

# On the Road of the Winds: Journeying Across the Blue Water of the Pacific, and Along the Roads of Rapa Nui

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**Abstract** - In (1963) Koskinen first wrote about the strong symbolism attached to the "path" in Polynesian thinking. Clearly within Pacific societies, a disparate range of human experience is expressed and understood with regard the idea of movement through space as a dominant form of metaphoric extension. This paper continues this discursive framework and outlines an initial attempt to explore the idea of journeying as a transformative experience within Polynesian social life. Through considering the role of transformation within "road" journeys, a comparison is presented between voyages across the Pacific and journeying along the moai roads of Rapa Nui.

## Introduction

In the words of Patrick Kirch "the history of the Pacific is more than anything a history of voyages, and all that word entails: curiosity, courage, skill, technique, stamina, doubt, hope and more" (2000:392-3). That such voyages should be described as traversing 'the road of the winds' is an interesting characterization and one that influences the scope of this contribution. In this paper I wish to think about the nature of Polynesian journeying by both sea and land. This comparison may appear disparate but represents an attempt to draw out a better understanding of the role of journeying in the negotiation of pre-contact Polynesian social identity and its transformation. In particular, I suggest that within a prehistoric Polynesian context, journeying provided not merely a metaphorical medium for articulating strategies of change, but one based upon an altered embodied experience. My ultimate argument is that different forms of journeying by sea and land affected a phenomenological rendering of cosmology, thereby providing a physicality to otherwise transcendent concepts (Richards 2008).

My point of departure, however, is not the South Pacific, but the 1934 Academy award winning film, *It Happened One Night*. In this picture Ellie Andrews, played by Claudette Colbert, detaches herself from her wealthy background and embarks on a 'road' journey, from Florida to New York. Along the way she inevitably encounters an array of people, including an unexpected travelling companion Peter Wayne, played by Clark Gable. For Ellie Andrews, her passage along the road constitutes a life changing experience and when she ultimately returns home and is reinserted into her social context she is quite simply a different person (Cohan & Rae Hark 1997: 5). This personal transformation is a consequence of displacement and incongruence, in this case enlightenment is produced through exposure to a variety of people and situations along the road. Here, the 'road' represents both a revelatory and transformative medium producing, in Ellie Andrews, an altered understanding of both herself and the world she inhabits. Essentially, she becomes a wiser and better person and *It Happened One Night* captures an essence of journeying as one of transformative practice that leads to social and moral awareness in the context of relatively low risk.

This image of the 'road' as being a medium and metaphor of transformation is also present within the 1969 film *Easy Rider*. In this film it is the experiential nature of the road trip that is the primary 'vehicle' of portraying a highly metaphorical and allegorical journey. Interestingly, themes involving difference and the juxtaposition of social values are powerfully articulated through the vehicles of transportation: the 'chopper' motorcycles. Indeed, within *Easy Rider* the motorcycles can be viewed as highly charged symbols embodying the condensation of meaning that Turner (1967) attributes to 'dominant' symbols. To ride a motorcycle is also 'raw' and exciting, and produces a very different bodily experience to walking or travelling within an enclosed vehicle. Sitting astride their vibrating, powerful, silver machines, Captain America and Billy, with the wind in their faces, travel within highly varied and spectacular landscapes with broad open vistas. Unsurprisingly, a large proportion of the film is concerned with attempting to communicate this experience to the audience through extensive footage of the travellers riding along the open road. The physical experiences of motion, as opposed to metaphors of the road, are undoubtedly intended as a powerful discourse in the exploration of issues of change, difference and alienation.

For Captain America, played by Peter Fonda, and Dennis Hopper's Billy, the journey as a form of emancipation is at once illuminating and dangerous. As the voyage from LA to New Orleans to Florida, unfolds, the road gradually takes on a darker quality as the familiarity of the Californian desert is left behind. Strangers encountered along the route are progressively ambiguous and different, and consequently the journey becomes increasingly dangerous. As with *It happened one night*, the characters of *Easy Rider* are transformed by their experiences, but unlike the former the nature of this change is more risk-laden and complex than some form of social or moral enlightenment.

