The main character of this children’s book is Tou-Ema, who won the birdman competition and is chief of the long ears. Another young man, Kontua, also wants to win the race and tries to cheat, but Tou-Ema is the winner. Kontua meets with some friends and they try to kill Tou-Ema by pushing him down the cliff but Tou-Ema lands on Motu-Iti. The seagulls choose him as a leader and follow the movements of his hands so he decides to punish the people on Rapa Nui by sending the seagulls to destroy houses. The attacks get stronger and Kontua confesses what he has done. Then people notice someone on Motu-Iti and assume that Tou-Ema is still alive. Kontua is sent to Tou-Ema to apologize and to ask him to come back as their chief. But before Kontua reaches the island, Tou-Ema sees that the seagulls are very aggressive and he raises his arms to warn Kontua but the seagulls take this as a signal to attack. Tou-Ema returns to the island to the top of the volcano so he can warn everyone if the seagulls attack. His girlfriend, who always believed that he was still alive and innocent, brings food to the top of the volcano. One day she doesn’t notice the warnings and protects herself with a piece of wood that looks like a face and the seagulls do not attack her. So Tou-Ema tells everyone to make a mask because the seagulls fear the features of the face. Then Tou-Ema asks the young men to carve the huge stone figures with eyes looking towards Motu-Iti to keep seagulls from attacking the island.

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The Polynesian Connection
by Blake Edgar.

This item in the recent issue of Archaeology Magazine hit a nerve with this reviewer because it touches on two areas of personal interest: Polynesia, and the Chumash Indian culture of coastal California. Edgar’s article describes research by archaeologist Terry Jones and linguist Kathryn Klar suggesting that Polynesians, probably Hawaiians, reached the coastal area occupied by the Chumash Indians sometime around AD 700. The connection is suggested by parallel technology – sewn plank canoes – plus linguistic similarities (for the names of the canoes).

As may be expected, this is a controversial concept in most of the archaeological community, but it has the backing of Patrick Kirch, and this connection was also seriously considered by the late anthropologist, Robert Heizer. The sewn plank canoe of the Chumash appeared suddenly, and was the only such craft in all of North America. The trip from Hawai’i to California and return would not have been an unusual one for the Polynesians of that time. It all makes sense to me!