

Getting Around in Honolulu

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ABSTRACT The author, on a three month sabbatical at the University of Hawai'i, naturally engaged in participant observation on both academic roles at the University, and on living in Honolulu. Hawai'i is an attractive tourist spot, but is also an intriguing American/Pacific Rim city, filled with intriguing people and stories. During the time available, the author took notes, and upon reflection, noticed subtle changes from initial personal concerns to a gradual focus on managing in public roles and activities. This was followed toward the termination phase of the sojourn, by increasing attention to activities in the private sector. The subtle pattern of phase transitions may serve as a useful construct to extend to other fieldwork situations

INTRODUCTION

From the middle of August through November 2000, I lived in downtown Honolulu while working as a visiting scholar at the University of Hawai'i. As an anthropologist, I kept notes and made observations about both the locale, and about my own impressions and feelings. Subtle shifts from my initial attention to my personal needs towards varying roles in a more public capacity were followed by eventual changes to private activities and reflections. These phase transitions or changes provided an underlying timeline around which I characterized the events of my sabbatical retreat. This article provides some sketches of the fieldwork happenings and the processes noted.

BEGINNING FIELD WORK

As a nearly two decades resident of New Zealand, my most recent arrival in Honolulu seemed auspicious, in retrospect. I had passed through Honolulu a few times, travelling back and forth between my New Zealand home and my old home back on the East Coast of the United States, but I had never spent time to get acquainted with this marvellously and most ethnically, diverse, city midway between.

I was familiar with simple concepts like ocean side (makai) or mountain side (mauka) from experiences in Melanesia where the altitude and distance from shorelines had more meaning than north, south or other directions. Hawai'i is no different. In fact, the Hawai'ians have even added windward and leeward sides for O'ahu, as defined by prevailing wind directions. Directions are essential. I am of course fully aware of the cognitive and performance based necessities of adjustment to automobiles, driving on opposite sides of the street, steering wheels on opposite sides of vehicles, and right turn priorities in New Zealand that would and do drive Americans literally and figuratively around the bend.

On the first morning, I found myself sitting on Lemon Street, leisurely consuming a giant blueberry muffin, while watching the people of Honolulu wake up early in the morning. This might be a waste of time for some, but for me, the slow, almost jerky, movements trigger ideas and reflections aplenty. The morning rays of sun reach out like tentacles of an octopus, warming the streets and walls of giant hotels, while the people move around in sleepy mode, as with bees just beginning to stir in a hive. The intriguing part of the morning is always the collection of diverse early movers and shakers, that is, the laundry cleaners, the gardener with hose to water his precious lawn and bushes, the restaurant owner or operator, hoping to catch a few customers. Motor-scooters speed by, helmetless riders risking brains and bodies, to enjoy their self-made breeze. New Zealand provides heavy penalties for riding even bicycles without helmets.

The surfers have already been on the beach probably for hours. I would not know about that, for I need my sleep. Truck drivers haul their rigs into and out of the adjoining hotels, and then a few teen-age girls, apparently left out from the surfers brigade, wander by, laughing and flaunting their attributes for all to see and observe.

The parade continues, with buses reaching back and forth, bringing more activity. The street and the Waikiki Beach, just one road back from the action, awake.

Some of the delivery trucks are hard at it, Coca-cola, linen, supplies for the hotels, whatever. Some run engines to keep air conditioning operational, others just concentrate on delivering product. As the sun increases its intensity and range, the heat on the street begins to rise. Suddenly, a band of houseflies emerge, as if they had waited for a message directly from the sun. They arrive and flock to search for titbits, to begin their day of scavenging left-overs, recycling and speeding the decay of remnants. Cream coloured buildings stand tall, enlivened by a few potted scraggly plants to shield the eyes of the viewers from the drab and dreary. Down the way, coconuts too, stand tall with their majestic fronds gently swaying. Warm breezes flow. Yes, Waikiki does have magic even with far too much pavement, too many large hotels and way too many cars. Even when one is relegated to the back road, removed from the beach itself, Waikiki and Honolulu are hard to beat.

But, somehow, somewhere in the interim of life, my categories have shifted. The simple example I recall is from the hippie era when "hey dude" applied to anyone, even and maybe especially, elderly dignified, business type, males. In Hawai'i, my now New Zealand influenced categories such as personal/social, private/public, responsibility/obligation, have come to mean different things over the years.