Ultimately, the very incongruity which facilitates the transformatory experience for the travellers, also provides the context of their demise as they are brutally murdered by strangers. Taken at its simplest, this is a result of social difference and the threat of the 'other'. However, their journey is teleological and failure is realised before their violent deaths occur and is succinctly voiced in the words of Captain America - "we blew it".

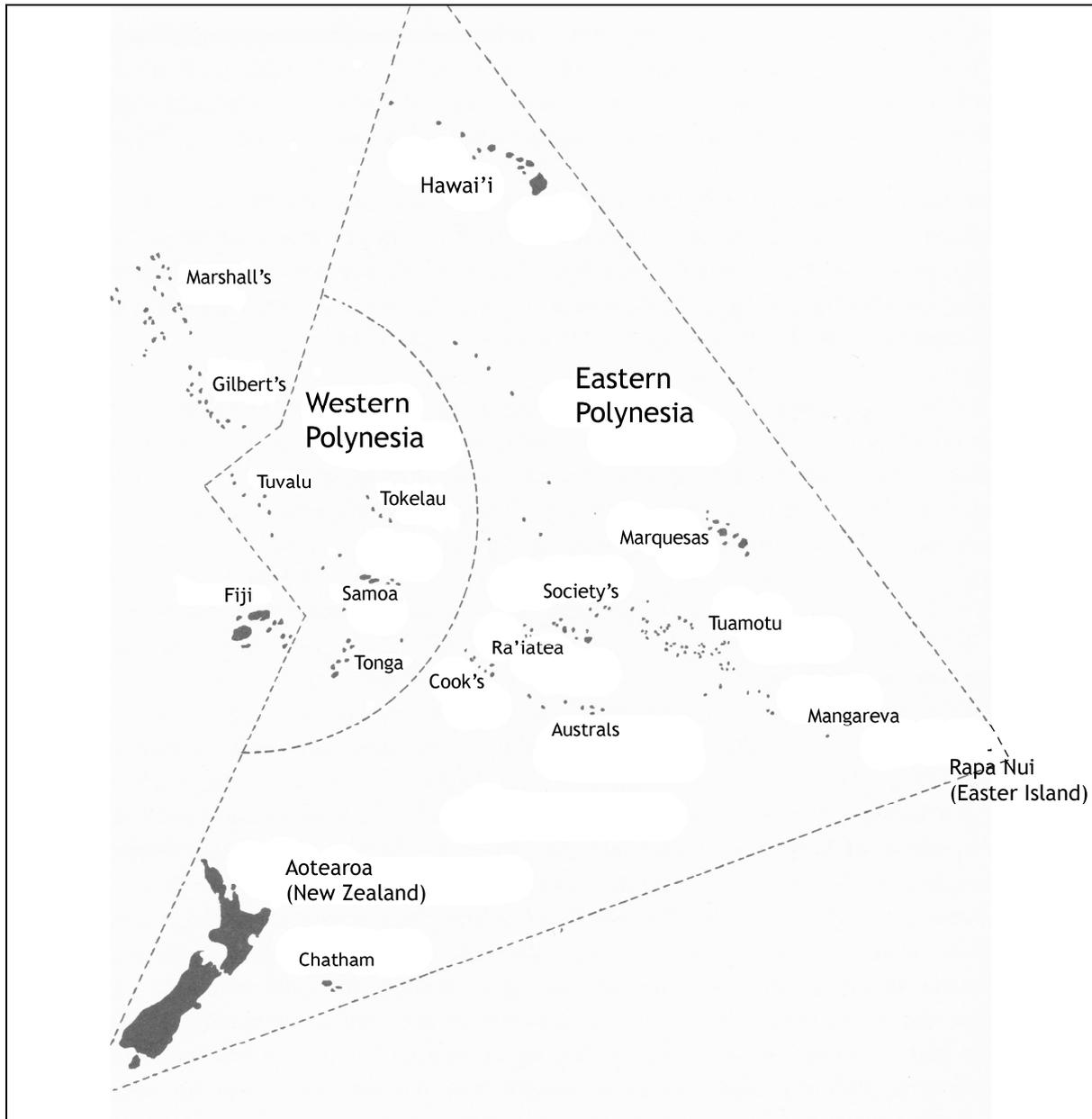
These differing views of the 'road' and the experiences of the journey that they portray are obviously grounded in the different historical contexts of the United States during the 1930s and 1960s. However, despite the substantial differences between these periods we see similar themes of 'the road' and 'the journey', through both practice and metaphor, being deployed in alternative ways to create extremely different but equally evocative social commentaries. Perhaps these themes also provide an interesting way to think about journeying both on land and at sea in other social contexts. In particular, an argument can be made that there are similarities between these two very different mediums of travel, in terms of categories of social identity and their transformation and manipulation.

