whether it was coincidental or not, there seemed to be such strong connections between the sounds I was hearing and the actions happening around me, there was a very “local Fremantle” feel to it, like I was sitting at the up-markets with the hustle and bustle going on, and I like that local aspect...

### A.2.3 The soundscape

Most scientific research into sound concentrates on seeking out sound sources and quantifying the nature of the sound broadcast out from them. The Canadian composer Murray Schafer (1977, 1993) popularised the term soundscape as a description of the overall sounds experienced in a place. In this schema the central point is the listener and the environment unfolds in space and time around her. Some of the artists in strange strolls were very conscious of adopting a “soundscape composition” approach. In this sub-genre of electroacoustic music, the context of the sounds played is embedded in the composition. The texture of sounds is important especially in establishing the mood of a piece. An example of soundscape composition is Bill Fontana’s well-known work, *The Sound Island* (1994) that linked up Dunkirk to the Arc de Triomphe on the 50th anniversary of the Allied landing. Sounds from hydrophones in the sea and microphones along the seaside were relayed live to Paris. Fontana’s interest is in live ambient recordings projected by loudspeaker back into an urban location. He believes that the installations are powerful precisely because of “sound’s capacity to elicit visual imagery through memory and knowledge” (Fontana, accessed 2006a).

The Fremantle soundscape is typical of an Australian inner city in that traffic and exhaust are the commonest sounds. Its two-story 19th century architecture gives a particular texture to the town, and although car-free areas are limited, it’s a much more pedestrian oriented urban space than Perth’s more recent suburban subdivisions. It still has a town hall bell. The cafe strip is full of coffee conversations. Fremantle attracts a wide diversity of cultural groups. The Fishing Boat Harbour comes alive with the annual blessing of the fleet ceremony. The Inner Harbour sounds are industrial and muted as most cargoes are nowadays parcelled into containers; raucous local silver gulls steal your fish and chips. Unlike some other capital cities Perth has fewer feral bird species. It

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8 The principles of soundscape composition are:
1. Listener recognisability of the source material is maintained, even if it subsequently undergoes transformation;
2. The listener’s knowledge of the environmental and psychological context of the soundscape material is invoked and encouraged to complete the network of meanings ascribed to the music;
3. The composer’s knowledge of the environment and psychological context of the soundscape material is allowed to influence the shape of the composition at every level, and ultimately the composition is inseparable from some or all aspects of that reality;
4. The work enhances our understanding of the world, and its influence carries over into everyday perceptual habits.

Thus, the real goal of the soundscape composition is the re-integration of the listener with the environment in a balanced ecological relationship (Truax, 2000), NOTE: Although related to site-specific art, sound composition *per se does not* imply sounds are played back in the place of composition or indeed that there is any local place at all when the composition is played/performed.

9 Very rarely in the early hours of summer mornings I can hear the bells from my bedroom window in East Fremantle.
still has large populations of the original honeyeaters. Willie-wagtails are making a return after being decimated by argentine ant spraying in the 1950s. These birds provide a rich dawn chorus (see Seddon, 2005) even in the heart of Fremantle. Escaped corellas have formed large populations in Perth that occasionally visit the Norfolk Island pines of The Esplanade Park and their raucous calls can split the soundscape. The seashore and its fringing vegetation at Arthur Head contribute their distinctive sighs. The maritime nature of Fremantle is even more apparent when the Fremantle Doctor comes howling in. The one-o’clock time cannon on Arthur Head is a strangely unpunctual soundmark subject to the endearingly idiosyncratic availability of volunteers to man it.

A.2.4 Listening and hearing

There are a number of differing models and descriptions of the process of hearing that I will not go into here\(^\text{10}\), suffice to say that there is a clear difference between hearing (which focuses on the physical process of sensing) and listening (which implies a more expansive understanding)\(^\text{11}\). Helyer notes that listening

\[\text{...is not something that many of us allow ourselves the time to do, dominated as we are by a constant flow of visual information, and so mindful of the demands of the clock. But listening, rather than simply hearing, is an ever present gateway to hidden worlds of detail and narrative; always close at hand, always available, always possible, requiring only our time, attention and concentration (Helyer, 2006).}\]