The example that really hit home was from a walk in Ala Moana Park, where I saw people living in or under the banyan trees. Not entirely homeless, these people made use of the park, the warm weather, and their own ingenuity to create a place to reside. While the newspapers, television, and radio all extolled the wonderful economy of the 1990's and 2000's, these people were Americans, unemployed, rejected, and neglected, but not without a place to live so long as the banyan trees stood. Near my hotel too, I note the private swimming pool sits vacant at least 99 per cent of the time, while only ten feet over the fence are urchin kids, relegated to the street for their play space, and no-one, absolutely no-one else notices or cares. Mean-

while, the public canal nearby is so polluted that the health department posted a sign warning not to drink the water, not to eat fish taken from the water, and yet, I hear people talk about justice, fairness, and the decent society.

The United States has so very many opportunities in which someone, with power and vision, could intervene, could change the system. And the United States has so few, so very few, concerned people with the skills and foresight to intervene. My thoughts are of course that wealth is not just about money but also and perhaps more importantly about the ability to see what needs doing, the talent to act as a catalyst, and the compassion to recognize that we are all human beings. Yes, my categories shifted, radically, from those of my old country or origin.

GETTING ABOUT

The bus system in Honolulu has earned my respect for an ethnographically fascinating story. The shuttle from the airport was straightforward. Impressive, simple, and rapid, the taxis, shuttles, and buses carry passengers back and forth without any great problems, most of the time. But once in town and situated, I (RJG) asked a series of people (I for informant) about getting around:

Tourist Center Agent - Native of Hawai'i

RJG: How do I get from here to the Zoo?

I: The Bus - you can get a pass at the ABC Store, or pay, it is only a dollar. I'll look up the number of the bus you need.

RJG: No, thank you though, I would prefer to walk.

I: The Zoo is too far to walk, you can get the bus, just walk down to the corner. You will need to ask for a transfer.

Colleague at the University - a relative newcomer to Hawaii

RJG: I want to get back to town, down towards Waikiki. Can you tell me how to get there?

I: The bus, it is only a dollar. Do you know the number of the bus you need?

RJG: No, I plan to walk. I need exercise and it's a nice day.

I: Don't know about that. It's too far to walk, you will be better off taking the bus.

Hotel Receptionist - resident in Hawaii, 40 years old

RJG: How do I get from here at Waikiki to the Public Library?

I: The Bus - you only have to pay a dollar. The phone number to get information about the bus is on the wall, next to the phone. You can ring them 24 hours a day, tell them where you are and where you want to go, and they will tell you the number of the bus.

RJG: But, I want to walk. I need the exercise. Besides, it is a nice day for a walk.

I: But the library is too far. It's unwalkable from here.

Young woman on the street

RJG: How do I get from here to the University?

I: Well, it is over in that direction (pointing) but just over there, you get the bus.

RJG: But I want to walk. It should be only a few blocks.

I: It is only a dollar. Besides, it might rain. Look at the clouds.

Wife of a financial consultant - native of Hawaii

RJG: I have heard that the bus is the best way to travel around Honolulu. It is inexpensive, goes everywhere, and runs all the time.

I: We don't use the bus. I would not allow my children to ride the bus, it is just too dangerous.

RJG: I didn't know about any dangers. Can you tell me more, like what are the dangers?

I: The bus is just not safe. There are too many strangers, too many people who might steal or harm children. We would never use the bus.

Getting about in Honolulu depends upon knowledge of and use of The Bus. And it does not take that much knowledge, for you can call the bus company with almost any question and they will provide an answer, and each driver is a fount of knowledge and wisdom. Most are eager to answer queries, and all are used to tourists and their questions in varying languages. In fact, all day, each and every day, the drivers answer questions from people from all over the world who are trying to find

their way through Honolulu and Hawai'i. Some of the drivers are female, some tell stories to listening passengers, some make mistakes or wander off for a half hour meal without even bothering to tell their passengers that they will have to wait while they eat, and yet most are excellent drivers and superb information brokers.