## Voyaging Across the Pacific Ocean

The colonization of the Eastern Pacific is indeed a story of great ocean voyages (Kirch 2000:392-3). The 'Polynesian triangle' represents the traversing of vast stretches of blue water by Polynesian voyagers (Figure 1). Unsurprisingly, voyaging is a consistent theme in Polynesian oral traditions (e.g. Finney 1996:108) and is a characteristic of Polynesian life that forms a strong component in the construction of social identities. For example, many of the rich oral traditions defining Maori social groups are predicated on the voyages from *Hawaiki* to *Aotearoa*, the named canoes that carried them, and the places where they landed. It is these accounts, including the genealogies, which invoke and imbue a sense of belonging between people and 'place'. Material constituents of 'place', such as boulders, rock outcrops, etc., recognised as components of voyaging canoes or their occupants (Orbell 1985b:108-11), act as mnemonics of these fabulous journeys. Hence, origin voyages are a central feature of Polynesian life, being invoked through engagement with materialities of memory framed by genealogical discourses. A consistent theme is one of constructing social identities through specific and strategic recollections of a past that involved transformation through journeying. In this instance, such pasts are frequently traced back to eventful voyages from *Hawaiki*, and specifically, the particularities of island colonization. Given the clear inter-relationship between voyaging and the construction of social identity it is surprising that Finney (1991: 398) was startled by both the political expectations and the demands of his Polynesian colleagues for 'authenticity' within the *Hokule'a* project.

As voyaging had effectively disappeared by the contact period, assessing motivation for colonization of the Pacific triangle relied on ethnological accounts and archaeological assumptions. For instance, Denning tells us that "the main motives for less spectacular journeys were economics and war" (1972:121). More substantial voyages which transported 'micro-societies' were attributed to 'civil unrest' (ibid:124), created by population pressure, political competition, etc. (e.g. Kirch 1984:81-82). A more abstract reason that continually re-occurs in both traditional accounts and archaeological interpretation is the passion or love of adventure and travelling (e.g. Haddon & Hornell 1975:45; Firth 1936: 32; Irwin 1980:328). Could it be that what is consistently interpreted as the urge to adventure (Lewis 1994:17; Finney 1996:109), belies something altogether different?

Undoubtedly, physical engagement with the sea and seawater constitutes an altered experience of the world in terms of embodied practice. To be at sea imposes physical variation in stability and motion; hence, to be in or on water requires the employment of different bodily actions and human senses. The point to be made here is that bodily engagement with water as a substance, materially and experientially represents difference and becoming different (see Handy 1927:52-53). Such difference is a physical quality of the ocean voyage, when the stability of land is substituted for the constant motion of the ocean. The Pacific Ocean is far from stable and predictable.



**Figure 1.** The Polynesian triangle (after Orbell 1985a).

Dramatic changes in weather conditions can occur very quickly at sea, thereby creating uncontrollable and unpredictable circumstances that are not open to social intervention. Thus, apart from the obvious transformative qualities of (sea) water itself, storms at sea can create conditions where voyagers are removed from the world of social control to a chaotic and dangerous world of supernatural forces. For those voyaging through such conditions, if fortunate enough to survive, a return is consistent with the ritual process of re-aggregation. Interestingly, it is in this context of voyaging as rites de passage that the frequent role of storms and strange adventures within the theme of 'drift voyages', within traditional accounts of island colonization may be better understood (cf. Sharp 1957, 1964).

