

NGARU: A CULTURE HERO OF MANGAIA

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The hero, Ngaru, appears in a cluster of oral traditions recorded during the mid 19th century in Mangaia, the southernmost island of the Cook Islands. These traditions take the form of a sequence of stories, with accompanying chants and songs. They retell Ngaru's struggles and triumphs against a series of human and non-human adversaries. In this sense they resemble a hero-cycle: "an oral account of the biography of a hero" told in prose form, and interspersed with various chants as well as songs (Luomala 1940: 367, 1971: 22).

The prototypical hero (from the Ancient Greek *hērōs*, or plural, *hērōes*) for most human societies is the culture hero (Bravo 2009: 13, Meadows 1945: 241). These culture heroes appeared at or near the beginning of the world, usually after the initial creation period (Bacwaden 1997: 329, 333, Cunningham 1997: 164, Du Toit 1964: 315, Gay 1983: 373, 377, Jones 1995: 130). For early Greeks and other peoples, such heroes possessed an "extrahuman status", being frequently descended from a union between a human and a god, which enabled them to undertake feats of superhuman strength and courage. The dual descent from divinities and humans is the distinguishing mark of a culture hero, making them a kind of "demigod" (e.g., Bacwaden 1997: 340-41, Bravo 2009: 13-15, Ekroth 2007: 101, Gay 1983: 377, 384, Kirk 1974: 26). These heroes existed in an era when human beings might still lack certain physical features, and were a small population who lived in a confined or inappropriate place, making do with an incomplete set of key cultural elements (e.g., Bacwaden 1997: 330, Du Toit 1964: 315, Scott 1964: 93). They remained a work-in-progress, awaiting someone capable enough to make the final important changes. In the following Ngaru cycle, for example, the hero seems to live in a human-like world but one strongly dominated by the spirit powers, where the human dimension has still not been fully formed or developed as a cultural and social reality. As a result, people remain very vulnerable, unable to assert themselves in the face of those powerful creative forces that had so recently brought the world into being.

Into this volatile world, the culture hero appears, as a "benefactor" who will strengthen the human dimension, at the expense of the sacred (Klapp 1949: 21). The hero for many societies is "the bringer of culture and the source of uniquely human institutions", such as agriculture, fire and language (Gay 1983: 373; also Bacwaden 1997: 332, Jones 1995: 129). Like the great Polynesian culture hero, Māui-pōtiki, he is "a transformer who changed the facilities of the world which others had already created" (Luomala 1971: 29).

The following presentation of the Ngaru cycle reproduces a 19th-century Mangaian prose narrative about this hero (Mamae n.d.a). A comparison of handwriting confirms that the author of the prose text is the scholar and churchman Mamae of Ngāti Vara (c. 1810–1889), who most likely wrote it for his colleague, William Wyatt Gill (1828–1896) of the London Missionary Society. During Gill’s service on the island, between 1852 and 1872, the two men not only worked together as ministers, but also collaborated to record and publish songs and stories about the ancient world of Mangaia before the arrival and acceptance of Christianity in 1824. In addition to Mamae’s narrative about Ngaru, Gill himself wrote an English version of the story. In places that text clearly shows he had access to other versions in addition to Mamae’s. These were most likely told to him as oral traditions which he then retold in English for publication. For the story of Ngaru he presumably brought together all the story elements he heard at different times into a composite account. Arguably therefore, Gill’s story is just as important a part of any ancestral inheritance as Mamae’s since it contains knowledge told by various anonymous Mangaians and bequeathed to Gill to write down for posterity. He did, however, add some minor textual elements, not found in Mamae’s version, intended to suit the cultural values and reader expectations of his English audience. Although Gill states elsewhere that he retells stories “without improvement or elimination”, he does modify them to exclude mention of sex or excretion, to refashion the depiction of women, and to limit the occurrence of Mangaian names (Gill 1984: 8, Reilly 2003: 14, 2009: 33, 39-40). Similar kinds of modifications were made by 19th century Pākehā editors of Māori stories (Reilly 2004: 29-30).

The following presentation reproduces Mamae’s manuscript, along with a translation. The text is divided into a series of episodes or stories within the cycle. Each episode is followed by a discussion of Gill’s version of the same account and an explanation of any obscure references.

Before providing the text and translation a few observations about Mamae’s language seem warranted. His narrative style tends to run verbs together by omitting many pronouns and conjunctions, thus giving his writing a dynamic, action-oriented tone. The economical approach to language means that in many places his text is quite cryptic, with content barely alluded to. For an outsider, it is hard to understand what is going on. Such linguistic liberties suggest that Mamae confidently assumed his audience, including Gill, possessed sufficient prior knowledge to fill in the blanks. These qualities of his prose writing reflect the origins of this story in the oral tradition that lies beneath this version, including the short, almost abrupt turns of phrase, the allusive tone, the fast-paced drama and the profusion of direct quotations. Such elements of this narrative resemble the kind of language used in

Mangaia's song poetry. This may not be altogether a coincidence since Mamae himself acquired his own extensive knowledge of Mangaian history from the lips of his grandfather Koroa, who was an acknowledged master in the composition of songs (e.g., Gill 1876a: 270).

Mamae's extensive body of writing suggests he wanted to show others, like Gill, and perhaps a younger Mangaian generation, exactly what the old pagan world was like. Gill himself was keen to correctly record such knowledge, partly for its own sake, and in part to highlight just how changed the people were in his day (e.g., Gill 1876b: 36, 1984: 8-9). The words Mamae chose, however, reveal how much his generation already spoke and wrote using a mixture of languages. Words from *te reo Rarotonga* 'the Rarotongan language', like *kāpiki* 'call' or *pikika* 'a lie', appear in place of their equivalents, *tūoro* and 'amo, in *te tara Mangaia* 'the Mangaian language' (Kōpū Rouvi pers. comm. 10 February 2015). Such new linguistic forms followed on from the acceptance of Christianity which had brought in its wake access to other Polynesian languages and a Bible translated by Rarotonga-based missionaries.

Some changes have been made to Mamae's account in order to bring it into line with contemporary expectations about the presentation of an indigenous text, including the division of words and the insertion of punctuation, capitals and appropriate accents, such as marking of long vowels with macrons [e.g., ā] and of the glottal stop with a hamzah [ʻ]. Mamae himself included certain accents; for example, he marked the presence of some glottal stops with macrons over the following vowel. In other cases his macrons appear to indicate word stresses, particularly in chants and associated songs. The last examples have been retained (marked by a circumflex [e.g., â]) as they provide readers with a guide to how these works should be sounded. Further editorial changes include the organisation of the text into paragraphs. Perhaps the most noticeable liberty has been the insertion of episode titles into the body of Mamae's story in order to highlight the distinctive stories within a story that is a feature of this fairly long example of Mangaian writing.

The translation does not attempt to emulate Mamae's own particular style; instead, it presents a more literal interpretation of what he wrote. While the more pedestrian prose of the translation admittedly lacks the pace and excitement of Mamae's original, the aim has been to provide the reader with a greater clarity and understanding of what is happening to the different characters in the stories. To aid the reader, especially those not familiar with the Mangaian language, the translation spells out content that is only implied or barely touched on in Mamae's passages. Endnotes are also used in places to explain at greater length what is going on.

A challenge faced by a translator of older Mangaian language texts is to try and find a satisfactory interpretation for the various words and phrases

that have escaped the notice of the limited range of dictionaries available for this part of the Pacific. Some words and phrases have fallen out of use and even older native speakers have found the content archaic. Ngariki Orani explained that it was akin to a modern English speaker reading the King James Bible (pers. comm. 2015). In the absence of any other information Gill's own version of this story became an anchor, by helping make sense of many obscure passages. His deep understanding of the narrative was doubtless based upon many conversations with Mamae, and perhaps other Mangaians, about the meaning of the text. Unfortunately, in places Gill chose renderings that were particularly vague or not clearly related to passages in Mamae's own account. In the last case, he may have been relying on other versions of the story. Alternatively, he might not have been able to obtain greater clarity simply because some words or phrases in the oral tradition were already unknown to his 19th-century Mangaian advisers. Where the translation is conjectured an endnote has been inserted explaining how the provisional interpretation was arrived at.

TEXT, TRANSLATION AND DISCUSSION

Episode 1: Introduction

'E Tara iā Ngaru

'E tamaiti a Ngaru nā Vaiare. 'E mokopuna aia nā Moko. 'O Tongatea tā Ngaru va'ine. I tēta'i rā, kua 'aere aia e ui i te kōrero i tōna tupuna rā iā Moko. (Tērā pa'a tō rātou 'enua, 'o Marua.) 'E tamaiti tā'emo arakata a Ngaru. Nā Moko i 'ōmai tōna mana.

Stories about Ngaru

Ngaru was Vaiare's son. He was a grandson of Moko. Tongatea was Ngaru's wife. One day, he went to ask for the traditional knowledge from his grandfather, Moko. (Their land was Marua.) As a child Ngaru possessed a competitive temperament.¹ Moko handed over his *mana*.

In his own opening to this story, Gill understood that Marua, which he translated as 'Shady-Land', was a location in the spirit world, 'Avaiki, where Ngaru and his family lived. According to Gill, the light-coloured Tongatea, "fair Tongan", was Marua's most beautiful woman. A lighter skin tone seems to have been associated with beauty in many Polynesian islands like Mangaia. Up until the early 19th century young Mangaian women of rank were raised in seclusion to ensure they possessed a lighter coloured skin.² Gill explained that Moko ("Great Lizard") was "the king of all lizards"

while Ngaru himself thirsted for distinction by testing his strength against various “monsters and evil spirits”. In other words, he sought to enhance his personal *mana* through competitive feats that involved not just strength, but the qualities of a young hero, such as courage and daring in the face of great odds. This differs from Mamae’s account where a young Ngaru requests the transfer of his grandfather’s knowledge, and therefore his *mana*, presumably in order to obtain the skills and attributes needed for the forthcoming contests.

Episode 2: Ngaru’s contest with Tikokura and Tumutearetoka

E tae akēra i tēta’i rā, kua ‘aere atūra aia e kokoti i tēta’i rākau, ‘e puka, ē kua tarai e oti akēra. ‘Aere atūra aia i tai, e tae atūra i te tapa ‘utu. ‘Ua tau atūra ia Tikokura. Tērā a Tikokura, ‘e ngaru, nō te mea tei reira tēta’i tā ‘ae, ‘e mangō kai tangata, ‘o Tumutearetoka tōna ingoa. ‘Ua ngaru ‘iōra te tai. ‘Aere atūra te ngaru i te piri mato i te tapa ‘utu. Tē tū ‘ua ra a Ngaru i rotopū i te naupata. Ē ‘ia ‘oki mai te ngaru mei uta mai, ka ‘oki i te moana, tuku ‘iōra i tōna papa i raro i tōna kōpū, kake atūra aia ki runga, tere atūra i te moana i runga i te tua o te ngaru. ‘Ua kimi ‘iōra taua mangō rā iāia e ‘āpuku. Kāre rā aia e rauka i taua mangō rā, nō te mea tei uta tōna tupuna tē tarotaro ra iāia ‘ia ora. Tērā tāna tarotaro: “‘Ei nunga e Ngaru! ‘Ei raro e Ngaru!” Tei nunga a Ngaru i te tua o te ngaru, tei raro ake te mangō. ‘Ia kake te mangō i nunga i te tua o te ngaru, tei raro ake a Ngaru. Pērā ‘ua atūra rāi e tae atu i pō varu.³ ‘Ō atūra a Ngaru i tōna papa ‘ei kai nā te mangō. ‘Oro atūra a Ngaru ki uta kāre i mate. (Tērā te ingoa i tōna papa, ‘Orua.)

Another day arrived, he went off to cut down a tree. It was a *puka*, ‘lantern tree’ *Hernandia nymphaefolia*, and he shaped it till it was finished. He went towards the sea, arriving at the border of ‘utu, ‘fish-poison tree’ *Barringtonia asiatica*. Tikokura reached there. That Tikokura was an ocean swell, because that was the location of another fear-inspiring spirit being [*tā ‘ae*]; a man-eating shark named Tumutearetoka. The sea was rough just then. The wave came up to the strip of land below the seaward-facing cliff [*piri mato*] at the edge of the ‘utu trees. Ngaru was standing in the middle of the land between the cliffs and the reef.⁴ When the waves returned from inland and went back to the sea, he placed his surfboard under his stomach, climbing up on top and sailing out to sea upon the crest of the wave. Just then that shark looked about in order to swallow him. But that shark did not get hold of him because his grandfather on shore was reciting a chant for him to live. This was his chant: “Be above o Ngaru! Be below o Ngaru!” When Ngaru was on the crest of the wave, the shark was below. When the shark got above the crest of the wave, Ngaru was below. That is how things went until the eighth night. Ngaru gave away his board as food for the shark. Ngaru ran inland and did not die. (‘Orua is the name of his surfboard.)