In Listening and Voice: A Phenomenology of Sound Don Ihde (1976) begins the chapter The Auditory Dimension, with the following description of the field of vision and the field of sound (see Figures A.2.12 and A.2.13). He fixes his gaze on a box of paperclips. “I fix them in the centre of my vision” (1976, p. 49) The stationary box is mute. “A fly suddenly lands upon the wall next to the desk where the paperclips lie and begins to crawl up that wall.” (1976, p. 50) For a moment, the fly exists within both the visual and aural horizon. The fly is both seen and heard. The box of paperclips, on the other hand, “stands beyond the horizon of sound” (1976, p. 50) even while it stands within the horizon of vision. And in the world outside the wind rustles. It is invisible to sight. Figure A.2.12 shows the “region” of sight, bounded by the horizon of invisibility. Figure A.2.13 illustrates the “region” of sound, which is circumscribed by a horizon of silence. Figure A.2.12

\(^{10}\) Compare Barry Truax’s

- Listening in search (actively searching for information);
- Listening in readiness (ready to receive but concentrating on other things);
- Background listening (sounds ignored because no immediate significance); and
- Distracted listening Concentrating very hard to hear in a noisy competed situation (Truax, 2001, p. 22)

\(^{11}\) to Pierre Schaeffer’s differentiation of listening into hearing, attending and comprehending:

- Listening deals with the attention to someone or something; the intermediation of sound and the event that caused it. The sound is treated as an indication of the source;
- Hearing concerns the most elementary rough order of listening perception. One listens passively without specifically searching for a certain sound without explicitly comprehending the sonic information;
- Attending deals with the perceptual stage when one doesn’t etymologise the sound: the derivation and origin of sounds are not searched for. Instead the perception operates on a selective level: one searches the specific qualities of a certain sound; and
- Comprehending is a semantic listening mode. The sound is treated as a sign or a code that consists of certain values (Hellström, 2002, p. 6).

There is no equivalent word for “expansive” seeing in English: hearing and listening; seeing and ...? For example, perceiving usually implies more than sight.
The fifth saunter: strange strolls

Figure A.2.12 The region of vision showing the horizon of invisibility (adapted from Figure 2 in Ihde, 1976, p. 52).

- X Things that are visible but silent e.g. box of paperclips
- y Things that are visible and not silent e.g. fly

Figure A.2.13 The region of hearing showing the horizon of silence (adapted from Figure 3 in Ihde, 1976, p. 53).

- y Things that can be heard and are visible e.g. fly
- Z Things that can be heard and are invisible e.g. wind

Figure A.2.14 The overlapping regions of sight and sound showing the distribution of different types of phenomena (adapted from Figure 4 in Ihde, 1976, p. 54).

- X Things that are visible but silent e.g. box of paperclips
- Y Things that can be heard and are visible e.g. fly
- Z Things that can be heard and are invisible e.g. wind

Auditory world  Visual world
contains the paperclip box and the fly. Figure A.2.13 contains the fly and wind. When we perceive both these “regions” overlap (Figure A.2.14).

In the case of strange strolls, walking through Fremantle the soundscape of the away place, the awayscape, is imposed upon the visual landscape of the local place. It might be said that it is a model of translation. Such a model would imply a faithful imposition of one on top of another. However, the sound itself comes complete with its own evocation of visual imagery that demand upon our senses as well. In other words, fleeting imagery generated from the awayscape collides with the local place. And of course memories and socio-cultural implications bloom outwards from the sounds themselves. This is a significant part of the disjunction experienced by the viewer/participant in strange strolls.

Figure A.2.15 An attempt in two dimensions to show the interdigitated nature of the auditory and visual aspects of the away place (left) and Fremantle (right).

A.2.5 The nature of the disjunction in strange strolls

In his historical account of the soundscape Murray Schafer (1993) is quick to emphasise the changing nature of sound as it has been effected by industrialism and recording technology. He defines the dislocation of sound sources from their referents produced by the technologies of recording, as schizophonia. Of course it is a basic acoustic paradox that the away place is not there for the viewer/participant. However, because of the prevalence of schizophrenia today, I don’t believe that this was a conceptual problem for the participants. After all, juxtaposition of recognisable and non-recognisable sound forms the basis of much music composition: “the brain is capable of reconstructing a message from partial information, even when the remainder of the message is not present” (Hellström, 2002, p. 9 quoting; Wishart, 1996).