People in Hawai'i are remarkably reluctant to walk, even for short distances. The climate might be one factor, but the culture is far more important. Many Hawaiians and visitors to Hawai'i are overweight, unused to physical exercise, and let us tell it like it is, lazy. The last thing they want to do is walk. The bus serves all who care to use it at a very reasonable price, and the buses are accessible to those in wheelchairs, the elderly, people with diverse disabilities, and the poor. I was surprised the first time when one of the many buses I rode in stopped, then got down and kneeled to enable an elderly person to get off more easily. How can a bus kneel? These buses are designed so that a hydraulic lift can lower and then raise the entire right front of the bus to make entry and exit more simple and easier. This accommodation to people is akin to a technological miracle, almost like one imagines an elephant helping people aboard. In fact the bus even has a rack on the front to store a bicycle so that if you get tired from pedaling, you can hail the Bus! A dollar a ride (and you can ask for a transfer), or \$25 per month, unless you are old or have a disability and can claim residency, then you can get a \$20 pass good for the year. The Bus has been acclaimed as the best system of transport in the entire United States!

However, before you become too enthusiastic about travelling by bus in Hawai'i, do remember that this is the United States - the world leader in economic wealth and in conspicuous consumption. The wealthy in Hawai'i, naturally, use only their own private automobiles, perhaps taxis in time of extreme need, and the super wealthy use limousines or helicopters. The rule is to avoid driving between 7 and 9 am, or from 4 to 6 pm. The queue continues if and when an accident occurs, or if the road crews decide to work on a ramp, or if someone breaks down, or if many other contingencies occur. Politicians are afraid to raise the question, how many privately owned vehicles

are too many? The automobile lobby, the oil and gas advocates, the auto repair shops, and other powers-that-be would not help the politicians with their next campaign if they blocked an ever increasing tide of cars. The enormous quantities of vehicles on the roads means that traffic jams, delays, and accidents are many, far too many. No matter how good the bus system is, and I confess that it is marvellous, the clogged up roads mean that you will have problems travelling about this fabulous place.

One of the really fascinating experiences is taking The Bus around the island. Again, for one dollar, or if you get a bus pass, you can ride about 4 hours virtually around the entire Oahu island. Even better, if you know where to stop, you can jump off, visit a beach or park or town, then reboard later and continue on around the island. The sights are many, the mixture of people travelling by bus is as always, diverse. I could not wait, so took this grand tour on a Saturday, starting around 9 am, concluding about 1 or 1:30 pm. Watching scenery and observing passengers kept me totally occupied, and completely fascinated. We went through the two tunnels on the Pali Highway to the East Coast - much wetter and geographically far more intriguing than Honolulu, along to the North Shore and then back via pineapple and sugarcane fields. I watched the driver lower the entire front entrance of The Bus to enable a fellow in a wheelchair roll on, then be lifted upwards by bus power to take up a space at the front. The same operation in reverse enabled him to decant at a Northern resort area. Children as always were fascinating as they regard The Bus as just a normal means of conveyance, and they ride without any indication about how special the bus really is. Shoppers, travellers, visitors, tourists, swimmers, and all sorts move freely from place to place, throughout Oahu, with The Bus.

After walking during my initial two weeks in Honolulu, I broke down and bought a pass - only \$25 and good for unlimited use of The Bus any time, anywhere, all day if I so chose. And, I rode to work, from work, for fun, and to explore, freely! The Bus is one great service that makes Honolulu unique. And remember, if you pay a dollar for The Bus, you can ask for a transfer, to extend your ride further than just one trip.

During the last month of my stay, several co-workers offered rides in their cars. Driving or riding on the other side of the road was difficult for me, after 18 years of "Down Under" experiences. The mental shift from left to right works at one level of safety after only a few days, but there are other levels that take longer. The luxury of riding in private cars as compared with the public bus system was attractive. Symbolically I think with that change that the shift from public to private was taking place. In addition to rides, my interaction with people, activities, and sites, changed from openness to all comers (public) to increasingly careful choices (private), governed by my decisions based on previous experiences.

Turf

The daily struggle for turf continues in Hawaii, just as elsewhere on the earth (Daws, 1968; Daws & Sheehan, 1970; Fuchs, 1961; Nordyke, 1977). Hawai'i of course was founded on its coast, and Waikiki's claim to fame depends on the fabulous beach. If you walk along the beach, you will quickly find the yachts, perhaps a thousand or so, given that I counted up to 870 plus berths on my walk. Surprisingly, most of the berths are filled, even on a Sunday. But some of the yacht world is private and reserved for the wealthy, not open even for observers or anthro-pologists wishing to study up rather than down. Exclusion from the Ala Wai Yacht Club is of course, de rigor. Even the remainder of the boats however, had their own air of exclusivity, their own fences separating them from the sidewalk, or guarded by a clutch of tropical plants so the passer-by cannot see what is taking place on board. The graffiti of catchy advertising or symbolic word-game names, represent a claim to identity and wishes unfulfilled. Some 99 per cent of the boats are in port, even on good weather in summer, thus these are not working recreational or living or fishing boats, only the physical manifestations of separate, individual dreams. Perhaps 5 per cent are anchored or berthed with evidence of people actually living aboard. Perhaps at any one time 2 per cent have tradesmen or owners aboard, fixing, repairing, or treating the wood, electrical systems, plum-bing, ropes, sheets,

