Māui, Polynesian culture hero: a nineteenth century tradition from Ruapuke Island

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The appearance of the culture hero is an important moment in the development of a distinctively human society following on from the initial stages of creation. These heroes are best known for introducing culture to humanity; they are "the source of uniquely human institutions."[1] The hero wrests key elements of human life, such as fire, from the world's creative powers, and in so doing ensures that such things become accessible to ordinary people, thus setting the stage for the emergence of human civilisation. The heroes themselves are not human, but rather part of an intermediate generation linking the spiritual powers that formed the universe and human beings. These heroes are often depicted as demi-gods, being part human and part god. While they assist humanity by providing the building blocks of culture, they are themselves not confined by cultural norms or the boundaries of time and space.[2] Some culture heroes reveal a particularly mischievous aspect to their behaviour: they become the trickster, the hero's alter ego. The trickster plays a more subversive role of clown or buffoon, a restless being who typically indulges in lots of eating and sex; the antithesis of the hero. Such hero-tricksters have the power to transform themselves into various shapes, often appearing as animals.[3]

Oceanic tricksters tend to act as mischievous but clever pranksters who delight in breaking rules. They present a more human side to themselves while retaining their more divine qualities as a culture hero.[4] For Māori and other peoples in Polynesia, Māui is the best known such "Culture-hero-become-Trickster."[5] Throughout the Pacific he is presented as "a mischievous, adolescent trickster," "a born rebel," or a "juvenile delinquent"; a being who defies precedents and sets about to transform the world that an earlier generation has created. Like most tricksters he is restless, always seeking to challenge yet another powerful spirit being, and to defy and overturn the rules that differentiate human beings and the creative powers of the universe. Ultimately, he wants to put humanity on a par with the universe's spirit beings. From the perspective of others, however, he seems intent on destroying the established order of things in order to effect the changes he wants.[6]

The following chapter looks at a particular Māori kōrero about Māui from Murihiku, in Te Waipounamu. This kōrero was told by the older generation of tangata whenua living on the island of Ruapuke, located in Te Ara a Kiwa (Foveaux Strait). During the first decades of the nineteenth century, this island was an important hub for Kāi Tahu, acting as a refuge from the conflicts afflicting many parts of Te Waipounamu further north.[7]

The Māui story emerged out of talks between the local missionary, Johann Wohlers (1811–1885), of the North German Mission Society, and a number of elders on the island. During the long winter nights, several of the old people would recount traditions to Wohlers who recorded what they said in the reo. This technique of writing passages down was a language-learning technique he developed after he came to Ruapuke in 1844. By the time he began writing down kōrero like the one about Māui, around 1850, he had clearly become highly proficient in this recording process and in his understanding of the reo.[8] In the early 1870s he edited this Māui story for publication. Another edition of this narrative was published by Christine Tremewan in 2002 as part of a collection of southern stories from Ruapuke.[9]

Journal of New Zealand Studies NS35 (2023), 7-21 https://doi.org/10.26686/jnzs.iNS35.8112

Wohlers did not identify the elders who shared their knowledge with him, a not uncommon practice amongst other European collectors of this era, such as George Grey, although others, including John White and William Wyatt Gill, partially acknowledged Indigenous authorities.[10] However, an 1852 census identifies a cluster of older people who may well have included at least some of those who took the time to speak with Wohlers. Amongst those listed were Hone Te Mahiaraki, Hākopa Haumai and Maraetai, who were then in their sixties, as well as a larger group aged in their fifties: Rihia Hinekōau, Aria Te Aroatua, Awenata Rotu, Rāwiri Te Kaomo, Taora Te Karuwakapuke, Hāmuera Te Mahaka, Te Manihera Tūtakaia, Te Karawa, Wiremu Rēhua and Te Waika.[11]

Wohlers himself explains that he recorded the words of the Ruapuke elders as a means of learning their language and their "way of thinking."[12] Other missionaries in the Pacific expressed similar motivations; for example, Gill decided to study Mangaia's traditions "especially with a view to understand native thought and feeling."[13] In later years, Wohlers clearly realised the value of this knowledge for scholarship, reading his Ruapuke narratives at meetings of the Otago Institute, a local learned society, in 1874 and 1875.[14] Other missionaries were doing the same. Gill, for example, presented papers to English and Australian learned societies, intending his work to aid "the student of ethnology in his researches."[15] Indeed, in his case the Oxford philologist, F. Max Müller, encouraged him to publish his first book, *Myths and Songs from the South Pacific*, and in a preface praised its contribution to the study of mythology and religion.[16] Clearly, missionaries like Wohlers and Gill were now contributing to cutting edge ethnological research.