In Gill's account, Moko tells Ngaru about two "fierce enemies of mankind" which dwelt together in the sea—Tikokura "the storm-wave" and Tumuitearetoka "a vast shark"—who ate people. Gill slightly varied the last creature's spelling from Mamae's, perhaps suggesting access to another oral version. Gill described the two beings as "evil spirits", probably a translation of *tā'ae*. Before taking them on Ngaru first provided himself with a surfboard which he named, 'Orua 'the two'—an allusion, according to Gill, to the two "sea-gods". Ngaru carried his surfboard to the inner edge of the reef where the wide area of coral was dry before heading out to the outer edge of the reef, where the surf beat against the land. In Gill's version, Moko sits upon a projecting crag of rock where he can watch over his grandson and ensure he comes to no harm. The careful scene-setting found in this episode may come from other versions or, and what is more likely, reflects Gill's own addition intended to provide a non-Mangaian reader with a word picture of the scene in which the actions took place.

In a variation from Mamae's text, Gill stated that Ngaru then "cursed these sea-monsters by name". This is the decisive act. Cursing someone is a verbal attack on their *mana* and inevitably results in effective countermeasures, such as a violent retaliation.⁵ In Gill's story, Tikokura and Tumuitearetoka are provoked into anger and decide to seek revenge. Immediately afterwards, the sea comes surging inland, reaching to the roots of the 'utu trees. Ngaru floats out on the retreating waves into the sea where he begins his eight days and nights of struggle with Tumuitearetoka, the "shark-god". Unlike Mamae, Gill did not suggest that Moko recites protective chants, only that he shouts timely warnings ("The shark is under you"). Gill described how an exhausted Ngaru ends the struggle by throwing his board to these "sea-monsters", who then return to their home in the sea. Moko and the people were delighted at Ngaru's exploit for he was the first to challenge the "sea-gods" in their domain and live.

Mamae's story assumes some knowledge concerning the flora of Mangaia's coastal region. The *puka* tree is commonly found on the seashore. It has a very soft wood that makes it easy to work with: the straight trunk is ideal for constructing canoe hulls, or, as in this story, a surfboard. Unfortunately, the wood's softness means a short life span of no more than two years (Shibata 1999: 229-30). For Ngaru, the *puka* would have been ideal for the purpose of a surfboard constructed for a specific event. The 'utu tree grows in abundance on the coast, especially below the seaward facing *makatea* 'uplifted coral' cliffs, where it often forms a monodominant forest (Whistler 2009: 43). Tumutearetoka, one of the creatures Ngaru struggles with, is described by Mamae as a *tā'ae*, a particularly fear-inspiring category of spirit being that included sharks since these in real life were among the most feared of sea

creatures (Reilly 2009: 55-58, 60). At the end of the contest, Ngaru's departure inland ("ki uta") from the coast indicates that Marua resembled Mangaia in having its centres of population in the interior valleys and not on the coastlines vulnerable, as this story shows, to storm surges. The presentation of the surfboard as a food offering to the sea creatures suggests that both parties to the contest had reached an impasse with neither party able to defeat the other. Ngaru's curse in Gill's episode might suggest that the board served as a compensatory payment to the spirit beings. Nonetheless, Ngaru had managed to challenge two powerful spirit beings and live to tell the tale; his *mana* would have grown as a consequence.

Episode 3: Ngaru's contest with his wife, Tongatea

'Aere atūra aia i te kāinga, ē 'ārāvei atūra aia i tāna va 'ine ia Tongatea. Tāpae atūra rāua i tēta 'i ngā 'i 'e vai tei reira. 'Ua taumārō 'iōra rāua. E keta te tāne o te va 'ine, tē 'eke ana i raro i te vai, e keta te va 'ine o te tāne. 'Eke atūra te tāne, e ruku atūra i raro i te vai, mei te popongi mai e a 'ia 'i 'ua atu. Kua tū mai ki runga ē inā! 'ua oro tāna va 'ine nō te mea 'ua akava 'ava 'a iāia 'ua tako i te tai. 'Aere atūra aia i tō rātou kāinga. 'Ua ui māira tōna tupuna iāia ē, "tē 'ea tō va 'ine?" 'Ua karanga atūra aia, "'ua oro i Teautapu, i te ngā 'i pa 'a o tōna 'ai metua." 'Ua nākō māira tōna tupuna iāia ē, "'O tāku 'oki ia i karanga atu ana iā 'au rā ē, 'āore i anga e ta 'u moko, e anga turoko." 'Ua kō 'iōra rātou i tēta 'i va 'arua 'ei tanu iā Ngaru 'ia para. 'Ua tanu 'iōra rātou iāia, i 'āriki 'ia i te rau ngāngā 'ere. E tae atu i te pō varu, tērā tei tupu iā Ngaru, 'e uira tei pana mai nō raro mai i tōna va 'arua. Nā te uira i 'uke i te one, ē te ngāngā 'ere i tāpoki 'ia iāia. 'O te mana ia nō Ngaru, 'e uira, 'o tōna para ia. 'Iti atūra te uira e tae atūra i te 'enua i no 'o 'ia e tāna va 'ine e Tongatea. Riro atūra te rongo o Ngaru i reira. 'Ua karanga 'iōra te tangata ē, "Tēnā te kiri o Ngaru!" 'Ua nākō māira tāna va 'ine a Tongatea, "Ā, 'e Ngaru kē tāku i kite ra, 'e Ngaru kē 'oki tēnā?" 'Ua nākō māira rātou iāia, "'O Ngaru, 'o tō tāne rā." 'Ua nākō atūra aia, "kāre ia."

Inā rā tei reira tēta 'i kapa va 'ine. 'Ua 'aere atūra Ngaru ē tōna vaka tangata e tirae (e mātakitaki) i taua kapa rā.⁶ Inā! tē va 'a 'ua ra tō Tongatea tūranga. 'Ua ui atu a Ngaru, "nō 'ai te va 'a, e va 'a?" 'Ua nākō māira rātou, "nō Tongatea." 'Ua nākō atu a Ngaru, "iātua 'ia." Pērā 'ua rāi e 'akau akēra te kapa. 'Okī atūra Ngaru i tōna 'enua mā tōna rau tangata. 'Ua tueru 'aere atūra Tongatea iā Ngaru mā tē kāpiki atu ē, "'oki māira e Ngaru 'ia moe ana tāua!" 'Ua nākō māira Ngaru, "'Āore oa au e 'oki atu, 'ua pou au iā 'au." 'Ia kite a Tongatea ē, kāre rāi a Ngaru e 'oki mai, tāpae akēra aia, kakati atūra i te kōki 'i kura, mate atūra.

He went away towards the homestead, and he met his wife, Tongatea. They turned off at a place where there was a fresh water pool. They then argued. The husband of the wife and the wife of the husband were each determined

to get into the water. The husband got in, diving into the water, from the early morning until the evening. He stood up, and lo and behold his wife ran off because she disliked his blackening from the sea. He went on to their homestead. His grandfather asked him, "Where is your wife?" He responded, "She has run away to Teautapu, probably to the place of her parents." His grandfather said to him, "I will say this to you, nothing changes, o my grandson, till we change your colour."⁷ Right then they dug a hole to bury Ngaru in order to ripen him. They buried him with a covering of weeds. On the eighth night, lightning started to flash from under Ngaru's hole.⁸ The lightning opened up the earth and the weeds covering him. The lightning was Ngaru's *mana*; that he was ripened. The lightning shone as far as the land lived in by his wife, Tongatea. News of Ngaru was taken there. Then the people cried out, "That is the skin of Ngaru!" His wife, Tongatea, said, "Well, the Ngaru I know is different, is that Ngaru different?" They said to her, "It is Ngaru, it is your husband." She replied, "That cannot be."

All the same, there was a women's dance festival. Ngaru and his group of men [*vaka tangata*] went to watch that dance festival. Lo and behold, Tongatea stood to throw a javelin. Ngaru asked, "Who is the thrower throwing a javelin?" They replied, "Tongatea." Ngaru said, "Fasten up your *maro*."¹⁰ That is how the dance festival really ended. Ngaru and his people returned to his land. Tongatea went chasing after Ngaru, calling out, "Come back here, o Ngaru, so that we can sleep together." Ngaru replied, "I will not return. I have finished with you." When Tongatea knew that Ngaru would definitely not come back, she stopped off, ate the *kōki 'i kura*,¹¹ and died.

Gill opened his account by explaining that Ngaru's skin had been badly scraped by coral during his contest with the sea creatures. After this insertion his version follows Mamae's account pretty closely. Ngaru and Tongatea met on the road, and went to bathe, where they argued over who was to go first, before Ngaru won the contest and stayed in the water until sunset. When he got out, Tongatea was "horrified" that Ngaru's skin had turned black from exposure to salt-water during his struggle with the "monsters of the deep". Disliking the colour she ran off to Teautapu, where she stayed with friends, not her parents as in Mamae's account. When Ngaru got home, Moko asked him where his wife was, and Ngaru told him what had happened. Gill inserted two statements, made by Moko, which either come from another version or were Gill's interpretation of Mamae's own cryptic statement. The first utterance is: "Nothing blackens the skin so soon as the sea and the sun." According to Gill, Ngaru then asked Moko how he might whiten his skin. Moko replied: "The only way to blanch your skin is to treat you as green bananas are treated when they are to be ripened." This last statement is almost certainly Gill's own addition, intended to explain the next sequence of actions. In a note he explained that the process of blanching or ripening a green banana, so that

it turned yellow, was known as *tāpara* (from *para* ‘ripen, yellow, blanch’). Ngaru consented to the process, which required them to dig a deep hole, line it with layers of sweet smelling fern, and put Ngaru into it, before covering him with leaves and a thin layer of earth. Eight days later flashes of lightning started coming from Ngaru’s burial place, destroying the layers of earth and leaves, and allowing Ngaru to emerge. These flashes of lightning came from “the dazzling fairness of his skin”.

At this point Gill added a new story element not in Mamae’s text. The steam from the blanching oven had rendered Ngaru entirely bald, so that Moko instructed Vaiare, Ngaru’s mother, to obtain new hair from Tangaroa. However, Moko rejected the first hair because it was too frizzily. Vaiare returned to Tangaroa for more. Tangaroa then gave her some fair coloured hair. As Gill explained in a note, this is the colouring of Tangaroa’s own hair but such a yellow colour is detested by Māngaians. Not surprisingly, Moko rejected this hair, and Vaiare returned to Tangaroa for more. Finally, in order to escape from Moko’s “importunity” Tangaroa gave her a large amount of black hair which Moko was very pleased with and attached to Ngaru’s head.

Gill’s story returns to Mamae’s version. The flashes of light from Ngaru’s face and body were seen in Teautapu where people said, “Behold the dazzling fairness of Ngaru!” But Tongatea was cautious: “This Ngaru you praise must be a different individual from the Ngaru I know.” Although everyone argued that it was her husband she did not believe them.

Following Mamae, Gill continued on to the final part of this episode, where Tongatea organised a women’s reed-throwing match to which the men were invited. Gill inserted additional material describing the dress and scented garlands worn by the women players standing ready to pitch their reeds with their right arms. As the event’s organiser, Tongatea was about to cast the first reed when she saw Ngaru arrive. Gill described her emotional response: she is too overcome to continue with the game; her body trembles so much she struggles to keep her clothes on. The frequent attention to women’s appearance and their vulnerability in this part of the story makes me suspect this was Gill’s own addition; a distinctively Eurocentric reading of Pacific women as the weaker sex. The final section of this text follows Mamae very closely. The game ended in confusion and Ngaru departed, along with the other visitors, but Tongatea ran after him, begging him to come back to her. Ngaru, however, remembering her rejection of him when his skin had turned black, responded: “Never will I return to thee.” On hearing this Tongatea went away, found the poisonous plant (*kōki’i kura*) to chew and died.

The various departures from Mamae’s story in this episode point to Gill using two other sources of information. The first is the addition of elements from other versions told to Gill by Māngaian experts; a good example being

the search for an appropriate hair covering. The second are minor explanatory insertions, not found in Mamae's version, such as descriptions of landscape, women's appearance, and people's emotional responses. These additions fill out the terser, more cryptic oral traditions about Ngaru suggesting that these kinds of insertions were made by Gill and were intended to make the story more acceptable to an English-reading audience.

In this more extended episode, Mamae and Gill provided insight into Mangaia's ancient cultural world. Ngaru's bathing in fresh water after his long immersion in salt water reflects a common practice. His contest with Tongatea over who would be first in became a serious struggle for precedence between persons of *mana*. To win, as Ngaru did, reinforced his *mana* further, and confirmed his earlier success against the two sea creatures. Tongatea's subsequent abandonment of her husband because of his blackened skin may also have been a response to her earlier loss in the bathing pool competition. Someone who was beaten or socially humiliated might move elsewhere to avoid a sense of shame arising from the diminishing of their *mana*.¹² Tongatea's negative response to Ngaru's black skin reveals how skin colouring possessed a social significance. In this story, beauty and high status—expressions of *mana*—are associated with a lighter colour. Thus, Tongatea is beautiful because she possesses a pale or fair skin (*tea* means 'white, pale, clear'). Ngaru agrees to be put through a food ripening process, involving burial for eight days and nights, just to regain his lighter complexion. As a result, his skin is so bright to behold it is described as lightning; the element that reveals his *mana*.

The search for replacement hair introduces the *atua* 'spirit power', Tangaroa, best known in Mangaia as the absent *tuakana* 'elder brother' of the island's pre-eminent spirit power, Rongo. The desire to obtain the best sort of hair may suggest that Ngaru personifies a Mangaian male ideal with a lighter coloured body topped off with a lot of long black hair, doubtless tied up in a topknot. The three attempts echo other mythological stories in Polynesia where a hero goes back again and again to a revered ancestor or god until finally, almost in exasperation, they are given what they were always seeking.¹³ Given that Rongo defeated his brother, and thereby brought him under his authority, it is likely that in spite of his resistance Tangaroa is ultimately not able to resist these requests.