engines, or the thousands of other tasks. The yachts are sleek and beautiful, utterly useless as functioning ships, and wonder-fully expensive whether to build, to own, to keep in a marina, or even to lease or rent for a day.

The values underlying these boats are exactly those so amply described by Thorstein Veblen many years ago: conspicuous consumption. Still, they provide jobs and a living for dozens of tradespeople, suppliers of paraphernalia, manufacturers of products, maintainers of security and space, and more. The economy of owning a boat, of renting or leasing a boat, or of even obtaining a berth can only be guessed at by an observer. Without becoming a participant, one watches, observes carefully, and guesses but the anthropologist and the writer are invariably unable to foot it with the wealthy.

The point is that ownership of a boat is akin to being a King in years long gone, with a retinue of supplicants who work at and on the Kingdom at a price. This enables the King and the trades people to get along together in an ever changing milieu - a form of tribute and distribution of wealth for work at relatively interesting tasks. Logic, rationality, or sensibility would tell anyone that ten or fifteen boats, capable of being rented for actual use on a daily basis, would serve the same functional purpose, but ahhh, who wants functionality in America? Display and grandiosity have become functional in their own right.

Along the shore and near the yachts, a flock of tourists emerge from the expensive hotels of Waikiki and Honolulu. They are invariably pale, proof of their long hours of overwork elsewhere in the empire's corporations. They are usually coupled together, white middle aged, middle class to elderly middle-upper class, almost always overweight. Their poor physical condition limits the extent of their stroll, the timidity of their approach to a new and unfamiliar territory makes their engagement somewhat distant. If they were in familiar territory, one can surmise, they would be domineering and downright ugly about their rights and privileges, but here, they are unsure of themselves. Still, they strut about, gawking, like important and distinguished fish but out of water.

Closer to the water, the bronzed surfers include

people of a wider age range than one might expect. Grey haired, balding, but still powerfully physically fit men fit right in with the stocky heavily muscled young men, so physically fit and so sure of themselves. They are seemingly at peace, both before and after their very personal and private encounters with the beautiful waves so visible just offshore. A few physically fit young females join in, graceful and bronzed like statues, muscled and confident with sleek tanned bodies. Tattoos and wetsuits seem natural and friendly in this arena, certainly more so than the business suits or tourist garb. Although a few groups of two or three surfers may sit and watch while resting, most of the surfers go forth solo, dismissing one of the elementary rules of water safety.

Another less noticeable tribe hides along the rocks and paths. Most ignore these hermits, and they too, ignore the tourists, the yachts and their denizens or owners, and the surfers. These are the fishers, solitary whether young or elderly. A few fisherpeople are middle age males, also a few are female. They sit comfortably on the rocks or the banks formed by sidewalks and walkways, and ply their lures to hidden quarry - out there. The rest of society leaves them free to meditate, to study their own thoughts and to create ideas. The others passed by, ignorant of the presence of fishers. Rare cases of acknowledgment by others include the standard query, "Did you catch any?" but such questions are guilty of missing the point, the real reasons for going fishing.

The rarest of the Waikiki tribes, because they are so few in number and so intent on hiding, are the anthropologists and the writers and the photographers, who observe, understand, capture, reflect, and ponder the meaning of life in Hawai'i, eventually to report to public groups at large elsewhere. They want not to be observed themselves, for that would interfere with their own work and role, and question their special place in the scheme of things.

Niches

One makes discoveries quickly and frequently in Honolulu. Jack in the Box, for example, is a restaurant with quirky advertising and superb

chicken sandwiches for .99 cents each (plus of course the 4 per cent sales tax in Hawaii). You can also get a large glass of ice water for free. The Subway is not an under-ground transport system but a take-away sandwich shop, specializing in 6 inch or 12 inch long healthy sandwiches for low prices. Be wary when ordering 18 inch sandwiches, for the price savings for a 12 inch are lost with greater volume. A variety of fillings and breads can be purchased, eaten within or taken away.