12 If someone goes beyond the strangeness of hearing the naked sounds and takes the time to listen, the actual visual aspects of the sound sculpture lies in this person’s imagination, in their personal mental space to create virtual images (Fontana, accessed 2006b).
Being mobile adds an extra element of disjunction in the walks. It is obvious that walking interrupts the stable horizon of a Cartesian eye-space. But if instead we understand places to be a “scene of motion” (Casey, 2005, p. 24), then walking complements such living (animate) places. Using de Certeau, Thibaud (2003) frames the Portable CD player as a tactical device. He believes that sound walking evolves from being just a spatial experience to a richer spatio-phonic experience. Thibaud argues that there is a double movement first of de-territorialisation and then of re-territorialisation13. The centrality of walking in the works moves us from models of perception to models of perception in motion. The outcome is that walking is a significant contributor to the disjunction perceived in the strange strolls works

A.2.5.1 Some points on the Walkman14 (and the iPod)

Pioneering cultural analysis of the portable CD players by writers such as Rainer Schönhammer (1989), Paul Du Gay and others (1997), Michael Bull (2000) and Jean-Paul Thibaud (2003) emphasise the disjunction between the music headspace of the listener and public society. The Portable CD player is seen as a private intrusion into the public. A common trope is to see the listener as floating above the city space. The viewpoint of the listener is often likened to an unreal-cinematic experience15. And it could be argued that this is also part of the disjunction experienced by the viewer/participant in strange strolls. Whilst these analyses are useful, they are directed towards people listening to music. Whatever the style of music it is most often selected by the listener on the basis of familiarity and not strangeness. In other words, there is a tendency to assume that the participant is meditatively wrapped in a music listening mode, and that an overlay of sound over a visible local place occurs. Thibaud (2003), for example, stresses the secret (private) nature of the soundtrack over the public space. But the experience in strange strolls was that the Fremantle soundscape (with its cars, people and birds) leaked into the perception of the viewer/participant. Even though enclosed headphones were used, the effect of the existing Fremantlescape was substantial16. One cannot say that it was a simple translation of the away soundtrack onto a blank slate. There was a distinctly double soundscape – of the city and the head – of the away soundscape and the Fremantlescape. Furthermore, the horizon of silence proposed by Ihde constantly swells out and drifts in as the two soundscapes flux together in volume and frequency.

Similar to readings of Cardiff’s work, in strange strolls the walking and headphone/portable CD player technology introduced a particular type of disjunctive

13 That is, “paradoxical territorialisation” where the outside world is heard less but is seen more; “phonic deterrioralization” where the private and public spaces are joined into one listening space; and a “sonic reterritorialization of the urban space in the sense that sonic urban occurrences are recomposed in terms of musical dynamics” (Thibaud, 2003, p. 334). He derives his notions of deterioralization from Deleuze and Guattari.

14 Although it is commonly used in everyday language, the word Walkman is a trademark owned by Sony Corporation.

15 In another context: “Most people in modern cities tune out the sounds around them as noise, making the visual experience of the city like the movie without a sound track” (Fontana, 1990/2000).

16 The strange strolls pieces required concentration and discrimination to hear the navigational instructions. At times the sound of sudden traffic drowned out important instructions.
experience. It is now commonplace to encounter experiences where one is standing in one place and listening to another place. But the participants in strange strolls inhabited a double place where the here and there were equally present and forceful. This is unlike, for example, mobile phone conversations where people shout to talk over the “here”. A dislocated and detached self is only one way that the strangeness of strange strolls can be read. Feedback from participants indicated that this now accepted understanding of how the portable CD player operates was not the dominant impression. The walks were not exactly like listening to recorded music. The fact that the two places were equally present made it more disjunctive than the now naturalised use of mobile phones or iPods and personal CD players in public spaces.

A.2.5.2 Poly-sensing

In her paper entitled Soundwalk, Digital Media, and Sound Art, Sawako Kato concludes “these works are made only with sound, but we use the five sense[s] to participate with them, along with the environment that we experience through the five sense which will feed back into our bodies” (2003, p. 5). “Stories in sound installations can slip and slide against each other… Each voice can be given space, unlike the politics of real life” (Bandt, 2001). We have arrived at a poly- or multi- sensual understanding of the world: our senses don’t act separately, so there are viewscapes, and soundscapes, and smellscapes acting together: the roses we passed and the sea that we smelt contributes to our experience of strange strolls. And of course, the outcome of this is to move on from conceiving of the combination of the away place and the local place as being merely translation.