The women's dance festival included a game of *teka* played by the performers. In this game, competitors took a short run and threw their *tao* 'spear, javelin' at a point on a prepared strip of ground, so that these javelins then ricocheted into the air. The winner was the one whose *tao* flew the farthest (Hiroa 1971: 49-51).¹⁴ Mataora Harry pointed out to me that in Mangaia the *tao* was much longer than the one used in the Rarotonga version of this game

(pers. comm. Māngere, Auckland, 24 July 2014). Evidently, the person of *mana* who sponsored the festival received the honour of opening the *teka* competition. The audience at a women's dance festival comprised only men which explains why Ngaru instructed them to do up their *maro* 'loincloth' (Hiroa 1971: 143, 149-51). These *teka* playing arenas were cleared areas on the flat, overlooked by hills where the audience would sit and watch (e.g., Gill 1876a: 243).

Ngaru's rejection of Tongatea's pleas to get back together again, no doubt uttered in front of many other people, only confirmed his wife's utter humiliation as a social person. This is really what this particular story is all about: a contest between husband and wife that results in her loss of *mana*. When a man or woman of rank experienced such a form of social death, they had various options available to them, including suicide. The severity of her experience of shame prompted Tongatea to choose the final option. By this act, she was able to reassert her autonomy and therefore her *mana*. That she chose poison underscores how severe had been her loss of status since she adopted a method that virtually guaranteed death. By contrast, an upset or angry young man might opt to sail out to sea. But before doing so he would announce his intentions to friends and family, thereby allowing opportunities for others to intervene and prevent it.¹⁵ As an aside, Tongatea's use of a poisonous plant points to the extensive knowledge people possessed of both the beneficial and toxic effects of the local flora.

Episode 4: Ngaru's contest with Miru

'E tae akēra i tēta'i tuātau, 'ua aere māira ngā tamā'ine a Miru, 'o Kumutonga ē Karaia, e tiki iā Ngaru, 'ei kai nā Miru. I pikika'a mai ē 'ei tāne nā rāua. 'Ua va'i 'iōra i tā rāua tāne i te parai, 'ua 'anati i te amo takitaki atūra.¹⁶ 'E tae atūra i tēta'i maunga, 'o Erangi te ingoa. 'Ua kake atūra rātou. 'Ia kite rā a Ngaru ē, 'ua teitei tēta'i tānga i te amo, 'ua 'aka'aka tēta'i, 'ua kite aia ē, tē kake nei rātou i runga i taua maunga rā. 'Ua tarotaro akēra aia i roto i te parai. Tērā te tarotaro:¹⁷

Ōi au tiriā, tiriā,

Ōi au tārā, tārā,

Tārā 'ia akēra 'ia kite au i teia maunga,

'O te maunga poro oa teia

A ta'u tupuna a Mokoroa, ta'u metua a Vaiare, ta'u va'ine a Tongatea.

'Ua nākō māira a Kumutonga ē Karaia:

Kiritia kai e kinana,

Tō koivi! Vaio i Erangi maunga,

Tō vaerūa, e kave i te pō nā tō māua metua nā Miru!"

'Ua nākō māira a Ngaru, "Ā, 'ua tōkā kōrua iāku!"¹⁸ 'Ua va'i 'akaoru rāua i tā rāua tāne. 'Ua takitaki e tae atu i tēta'i ngā'i kakekake. 'Ua tarotaro a Ngaru.¹⁹

Ōi au tîria, tîria.
 Ōi au târâ, târâ,
 Târâ 'ia akerâ 'ia kite au i teia maunga
 'O te maunga poro oa teia
 A ta 'u tupuna a Mokoroa, a ta 'u metua 'o Vaiare, ta 'u va 'ine 'o Tongatea.
 'Ua nākō mai rāua:

Kiritia kai e kinana,
 Tō koīvi, vaio i Erangi maunga!
 Tō vaeria! e kave i te pō nā tō māua metua nā Miru!
 'Ua nākō mai a Ngaru, "Ā, 'ua tōkā kōrua iāku." 'Ua va 'i rāua 'ua takitaki,
 e tae atūra rātou i tēta 'i ngā 'i marumaru. 'E pū rākau tō reira, 'e i 'i te
 rākau. 'Ua tuku 'iōra iā Ngaru 'ua tatara. 'Ua tiki atūra rāua i tēta 'i pae i
 te kava, 'ua vā 'i mai 'ua ngau. Tērā te ingoa i taua pū kava rā, 'o Tevo 'o, 'o
 tēta 'i ia mana o Miru, 'e umu te rua. 'Ua inu 'iōra a Ngaru i taua kava rā, ē
 kāre aia i kona. Tē kāpiki 'ua māira te tangata nākō māira i te kāpiki 'anga,
 "Kumutonga-i-te-rangi, Karaia-i-te-ata ōi, 'ōmai rā tā kōrua tāne. 'Ua roa
 oa te umu a Miru!" 'Ua ume 'iōra a Ngaru i tōna maro, ē oti akēra, 'aere
 atūra aia e tae atūra i taua umu rā. 'Ua oti i te uru, 'ua ui atūra aia, "'e
 umu a 'a tēnā e Miru?" 'Ua nākō māira aia, "'e umu tao iā 'au!" 'Ua nākō
 atūra a Ngaru, "'Āore a Moko i tū ake e Miru o, 'e umu tangata tāna, i tū
 ake a Moko o, pāpā paka o, 'ā inu i te vai o, tuku atu 'ia 'aere, parau o 'e
 umu tangata iā 'au!"²⁰ 'Ua tātā 'i te rangi i reira. 'Ua taka 'i atūra tēta 'i
 vaevae o Ngaru i raro i taua umu rā. 'Ua topa pū 'ua māira te ua, kī akēra
 taua 'enua rā i te roto. Tere atūra te tangata ravarāi o taua 'enua rā i miri
 ia Tumuteanaoa rā.²¹ Ora māira a Ngaru, kāre i mate i mau aia i tēta 'i pū
 rākau. E roa akēra, 'ua tae māira ngā manu 'e rua, 'e karakerake te ingoa.
 Nā Moko i tonu mai, rere māira, e tau māira i runga i te 'uru.²² 'Ua tarotaro
 atūra a Ngaru. Tērā te tarotaro.²³

Karakerakē ē, tukua 'iorā te taūra!
 'O te taura oa tēnā i tukua 'i 'o māua Ariki
 'O Rākāmaumau ē, tukūa, tukua rā i kōna!
 'Ua topa ngā taura 'e rua, 'ota 'i a tēta 'i, 'ota 'i 'oki a tēta 'i. Kua pīpiki a
 Ngaru. 'Ua 'uti rāua e tae atu ki runga. 'Ua 'apai rāua iā Ngaru e tae atu
 iā Moko rā.

Ka 'ā arakata i rauka iā Ngaru, 'e ngaru, 'e mangō, 'e kava, 'e umu.

Another time came, and the two daughters of Miru, Kumutonga and Karaia, went off to fetch Ngaru as food for Miru. He was deceived so as to be a husband for them. Right then they wrapped their husband up in a high quality *tapa* cloth called *parai*, secured him with cords to the pole and carried him away on their shoulders.²⁴ They reached a mountain named Erangi. They climbed up. When Ngaru saw one end of the pole was raised, and another lowered, he knew they were climbing up that mountain. He recited an incantation from within the *parai*. This is the chant:

Hey, throw me down, throw me down
Hey, untie me, untie me
Untie me, so that I can see this mountain,
Farewell this one and only mountain
Of my ancestor, Mokoroa, my mother, Vaiare, my wife, Tongatea.

Kumutonga and Karaia responded:

Drawn out, you will be devoured forthwith o *kinana*,²⁵
Your bones! Left on Erangi mountain,
Your spirit, taken to Te Pō for our mother, Miru!

Ngaru replied, “Well, you two have spurned me!” They wrapped and tied their husband up again. They carried him till reaching another uphill place.²⁶

Ngaru chanted:

Hey, throw me down, throw me down
Hey, untie me, untie me
Untie me, so that I can see this mountain,
Farewell this one and only mountain
Of my ancestor, Mokoroa, of my mother, Vaiare, my wife, Tongatea.

They responded:

Drawn out, you will be devoured forthwith, o *kinana*
Your bones, left on Erangi mountain!
Your spirit! Taken to Te Pō for our mother, Miru!

Ngaru replied, “Well, you two have spurned me!” They wrapped and carried him till all three of them reached another shady place to which belonged a tree, an *i'i*, ‘Tahitian chestnut’ *Inocarpus fagifer*. They put him down right on that spot and untied him. They went and got some *kava*, *Piper methysticum*, broke it up and chewed it. The name of that *kava* plant was Tevo‘o: that is a *mana* of Miru, an earth oven is a second. Ngaru right then drank that *kava*, and he was not intoxicated. The person called out, saying: “Kumutonga-i-te-rangi, Karaia-i-te-ata, hey, hand over your husband. The earth oven of Miru has been waiting a long time!” Ngaru thereupon put on his *maro*, and when finished, he walked off till reaching that earth oven. When he had entered, he asked, “What is this earth oven for, o Miru?” She replied, “An earth oven to cook you!” Ngaru responded, “Moko did not establish there an earth oven to cook people, o Miru, his was an earth oven for people, that Moko set up on the other side, with chopped *māmio* tops to eat, water to drink, allowing people to leave; your earth oven for people is false!” The sky then clouded over.²⁷ One of Ngaru’s legs trod down on that earth oven. The rain quite suddenly fell, filling that land till it became a lake. Every single person of that land swam away behind Tumuteanaoa. Ngaru survived; he held onto a tree and did not die.

Some time later, two birds arrived, named *karakera*. Moko had sent them; they flew here and landed on the ‘uru [Breadfruit, *Artocarpus altilis*] tree.²⁸ Ngaru chanted. This is the chant:

O *karakera*, release the rope!
This is the right rope released by our *ariki*

Rākāmaumau, release, release here to me.²⁹

The two ropes dropped down, one from each bird. Ngaru clung on. They hauled him up. They carried Ngaru till they reached Moko.

Ngaru received four attributes: a wave, a shark, *kava*, and an earth oven.

Gill told a far more elaborate tale than Mamae does. He first foregrounded the motivations and actions of “a fierce she-demon”, Miru, who also lived in ‘Avaiki. He explained that she was envious of Ngaru’s fame, and decided to kill him in “her fearful, ever-blazing oven”. To achieve this, she hatched a plan of deception involving her two daughters, Kumutonga-i-te-pō (“Kumutonga-of-the-night”) and Karaia-i-te-ata (“Karaia-the-shadowy”). They are described as being “tapairu” or “peerless women” whose beauty is far superior to “the daughters of mortals”. The *tapairu* was a category of spirit being, usually females, known for their alluring beauty, and hence a temptation for men. They would often come up from ‘Avaiki to Mangaia through the underground passages which discharged water out to sea (‘Aerepō n.d., Reilly 2009: 58-60). Miru directed her daughters to ascend to Ngaru’s world and get him to marry them. They were then to convince him to come down to Miru’s domain.

In Gill’s version, the two *tapairu* visit the house belonging to Moko, where Ngaru and other family members resided. During this visit Ngaru pretended to be asleep, so that the two women talked with Moko, who tried to find out their real intentions for visiting. They insisted they had only come to escort Ngaru to Miru’s land so that he could be married to them. To buy more time, Moko made sure to play the role of a very attentive host, ensuring the daughters really enjoyed themselves. Meanwhile, Moko secretly sent small lizards down to Miru’s domain to find out as much as they could about her. They observed her stock of *kava* used, so Gill explained, “exclusively for the purpose of stupefying her intended victims”. Victims were then cooked in Miru’s oven and eaten by her family and followers. Moko warned Ngaru of what had been discovered and told him to be careful.

That evening, Ngaru set off on his journey. Gill made sure to relate Ngaru’s “peculiar” form of transport, just as it is described by Mamae, and doubtless in other Mangaian versions, although he is clearly bemused by it. He described how Ngaru is wrapped and tied up with cords in “rolls of finest tapa”, then slung on a long pole, and carried “in triumph” by the two *tapairu* down to Miru’s domain. Just as in Mamae’s version, Gill twice quoted all the chants and responses uttered by both Ngaru and the *tapairu*, first when they ascended the mountain, Erangi (“The-heavenly”), and then when they reached a spur. Gill’s narrative continues to follow Mamae’s pretty closely as it describes how Ngaru is dropped off under “a shady grove of chestnut

trees” while the *tapairu* went off to prepare the *kava*. However, Gill left out mention of the *kava* plant’s name or its link to Miru’s *mana*, perhaps to make the story easier and more acceptable to an English readership. He did however note that Ngaru, unlike other victims, is not overcome by the *kava*. He also closely followed Mamae’s phrasing of Miru’s call to her daughters to bring their husband to her oven, although he added negative colouring by describing her as “the pitiless Miru”.