Another way in which social attitudes towards the sea become discernable is through the significance attached to the status of the voyaging canoe. Although ethnographies are slippery tools for archaeological understanding, one consistent observation of such accounts in the Pacific is the 'sacred' status of large ocean-going canoes. The *tapu* surrounding construction practices was not only to facilitate the successful passage from tree to canoe, but a series of categorical shifts that culminate in the creation of something 'otherworldly' (e.g. Best 1976:65-75; Handy 1927:282-296). Here, the completed canoe is not only an inalienable object embracing the labour and identity of the actual builders, but through temporal compression, embodies a form of transcendental practice. For instance, Handy (1923:154-155) records that tree felling for canoe hulls in the Marquesas was accompanied

by cosmogonic chants, thereby merging the creation of the canoe with that of life. In short, the completed voyaging canoe becomes of this world and another, and again this affects both the ontological status of both voyaging and voyagers. As the vehicle of transformation, the canoe constitutes the membrane that separates humans from the ocean, a context where present touches past. Just as the motorcycles in *Easy Rider*, the canoe is complicit in this process of becoming as is effectively demonstrated by their transmutable qualities on landing on an island shore (e.g. Orbell 1985b:109).

Traditionally, the homeland, Hawaiki, was situated beyond the western horizon. Hawaiki is also the home to which the dead return, importantly allowing them to travel in westerly direction. Yet, Hiroa (1954:65) records the following Chant of Kahu-Koka which reveals Hawaiki to be in the east:

Now do I direct the bow of my canoe  
To the opening whence arises the sun god,  
Tama-nui-te-ra, Great son of the sun,  
Let me not deviate from the course,  
But sail direct to the land, the Homeland

Blow, blow, O Tawhiri-matea, God of the winds!  
Arouse thy westerly wind to waft us direct  
By the sea road to the Homeland, to Hawaiki

What is clear about the ambiguity of the location of Hawaiki is the degree of contingency affecting ideas of directionality and ancestral geographies (Orbell 1985a). If we follow Irwine's (1992) suggestion of voyaging being a continuous form of practice, then as a homeland, a place of origin, Hawaiki is conceptually fluid and always in a state of becoming. As Denning (1972:124) observes, the Polynesian voyagers always appear to have total confidence in finding an island to the east (Figure 2), hence, to travel east was necessarily to continually encounter Hawaiki (Suggs 1960:87). As a place of origin, Hawaiki was necessarily transcendental, providing its inhabitants with god-like qualities and for those who departed on voyages an enhanced status by virtue of the 'journey' (Siikala 1996:47-8).



**Figure 2.** Eastwards, across the blue water of the Pacific Ocean.

If we consider voyaging as affording both transcendental and different bodily experiences, then the easterly Polynesian journeys across the Pacific Ocean represented a transformational process realized through conjunction with the past ancestors who discovered and colonized distant islands (see Richards 2008). In undertaking journeys that had traditionally occurred time and time again, the participants were doing more than merely replicating mythical structures as a form of ‘mythopraxis’ (Sahlins 1981). Voyaging may have been interpreted and expressed as ‘adventure’, but those who journeyed across the ocean were, consequently, “no longer ordinary people” (Helms 1988: 49), they were “renewed and made different” (Orbell 1985b:137). Accordingly, voyaging across the blue water of the Pacific, as a strategic form of practice involving an altered experience of the world, maintained the potency for social transition beyond the normal rules of traditional genealogical descent (cf. Siikala 1996:47-9).

If the ocean was conceived as ‘highway’, ‘road’ or ‘bridge’, then it also effectively drew disparate places and things together, thereby combining widely separated islands and ocean pathways within a single locale (cf. Heidegger 1978:354). This is a quality of the road that is only realised in its passage. I now wish to turn away from the ocean and look at the network of roads on Rapa Nui.

## Walking the Roads of Rapa Nui

Through the evidence of root moulds initially discovered in excavations by Mulloy and Figueroa (1978:22), and the botanical work of Flenley (1993; Flenley *et al.* 1991; Flenley and Bahn 2002:78-88), it is now known that a very different Rapa Nui was disclosed to the first Polynesian voyagers when they stepped ashore. The island appears to have been covered by swaying groves of palms with trunks up to a metre in diameter, reaching up to twenty metres in height (Van Tilburg 1994:47; Flenley and Bahn 2002:84). Indeed, when Rapa Nui was first inhabited, sometime between AD 800 and 1200 (cf. Hunt and Lipo 2006; Martinsson-Wallin 1998), it is likely that actual rainforest was still present on the island (Flenley and Bahn 2002:87).