A.2.6 To Meander and Back part one

As part of strange strolls I developed a walk called To Meander and back whose away place was the walkingcountry. The piece outlines a trip past four photo monitoring points: Blacksoil, Quadrat, Junction and Meander that I photographed each time I visited. Blacksoil was the starting point at the gallery. The other points were located at the correct orientation relative to Blacksoil, out in the streets. The photopoint Quadrat is located at a non-existent cross on the footpath. I aligned a creek in the walking country to the sea’s edge in Fremantle. Meander ended up being on a traffic island in the middle of Fleet Street and I made the viewer/participant “circumnavigate the lamppost a few times…” Walking back, the order of stations was reversed but the route taken was a more direct route down High Street to the gallery. In general the sound in the work were largely raw and unaltered. The editing was kept to a minimum.

The awayscape of the Kimberley is a high fidelity soundscape. Overall loud sounds are uncommon. Ambient sounds are hushed. In the Dry Season there is wind drought: standing still you can hear a 30 of 40 metre wide gust travelling across the valley towards you. In contrast, the storms of the build-up and the Wet season have tremendous cracks of thunder. Birds call all year round but there is much more activity of birds and insects.
The fifth saunter: strange strolls during the Wet. Crocodiles settle territorial disputes with nocturnal yips and bellyflops. In the dry valleys the sound of moving water is restricted to maybe a few tens of days per year.

There were two distinct parts to the work. The walk outward has no talking apart from navigational directions. Most viewers found this disconcerting because there was little to come to grips with. The sounds were “neutral” or ordinary selections from the ten-minute recordings done during each field visit. As you walked through Fremantle the sound transition from each photopoint was seamless. The lack of dialogue was a deliberate strategy because I wanted to slow the listener down and make them concentrate on small things. My intention was as

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**Figure A.2.16** Map of Fremantle showing relative positions of photopoints on the *To Meander and back* sound walk (Phillips, 2005).

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**Figure A.2.17** Image from *Walking around taking photographs, digital print installation series, 2006* Detail of Blacksoil Photopoint.
much as possible to make the nonhuman in the awayscape have a conversation with the viewer/participant. In particular I set out create a soundtrack that encouraged attentive listening: slowing down self-chatter and letting the sounds *be*.

Please listen to track 5, the first sample of *To Meander and back*.

L.G. writes,

I did your stroll with my mother, ------. We were worried it would be very hot, but the commentary and instructions were soothing and cooling. We had to listen hard and the soundtrack merged with the real world. We paused at the Kero store (Kidogo Arthouse) and again at the space around the Round House and enjoyed the texture of the ground beneath our feet. The tics and bivalves told us to tell you “hello”.

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**Figure A.2.18** Blacksoil Photopoint looking south in February, 2004, *the walking-country*.

**Figure A.2.19** Image from *Walking around taking photographs*, digital print installation series, 2006.
A.2.7 The nature of the disjunction in strange strolls continued

A.2.7.1 The anxiety of being lost

I have said that our senses operate in cooperation but it is also true that we do not sense everything – everyday soundscapes are already highly semantically ambiguous – even in natural areas we selectively hear. We discriminate both automatically and consciously. Sound artworks take us out of ordinary listening on to more metaphorically rich levels. In the strange strolls project it was critical to hear the navigational directions and the degree to which this was clearly articulated, dealt with or ignored by the artists varied. Set adrift by disjunction some people became anxious about getting lost. It was almost as if people resented their time being used up. The degree to which lost anxiousness was present varied. I am reminded of the personality test factor: surgency. This is a measure of how positively people rate novel social situations. Age is supposed to affect one’s surgency: surgency peaks in young adulthood.