Gill more or less followed Mamae in retelling the episode of the earth oven, but he added some elements to it. Gill noted that the “girdle” Ngaru puts on was given to him by Moko. Gill then described how “the dauntless visitor” went to find “the hag Miru and her dread oven”. At this point, Gill drew on another version that relates how Ngaru heard the warning voice of “the anxious Moko”: “Return, Ngaru—yonder is the oven in which she means to cook you.” Ngaru, however, paid no attention and instead went on and found “the red-hot stones of the oven raked ready for the victim”. He asked Miru (“the horrid mistress of the invisible world”) what it was for. At this point, Gill quoted the dialogue between them, following Mamae, although Ngaru’s reproach is somewhat differently phrased: “Ah, Miru! my grandfather Moko did not prepare an oven for your daughters; but gave them food to eat, cocoa-nut water to drink, and sent them away in peace! You cook and devour your visitors!” With those words, and in similar detail to Mamae, Gill then described how the skies, which had become cloudier and darker while Ngaru was in Miru’s land, now deluged the land with water, just as Ngaru put one foot on the hot oven stones.

Gill’s story departs from Mamae at this point, again suggesting he was drawing from another version. Miru and everyone else were swept away. Ngaru held on to the tenacious roots of the *nono* (*Morinda citrifolia*) plant and saved himself while each of the two daughters held on to one of his legs, and alone of all their family, survived. They then taught him the art of ball-throwing. Eventually, he tired of these two *tapairu*, and journeyed through “a dark, winding passage” to another land, Taumāreva (“Expanse”) described as full of fruits, flowers, and where the people constantly made music using a three-hole bamboo flute blown through the nose. Ngaru married a girl being kept inside a house so as to whiten her skin.

The story returns to Mamae’s version, although with several additions. Two “pretty little birds”, the *karakerake*, landed on rocks near Ngaru, who learned they had come from Moko. Ngaru, weeping for joy, recited the chant quoted by Mamae. Two cords fell down, one from each of the bird, to which Ngaru attached himself. He gave a signal to the birds and they pulled him up. He failed to farewell either his wife or “her musical countrymen”. He was brought to Moko, who had become ill with longing for Ngaru’s return. There

is no mention of Mamae's concluding comment about the four attributes.

Gill's version of this episode reveals the ways in which he retold this story for his English readers. Like his translations of Mangaian song poetry his version of Ngaru's story could be quite free in places. His intention was not to mislead; rather, like any storyteller, he modified and adapted what he had heard and read for his particular audience. In this episode he again included brief descriptive passages referring to the landscape and, more importantly, related elements not found in Mamae's version, which he must have been told by other Mangaian storytellers. He occasionally excluded some of Mamae's story elements; for example, he did not mention the name of the *kava* plant. Various allusions to the spiritual dimensions of this tradition seem to be reworked, so that they are less explicit than in Mamae's text.

Gill made even more significant modifications in this episode. The most obvious is his negative depiction of Miru as a witch or a demon and of her oven as some sort of diabolical inferno. As Gill himself recognised, Miru was in fact the female spirit being who presided over Te Pō. People who died a natural death were understood to end up being cooked in her oven and consumed by Miru and her family (Gill 1876a: 236-37). No doubt Mangaians were always ambivalent about Miru and her oven. Christian Mangaians may well have thought of her as equivalent to the devil, although Mamae at least does not develop such an interpretation in his more matter-of-fact retelling of this episode. On the evidence of this story, it is Gill who played up the negative aspect of Miru's role; in effect, he created Te Pō as an equivalent to hell, with Miru as the presiding female devil. Te Rangi Hiroa suggested that Gill was influenced in his interpretation by a "European concept of Hades" as a place of punishment for sins committed while living on earth (Hiroa 1971: 203).

The destruction of Miru's world is also differently handled in these two accounts. Mamae described everyone swimming behind Tumuteanaoa, whereas Gill simply wrote they were all swept away. Tumuteanaoa was a major spirit being considered a guardian of the land of Mangaia. She lived in a land called Te Parae-tea in 'Avaiki. She is also associated with the caves and rocks of the *makatea* (Hiroa 1971: 9-15, Reilly 2009: Ch. 1). Significantly for the Miru episode, this location continues to serve as a refuge when Mangaia is assailed by storm surges on the coast or flooding in the interior valleys. Presumably, the inhabitants of 'Avaiki made their way to Te Parae-tea which, like the *makatea*, provided a refuge from the waters. If that is so, then the floods disrupted but did not destroy Miru and her world as Gill suggested. Given Miru's role in the Mangaian afterlife this seems a more appropriate reading. Nonetheless, her defeat signalled a weakening of her own *mana* at the hands of Ngaru. This may explain why the dead who most resemble the hero—warriors killed in battle—did not end up in her oven but rather dwelt

in a far pleasanter spirit place, Tia'iri (Hiroa 1971: 205-6). She no longer had dominion over them. This may explain why Mamae wrote that Ngaru acquires the attributes of *kava* and earth oven; he was saying that Ngaru had obtained authority over Miru. In that sense, Ngaru secured at the very least a partial victory over death's total annihilation of self. Gill of course believed that Christianity could promise its Mangaian believers an even better end-of-life deal (see Gill 1876a: 237).

In his reflections on the Ngaru story, Gill interpreted this journey to 'Avaiki as a "vivid representation" of the burial of someone who has died a natural death. Like Ngaru, they were wrapped up in *tapa*, secured with cords, and carried by two people down into a burial cave, located in the bowels of the *makatea*, a resting place equivalent to Miru's "deep cavernous domain". In Gill's translation of Ngaru's chant, this cave was called Orākā which Gill believed was an alternative name for the famous 'Auraka burial cave, located in Kei'ā district. The ropes that brought Ngaru back from 'Avaiki alluded to the ropes used to let a body down into burial caves (Gill 1876a: 236, 1984: 168).

This is Ngaru's most challenging contest so far. He allows himself to be taken by two of Miru's beautiful *tapairu* daughters to the domain of death, where he defeats its presiding spirit being, and subsequently, returns to the world of the living again, all with the assistance of his ever protective spirit helper, his grandfather Moko and his spirit creatures—lizards and the small *karakerake* birds. Gill appreciated the thematic connection between Ngaru's triumph and that of his own hero, Jesus Christ, but he understandably affirmed the latter as the only true one.

Despite such professional allegiances, Gill took great care in retelling the details of Ngaru's journey, especially his repeated unwrapping and rewrapping by his two *tapairu* wives. The repetition only underscores the significance of these actions as dramatic high points of this story. When the *tapairu* first wrapped Ngaru he was being treated as if a corpse. He was already naked. His whole body was tightly restricted within the *tapa*, so much so that he had very limited capacity to sense what was going on outside his confinement. It was as if he had already been removed from the world around him. Only when he sensed that he was being carried uphill, did he call upon his wives to stop and unwrap him. By doing so, they released him from his imitation of death, and returned him temporarily to life, in order that he could look at the mountain belonging to his grandfather, mother and his wife, and farewell them. Such farewells indicate that he accepted that he was going on a journey from which he might not return. Rewrapping him returned him to a death state.

When he reached 'Avaiki he was finally released from his shroud. But this was not a return to life; rather, it was a preparation for his final destruction,

as his wives prepared to stupefy him with Miru's *kava*, a form of her *mana*, before he was consigned to her earth oven, the second form of her *mana*. When the *kava* had no effect on him, he began to reveal that he was more than an ordinary person. He fully returned to a living state when he put on his *maro* and walked to confront Miru at her oven. There he told her off for her deceit and her lack of hospitality. She clearly did not conform to the standards expected of human beings, as exemplified by the actions of Moko himself when he used his oven in an appropriate way so as to look after people. Miru is not part of a world that operates according to human norms. The destruction of her domain and Ngaru's survival enable him to defeat her. Moko's intervention completes the circle, by finally returning Ngaru to the world of the living which is located in an upper realm. His acquisition, in Mamae's text, of Miru's *mana* in the form of the *kava* and the oven, only affirms his enhanced *mana*.

In Gill's version, Ngaru's survival is underscored by his emergence through an apparent birth canal leading from Miru's land, Te Pō, to Taumāreva. The two lands are intentionally contrasted, one filled with deceit, violence and death, and the other abundant with food and the practice of peaceful arts like music. Ngaru's return to a new life is further marked by his taking of a new wife who like him had deliberately sought a lighter skin, a sign of their beauty and therefore of their *mana*. In this worldview, beauty signifies the possession of *mana*: ugliness marks the commoner, the person without *mana*. When Ngaru ascended to Moko's homeland he abandoned his unnamed spouse. In this he resembles the heroes of other Polynesian oral traditions, such as Kahungunu in Aotearoa, who entered into sexual relationships with a series of important women, each one belonging to a different kin group occupying their own lands (Mitira 1972: Ch. 10).

Episode 5: Ngaru's contest with 'Apaiteurangi

E tae akēra i tēta'i rā, 'aere atūra aia e kākaro i te ka'u, nā 'Apaiteurangi. Kāre 'e tangata e ora i taua ka'u rā, mē piki tēta'i tangata ki runga. 'Ua 'uti a 'Apaiteurangi ki runga ē 'ia vaiata iāia rā, 'ua tāpatu, 'ua mate, 'ua kai pa'a. Inārā 'ia kite a Ngaru 'ua 'oki aia 'ua tiki i tēta'i nō'ona mana iā Moko rā. 'Ua 'ōmai rā a Moko i tōna mana, 'e moko 'e rua, 'ua mōmono i roto i tōna kēkē, 'aere atūra. E tae atūra i taua ngā'i i te ka'u rā, 'ua kake aia ki runga. 'Ua 'uti a 'Apaiteurangi e vaiata atu iāia rā. 'Ua kave a Ngaru i tōna ririnui e tae mai ki raro i te 'enua. Pērā 'ua rāi rāua, 'e 'ā taenga i runga, 'e 'ā 'eke 'anga i raro, ka varu. Kake atūra aia i te iva. 'Ua 'akavaitata atūra a Ngaru. 'Ua rave akēra a 'Apai[iteurangi] i tāna tāpatu i ōna rima 'e rua. 'Ua tāmau 'ia te taura i raro ake i tōna 'ū'ā.³⁰ 'Ua tāki akēra ki runga i ōna rima. 'Ia teitei te tāpatu, 'ia ririnui 'iē topa i runga i a Ngaru, 'ua 'e'eu

akēra a Ngaru i ōna kēkē. 'Ua rere atūra ngā moko 'e rua i roto i ngā kēkē o 'Apaiterangi. 'Ua topa te tāpatu i tōna rima, nō te mea 'ua māene tōna kēkē. Reki atūra a Ngaru, tau atūra i tōna ngā 'i rā (kāre i taka iāku ē, i tā āina aia ia 'Apaiterangi).

Kāreka 'o tāna i kite i taua 'enua rā, 'e 'are va 'ine tapairu. Tērā tā rātou 'anga'anga, e pē 'i.

Another day came, he went to look at 'Apaiterangi's container.³¹ No person survived from that container, if a person ascended upwards. 'Apaiterangi hoisted them up, and when they drew close to him, he struck them, they died, perhaps eaten. In spite of that, when Ngaru saw the container he went back to fetch one of his *mana* from Moko. Moko gave his *mana*, two lizards, which were placed within Ngaru's armpit; he went away. He reached the place where the container was located, and climbed up into it. 'Apaiterangi hoisted it near to him. Exerting all his strength, Ngaru conveyed it back down to earth. They really went on like that: four ascents, four descents; in total, eight. The ninth time he climbed up, Ngaru drew closer. 'Apaiterangi took hold of his striker in his two hands.³² The rope was held under his thigh. His hands were raised up. When the striker was aloft, to drop down forcefully upon Ngaru, Ngaru opened his armpits. The two lizards raced away into the armpits of 'Apaiterangi. The striker fell from his hands, because his armpit was tickling. Ngaru leaped away, landing on his place (I do not know whether he might not have killed 'Apaiterangi).

But he did observe in that land there was a house of female *tapairu*. Their occupation was to throw balls.

Gill prefaced this final contest by summarising the previous episodes, highlighting Ngaru's victories. Although Gill's version of this episode is more or less in line with Mamae's text, the story clearly shows how the English missionary drew on alternative sources of tribal knowledge that were available to him. He described how people were amazed when they saw a large, attractively decorated basket descend to earth. He added that some said it was an enormous fish hook. People who climbed on were drawn up to the sky and were never seen again which soon made everyone suspicious. As in his Miru story Gill gave more prominence to the "sky-demon" who invented this conveyance in order to be able to eat human beings. In both cases, he was obviously interested in creating a stronger set of story characters for his English reading audience.

Gill called this being 'Āmai-te-rangi 'Carry-up-to-heaven'. He later explained that the Ngāti 'Āmai people of Mangaia considered him to be their ancestor. Gill added that this ancestral being was also known as 'Apai-te-rangi, the name Mamae uses. The preference for the form 'Āmai-te-rangi may suggest that Gill obtained his variant story episode from expert sources

within the Ngāti 'Āmai. Perhaps they were also responsible for at least some of the additional details found elsewhere in Gill's retelling of the Ngaru story.

As the story unfolds Gill added further new elements not found in Mamae's version. 'Āmai-te-rangi heard about Ngaru's prowess and decided to try and catch and eat him. He dropped down his basket near to Moko's house. Although Ngaru was keen to go and do battle, Moko counselled caution. Instead, he sent a host of lizards that were taken up to the sky in the container. There they observed *tapairu* throwing balls in a game requiring seven or even eight balls to be kept up in the air at any one time. The lizards also noticed a chisel and mallet, and plenty of human bones. All this they reported back to Moko after returning to earth.