Around the periphery of the island, there is some evidence that a coastal road or pathway was constructed, possibly at an early date (Routledge 2005:198-199). Known as the *Ara Mahiva*, this road may well have operated in similar manner to the *Ara Metua* on Rarotonga as described by Campbell (2006). The circuit of the *Ara Mahiva* will have created a spatial organization influencing the position of a number of coastal *ahu*. If mythically associated with the initial division and occupation of land by Hotu Matua, the founding ancestor, this road would at times take on ritual restrictions (cf. Campbell 2006:105-106). For instance, at times it may well have provided a route for ceremonial procession or for procuring materials required to construct local *ahu*. At other times it may have provided a local route for everyday routines where people meet, talk and visit one another.

In contrast to the *Ara Mahiva*, at some time during the florescence of Rapa Nui monumentality, cutting through the interior remnants of this vegetation, a new network of roads was constructed across the island (Figure 3). This network radiated from the great *moai* quarry at Rano Raraku to different coastal areas of the island (Love 2001; Lipo and Hunt 2005). With the exception of Love’s (2001) and Lipo and Hunt’s (2005) recent fieldwork, the latter are correct to point to the neglect the roads themselves have received at the hands of researchers. Indeed, virtually all the attention placed on roads has been focused upon their role in the transportation of *moai* from the quarry to *ahu*, thus, their being named ‘transport roads’ (e.g. Van Tilburg 1994:137), or ‘*moai* roads’ (e.g. Love 2000:118).

Today, the roads are becoming increasingly difficult to identify as island land-use patterns begin to change rapidly and sections of the roads are destroyed (Charles Love and Terry Hunt pers. com.). The road network was effectively of monumental status and its construction would have been a major undertaking involving much labour. Yet, it was virtually invisible when Routledge visited the island in 1914-15:

“From the beginning of our researches we had felt certain there must be an old road to be traced; but for many months we looked in vein, and the manager who had lived for many months on the island could throw no light on the matter. It was finally by accident that its position dawned on us. A lazy ride one Sunday afternoon took one of us to the top of a small mountain. The sun was getting low, and with the light thus just right the track was seen clearly. It could be traced shallow cuttings through the higher portions of the route and slightly raised causeways over the lower parts. At intervals along this route lay the statues. We subsequently rode over the track, and found that while in certain places it disappeared its general trend was indisputable” (1917: 331).