17 Ubiquity and metabolism are terms developed by Pierre Schaeffer (Hellström, 2002). Metabolism is a measure of temporal confusion or instability – the amount of transition in the soundscape – the degree to which there is not a progressive or narrative sense to the soundscape. Cityscapes generally have high rates of metabolism. Again in strange strolls the headphones cocooned the participant into a strongly narrative ‘scape but the confusion of two places increases metabolism. Ubiquity is the measure of the spatial confusion of sounds. Binaural recording decreases ubiquity because it is spatially superior, but the complexity of experiencing the Fremantlescape and away-scape increases ubiquity.

18 I decided at the beginning of strange strolls that I would keep to the cheap and reliable technology of portable CD players but (compared to the audioNomad technology) the linear nature of a CD is a clear limitation. Robert Curgenven dealt with this by offering a choice of tracks with alternative destinations depending upon the mood of the listener.

19 Some notes on technology: the works of Canadian composer Hildegard Westerkamp are based on a Schaferian soundscape understanding. She uses the soundwalk as an interrogative technique in the process of investigation, and in a work such as Kits Beach she does not require the viewer to walk (they are played in concerts or sold as CDs). Kits Beach features a narrator (Hildegard) talking about the sounds of a place and then takes you to the sound studio where she makes clear the artifice of the recording. This is because she is trying to work both outside and inside the soundscape, “both recognizing the boundaries between self and subjectivity exist, and attempting to create the kind of immersive listening that temporarily dissolves those boundaries” (McCartney, 2000). Westerkamp makes apparent the illusion of technological transparency; of the microphone as a transparent window on nature. The microphone does not open a window of transparency onto nature (Madsen, 1995) – it is more like an augmented reality (NB: those that are musically trained are able to break out into reduced listening – an anti—natural process of being able to identify timbre and pitch etc.). In the sense that all recordings are mediated by technology this is probably not a strong source of disjunction in the strange strolls walks.

A.2.5.2 Continuing transformation afterwards

Akitsugu Maebayashi’s *Sonic Interface* uses digital software to delay and transform the sound surrounding the viewer/participant. The real-time sounds are played back with a time lapse. The sounds are distorted and looped to produce an altered soundtrack that can build up to a frenetic conclusion. A guide accompanies each participant on the walk. This is because the eye and ear separation is so extreme, that it leads to feelings of virtualness so strong in the listener, that it prevents coherent movement or speech. This effect can last for some time afterwards (Kato, 2003). In *strange strolls* the more modest goal was to stimulate the viewer/participant to reconsider the ambient, and to develop a permanent sensitivity to sounds of the everyday. Of his reprojection of live ambient sound to other places, Bill Fontana writes, “What is so compelling is the natural completeness of the live flows of musical events and patterns. That the live ambient sound constellations present such seemingly perfect relationships makes this art form actualise an awareness of what is already present” (Fontana, 1990/2000).
A.2.8 Transformation not translation: the role of viewer/participant has changed

So far I have discussed how ways of sensing and places are multi-dimensional and changing. Instead of exactitude and realism we have change and evolution. Where once we would have been happy with simple models, a more complicated situation leads to ambiguity, disjunction, frisson and wonder. I would now like to draw together some threads about how the object of an artwork, the artist, viewer and environment are linked together.

Taking his lead from the sciences, Simon Waters (2000, listed in EARS glossary) adapted the word *emergence* to describe a soundwork that shows a conscious utilisation of the changing boundaries between the subject (listener, interpreter) and the maker (artist, composer), in which the former interacts with what the latter has made, such that the work can be said to emerge in its “*use*”, rather than having been designed in its entirely by the artist and then “presented” (Waters, accessed...
Figure A.2.27 Junction
Photopoint looking up
in July, 2005, the walking-
country.

Figure A.2.28 Meander
Photopoint looking south
in February, 2004, the walk-
ingcountry.
Sound artist Christina Kubisch describes her work in this way: “I organize everything beforehand, and the person who listens to my installation puts it together. It’s like a puzzle - I give them the single pieces, and then they can make their own composition with them, by the way they’re moving” (Kubisch, p. 91 cited in Overton, accessed 2006). As discussed in Section 3.3, such a trend for a relational practice is now common in contemporary art. The artist makes the systems, interfaces and tools that the spectator uses to finish the artwork. A number of viewer/participants in strange strolls remarked upon the fleeting camaraderie of seeing another headphoner on the streets. In Dorothee von Rechenberg’s work the participants were asked to place a Swiss flag somewhere along their journey through the mountains. Over time the accumulation of other people’s flags made the experience more relationally oriented.