Gill's version then more or less returns to what Mamae wrote. Ngaru ascended in the basket up to 'Āmai-te-rangi, but before he could slay him Ngaru jerked the basket down to earth. 'Āmai-te-rangi pulled him back up, only for Ngaru to jerk the basket earthwards again. 'Āmai-te-rangi hauled the basket up eight times, until he was exhausted, before Ngaru finally emerged to confront him. 'Āmai-te-rangi lifted up his chisel to strike the fatal blow. At this point Gill incorporated additional details. Moko had foreseen this action, and had sent lizards up to the sky with the basket every time it was pulled up from the earth. When 'Āmai-te-rangi raised his arms to strike, these lizards raced up his body and tickled him in the armpits, preventing him from killing Ngaru. Multiple times he tried to brush them off and strike Ngaru, but the lizards kept tickling him until, eventually, he dropped the chisel and mallet. Ngaru then killed 'Āmai-te-rangi with his own weapons, and then returned to earth, with the lizards and the chisel and mallet. Gill's version adds that before Ngaru left he beat the *tapairu*, 'Ina and Matonga, in their ball-throwing game, and subsequently introduced this game to earth.

In reflecting on the story of Ngaru, Gill remarked that Miru and 'Āmai-te-rangi were counterparts. Miru was a female spirit power with authority over the lower world; the domain of dark caves where the dead were consigned. 'Āmai-te-rangi, or 'Āpai-te-rangi, was a male spirit power who ruled over the upper world of the skies. Between the two lay the lands where Moko, Ngaru and human beings lived. Moko had authority over creatures—the lizards and the *karakera* bird—that were linked with the domains of Miru and 'Āmai-te-rangi. The lizard families, the *mō-tukutuku* 'skins' and the *moko kārara* 'geckos', are frequently found in the rocks and caves of the *makatea*, believed to be the entry points to Miru's Te Pō (Clerk 1981: 51-52, 514, Gill 1876a: 152-53). These connections to the upper and lower worlds explain how Moko acquired his knowledge of these places. It also makes him an excellent spirit guide and protector. Appropriately for a culture hero, Ngaru himself is affiliated to both the spiritual and human worlds; he is described as "a man

of divine descent” (Gill 1876a: 237). He is well placed to achieve changes in the world that will benefit humanity. Mamae and Gill both showed how Ngaru bests Miru and sets limits to her power over the dead. Less clear is the link to ‘Apai-te-rangi. However, the *rangi* ‘sky, heavens’ is the location of the warrior’s posthumous resting place, Tia’iri (Gill 1876a: 153, Hiroa 1971: 205). By defeating ‘Apai-te-rangi and the associated *tapairu*, Ngaru also gained authority over this upper domain and its spirit powers. His victory established the final destinations for Mangaia’s dead, and suggests that in ritual terms Mangaians gained the power to communicate with and to control the spirit powers in both the lower and upper realms of the universe.

At the end of his Ngaru story Gill (1876a: 236) described him as a “Polynesian Hercules”—a culture hero better known to the Greeks as Heracles. The parallels are striking. For example, Heracles too descended from the gods, in his case, the father of gods, Zeus. Like Ngaru, he was also precocious as a child (a mark of divine origins). Heracles famously performed 12 labours which included defeating an assortment of dangerous creatures and, more importantly, entering the underworld to harass and injure Hades, god of the underworld. To ancient Greeks, Heracles became known as the “Harrower of Hell” and “the terror and controller of the ghost-world”. In all these works, he was often aided by various gods and goddesses (Farnell 1921: 149-50, Kirk 1974: 183-93, 197). Both Mangaians and Greeks could celebrate the attainments of their respective culture heroes, especially their victories over the presiding god of the world of death.

SONGS

Gill concluded his Ngaru narrative with two long song texts that refer to elements of the story. A note at the front of Gill’s manuscript song collection identifies the writer of most of these texts as Mamae (Gill n.d.a). By ending with these two creative works Gill imitated the practice of his Mangaian colleagues, such as Mamae, who would often end a story by quoting a related song, presumably a reflection of the ancient oral art of Polynesian rhetoric still found in related societies such as Aotearoa New Zealand, where speakers complete their oration with an appropriate song (Higgins and Moorfield 2004: 80, Reilly 2009: 33, 64-6, 180-86.). In the Cook Islands the performance of complex songs filled with traditional allusions was not only a speech’s “*pièce de résistance*” but also “conclusive proof” of an orator’s knowledge and performance abilities (Savage 1980: 244). Following Gill and generations of Polynesian orators, it only seems appropriate to conclude this paper with these two significant song poems.

Before examining these songs, a few preliminary comments are needed. Because of their length, only material that refers specifically to elements of the

Ngaru story is included. Line divisions generally follow either Gill's published version or the divisions he pencilled in Mamae's manuscript. Editing and translation principles follow those outlined above for the Ngaru hero cycle, with the following additions. First, Mamae's original manuscript is followed in cases where Gill altered that text, such as instances where he corrected verbal particles 'ua or 'ia to *kua* and *kia*.³³ Second, the translation draws on various English annotations found in the manuscripts which presumably were made by Gill after consulting with Mamae about the meanings of some of the more obscure Mangaian terms.

The first of these songs is called a *ve'e*, perhaps alluding to the various parts of the Ngaru story which are referred to in this work (Mamae n.d.b). Mamae himself sat in the male audience who watched it being performed by an all female group at a women's *teka* competition (*te tekanga*) sponsored by the woman of rank, Patikiporo, in about 1815. This dramatic interpretation of the Ngaru story took place on a level area below Vivitaunua Hill in the district of Tamarua. The composer, Tukā, is most likely the senior Ngāti Vara ancestor who was then medium of the spirit being, Te A'io. He was a contemporary of Mamae's father, Ta'uapepe; both men fell at the Ara'eva battle fought about 1821 (Gill n.d.b, 1876a: 243-44, Reilly 2003: 83-84).

<i>'Aki 'akiā tute te manava ia Tevo 'o 'i</i>	Pick the root of Tevo'o
<i>'Ei mana pa'a nō Ngaru, 'Avaiki</i>	Perhaps as <i>mana</i> for Ngaru, 'Avaiki
<i>Koia i pau tā'ae!</i>	He defeated dangerous spirit beings
<i>Teipoī arire nā Moko rā,</i>	Beloved grandson of Moko,
<i>Nā Vari-mātetakere ē!</i>	Descended from Vari-mā-te-takere! ³⁴

In these opening lines of the song the listener is reminded of Ngaru's important attribute, that he defeated the various *tā'ae* 'spirit beings', which had threatened humanity in various ways. His ability to do this was based on his own descent from the spirit world, through his grandfather, Moko, and an even more important Mangaian spirit power, Vari-mā-te-takere 'the-mud/menses-and-the-bottom', who was the source of human life as the parent of Avatea, from whom Mangaia's people descend (Reilly 2009: 34, Hiroa 1971: 9-10).

<i>Te ta'a o te rangi</i>	The people of the sky
<i>A tuku te 'ata 'apai Ngaru ē</i>	Let down the staging to carry Ngaru
<i>I te kakenga 'tu rava.</i>	Who ascended up.
<i>Kake atu Ngaru</i>	Ngaru ascended
<i>I te tautua i te tau aro 'o te moko</i>	The red lizards settle at the front and back,
<i>kura i tau ē,</i>	
<i>'A pare nei kia 'Apaiterangi ē!</i>	Baffling 'Apaiterangi! ³⁵

After establishing Ngaru's genealogical credentials the song then alludes to elements of the contest with 'Apaiterangi. Ngāti Vara sources clearly preferred this version of the name. The song describes the container used to draw up Ngaru to the sky as a stage or platform ('ata). Appropriately the song associates Moko's lizards with the sacred red colour (*te moko kura*), indicative of their links to the spirit world. The last two lines appear to refer to the lizards crawling over 'Apaiterangi's front and back in order to distract him from his attempts to kill Ngaru.

<i>'Ua kino Ngaru ē</i>	Ngaru was ugly-looking
<i>I te tā'eke aē!</i>	From the surfboard riding!
<i>'Ua kino Ngaru rā i te tā'eke</i>	Ngaru was ugly-looking from the surfboard riding.
<i>E anga turoko ka oro ai Tongatea ē,</i>	Blackened in appearance Tongatea ran away,
<i>Tei Itikau te rōki.</i>	Itikau is the place of rest. ³⁶
<i>Tei Itikau te roki ē!</i>	Itikau is the place of rest!

These lines highlight the dramatic incident when Ngaru's surfboarding darkens his skin, prompting a horrified Tongatea to run away. The blackened skin is described as ugly (*kino*), an aesthetic judgement that hints at the associations of skin colour with rank and beauty. Interestingly, the phrase "*e anga turoko*" also appears in Mamae's account, suggesting how key words and phrases repeatedly appear in different versions of the oral tradition. In his translation Gill described Itikau as Tongatea's "loved resort". Perhaps the place known by this name in Mangaia remembers this placename in the spiritual world. Gill thought the Mangaian location "a famous resort for lovers" (Gill 1876a: 240 fn.1). Another song suggests it was a place where youth gathered to entertain themselves with music (e.g., Gill 1984: 281).

<i>Pāpāpaka 'ā inu rā i te vai o Marua</i>	Chopped <i>māmio</i> leaves as food, drink from the water of Marua,
<i>'E rua 'enua i pē'i ai te pē'i.</i>	Two lands played the ball-game.

These two lines end the first section of the song. The first line echoes Ngaru's statement, in Mamae's version, about Moko's earth oven: "*pāpā paka o, 'ā inu i te vai o, tuku atu 'ia 'aere*". This partial quotation reveals how Mamae creatively draws from the older song text when writing his own account. According to Te Rangi Hiroa, the full statement became a proverbial saying about hospitality: "*Papa paka a inu i te vai o Marua / Tukua kia 'aere 'A baked taro, a draught of the water of Marua / And freedom to depart*" (Hiroa

1971: 138). The lines referred to the simplest meal prepared in Mangaia, comprised of *pāpā paka* ‘taro baked in the embers of an oven’ and some fresh water (Hiroa 1971: 137). The second line confirms Gill’s version that both the *tapairu* in ‘Avaiki and in the skies played ball games with Ngaru, something Mamae only touched on briefly at the end of his story.

<i>‘Unu I. Pē’i ‘iki’iki nā Ngaru ê!</i>	Part I. The ball-throwing skill of Ngaru.
<i>Tērā rava te karanga,</i>	There is the call,
<i>E karanga iā Ngaru,</i>	Calling to Ngaru,
<i>‘Iti mai rapa te uira,</i>	The lightning flash arises,
<i>E uira tū ‘akarere,</i>	Flashes all around,
<i>Nā mana o Ngarutai,</i>	Of Ngarutai’s <i>mana</i> ,
<i>Nō ‘ea tō ‘ou mana,</i>	Where is your <i>mana</i> from,
<i>Nō raro i ‘Avaiki,</i>	From ‘Avaiki below
<i>Nō Vari-mātetakere,</i>	From Vari-mā-te-takere,
<i>Nā ‘o ‘oki atu nā,</i>	Who sends him back,
<i>Tēnā ia ia kava,</i>	That is that <i>kava</i> ,
<i>E tere ‘a ‘a rā e Miru,</i>	What do you travel for Miru,
<i>E tere kai tangata!</i>	I travel to eat people!
<i>Tākina rā ‘Avaiki e Miru ê!</i>	‘Avaiki is brought up by Miru!
<i>‘Ei rapanga uira i tāne.</i>	As the husband’s [Ngaru’s] flashing lightning.
<i>Tāne oro ki Iti!</i>	The husband at Iti [Itikau]!
<i>Aē Ngarutai.</i>	Yes, Ngarutai. ³⁷

Ngaru’s full name, Ngarutai, is revealed in this part of the song. Like his wife, Tongatea, he is associated with the spirit place Itikau. The source of his *mana* is confirmed as Vari-mā-te-takere, who dwells like other spirit beings, including Miru, in ‘Avaiki. As in Mamae’s story, Ngaru’s *mana* is revealed as the white flash of lightning. The reference to Miru’s travels up to the human world to eat people suggests how much of an existential threat she was perceived to be by pre-Christian Mangaians. Ngaru’s defeat of her was therefore an important victory for human beings.