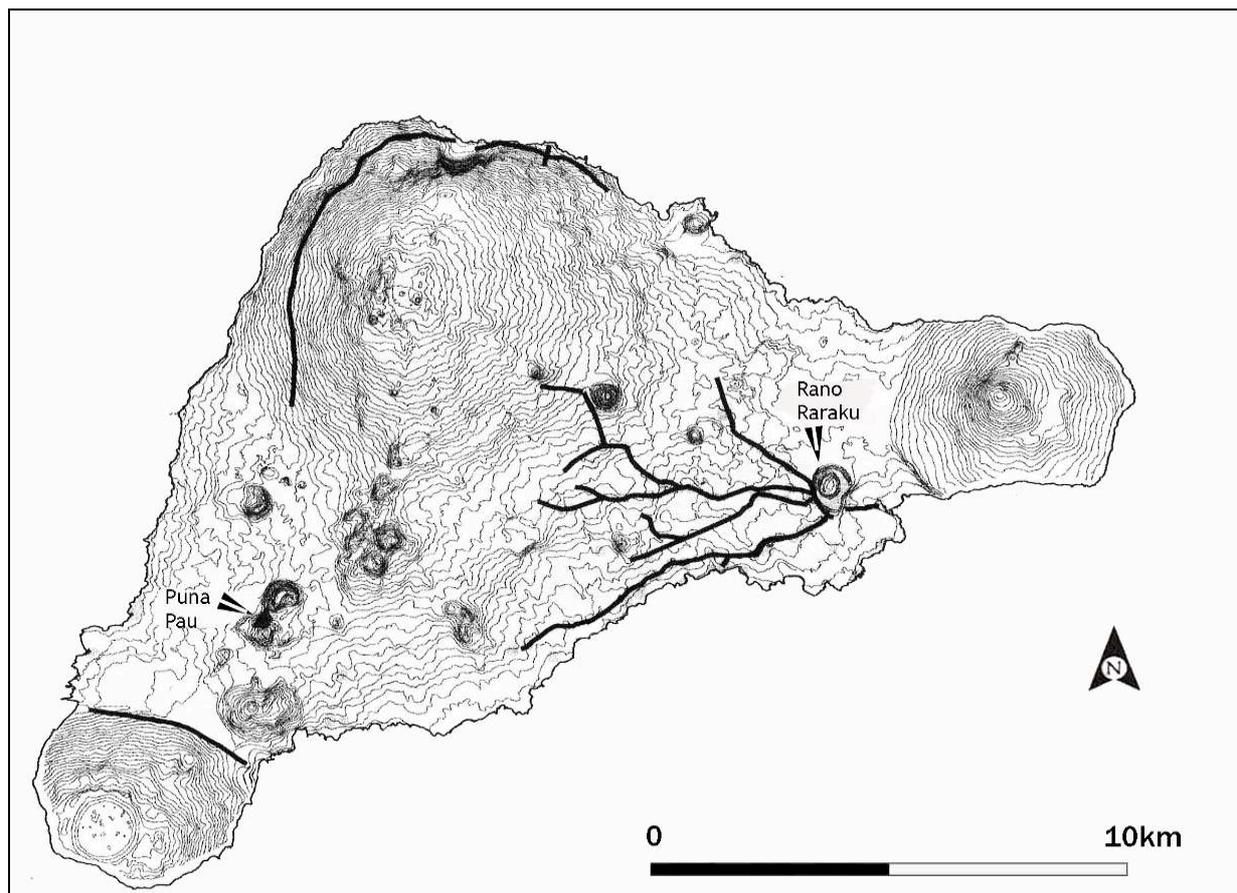


Figure 3. Prehistoric road network radiating from Rano Raraku (after Lipo & Hunt 2005).

The variability of road visibility noted above may well be partly a product of differential land-use and natural erosion. There is, however, some evidence to indicate that divergence in the form and visibility of different road-sections across the island may be a consequence of differential construction. For instance, along the better-preserved sections, particularly the southern section to the east of Akahanga (Figure 4), the road appears in clearly defined linear stretches, concave in cross-section, and uniformly edged on either side by lines of curb stones. In contrast, when Charles Love (2001:3) excavated a road-section further west at Hanga Hahave (east), not only was the route indeterminable, there appeared absolutely no definition to the road nor its original location. Moreover, in Lipo and Hunt's (2005) mapping of the road network, the most clearly traceable sections are those in close proximity to Rano Raraku, the *moai* quarry (Figure 3). As noted above, such differential preservation will partly relate to land-use variation, particularly across the southwestern area of the island where land has been under cultivation for a number of years. However, this should only account for discontinuous sections within those areas of more recent disturbance, not the variability present in the lengths of road situated elsewhere. Instead, this architectural variability is suggested to relate to differential construction regimes operating in various areas of the island.

Over the years, some effort has been expended attempting to recreate prehistoric territorial zones on Rapa Nui (e.g. Stevenson 1986; Shephardson 2005), or their occupation by corporate units (e.g. Sahlins 1958; Van Tilburg 1994:86-96). This procedure can be criticised at a number of levels, not least concerning the actual fluidity of social identity and the corresponding permeability of physical boundaries. Nonetheless, we can assume the presence of social differentiation within the island and that social groups maintained some form of spatial definition. Indeed, it is suggested that it was through attachment to land, as opposed to the occupation of clearly 'mapped' territories, that prehistoric Rapa Nui identity was articulated. The roads were not built within neutral space but within a highly structured and nuanced landscape. Therefore, the routes taken by each road would have affected and transgressed the homeland areas of many social groups; groups that may be in a highly volatile and competitive relationship (Vargas 1988:133; Lipo & Hunt 2005:166). Under these circumstances, the actual act of construction would have provided a potent mechanism for the negotiation of social identities. Hence, the altered appearances of the roads in different areas would have been a visible manifestation of this strategy.