In Section 3.3 I considered Ric Spencer’s conversational aesthetics that requires that the walking artist become conduits for their surroundings. Strange strolls puts a further twist on this by putting the viewer in this position. In the case of the strange strolls walks I believe that the places (away and local) were equally present in the system of exchange between the artist, art object and participant. In the transformational condition, each of these elements pushes against each other. Although brought together their identities do not merge. I persist in retaining the names of each of the places because I did think that they retained their identity by being able to converse with each other. The two places do not dissolve into a homogenised combination.

20  Such a relational model places great demands on the viewer/participant.
21  As I stated earlier the artist’s away-place need not have a physical manifestation in reality- it could be completely fictional.
A.2.9 To Meander and back part two

We have seen that in the first section of To Meander and back the participants were called upon to create their own conversation with the away place and the local place. In the second section (once the participants have gone around the lamppost a few times) the soundtrack changes to an in situ unrehearsed narrative by myself as I walk back to Blacksoil. This recording is binaural. I describe what I am seeing. I talk about how it functions as an ecosystem and how it changes over the seasons. Most people found this easier to interpret and experienced more serendipitous events. For example, during the first two weeks of the exhibition, there were archaeological digs along the route that synched up with me talking about holes that I thought were made by goannas.

Please listen to track 6, the second sample of To Meander and back.

S.H. writes

Meandering around Fremantle, whizzing around poles, thankful for wearing thongs (easily taken off) and feeling sand between my toes: all this to the sound of desert and dry wood and insects. This was strangely suitable. Thank you for this meander, and letting me find these places on my own and experiencing them without historically –bent tourist-aimed monologue.

Figures A.2.31 and A.2.32. Images from Walking around taking photographs, digital print installation series, 2006. Probably a water rat’s tracks.

A.2.10 Kindness and listening

There is a reason why I want people to listen to the walkingcountry. I wish to bring its agencies and its histories and politics to the attention of an urban audience. There is a reason why there was so much “silence” in the first half of To Meander and back. Such silence itself has the potential to counteract the silencing process of colonialism: Jane Belfrage proposes a different (contemporary) process of silence to combat the oppressive colonial silence. This is a process where we attend to listening “it is to listen contextually and historically, to listen in relationship, to listen with imagination and heart.” It is to heed – to hear the other – and to respond to the injustices wrought (1994).22 Even in the second half of To Meander and back (where I am speaking), my desire is to create a place for listening. For Virginia Madsen such tactful listening “unfurls to self-presence,

22 I discuss different processes of silence more fully in Section 3.5 of the Exegesis.
Figure A.2.33 Visual impressions along the route of *To Meander and back*, 2005.
is playful yet respectful, anticipating the chance mutation” (Madsen, 1999, p. 43).

A listening which is aware of its presence, is alert, solicitous, and open to the possibility of interpenetration and mutation. Listening is not only an action born of the desire to know and acquire; one cannot strain too much to hear. Sounds must be allowed to settle and to resound (Madsen, 1995).

“Openness to the Other is characterised not by an ability to form meaningful sounds but by listening” (Carter, 1999, p. 154).

Other artists in the strange strolls project would also be aware of the power of silence and of the concept of attentive listening. Viv Corringham, for example, has studied with Pauline Oliveros.

A.2.11 The artwork’s boundaries

In To Meander and back the participants became actors when they were asked to circumnavigate the lamppost. Their performances were visible to others and the field of the artwork rippled outwards from an unexceptional traffic island. Maria Manuela Lopes and Paulo Bernardino’s 2untitled2 not only enfolded the space between the Portugal and Fremantle, but their even-handed use of bilingual navigation instructions persuaded us that departure point and destination were equally important. If the relationship between the two places were a simple model of translation then the border between the two places would be exact and continuous. The awayscape in the headphones would be dominant and the interaction with other senses would be without significance. We have seen that this is not the case.