<i>‘Unu II, ‘O Marua tai ō ‘are ê!</i>	Part II. Marua-tai is your home!
<i>Tākina ‘o Ngarutai,</i>	Lift up Ngarutai,
<i>Nā Kumutonga i ‘apai</i>	Carried by Kumutonga
<i>E ‘apai ki ‘Avaiki,</i>	Carried to ‘Avaiki,
<i>‘Ei kai nā Miru kura</i>	As food for Miru kura
<i>‘Ei tāne Ngarutai,</i>	As a husband, Ngarutai
<i>‘Aki ‘akiā tute, ‘aki ‘akiā kava,</i>	Pick the <i>kava</i> ,
<i>Te manava ia Tevo ‘o,</i>	The root of Tevo ‘o

<i>Tâtâia e 'Iva, pōrutuâ te rangi rā,</i>	Clouds darkened by 'Iva, the sky pours torrents of rain,
<i>Takea rā e Ngaru, te 'enua</i>	Ngaru climbs up to the land,
<i>Tau māreva,</i>	Taumāreva
<i>Te 'enua 'iri kura e,</i>	The land of red garments (?),
<i>Nā te ta'a o te rangi,</i>	At the edge of the sky,
<i>E tere a'a rā e Miru,</i>	What do you travel for Miru,
<i>E tere kai tangata.</i>	I travel to eat people! ³⁸

Much of the rest of the song alludes to elements of the story regarding Ngaru's contest with Miru. The second part of this song identifies the formal name of Marua as Marua-tai, the home of Ngaru, or Ngaru-tai, and his family. Miru's own full name is also revealed as Miru-kura. Te Rangi Hiroa thought "kura" a reference to Miru's reddened face burned by the heat from the oven (Hiroa 1971: 202). The song confirms a number of the incidents mentioned at greater length in the prose versions by Mamae and Gill. First, Kumutonga, Miru's daughter, carries Ngaru from Marua-tai down to 'Avaiki, where he is to be eaten by Miru. *Kava* is then made from the plant named Tevo'o. The cloudburst that inundates 'Avaiki is caused by an otherwise unknown spirit being called 'Iva. Ngaru then travels to another land, Taumāreva. The song line, "*Te 'enua 'iri kura*", which refers to this place, suggests an association with Te 'Enua-kura, a spirit land, an interpretation strengthened at the end of the song (see below). Differing accounts link this land either to Tango, a son of Vari-mā-te-takere, or to Timate-kore and Tamaiti-ngavarivari, the parents of Avatea's wife, Papa-ra'ira'i (Gill 1876a: 5, Hiroa 1971: 14, 15). The song maps out the places and their spirit beings which make up Mangaia's spiritual domain, 'Avaiki.

<i>Ōi au tīriâ, tīriâ,</i>	Hey, throw me down, throw me down,
<i>Ōi au târâ, târâ,</i>	Hey, untie me, untie me,
<i>Tāraia akēra</i>	Untie me
<i>'Ia kite au i teia maunga,</i>	So that I can see this mountain,
<i>'O te maunga poro oa teia</i>	Farewell this one and only mountain
<i>A ta'u tupuna a Mokoroa,</i>	Of my ancestor, Mokoroa,
<i>Ta'u metua 'o Vaiare,</i>	My mother, Vaiare,
<i>Ta'u vaine 'o Tongatea,</i>	My wife, Tongatea.
<i>Kiritia kai e kinako.</i>	Drawn out, you will be devoured forthwith, o <i>kinako</i>
<i>Tō koivi, vaio i Erangi maunga,</i>	Your bones, left on Erangi mountain,
<i>Tō vaerua e kave i te pō</i>	Your spirit taken to Te Pō
<i>Nā tā māua metua nā Miru</i>	For our mother, Miru!

All these lines appear in Mamae's story, showing how far he drew on the older song especially for important spoken passages: the chant by Ngaru as he is carried up the Erangi mountain, and the shorter response by his two wives, Kumutonga and Karaia, the daughters of Miru. Since poems are fixed texts these elements of the Ngaru story are potentially very old.

*Kumutonga-karaia i te ata ôi,
Tukua maira tā kōrua tāne
'Ua roa oa te umu a Miru!*

Hey, Kumutonga, Karaia-i-te-ata
Bring your husband
The earth oven of Miru has been
waiting a long time!

Despite various modifications Mamae's own version of this call by Miru to her daughters is clearly drawn in part from the song: "*Kumutonga-i-te-rangi, Karaia-i-te-ata ôi, 'ōmai ra tā kōrua tāne. 'Ua roa oa te umu a Miru*". This example, along with the various other ones found in this song, show how the core spoken or chanted passages in Mamae's version are derived directly from this older song text, with some adaptations.

*'Āore au e pā atu i ta'u moko
E tapu te tikinga va'ine a Ngaru.*

I will not allow my grandchild to be struck
The wives' fetching of Ngaru is *tapu*.³⁹

These lines must be uttered by Moko and explain the intervention below. The reference to *tapu* seems to confirm Gill's idea that the carrying of Ngaru by his wives down to 'Avaiki imitated the taking of a body for final burial. Both acts were surrounded by the *tapu* restrictions associated with death, as the body was returned to the spirit world.

*Tuku atu te taura i 'Enua kura,
'E taura viri viri,
'E taura varavara,
Ruia e te matangi,
Kakea e Ngaru,
Kakea e te rangi tautua,
Kakea e te rangi tuamano,
Ē tuku te taura i 'Enua kura ē
Mauria!*

Drop the rope down to 'Enua-kura
A many stranded rope,
A strong rope (?),
Waved about by the wind,
Climbed by Ngaru,
Climbed by the first *rangi* (?),
Climbed by the many *rangi* (?),
Drop the rope down to 'Enua-kura
Hold fast!

*Mauria e Ruate'ātonga
Te pitonga i te taura
I tukua 'i ō māua Ariki,
'O Rākā maumau ē,
Tukūa, tukua rā i kōna,*

Hold fast o Ruate'ātonga
The end of the rope
Drop down for our *Ariki*
Rākā maumau,
Drop down, drop down there,⁴⁰

'Oki mai e Ngāru

Return, o Ngaru

Tērā 'tu te umu tao iā 'au.

Yonder is the earth oven to cook you.

These final lines of the song refer to the return of Ngaru by means of a rope to the upper world from Miru's earth oven. The mention of 'Enuā-kura confirms an earlier connection between this spirit land and Taumāreva, where Ngaru dwelt for a time after leaving Miru's domain. Gill translated Ruatē'ātonga as "Spirit of the shades", suggesting a being associated with 'Avaiki. He interpreted Rākā maumau as an allusion to the burial cave, 'Auraka, but it seems more likely to be another spirit being. The ascent skywards was not an easy one as Ngaru's rope was buffeted by winds as he climbed through a series of *rangi*, presumably forming parts of the sky domain. Once more a line from this part of the song is incorporated into Mamae's story as part of Ngaru's chant to raise himself up from Te Pō: "'O Rākāmaumau ē, tukūa, tukua rā i kōna!". The final two lines echo almost word for word Moko's utterance as reported by Gill: "Return, Ngaru—Yonder is the oven in which she means to cook you." This suggests that Gill's quotations are fair approximations of their Mangaian originals. Part of the last line also appears in a statement by Miru to Ngaru in episode four of Mamae's story (*'e umu tao iā 'au*).

The second song is a *pē'i* 'ball-throwing song' apparently a type of *pe'e* 'historical chant' (Mamae n.d.c). It was performed at a dance festival (*kapa*) in the reign of the Ngāti Vara Mangaia 'High chief' Pōtiki, Mamae's great-grandfather. Gill estimated the date as about 1790. This is the oldest text we possess alluding to the oral tradition about Ngaru. Such *pē'i* were chanted during the actual performance of the ball-throwing or juggling game (*pē'ipē'i*), presumably to help the players keep time as they tossed the balls into the air (Savage 1980: 245).⁴¹ Gill explained that during the *kapa* the women performing the *pē'i* "imitated the movements of the ball-throwers", but without actually throwing the balls (Gill 1876a: 250).

<i>Karanga</i>	<i>Call</i>
<i>Pē'i 'iki'iki tei tō rima 'e rua toe,</i>	Throw balls around, two are left in your hand,
<i>Tei 'Iva ā ta 'i rā koē</i>	In 'Iva you have one
<i>Rorongo</i>	<i>Solo</i>
<i>Taipō ē!</i>	Go on!
<i>'E pūē</i>	<i>Chorus</i>
<i>Bē'i (ā 'ea) ngā tapairu nō 'Avaiki</i>	The two <i>tapairu</i> of 'Avaiki throw balls
<i>Nō nunga pa 'a i te rangi ē</i>	Perhaps up in the sky
<i>Roro</i>	<i>Solo</i>
<i>Āe ē!</i>	Yes!
<i>Pūē</i>	<i>Chorus</i>
<i>Pē'i (ā 'ea) i te pē'i 'itu i te pē'i varu</i>	Seven balls, eight balls are thrown by 'Ina
<i>e 'Ina e</i>	
<i>Ka rē koia 'o Matonga iti kau rē rē</i>	She wins, Matonga-iti gets no balls ⁴²

Roro

*Ka rē 'oki e Matonga e i te pē'i,
Ka topa i tō rima ā ta'i ô!*

Roro 'Unu I

Tiria mai tāku pē'i

Solo

Matonga is also victorious at throwing balls,
One ball has fallen from your hand!

Solo Part I

Throw my ball here.

This section of the song describes the ball-playing game of the *tapairu*. The spirit being, 'Iva, who caused the cloud burst that saved Ngaru is mentioned, but the principal focus is on the two *tapairu* located in the *rangi*, 'Ina and Matonga-iti, who lost this game against Ngaru. He then introduced this ball game to the human world (Gill 1876a: 236-37). Judging from the description in this first part of the song, the game consisted of each player throwing up as many as seven or eight balls into the air. Clearly, the aim was not to drop any on the ground, but to keep as many as possible in one's hands. Unlike these spirit women, expert human players could normally throw only four or more balls at any one time (Savage 1980: 245). Naturally, the *tapairu* were able to juggle almost double that. Ngaru's heroic status is further demonstrated by his display of skill in keeping even more balls in his hands than they could.

Pūē

*'E pē'i ka topa i te rima o ngā
tūpuna'ū,*

*Nā Te I'iri, nā Teraranga,
Tāku rima tāku 'ei kapara tūrina
'Ua tōro pati kura konikoni,
Nō nunga nō te 'akingā pē'i*

Chorus

A ball has fallen from the hand of
the ancestors

Te I'iri and Teraranga,
My hand, my necklace of *tūrina* seeds
Selected from round red fruits (?),
Concerning the gathering of balls.⁴³

The first two lines refer to the two *tūpuna* 'ancestors', Te I'iri and Teraranga. Gill described them as the two gods who preside over the ball-throwing game. They were responsible for devising and teaching it (Gill 1876a: 245, fn.1). The seeds of the *tūrina*, 'mountain lantern-tree' *Hernandia moerenhoutiana*, were a less preferred material for making 'ei 'necklaces' (Buse with Taringa 1995: 369, 530, Shibata 1999: 352). The last two lines describe the picking of fruit from trees to serve as the balls for the game. Savage explains that the hard seeds of different trees were used, such as the *tuitui* 'candlenut tree' *Aleurites moluccana*, or the *tamanu*, 'island mahogany' 'Alexandrian laurel' *Calophyllum inophyllum* (Savage 1980: 245). The *tuitui*'s seed is described as walnut-sized (Whistler 2009: 30), giving a sense of the dimensions of the seed balls used in this juggling game.

'O ngā tapairu, tū ta'i e, kirirua e, The two *tapairu*, stand as one,
two skins (?),

<i>Paiereiere, 'ikitia i raro o Kaputai.</i>	Come from under to perform the war-dance at Kaputai.
<i>Ā ta 'i nei va 'ine i ngingini ai,</i>	Of these women the most strangely fascinating
<i>I tōro pā tītī, tōro pā tātā,</i>	And proficient at our game,
<i>'O te pua i mata reka,</i>	The sweet-smelling pua
<i>'O te 'akatū ngā 'are</i>	The erected houses
<i>I 'ikitia i marama nui ē</i>	Chosen for Marama Nui
<i>Era koe e 'Ina!</i>	You are beaten, o 'Ina
<i>Roro</i>	<i>Solo</i>
<i>Taipo ē!</i>	Go on! ⁴⁴

This part of the song refers to the *tapairu*, 'Ina, who is beaten by Ngaru. The composer depicts the *tapairu* coming up from 'Avaiki to perform at Kaputai, located on the western coast, near the *marae*, Ōrongo, and historically the place where the *ariki pā tai* resided (Gill 1876a: 245, fn.2). 'Ina is likened to the highly valued and sweet scented flower of the *pua* (*Fagraea berteriana*) particularly favoured for 'ei 'necklaces' (Whistler 2009: 114). She is identified as the wife of Marama Nui, the moon. Originally, the sun and the moon were two halves of a child of the foundational married pair, Avatea and Papatira'i. Both parts were squeezed into balls and tossed into the skies to their present positions (Gill 1876a: 44-45). This origin may explain why Marama Nui is associated with the ball-throwing 'Ina.

The four parts of this song alternate between Ngaru defeating the *tapairu* 'Ina and Matonga. In between the first three parts Gill repeated the opening *karanga* 'call' of the song.⁴⁵ These later song parts are not quoted as they are somewhat obscure, even in Gill's translation, and do not seem to add anything further to this discussion. The final relevant part of this song is its concluding section.

<i>'E Mautu teia nō taua pe 'e nei</i>	This is a conclusion for that historical chant
<i>Karanga</i>	<i>Call</i>
<i>'E ara pē 'i nā Kumutonga,</i>	A ball-throwing game with Kumutonga,
<i>Nā Karaia-i-te-ata e, ā kâke ē</i>	With Karaia-i-te-ata, who climbed up
<i>Rorongō</i>	<i>Solo</i>
<i>Taipo ē!</i>	Go on!
<i>Pūē</i>	<i>Chorus</i>
<i>Tē pē 'i māira te pē 'inga i te ata</i>	Playing the juggling game in the shadows
<i>Roro</i>	<i>Solo</i>
<i>Ae ē!</i>	Yes!