**Figure 4.** The southern road section, east of Akahanga (note the curb-stones lining both sides of the road).

Regardless of their frequency of use, the roads created an altered spatial ordering to the Rapa Nui world. There can be little doubt that the roads were utilized for the movement of *moai* from Rano Raraku to particular *ahu*, since the roads appear to radiate from the quarry and lead to monumental complexes. However, if we reverse this view, because of the ‘dendritic’ nature of the road network each road segment runs directly from a specific ‘homeland’ to Rano Raraku. As Lipo and Hunt observe, “each region (potentially related to individual social groups) had their own road...” (2005:166). As all roads lead to Rano Raraku, the quarry is effectively presented at the centre of the Rapa Nui world: providing an axis mundi. Geographically, however, Rano Raraku is not at the centre, it is actually positioned in the eastern area of the island (see Figure 3).

There is a tendency in discussions of the quarrying at Rano Raraku to see *moai* production as a form of ‘industrial’ procedure involving several stages of production (e.g. Skjølsvold 1961:366-369; Flenley and Bahn 2002:116-119). In this interpretation, initial work involved shaping the *moai*, mostly in a supine position. Second, they were removed to the base of the volcano and erected, where, their backs were subsequently carved. Finally, the *moai* were transported to awaiting *ahu*. In commenting on the imagery of Rano Raraku, Thor Heyerdahl concludes, “we are left with nothing but a series of production stages” (1961:504). However, Heyerdahl (1958: 86), also describes Rano Raraku as a ‘birthplace’ of the *moai*. Certainly as a place of creation, in the form of shaping and producing *moai* from the rock, Rano Raraku was clearly a place of potency and sanctity, of great *tapu*.

Among others, both Routledge (2005:178) and Skjølsvold (1961:365) have commented on the sub-division of the Rano Raraku quarry into compartments, niches or chambers, or quarry ‘bays’ (Hamilton *et al.* 2008). Indeed, the discrete and exclusive nature of this architecture (see Christino *et al.* 1981) is remarkable for its impracticability in terms of the quarrying process and *moai* extraction. Suffice here to note that the actual quarry is not simply a single entity but a complex of discrete bays, each having specific routes of access and exit (Figure 5). Originally, the approach to many bays was adorned by associated standing *moai* (Routledge 2005:189; Van Tilburg 1994:146; Hamilton *et al.* 2008). To labour at Rano Raraku has been described as ‘sacred work’ by Van Tilburg (*ibid*). Clearly, the practices surrounding the carving and creation of *moai* can be likened to the *tapu*-laden ‘consecrated industry’ (Handy 1927:282) or ‘sacred labour’ of constructing Polynesian war and voyaging canoes (*ibid*:292-296). Hence, to ‘go to work’ at Rano Raraku involved engaging with a highly structured form of architectural representation which was embedded within discourses of cosmogony. Just as Handy (1923:154-155) describes labour being choreographed by cosmogonic chants within the context of Marquesan canoe

building, so equally potent ritual chants and songs may have accompanied the work of creating *moai* at Rano Raraku where their carving was referenced back to the creation of life.



Figure 5. Rano Raraku showing quarry bays and *moai*.

Stepping onto the road in Rapa Nui, immediately effected a fusion of homeland and quarry. Given the position of Rano Raraku in the eastern area of the island, and that much of the habitation occurs to its west, a journey to Rano Raraku necessarily involves travelling eastwards. As the road is traversed, so a number of intersections are encountered where separate roads, running from other places, conjoin with the main route. To walk eastwards along the road is therefore to physically experience a conjunction of people and places that are spatially segregated but genealogically related through lines of descent. Such an act is not simply to experience a spatially ordered convergence of different social groups. It is also metaphor and mnemonic; to walk the road in Rapa Nui is to participate in an architecture of memory. The road therefore provides a physical imperative to the linguistic conjunction of pathway and genealogy lines of descent as embodied in the Polynesian word *ara* (Siikala 1996: 47). As vistas open and close, and conjoining roads and monuments are passed in succession, so mythical time conflates. Here, the journey spatially retraces, otherwise abstract, genealogical lines of descent and so as the road is trodden, the past is revealed, as are the social relationships that comprise the social world of Rapa Nui.