The benches along the Ala Wai canal are protected from the sun and the rain by overhanging branches and leaves of trees. There is little traffic and few passers-by, thus a sheltered work environment is available for free for writers, observers, and those who are thoughtful persons. You can sit to watch the fish swim and enjoy the shells going by with busy paddlers working so diligently that the paddles look like the legs of a centipede. You can also relax and let the almost constant breeze play with the leaves or surface of the water and your own hair and body surfaces.

Another niche was filled with a walk around Ala Moana Park. Memories of 18 years ago returned, when our family walked about on our way to New Zealand, and our daughter found two fifty dollar bills blowing around in the wind. Lucky child, age 4, way back then! Today, some of the striking visions include three military helicopters flying in formation, perhaps 30 boats and ships, the huge waves, ever changing, and the small group of people placing themselves into different postures. Their sign proclaims Falun Dafa, I would certainly hazard a guess that perhaps they are an offshoot of the Falun Gong. Indeed, the skyscrapers, mountains and clouds, seaward the ever present waves, blue water, blue sky. And, surfers, everywhere, waiting to catch their wave. Along the rocks, a couple of small rats ate away at the remnants of a puffer fish, later one bigger rat replaced them. Bullying is ever present. Wherever you go, it seems social hierarchies can be found. The little pigeons are ever present too, in fact they will come right up to you if you but sit quietly and offer them a gift.

I suspect the helicopters are practising the "missing man" formation- supposedly there will

be a parade this afternoon. I heard that they are honouring the 7 or 8 Victoria Cross medalists with a military celebration. Two choppers close together, a gap, then the third. They are big ships, must be Huey's, playing out over the ocean away from harm's way, perhaps also to keep their noise away from taxpayers.

The soil is red in Ala Moana Park, grass is varying shades of green, depending on the vicinity of water. How like the desert and oases. The trees are ever fascinating. I even saw a cluster of baobab trees, their huge trunks as massive as elephants, but their disappointing tops resembled the very opposite of the huge tops of the many giant banyan trees. Everywhere, trees were in flower, or blossoming, or fruiting or doing something to let the passer by know that activity was afoot. In a couple of the trees, near where someone was living in a banyan, I sat and watched, and soon enough, noted that a couple of pigeons were living just above me. In the neighbouring tree however, there were at least 30 or 40 all white pigeons or doves or something - very ethereal and surreal.

The people too, are so varied in colour, ethnic background, physical shape, and dress. One species, to be sure, but the variations tell the story of the richness of Hawai'i. Languages include Korean, Chinese, Portuguese, Japanese, English, Spanish, and perhaps native Hawai'ian, maybe even others unknown to me. Finding a hideaway space under a shade tree allows one to watch, undisturbed, to reminisce, without worry, and to relax. Work is done, for the week. Lots of walkers, a few joggers, a bicycle or two, and a few on the latest invention, scooters with small wheels (at \$US150 or so each)! With our exchange rate, that amounts to nearly \$NZ400!

Like the waves, each person seen varies, pulsing with energy from far off shores, arriving, fresh, powerful, ready to make their mark on the shores. Some bigger than others, and some with more coherence or depth, speed, or in better phase with other nearby waves. Upon arrival, they crash into or sink into the existing rocks, sand, walls, and beaches, shedding their energy, absorbing the local characteristics. Not really just a melting pot, rather Hawai'i is a conglomeration, an aggregate from many places, yet to be assimilated.

synthesized and integrated. But that is happening.

People were even playing horseshoes - pitching them back and forth, while in the breeze the smell of charcoal burning and barbecued food wafted gently. My mind could absorb just enough to whet my appetite and trigger nostalgic dreams of yesteryear - the family gatherings, the picnics of a more decent life in a gentler time and place. A couple of Japanese tourists tried hard to surmount the language barriers, telling me they were from Sapporo on Hokkaido. These two women had pale white skins, so pale that I asked about them if they were Ainu people, but linguistic barriers interceded. She put up 5 fingers to indicate they had been here 5 days, their visit so far. I replied with 12 fingers. Language plays such a major part in Hawai'i, and the remedy is English and pigeon and the passage of another generation.