<i>Pūē</i>	<i>Chorus</i>
<i>Tē rere māira te manu pēpē kura</i>	The red-feathered bird is flying
<i>Roro</i>	<i>Solo</i>
<i>‘E ara pē‘i ‘oki rā nā Karaia ae ē!</i>	Also a ball-throwing game with Karaia!
<i>Pūē</i>	<i>Chorus</i>
<i>‘E ara pē‘i nā Kumutonga,</i>	A ball-throwing game with Kumutonga,
<i>Nā Karaia-i-te-ata</i>	Karaia-i-te-ata
<i>‘Āore pa ‘a e kitea te ikōnga i te rima.</i>	Perhaps the hand movements are not seen. ⁴⁶

In this finale, Ngaru defeats the two *tapairu* of ‘Avaiki, Kumutonga and Karaia-i-te-ata. Just as Miru and ‘Apai-te-rangi are complementary pairs, this song suggests that so too are the two pairs of *tapairu* found in the upper and lower realms. The last line suggests the speed and dexterity required to play this ball-game. Ngaru demonstrates his own *mana* by successively beating these *tapairu* at a game in which they excelled. Games in Polynesia were never just forms of exercise or entertainment but a field on which players realised an ambition to enhance their *mana* at the expense of others.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The oral traditions about Ngaru introduce a number of ideas and themes that give an insight into the ancient Mangaian world. The human beings who inhabit Mangaia exist within a world invested with various kinds of threatening spirit forces. Encircling Mangaia, above and below it, is another world filled with particular lands, each occupied by particular spiritual beings. Only a hero like Ngaru, himself descended from spirit powers, is able to grant a degree of security to humanity by bringing the different spirit beings under his authority with the aid of his guide, Moko. One of the key themes of this tradition must surely be how Ngaru defeats the great woman of Te Pō, Miru-kura, and so ensures a better afterlife for people, particularly those most resembling himself, the warriors and leaders of Mangaia.

In retelling Ngaru’s struggles the tradition categorises the kinds of spirits he must contend with, such as the fierce, human-eating *tā‘ae*, especially personified in the shark, and the seductively beautiful *tapairu*, skilled in the various arts, but complicit with the dangerous ruling powers of the spirit world, Miru-kura, and her counterpart, ‘Apaiterangi. As in the human world, the spirit forces are part of a genealogical network filled with social obligations, thus the *tapairu* daughters of Miru obediently carry out their mother’s instructions. When Ngaru is carried to Te Pō by his *tapairu* wives or ascends through the *rangi*, the oral tradition presents a map of the spirit world’s topography, listing the different domains and the spirit beings that dwell there. These places are still remembered for they appear in the landscape of Mangaia itself.

The other world is a distorting mirror that only superficially resembles Mangaia: spirit lands lie under the authority of leaders and are populated by families who appear to behave in similar ways to human ones. At a deeper level, however, the tradition highlights disturbing differences between both worlds. As Ngaru points out to Miru, whereas her daughters were entertained by Moko with food cooked in his oven, she fools her guests, by cooking them in her oven so as to become food for her family in 'Avaiki. To be truly human is to show hospitality to strangers: this is a core cultural trait, showing how a person's *mana* is revealed "by giving rather than receiving" (Johansen 1954: 63, also see Shirres 1997: 55). Unlike Moko, spirit beings play false; their inhospitable behaviour marks them out as non-human. By crossing over into that other world, Ngaru reveals his heroic status, confirmed when he is not overcome by Miru's *kava*. That he dresses as a man, by wearing a *maro*, confirms his affiliation to the human world. By contrast, the spiritual domain is an inverted place, filled with duplicity, cruelty and incivility, and an improper desire to eat human beings.

The relationship between the older songs which Mamae recorded and his own story about Ngaru reveals something of the nature of Mangaia's oral tradition. The free text of Mamae's narrative elaborates on elements touched on in the fixed song texts. Gill's version too, derived from other oral versions of the Ngaru tradition, relates story elements not mentioned by Mamae, although some are referred to in the songs. Mamae clearly drew on the fixed song texts he had learned from his grandfather, Koroa, especially for key quotations of chants and sayings. These must have been important elements of the oral tradition since both Gill and Mamae took great care to reproduce them. Around these fixed sections, story tellers obviously could take greater liberties, adding or excluding elements depending on the situation of their performance. Mamae presents a compact story, reflective of its oral origins. Gill adapted his version to the reading tastes of a European book culture, with greater expansion of characters, scene-setting and gender specific behaviour. When brought together these various texts reveal the full range of episodes that comprised Mangaia's tradition about their important culture hero, Ngaru.

The several references to eight in the Ngaru cycle confirm the particular prominence of this number in various Mangaian stories (Biggs 1990: 35). Eight was also a "favourite number" in Polynesian accounts about resurrections and visits to the spirit world (Biggs 1990: 35). In many Eastern Oceanic societies, "the number eight expresses the extraordinary, the powerful, the potent, the miraculous" (Biggs 1990: 33). There are four instances of the number eight in this cycle: Tumutearetoka struggled to defeat Ngaru for eight nights (Mangaian reckoning the passage of time by nights rather than days), Ngaru was buried in the ground for eight nights,

‘Apaiterangi and Ngaru raised and lowered the container eight times and ‘Ina juggled eight balls. The last two examples confirm eight’s association with “totality, the lot” (Biggs 1990: 34).

The most striking theme found in this tradition is its evidence for Mangaian usages of that profound and pervasive Polynesian concept, *mana*. As in other eastern Polynesian societies, such as Aotearoa New Zealand, the spirit powers were the immediate source of someone’s *mana* (Shirres 1982: 39, 1997: 57). In Ngaru’s case, he derived his *mana* from his ancestral spiritual beings, Moko and Vari-mā-te-takere. Clearly, *mana* could be passed down from one holder to another through a number of generations without losing any potency.

Inherited *mana* could also be shared between two holders at the same time. To safeguard Ngaru, his grandfather, Moko, twice gave his *mana* to his *mokopuna* ‘grandchild’. The relationship between a grandparent and their grandchild is normally a very strong and happy one, marked by a kindly indulgence and love of the young child, so it is not surprising that Moko willingly gave his *mana* to Ngaru in order to protect him from harm. There is no suggestion that Moko’s *mana* was lessened in any way by this act of love.

Mangaian did not distinguish between *mana* as it existed in a spirit being or person and in any thing that belonged to them. Mamae’s version describes how Moko’s *mana* is traditional knowledge and two lizards (“*moko kura*” ‘sacred, red lizards’, according to the first song). Similarly, Mamae refers to two *mana* of Miru: the first is the *kava* plant, Tevo‘o, and the second one is her oven. In all these examples, the thing is as much a part of the *mana* as the person. It is intrinsic to both. The Danish scholar of New Zealand Māori traditions, J. Prytz Johansen (1954: 105), observed something similar: “the Maori in general possesses the *mana* of his possessions”.

Mana, however, is not inert. In the words of the Māori scholar, Hirini Mead (2003: 51), it is a “creative and dynamic force that motivates the individual to do better than others”. The *mana* of a human person or a spirit being could be affected by the actions of another holder of *mana*. Mamae explains that after Ngaru defeated his various spirit enemies, he acquired their forms (as a wave, shark, *kava* or oven). By doing so, he also acquired the *mana* of those beings. Similarly, when Tongatea lost the argument with Ngaru about who would take a swim first, she lost *mana* to him. His cursing of the sea creatures, Tikokura and Tumuitearetoka, would have been understood as an attack on their *mana*. They had to fight him. Their defeat ensured he acquired their *mana* too. Ngaru’s steadily growing *mana* confirms his heroic role; only such a figure could succeed time and again against such beings of *mana*. As for those who lost to him, their feelings are perhaps best revealed by Tongatea’s decision to commit suicide. For her, only such an extreme action could restore any sense of equilibrium. To lose one’s *mana* was to

lose the very thing that defined you as a person; that gave you the capacity to live life fully and with dignity.

People of *mana*, like Ngaru or Tongatea, were also marked off from others by certain physical attributes, including a lightness of skin. This was an outward sign of someone's inner *mana*. A lighter skin was also thought to be a mark of great physical beauty, another manifestation of the *mana* that lay within a person.⁴⁷ By contrast, it was thought that an ugly person possessed a darker skin. They were not persons of *mana*. That is why Tongatea was so horrified by Ngaru's change of skin colour. His own feelings are clear from the extreme efforts he took to transform himself back again.

The intensity and power of someone's *mana* is demonstrated in Mamae's story when Ngaru's *mana* is described as lightning that shone forth from his body. It was so bright in Ngaru's case that people in other lands could clearly see it. For a hero like Ngaru, or indeed for a human person such as a chief, *mana* was not hidden away. It was not discrete. It shone out over the landscape so that people could not help but notice it. No one who looked upon it could be mistaken about its source. The person or being invested by *mana* stood out among others. Everyone knew who they were. Everyone understood that they were a vessel for the *mana* from the spirit powers. The cycle of Ngaru explains why people listened to their leaders. They could see that ancestral *mana* shining out from within them like lightning. When Ngaru told his men to leave Tongatea's *kapa*, they followed his instructions without hesitation or question. *Mana* is what made people pay attention to their leader's words. Without *mana*, they would simply become an ordinary person, like everyone else.

Ngaru is not Mangaia's only culture hero since like many Polynesian societies, people there delighted in telling stories about Māui too. Like that far better known character, Ngaru is both a benefactor and transformer of human society. Unlike Māui's trickster personality, Ngaru acts like a warrior and leader of others. He makes life pleasanter by introducing a new ball-throwing game. He makes the place safer when he is able to show people how to surf over dangerous seas and to beat the man-eating shark. He is able to reorder the afterlife, particularly for warriors, by beating major spirit powers and bringing them under his authority. He becomes the ideal model of beauty for Mangaian men. He reveals the logic of *mana*; its successful acquisition results in the defeat or denigration of others. He is the warrior archetype, unmoved by danger, prepared to go even to the deepest recesses of the spirit world and take on death itself. He reveals to human beings their potential for growth and success, even against the universe's greatest spiritual forces.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper is dedicated to Mataora Harry, *Kavana* of Kei‘ā, who died suddenly in Auckland on 22 April 2015. Since 1997 we have worked together on Mangaia’s ancient history, and this paper was the last one he was able to provide assistance on. Mataora was a passionate advocate for Mangaia’s economic and cultural development who believed that learning about the ancestral world would benefit his community. “*Vāia te rua e, i te tokerau ē! / I te tokerau, e ngaa mai ki tai. / Iki ki te iku parapu—ki te iku parapu*”, ‘Rush forth, O north-west wind! / Bear him gently on his way. / Awake, O south-west—O south-west’ (Gill 1876a: 190-91). Also special thanks to Kōpū Rouvi (Dunedin) and Ngariki Orani (Auckland) who commented on earlier drafts of this paper. Any remaining errors are entirely my own responsibility. Particular thanks to Iain Sharp, Manuscript Librarian, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Central City Library, for giving permission to quote the manuscripts, and to my Research Assistant, Erica Newman, for her help.

NOTES

1. ‘Temperament’ is my conjectured gloss for *arakata* which seems to mean some quality attaching to the person. It might also be translated something like ‘disposition’ or ‘attribute’. The word does not appear in any of the standard dictionaries.
2. This practice is mentioned in Gill 1876a: 233, also see Reilly 2009: 278 and Shibata 1999: 218.
3. The phrase “*i pō varu*” is written thus in the manuscript.
4. This is my conjecture for *naupata*, a word which does not appear in any dictionaries. I am assuming it is a synonym for *patapata*. This is the name of a zone of land between the *pi‘aki*, the boundary between sea and land, and the strip of land under the *makatea* cliff, also known as *rapeuru*. Various plants grow in the *patapata*, including the ‘utu and *puka* trees. See Mark 1976: 61, 63-64.
5. See the useful summary of the concept of *kanga* ‘verbal abuse, curse someone’, as it was understood by New Zealand Māori, in Benton *et al.* 2013: 115-23. Thanks to Poia Rewi for bringing this book to my attention.
6. In this sentence, Mamae first writes *tirae*, a word not found in contemporary dictionaries, and then in brackets explains its meaning for the benefit of his audience. Presumably, *tirae* was the word used in the version of the tradition transmitted to Mamae. Such care in retaining and explaining the ancestral language paints a picture of Mamae’s scholarly diligence in passing on not just stories but the very words of earlier generations of Mangaia’s people.
7. “Nothing changes... your colour” is my rather free translation of the statement: “*‘Āore i anga e ta ‘u moko, e anga turoko.*” This rather cryptic utterance is hard to translate accurately, but the context indicates that Moko is proposing to Ngaru that they change his skin colour which had been darkened through exposure to the elements.