As the quarry is approached so the roads converge to form at least five main routes advancing from the west. While small undulations shape the local topography, the approach to Rano Raraku is one of ascension. It is also in the main an easterly approach with all the associated auspicious connotations of moving in such a direction (e.g. Elbert 1959:148). Along these sections, the Rapa Nui roads were undoubtedly curbed by stones. This degree of definition provided an enhanced formality which essentially prohibited divergence of movement from the road or any transgression of its boundaries. It also introduced a different spatial order to the Rapa Nui world and gives rise to a 'roadside': a liminal space that is necessarily experienced in an ordered manner as the road is traversed (cf. Campbell 2006). Consequently, as Raitz (1999), observes, the architecture of this zone of experience "captures and mediates social and political relationships of the human world", and provides a potent architectural reservoir for grading space.

Often, described as 'in-transit' (e.g. Van Tilburg 1987:33), many *moai* lie apparently abandoned along the network of roads (Shephardson 2005:171). On one road alone up to 27 statues were observed in 1915 by Routledge (2005:194). Through excavation, Routledge (ibid:195-196) eventually concluded that many of the *moai* had been set upright adjacent to the roads, facing away from the quarry. Heyerdahl's excavations

(Heyerdahl *et al.* 1989:45-56), confirmed this occurrence where at least one roadside *moai* was found to have stood upon a stone platform. A similar ‘hard-standing’ of stones was located beneath another *moai* associated with the Akahanga road segment (Patricia Vargas pers. comm.). As Routledge evocatively observes “Rano Raraku was, therefore, approached by at least three magnificent avenues, on each of which the pilgrim was greeted at intervals by a stone giant guarding the way to the sacred mountain” (2005:196).



**Figure 6.** View of Rano Raraku as approached along the southern road.

Advancing towards the quarry, single roadside *moai* give way to groups of *moai*, apparently flanking each side of the road. This architecture serves to grade space, and by default incrementally transforms the ‘spiritual’ state of a person approaching Rano Raraku (Figure 6). This monumental order also acts as an mnemonic provoking memories of known and named ancestors in a sequential and structured manner. Here I have described the journey to Rano Raraku. This is because all the attention on the roads has been from the point of view of using the routes to transport *moai* away from the quarry. Of course, when leaving the quarry a process of reversal is effected whereby people walk back to their daily lives and are re-aggregated back into the community – albeit in different state.

## Conclusion

As Helms reminds us, “long-distance ‘voyages’ in the guise of ancestral journeys into time need not be limited to sea travel” (1988: 47). This is suggested to be exactly what ‘being on the road’ in Rapa Nui entails. Just as was suggested for Ellie Andrews in *It happened one night*, and Captain America and Billy in *Easy Rider*, the ocean voyagers sailing along the ‘road of the winds’, searching for Hawaiki, and those who walked the roads of Rapa Nui, were necessarily transformed by their journeys. Within the Polynesian world, journeying can be understood as a process of becoming, where past, present and future fuse within the social transformation of the actual journey. Here, the transformative properties of blue water, or the imagery of the open-road, are not simply metaphors of change and difference. Nor do social meanings totally mediate the experience of the journeyers. For instance, the materiality of the sea, from the smell of saltwater to the motion of the vessel, physically creates an altered form of bodily experience (see Richards in press).

Walking is also a very particular form of physical exercise, where posture, locomotion and purpose combine to provide a very specific experience of the world (Ingold 2004). Such an altered state of being is equally achieved through “the experience of the road as one of displacement and incongruity” (Robertson 1997:276). To approach the quarry at Rano Raraku represented an act of remembrance, a journey back in time, back through lines of ancestral descent powerfully mediated through the convergence of roads and visually punctuated by monumental architecture. Accordingly, to gain access to the quarry was to participate in a form of ordered regression to pass before the eyes of the ancestors, and to go to the very place of their creation – be it Rano Raraku or Hawaiki.

As archaeologists, we privilege material culture and reify sites and ‘place’. In *Easy Rider* a substantial proportion of the film is given to the experience of motorcycling along the highway and the ever-changing vistas

of the road. Here, it is suggested that it was through the phenomenology of journeying, either along the roads of the sea or land, that people in the Pacific negotiated the crucial transformations that embodied their journeys through life and death.

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