A second trip through the park reveals much more than any initial tour. You can begin to see, not just notice the interesting events and happenings. The high mountains, then the lesser mountains, then the inner sanctum of the intellectuals scattered through the Woodlawn area in the high valley that runs from the mountains down to the University, and the ever present skyscrapers, the views are magnificent inland as much as off shore. Watching the yachts move in and out, the fisher-people casting their lures, the swell of waves - magic. In fact you can quickly become sure that those waves are not puny like those in the Atlantic - these are Pacific waves and come in from several directions, in sometimes splendid huge swells that merge before crashing onto the rocks and retaining walls. The power has to be seen and felt.

The Ala Moana Shopping Center

The Ala Moana Shopping Center represents another niche location within the city. You can find anything you need - including quiet places to sit and watch people, musical bands and girls dancing the hula, a couple hundred or so shops, restaurants, displays and so on.

Some call this Shopping Center the very heart of Honolulu, and indeed, many do make the Ala Moana their favourite place. The crowds are

thick, day and night, with shoppers, retailers, visitors, tourists, and, heaven only knows who, others wandering back and forth, up and down, on at least three levels of a monstrous complex. Huge, with hundreds of shops, restaurants, and business outlets, the Center also holds an almost continuous round of entertainers, singers, bands, hula dances, beauty shows, talk shows, and so on. The events and entertainment are free, but you do have to pay for the items you buy in the shops. No one stops and thinks that the overhead costs of products must be high so as to pay for the entertainers. Still, because of the concentration of shops, consumers, and resources, the prices are probably lower than they would be in the many small "Mom and Pop" shops scattered about Honolulu.

The central area is reserved for probably 500 seats at tables. Fast food outlets, perhaps 25 or 30 of them, surround the tables. Another two dozen eateries, fast food services, or restaurants are scattered about among the shops. You can buy just about anything, somewhere, in this maze, and indeed, you can even get quite lost. The trick is to keep an eye out for mauka and makai, and that will give you a clue as to which way to go next. The Bus stops at the Center, not only stopping, but having three major stops within the complex. You can get from mauka to makai or from one end of Ala Moana to the other by The Bus! Imagine that, if you can! Other malls, such as Kahala, duplicate, but don't quite equal, the sheer size and scope of Ala Moana!

Fish

Fish in the water, suddenly a flurry of activity and several flying fish leap - leap for their lives. A little old lady, clad with big hat and bandana and enough clothing to outfit a Sally, curses when her line and lure get hung up on a rock. Philosophically she wades out, tries to free her lure, but fails. She resigns herself to retying her rig on shore. A couple of men trudge by, one with a rod, the other with a lead weighted circular net. The net carrier spots a good locale, carefully prepares, crouches and crawls down to water's edge, then hurls the net. It settles and we on shore look down from our safe perch

to see one small sparkle reflecting light in the water. Retrieved, he has a 5 or 6 inch small fish, a morsel perhaps for food, perhaps bait for his friend. Certainly numerous fish are present all around.

When I was a boy, I remember learning to watch the minnows in various creeks, or along the shoreline of lakes and ponds. The colors, sizes, shapes, and movements combined to create an ever-fascinating kaleidoscopic vision, never matched by television or computer screens. Over the years, such observations have continued in one form or another, again and again. I am reminded also of my mother's advice and practice when I was sick about tossing bits of bread on the sidewalk, along the path, anywhere, to draw in sparrows to watch - another ever-fascinating engagement with nature and small animals.

On my last week, I returned again and again to the beaches, the Ala Moana Park, the line up of yachts, and spent time alone, reflecting and thinking and preparing to return to New Zealand. Like the Queen's Wharf in Wellington, the Honolulu yacht berths offer plentiful spaces to watch, although I have yet to make bread offerings. The schools of perch like fish that inhabit the canal are ever present. An occasional long pencil shaped fish reminds me of a pickerel or pike I once caught. The rounded black fish with gently waving black filmy fins reveals glimpses of iridescent blue lines along both top and bottom. A foot-long angel-fish darted by with its yellow, black, and white patches adding to the mystique of movement. Near some of the boats, congregations of jelly fish washed in by the tides were so thick that they could be mistaken for masses of jelly, but their opening and closing indicated they were still alive, pulsating and seeking nourishment. Several puffer-fish demonstrated a miniature checkerboard of black and white patterns on their square, solid, bodies. Still others darted about, intriguing, mysterious, and magical to this observer. Of course, my nostalgia trip built upon my past, yet still, some of the excitement of first discovery so readily apparent for children, remains. The unknown, the potential for drama, the wanting, indeed, the lust, to share the finds with others, adds to the attraction. Thoreau must have experienced similar feelings at his pond.