8. This sentence more literally reads: “When it reached the eighth night, there developed from Ngaru, lightning that flashed from under his hole.”
9. The previous two sentences translate the Manganian text: “*Inā! tē va ‘a ‘ua ra tō Tongatea tūranga. ‘Ua ui atu a Ngaru, nō ‘ai te va ‘a, e va ‘a?*” This particular use of *va ‘a* is not found in dictionaries, but following Gill’s version, and information from Mataora Harry, Kavana of Kei‘ā, I have interpreted the word, *va ‘a*, as ‘to throw the javelin (in a *teka* competition)’. The person launching the javelin is also called a *va ‘a*. The word, *va ‘a*, describes someone raising their right arm and then throwing the javelin towards a point on the ground from where it launches off into space (Mataora Harry, pers. comm. Māngere, Auckland, 24 July 2014).
10. This instruction suggests that the men may have loosened their *maro* ‘loin cloth’ for comfort. Ngaru’s instruction indicates that they were about to walk out of the performance. Before doing so, they had to tighten up their *maro* and make sure they were presentably dressed.
11. The *kōki ‘i kura* is identified as a poisonous weed, with red berries, used to commit suicide in the pre-Christian era (Savage 198: 110). The *kōki ‘i*, ‘yellow wood sorrel’ *Oxalis corniculata*, was used in herbal medicine (Buse with Taringa 1995: 185, Shibata 1999: 100).
12. The classic example in Manganian history is the departure of Tangaroa from Mangaia following his encompassment by his *teina* ‘younger brother’, Rongo, and his subsequent settlement in other lands. See versions in Reilly 2009: 143-56.
13. A Manganian example concerns the hero, Māui, who returns three times to Ma‘uike and requests a firebrand from him. The two then fight as Ma‘uike seeks to defeat “this insolent intruder”. When Māui triumphs Ma‘uike, now under his power, has to reveal the desired secrets of fire-making. See Gill 1876a: 54-55.
14. Stories of champion players whose *teka* ‘darts’ flew long distances occur in various Polynesian traditions, including the Aotearoa New Zealand story about Hutu and Pare (Orbell 1968: 2-7). Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this example. A comparison of similar Māori and Hawaiian stories is discussed by Thornton 1987: 13-22.
15. This summary is based on the Manganian example of Paoa (see Gill 1984: 275-77). Doubtless it points to a well known method of seeking death. Firth (1967) describes interesting Tikopia parallels in his essay “Suicide and Risk-taking”.
16. In the manuscript *‘anati* is written *ānati*, but I am assuming that, as elsewhere in his writings, Mamae uses the macron to mark a glottal stop. The word does not appear in any modern dictionaries.
17. The following chants have been presented in verse form, whereas in the original manuscript they are written in prose. In accordance with poetical conventions, words have also been capitalised at the start of lines. Vowels marked by the circumflex indicate macrons inserted by Mamae probably to reflect stresses in the actual chanting of the words. Contemporary spelling of affected words are *tīria*, *tāra*, *koivi*, *vaerua*. Note that in Ngaru’s chant Gill changed the Manganian dialect form *‘ia* to *kia* in his published version; a practice he consistently followed in all his quotations of Manganian poetry.
18. In the manuscript *tōkā* is written *tokā*. I conjectured *tōkā* ‘despise, spurn’ (Buse with Taringa 1995: 505). Gill translated this passage, “Tis thus you treat your

- intended husband!” Kōpū Rouvi assumed the word should be *tākā*, suggesting the phrase put colloquially meant, “I’ll get you” (pers. comm. 10 February 2015).
19. There are some minor variants in the second versions of both these chants. In Ngaru’s there is some different placing of macrons, e.g., *tīria*, *akerā*, as well as an additional preposed possessive particle, *a*, and focus particles, *’o*, in the last line. In the women’s chant, exclamation marks are inserted in different places.
 20. Mamae writes *o* as a separate word throughout this quotation. These may be examples of the directional particle *a’o*. As used here it appears to refer to Moko’s earth oven located on the far side from Miru’s oven where Ngaru was then standing (see Buse with Taringa 1995: 62). In the manuscript, *Moko o* is spelt *Moko ō*, and *paka* is spelt *pākā*. Te Rangi Hiroa (1971: 137-38) quotes another version of this passage.
 21. In the preceding passage of the manuscript, *tātā’i* is written *tātāi*; this is also the spelling in the accompanying song, see below. The locative, *miri*, is the Manganian variant of *muri* (Shibata 1999: 142).
 22. This seems to be a variant of *kuru*, although not one recorded in any dictionary. Nonetheless, some Manganian words do replace *k* with a glottal stop.
 23. Again, this text is rearranged in a poetical form rather than in the prose presentation of the original. Many of Mamae’s macrons (represented as circumflexes) indicate apparent stresses in the chanting of this work, e.g., *’iorā* (cf. *’iōra*), *taūra* (cf. *taura*), *tukūa* (cf. *tukua*), *kōna* (cf. *kona*), rather than the standard spelling provided in brackets. The additional *i* with an apostrophe (in “*tukua’i*”) stands for the postposed particle *ai* so that this reads *tukua [a]i*. I have retained Mamae’s usage here as this abbreviation is frequently found in older Cook Islands Māori texts although others prefer to spell out both words fully (Buse with Taringa 1995: 9, 95).
 24. See Gill 1876a: 230 and Shibata 1999: 200. Following Gill, I have conjectured ‘secured with cords’ for the verb *’anati*. This term does not appear in any dictionaries.
 25. The word “*Kiritia*” suggests that Ngaru has been drawn out of his bundle of *tapa* cloth and released, only it seems to be eaten, or threatened with being eaten: “*kai*”. I have interpreted “*e kinana*” as a term of address for Ngaru. It is not clear whether Gill captured that part of the line in his rendering either, despite his access to Mamae and other knowledgeable Manganians. Gill tended towards looser verse translations rather than literal renderings of Manganian poetry.
 26. Following Gill I have conjectured *’akaoru* as ‘tie up (again)’. The word does not appear in any dictionaries. Gill (1876a: 231) translated ‘another uphill place’ as “another spur of the same mountain range”.
 27. In order to make Ngaru’s response perfectly clear, I have added quite a bit into the English translation. The *paka* refers to the leaf of the *māmio*, *Colocasia esculenta* ‘*taro*’, which was prepared as a meal in Mangaia (Shibata 1999: 191). I have translated *parau* as ‘false’, based on a New Zealand Māori meaning, because that seems to fit Ngaru’s point: whereas Moko’s oven fed people, Miru’s oven cooks them and therefore she practises a deception upon visitors such as himself. It may be that an older meaning has disappeared from current Cook Islands speech but been retained in a cognate language. I should note that 19th-century Manganian

- texts contain a number of words which elude recent dictionaries, many of which are primarily based on Rarotongan Māori. ‘The sky then clouded over’ is my very loose reading of *tātā’i*, but it makes sense of what follows. Gill (1876a: 232) describes the heavens becoming “intensely black”.
28. *Karakerake* does not correspond with any bird currently found in Mangaia or elsewhere in the Cook Islands. Gill (1876a: 233) describes these birds alighting upon “the ledge of a pile of rocks” rather than a breadfruit tree.
 29. Gill (1876a: 233 and fn.2) interpreted this text differently. He wrote, “... *o maua ariki/O Rākā maumau ē*”, and translates this as ‘the imperious/Orākā, the all-devouring’. He explained that Orākā is a variant for ‘Auraka, the burial cave in Kei’ā formerly used by Ngāriki people.
 30. Mamae indicates a glottal stop in *ka’u* by adding a macron, variously written *kaū* or *kāu* in this text. In the manuscript *tāpatu* is written *tapātu*. In the manuscript ‘Apaiteurangi is written “Apai -”, with the dash representing the rest of the name. Given the different possible meanings available for ‘ū’ā, Mamae inserted macrons (“ūā”) presumably to indicate glottal stops.
 31. The word ‘container’ is my conjecture for *ka’u*. Gill referred to “a large basket” (Gill 1876a: 234). Today, *ka’u* refers to ‘the membrane enclosing the foetus, protective covering of a plant or fruit’ (Buse with Taringa 1995: 164, Savage 1980: 91). Perhaps, some earlier meanings for *ka’u* have been lost. Tregear, for example, glossed ‘clothes, garments’ for the Mangaian word, *kaka’u*, a partial reduplication of *ka’u* (Tregear 2001: 113).
 32. Gill described ‘Apaiteurangi as holding “a huge chisel and mallet” in his hands (Gill 1876a: 234).
 33. In the first song text Gill made 19 minor changes to the manuscript version. Seven of them involved the insertion of the *k* in the verbal particles, ‘*a*, ‘*ua* and ‘*ia*. He was not consistent however; for example, he retained the Mangaian form of the focus particle, ‘*o* [*ko*].
 34. A note by Gill explains that *manava* refers to the root of the *kava* plant named Tevo’o; Savage (1980: 137) defined the phrase *manava-a-kava*. “fully-matured root of the *kava* plant, and the spiritual essence of the root”. An apostrophe followed by *i* is a 19th-century representation of the particle *ei* (*ai* after word ending in *a*). See Buse with Taringa 1995: 95. I have chosen to retain the older form here and elsewhere in these songs. Gill (1876a: 238) transcribed “*Tepoi*” instead of “*Teipoi*”, presumably a typographical error.
 35. A marginal note by Gill explained that *ta’a* refers to ‘people’. In the manuscript ‘*ata* is written *Ātā*. In writing “*kakenga’tu*” Mamae used the 19th century convention whereby an apostrophe replaces *a* when it follows on a word ending in *a*; thus, *kakenga* [*a*]tu. Gill annotated “*tautua*” as ‘front’ and “*tau aro*” as ‘back’. He translated “*te moko kura*” as “the golden lizards”. The line beginning “Baffling ...” is Gill’s translation.
 36. My interpretation of “*tā’eke*” as ‘surfboard riding’ is based on an old word *tā’eke’eke-tai*, ‘to indulge in sport of surf-riding, to ride shoreward on crest of breakers’ (see Savage 1980: 328). Gill annotated “*anga turoko*” as ‘black’, referring to the change in Ngaru’s skin colour.

37. Gill annotated ‘bring up’ for “*Tākina*”, ‘Ngaru’ for “*tāne*” and ‘Itikau’ for “*Iti*”. The next portion of the song repeats the first 19 lines, from “‘*Aki’akiā ... i pē’i ai te pē’i*”, before commencing Part II.
38. Gill annotated “*tātāia*” as ‘dark clouds’. ‘The land of red garments’ is derived from Gill’s rendering: “The land of scarlet garments”. Following “*E tere kai tangata*” there is a sequence of repeated lines: first, a repetition of the song lines from “*Tākina rā ‘Avaiki ... Aê Ngarutai*”, followed by a further repetition of the first three lines of the song: “‘*Aki’akiā ... pau tā’ae*”.
39. This line can be interpreted in various ways. Gill interpreted it “Tis thus ye fairies treat Ngaru”. Alternatively, it might read ‘Ngaru’s fetching of wives is *tapu*’. However, the line surely alludes to the two wives of Ngaru carrying him to Te Pō. Gill clearly assumed this is what the line referred to.
40. The interpretation (“A strong rope”) is based on Gill’s own rendering: “Ropes of many strands and of great strength”. In his marginalia Gill noted that “*ruia*” means ‘waved’. Gill translated “*rangi tautua*” as “the heaven-climber” and “*rangi tuamano*” as “all nature”. Gill translated the line referring to Rākāmaumau: “From all devouring ‘Auraka [a reference to the Kei’ā burial cave]”.
41. Buse with Taringa (1995: 337) records the phrase “*pēpē’i tamanu*, to juggle with *tamanu* seeds”. Shibata (1999: 211) records another throwing game called *peipei* (or *pēipēi* [*pē’ipē’i?*]) where players toss a pebble from the right hand and catch it on the back of the hand. The winner is the player who can keep tossing the stone the longest.
42. Gill translated ‘In ‘Iva you have one’ as “In all spirit-land thou hast no equal”, suggesting that he interpreted ‘Iva as a spirit place. The parenthetical word “*ā’ea*” found in several lines of this song is a pencil addition made to the original manuscript, presumably by Gill. Gill annotated “*kau rērē*” as “*ngere*” meaning to ‘lack, be short of, do without, get none (of fishing)’ (Shibata 1999: 172). Matonga presumably lacks any of the balls which are in ‘Ina’s possession.
43. Mamae consistently inserted a macron in *toro* ‘stretch out’, although recent dictionaries do not.
44. Gill annotated “*paieriere*” as ‘war dance’; unfortunately, the word does not appear in dictionaries. The lines “Of these women... our game” are difficult to interpret, and the translations are modified from those of Gill. The section following “*Taipō ē*” repeats lines 4-10 above: “*Bē’i (ā’ea) ngā Tapairu ... tō rima ā ta’i ô!*” before beginning ‘*Unu* II or Part II.
45. Note that in his published version Gill departed from Mamae’s by inserting an extra repetition, the “third call”, following the fourth verse; this is not found in the original.
46. Mamae inserted macrons in “*pēpē*” whereas Gill did not. He translated the line ‘The red-feathered bird is flying’, as “A bird of gay plumage is watching you”. I have assumed that *pepe/pēpē* is a poetical word for feathers or perhaps even wing (*pē’au, pererau*). The translation, ‘Perhaps the hand movements are not seen’, follows Gill’s with some modifications: “The quick movements of the fingers are invisible”.
47. A similar observation is made by Douglas Oliver for ancient Tahitian society (Oliver 1974: 159, 473).

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the story of Ngaru, a famous culture hero from Mangaia, as recorded in several 19th-century prose and song texts by a local scholar, Mamae, and his colleague, the missionary, William Wyatt Gill. Important themes are revealed, including Mangaian understandings of the concept, *mana*; the form and content of oral tradition; the important Polynesian number, eight; and, the parallels between Ngaru and the Greek hero, Heracles, who both beat the presiding spirit powers in the world of the dead.

Keywords: Ngaru, culture hero, *mana*, Mangaian oral traditions

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