# Movie Night Fall 2015

**Philosophy 100, 244 Danielson**

Rapa Nui (1994)

*Here are questions you might keep in mind while watching the film. Since you are writing answers because you did not attend the film, please answer one or more of the questions (but no more than 3) with a two-page response. You have until the date of the next film to submit your responses.*

1. What is the moral of the story?
2. Scarcity issues create conflict for the clans on the island. How does scarcity underlie modern ecological and geo-political issues? In other words, how does the situation on Rapa Nui relate to the modern world?
3. What does this film tell us about interpreting the desires of the gods? What does it tell us about trying to determine how we should live our lives?
4. Examine the role of women in the film. When Jason Scott Lee’s character, Noro, informs the leader of his clan that he wants to marry the “short eared” girl, Ramana, his leader says “Can’t you just take her and be done with it?” Does this reveal a misogynist culture treating females like property? Compare the treatment of women in “Ex Machina” and “Rapa Nui.” (Feel free to include how Ramana is treated like a prize for the winner of the “Birdman” competition.)
5. Thomas Hobbes, in his book Leviathan, argues that groups of humans, without a leader, will eventually resort into a war of all against all. He says that such a time of war is one in which individual lives are “Solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.” How are Hobbes’ ideas on display in the film?
6. Are the two young people, Ramana and Noro, who leave the island at the end of the film similar to Adam and Eve? How so? How are they different? Are the two leaving on the canoe at the end of the film similar to Ava at the end of the film “Ex Machina”? Why or why not?
7. If the island were ruled by females and had a Goddess centered religion, would things have developed as they did? Discuss.
8. Jared Diamond, in his book Collapse, argues that there are similarities between the destruction of habitat on Rapa Nui and the way modern industrial societies are destroying our environment. Given the possible parallels between the inhabitants of Rapa Nui and us, what kinds of steps we ought to take to avoid a similar outcome?
9. Rapa Nui is a small island in a vast ocean. The earth is tiny planet in a vast space. Do these relative similarities provide a way of thinking about the Earth which can help us avoid a similar end?
10. Do we have anything in the modern world which is similar to the Moai on Rapa Nui / Easter Island? Why are these constructions similar to Moai? (Clearly I do not mean large statues of human faces. Rather I am referring to what the Moai represent.)
11. Explore the class distinction between the different groups of people living on Rapa Nui. You can almost call one group the “working class” and the other the “elite or ruling class.” (Marx would call them the proletariats and the bourgeoisie.) Once those distinctions are in place in a society, why are they so hard to undo?
12. Discuss the way the leader of the Long Ears is free to interpret any event as being a sign from God: e.g. the lack of the White Canoe’s return signals that the building of the Moais is insufficient and that what they need larger Moai with hats. Are there any limits to such interpretations?
13. What kind of ethical system is in place on Rapa Nui? How well does it work for the inhabitants?