

Umaña Tupuna

Dear Stronach Family,

March was an intense week of communal work on the field once again. After spending a couple of months mostly doing production and research work at home, returning to Easter Island was a difficult but exciting process. In my entire month there, I was able to finish collecting audiovisual material for the final video production, as well as to arrange the presentation of my communal work to the entire community in June and to collect some bibliographic material from the local library I was unable to collect during my first stay in Easter Island.

As I delved deeper into the themes about which I am producing videos, I realized that in order to represent the community to itself in a way that made justice to the wide diversity of thought and opinion within the community, I had to capture the testimonies and experiences of more actors than originally planned. During my month-long visit to Easter Island, therefore, I was able to conduct an additional 8 interviews, mostly with people who disagree with the vision of the clan whose members had, during my first season, comprised the majority of the participants in my audiovisual project.

Amongst the most interesting of my interviewees during my second stay in Easter Island were two scholars, a Rapanui historian and a long-time foreign resident scholar. I grew dissatisfied with the use of text to communicate a contextual narrative necessary for the coherence of the videos I was producing. Instead of text, I came to realize the necessity of spoken testimonies to make the contextual narratives in question more engaging and personal. I was fortunate enough to be able to interview Alfonso Rapu, a renowned historical figure in Rapanui who led the rebellion against the Chilean government that granted the Rapanui basic rights in 1964. Instead of presenting the context of the rebellion when pertinent in the form of a text, then, I will be presenting it by having a first-hand testimony of the protagonist of the movement. I was also able to meet a Rapanui narrator. The narrator's voice will be used for the contextual narratives that were not covered during the interviews with the two scholars mentioned above.

The other interviews that I conducted were with various members unique in their roles in the community. For instance, I was able to interview a cultural activist known for starting the initiative of placing eyes on *moai* [human monoliths] of several ceremonial sites, a practice that was crucial to the ancestral significance of the *moai* as the living faces of ancestors. This initiative, on which many of the other interviewees commented, will add an interesting layer of discussion to the heritage video. Similarly, I worked with another person who took me to the burial place of his older brother, whom his clan buried in their ancestral territory—another revitalized practice, where contemporary Rapanui men accomplish cultural acts that had been dormant for centuries.

Other than interviews, the rest of the audiovisual material I collected included shots that I will then mix with the interviews, especially those that did not meet the standards of a “dynamic” interview. Shots of the sort included certain places—both urban and rural—referred to by interviewees, as well as more generic images of places, animals, situations, and the like.

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As anthropologist Forrest Young showed in his dissertation research, contemporary Rapanui society comprises multiple discourses mapped onto a complex institutional landscape. My work so far has attempted to move through these boundaries, working with peoples in their capacities as cultural activists, representatives of the local government, elders in domestic spaces, and so on. The product will be three videos on three important contemporary themes relevant to debates of Rapanui society today: heritage, generational transmission, and cultural change. The “heritage” video deals mainly with the relations the contemporary Rapanui society has with past objects, including questions of property, affect, and utility. The “generational transmission” video shows material relevant to questions of contemporary oral tradition, language loss, and spiritual connections with ancestors. Finally, the “cultural change” video reveals the quotidian biographic past of those who are today elders and who lived through the major changes Rapanui society underwent from being an isolated enclave dominated by colonial power to being a democratic society negotiating its status as culture vis-à-vis bureaucratic control by the Chilean state and economic control by the international cultural tourism industry.

Each video is relevant to the interests of one or more audiences in Rapanui and their respective interests. A crucial goal of my second trip to Easter Island, therefore, was to define venues where to share the work with the community in June such that I could reach these multiple audiences. Here are photos of several of the venues where I have arranged to show my work:



Figure 1. Centro Cultural Tongariki. Photo taken by Pablo Seward. March 12, 2015. Easter Island, Chile.

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Figure 2. Liceo Aldea Educativa. Photo taken by Pablo Seward. March 07, 2015. Easter Island, Chile.



Figure 3. William Mulloy Library. Photo taken by Pablo Seward. March 22, 2015. Easter Island, Chile.

I was amazed by the receptiveness of the staff at each of these places. Fortunately, each institution caters to different audiences in the Rapanui community. For instance, the William Mulloy Library caters to local people most interested in bibliographic material and

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contemporary academic/artistic debates. The Centro Cultural Tongariki, on the other hand, is located at the heart of downtown and is often a place where people gather for cultural practice (music, for instance), as well as public debates. The Liceo Aldea Educativa, in turn, is an educational institution, where I will be able to attract the interest of students. A fourth, final venue where I will show my work is in an event sponsored by the Corporación Cultural Kahu Kahu O'Hera (not photographed). This NGO for the protection of Rapanui culture has a long history and lasting influence in the local community. My work will serve as the centerpiece of a meeting meant for the NGO to communicate its yearly initiatives to its members, as well as to induct new members into the NGO.

At each of these institutions I will present the pertinent video in the pertinent modality. At the William Mulloy Library I will organize a showing of the "culture change" video, which will count with a discussion panel and a reception. This will be in line with a local audience that regularly attends presentations of researchers showing their work. As of late, a lot of research has started focusing on the colonial as opposed to archaeological past of Rapanui, so my "culture change" video will fit this trend. At the Centro Cultural Tongariki, the idea is also to organize a showing, but this time the idea is for the video shown to be the "generational transmission" video and within the context of an event focused on several cultural performances (music, dance, folkloric games, etc.) At the Liceo Aldea Educativa, I have organized workshops with students in the tourism major, where I will show all three videos in the modality of video-editing instruction. At the annual meeting I will organize for the Corporación Cultural NGO, the video shown will be the "heritage" video. The idea is to use the debates exposed by the "heritage video" to foster conversations about where best to focus the yearly efforts of the NGO to protect Rapanui culture.

I am now in a brief trip to the U.S. visiting graduate schools. Concurrently, I am working on editing the additional material I gathered during my last trip to Easter Island. I plan to return to Santiago in mid-April and then work on the final production of the videos with Antonia, who will incorporate her illustrations. I will incorporate bibliographic material, including many early 20th-century photographs I was able to find in the local library, to the videos during this stage. I already have tickets to return to Easter Island in June, when I will be showing the videos in the above-mentioned venues. I plan to film all of the events I organize. The final goal is to create a website where all the material will be available and free for the local community to use, including videos showing the debates during the organized events. Ideally, the website will eventually function as an archive for audiovisual material concerning Rapanui culture, of which there is more and more. All the material will be available with Spanish and English subtitles, so that it will be open to larger publics in Chile and the rest of the world.

Once again, I wanted to express my gratefulness to the Stronach Prize for making all of this possible. I am excited to begin the final stage of my project, which is becoming more and more of a reality!

Sincerely,

Pablo