When you walk as far out on Magic Island as you can, a yellow fence keeps you from going out onto the rock jetty that buffers the park and the yachts from the oceans waves. Signs warn that waves may cover the rocks, and that you should go no further. Climb that yellow fence, then walk out as far as the graded surface allows, then clamber further yet over the big volcanic boulders. Eventually, near the extreme edge where the swells crash, you will find one bigger boulder that sticks up higher than the rest. There, you can sit yourself down albeit somewhat awkwardly, and yield all the worries, anxieties, problems, issues, details, and such of your own life, and simply absorb the wind, waves, water, sky, and events taking place in as serene and beautiful a spot as any in the world. I sat there, half an hour went by before I broke away from that initial trance, a couple hours passed by with no problem.

Diamond Head stands tall in one direction, the airport must be off in the other for I confess, I was so immersed in the initial direction that I forgot to look in the other. Besides, the setting sun lay there, and its brightness blocked my vision. Toward the shore, thousands of hotel rooms in gigantic skyscrapers, yachts from around the world, and people speaking diverse languages and thinking diverse thoughts - such is Hawai'i.

Life

The jarring entry to America and to Hawai'i was particularly difficult given the length of time I had spent away, the depressing value of the New Zealand dollar (.40 of a US dollar), and the nostalgia of "coming home" in one sense, but visiting a foreign land in another. Slowly life in Honolulu evolves into a routine, patterns that work to fill the days, and nights. Sleep, a leisurely breakfast in one's room, foods based on what was gathered the day before, the walk to the spot along the road, waiting for The Bus and the ride to the place of work. The last days though, go by especially quickly, highlighted with lunch, camaraderie with fellow workers, a ride home on The Bus once again. Perhaps a tour of the Ala Moana Shopping Center, a meal or a fast meal to take home, watching television, and so to sleep -

another 24 hours gone. Weekends, perhaps a bus ride, time to spend in Ala Moana Park, or leisurely read a book on the lanai of the hotel room begin to fade. The variations that began to emerge, the special occasions and unique events that made a difference to the routines, are nearly over. Honolulu always has ethnic festivals, ceremonial events, and parades, dances, and more. I only wish I had more time to attend, observe, even participate.

Reflections

During the 3 plus months of fieldwork, my attention switched from personal adjustment during the first couple of weeks, on to the many observations of life in Hawai'i, then slowly turned towards actively getting around in Honolulu. The Bus served as one such measure of changes, for my fascination with The Bus represented an active engagement with the city, and with the American way. Observation then, became participation. Although not discussed above, I also participated more and more in my worksite at the university. I began by giving talks, preparing research papers, and participating in meetings. Needless to say, I found that engagement satisfying. The reconnection with the society of the United States, and with Hawai'i, was relatively easy, even with some New Zealand perspectives that I initially thought, had changed me. Subtle cultural differences are intriguing, but with an inner core, a self, as American, this transition was easy and positive. The Bus and the engagement both with living in Honolulu and working at the University, offered proof positive that I took an active and full part in public activities. Participation for me was in diverse places and with a wide range of people, it was

intense, and most of all, it was meaningful. Toward the end of my stay, however, I found myself withdrawing from work activities, and I spent some time preparing for a return to my adopted land. Thus the 3 months divided into an initial phase of attention to the personal, a second phase of focusing on the public, and a third and last phase of preparation for departure - a time of seeking and desiring privacy. Could these phase transitions serve others engaged in fieldwork? Is there a standard psychological process that we go through in our sojourns in other cultures?

America has changed in many positive ways over the intervening two decades, then again, so have I. The re-connection between us triggers nostalgia, a sense of what might have been, if it had not been for the tragedies of the 1960's, the "me" generation of the 1970's, and the Three Mile Island disaster of the early 80's. The fears associated with TMI pushed us towards New Zealand, with its claim of being nuclear free. Now I am driven to hope and anticipate given the Presidential race. Can Al Gore get in?

That political luxury was not to be, but now, like a grandparent coming home after going off to another country, life is rich, time is short, and one must make the most of each and every day. Enjoy, enrich, energize once again.

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