I hope that I have been careful enough not to imply that any of the away places really did exist in Fremantle23. Nevertheless in the newly imbricated environment you can hear as far as the walkingcountry (or London, or the Shetlands). What are the consequences for site-specificity? Despite the disjunction that occurs, there is value in bringing two places together. Miwon Kwon24 talks about a relational site specificity where one tries to live in and out of place at the same time. Nicolas Kaye defines site-specific practices as being concerned "with a working over of the production, definition and performance of ‘place’". The walker is “always in the process of acting out, of performing the contingen-

23 This would be a full-blown delusion. Reduplicative paramnesia is the psychiatric term for such a condition.
24 Kwon outlines six different types of site specificity:
1 1960s artists work “phenomenologically” with space – bringing to attention the physical environment.
2 Institutional site specificity – work is socially and culturally situated like Hans Haacke.
3 Discursive work – the actual site is the issues in the work. Underlying the work how power is played out.
4 Un-sited and working across places because to work in one place is to be complicit with power structures and institutions. Leads to peripatetic artist. Still ends up being complicit with mainstream consumption.
5 Resited – appealing to the nostalgia of past places.
6 Relationally site specific - avoiding un-sited and resited site specificity by trying to live in and out of place at the same time (Kwon, 2002).
cies of a particular spatial practice (Kaye, 2000, pp. 3, 5 original italics). The walker in motion is transformed, and transforms, places.

A.2.12 To conclude

We have seen that hearing and listening are performed in a different way from seeing because sound is immersive and has heightened spatial and temporal characteristics. Equally importantly, listening awakens our awareness of the rest of our senses to make us more skilful at being poly-sensual. Using sound as a medium in art makes available different methods of creating art experiences, such as binaural recording, for re-imagining non-urban places in an embodied way. This was demonstrated in To Meander and back. By using both walking and listening on headphones, sound art walks complicate the experience of a place in art. The soundwalks in strange strolls introduced a particular type of disjunctive experience distinct from listening to music on portable CD players or iPods, or from having a conversation on a mobile phone. The Fremantlescape leaked into the awayscape. The two places were equally forceful and equally present. This leakage of sound and the general strangeness of the experience made the local place more wondrous.

Figure A.2.35 Meander: interdigitated traffic island, To Meander and back, 2005.

25 Of Janet Cardiff’s work, Scott notes, “You are central to the story, because it happens in your head. You unwittingly become a performer who completes a circuit both literally and metaphorically. As a silent voyeur you resist the category of the innocent bystander seen in many films; you are more like a walk-on actor who rarely speaks, but is crucial to the staging of any scene or exhibition. The audio-walks simultaneously spectacularize and subsume your body. You are a technologically enhanced living reference point and Cardiff implicates you emotionally and environmentally” (Scott, 1999, p. 5).
In Section 1.8.8 I defined the artwork as a mutually constitutive dialogue between the artist, the art object, the audience and the environment. This Appendix has shown that the sphere of the artwork is substantially extended in sound art walking projects. By walking, the bodies of each listener “performed” the artwork into existence: the artwork had a life beyond the dimensions of the physical art object. Transformations were experienced by the participants during and subsequent to the walk; and by passers by who chanced upon the participants walking in public spaces. The soundwalks were also transformational because they clearly imbricated the away place (of, say the walking-country) with Fremantle: neither the away place nor the local place were the same as they were before: each of the places (the here and the there; the local and the away) were transformed. The away place was changed because it was brought to the politico-cultural attention of the viewer/participant. The streets of Fremantle were perceived with fresh senses and unnoticed things were brought to our attention. Such a standpoint has implications for the aesthetics of places, and more broadly for the relationship between non-urban areas and contemporary urban life in Australia.

In summary the arguments of Appendix A.2 are:

- Hearing and listening are performed in a different way from seeing because sound is immersive and has heightened spatial and temporal characteristics. Equally importantly, listening awakens our awareness of the rest of our senses to make us more skilful at being poly-sensual;
- That using sound in art makes available different methods of creating art experiences, such as binaural recording, for re-imagining non-urban places in an embodied way;
- That the soundwalks introduce a particular type of disjunctive experience distinct from listening to music CDs on Walkmans or having a conversation on a mobile phone;
- That the soundwalks were transformational because they clearly imbricated the other place or awayplace (of, say the walking-country) with Fremantle: each of the places (here and there) was transformed; and
- That the sphere of the artwork is substantially extended in sound art walking projects. This is because of the transformations were experienced by the participants during and subsequent to the walk; and by passers by who chanced upon the participants walking in public spaces.