Rapanui Diaspora

Rapanui (Easter Island) has a unique image in the European imaginary that has drawn Europeans to the place since 1722 when a Dutchman first saw it and named it. The centrality of the Rapanui imaginary has permitted Islanders to marry people from many American and European countries, spreading themselves over the globe in a personal version of that historic vision. Unlike, perhaps, other migrants, the Rapanui goal is to bring resources back to their island and not emigrate from it, so a frequent phrase is: "Marry me, marry my island". Some cases of Rapanui living in Europe will be explored to show how globalization has at once fragmented Rapanui vision of themselves and enriched it. I use Walter’s concept of “Topolepsy” to understand better Rapanui relations with their island.