The Ruapuke kōrero about Māui comprises 14 episodes. In the following paper, I outline the key elements in each of them, while concentrating on three of the most important episodes: Māui's meeting with his family, his seizure of fire and his fishing up of land. The first four episodes introduce earlier moments in Māui's life. Episode one describes his birth as a miscarriage in his mother's maro, in this case a loincloth with a pad of absorbent moss worn during menstruation, after which he was thrown into the very prickly tātaraheke. Subsequently, he was raised by ancestral beings in the form of birds on earth and clouds in the heavens. The second episode concerns Māui's first killings and ritual actions, marking his maturity and his command of sacerdotal powers. The next one demonstrates his superior control of nature in defeating another tohunga character, Maru, and taking control of the ritual of the kūmara. In the fourth episode Māui showed his superior skills at dart-throwing, beating his elder brothers and damaging the bargeboard, a sacred part of his parents' residence.[17]

That incident leads on to the next episode, one of the key moments in Māui's heroic biography when he meets his family. As a consequence, he moves from his early social isolation and becomes integrated into a community; the essence of being human. The Ruapuke raconteurs underscore how momentous this event is by bringing in the first piece of dialogue:

> (Ka puta ki waho te wahine),[18] ka pōrangi, ka ui, "Nā wai ka pae nei te maihi o te whare?"
>
> Ka kī atu ngā tuākana, "Nā rāia te tamaiti nei."
>
> "Nā wai rā te tamaiti?"
>
> Ka kī mai, "Nāhau anō."

Journal of New Zealand Studies NS35 (2023), 7-21 https://doi.org/10.26686/jnzs.iNS35.8112

> “Kāhore hoki, ka mutu anō ia āhaku kōrua anake: ko Māui-mua, ko Māui-roto, ko Māui-taha, ko Te Raka.”[19]
> Ka kī atu a Māui, “Aua, nāhau anō au. Ko tōu maro i pangā rā ki runga ki te tātaraheke. Nā aku tūpuna ahau i whakatuputupu. Nāhau anō au. Ko Māui au, te maro rakerake.”
> Kātahi anō te hākui ka mahara, āe, nāhana anō.[20]

> The woman appeared outside, searched around, and asked, “Who’s been breaking the house’s bargeboard?”:
> Māui’s older brothers said, “Why, it’s this child.”
> “Who is he the child of?”
> Māui said, “I’m your child.”
> “No you’re not. I’ve only got you others: Māui-mua, Māui-roto, Māui-taha and Te Raka.”[21]
> Māui said, “Nonetheless, I really am your child. I’m your loincloth with a pad of moss thrown into the bush-lawyer. My ancestors raised me. I really am your child. I am Māui, the rolled-up loincloth with a pad of moss.”
> His mother then realised that yes, he really was her child.[22]

Dialogue like this is a feature often found in oral storytelling. It highlights for the audience that this is an important moment in the narrative. By using direct speech the storytellers also make the characters come alive and take on the appearance of the kinds of people the listeners might well know in their own village. Such a passage helps draw the listeners into the unfolding kōrero about Māui.[23]

The dialogue allows Māui to introduce himself to his family and to recount the extraordinary circumstances of his birth. That evidence finally convinces his astonished mother that this boy is really her child. This dialogue also reveals how Māori raconteurs use repetition in order to dramatise and draw out important elements of the story. For example, Māui first announces his birth origin to his mother: “Nāhau anō” (I’m your child). She does not believe him. In his response Māui twice repeats this identifying phrase: “nāhau anō au” (I really am your child). After he explains his birth story Hine finally believes him, signalled by a modified repetition of this phrase: “nāhana anō” (he really was her child). With this Māui is accepted as part of his family.

Māui stayed at his mother’s village. He pondered where his father, Te Raka, was. Te Raka is of course Taranga in northern Māori dialects. Whereas other Māori narratives have Taranga as Māui’s mother, the Ruapuke version aligns with the paternal name used in Māui stories found elsewhere in Oceania.[24] After night fell, Māui would find Te Raka sleeping with Hine, but with the coming of day he left again. One night Māui pretended to sleep so that he could observe his father’s arrival:

> Ka tae mai a Te Raka, ka titiro atu tērā, ka wewete i te maro, ka hoatu ki tahaki, ka warea atu i te moe. Ka tīkina atu e Māui taua maro, ka mauria mai, ka waiho ki raro i tōna moenga. Ka oho ake a Te Raka, ka pōrangi, ka awatea. Ka unuhia te poupou, ka ngaro.
>
> Te Raka arrived and as Māui watched, his father unfastened his loin cloth, putting it to one side and went to sleep. Māui retrieved the loin cloth and put it under his bed.

> When Te Raka awoke, he searched about for his loin cloth till it was daylight. He pulled out a house post and disappeared.

When Hine had gone to cook food, Māui took hold of the post and looked down the hole into which his father had gone.[25]

The oral quality of this Māui story comes out strongly in this section (as it does throughout this narrative), with the raconteurs choosing an asyndetic style of delivery where conjunctions, pronouns, even names, are dropped in order to achieve a fast-paced narrative, exactly the kind of storytelling to enthral listeners well used to following such economical language.[26] To give one example, in the translation above, the sentence beginning "Te Raka arrived . . . and went to sleep", should more accurately be rendered as follows: Te Raka arrived, watched there, unfastened the loin cloth, placed to one side, overcome by sleep. This impression of pace is further aided by the frequent repetition of the same inceptive verbal particle (ka . . . ka . . . ka . . ., etc.) throughout the passage. Similar compressed styles appear in other examples of oral traditions from Aotearoa and elsewhere in Polynesia.[27]

In commenting on this episode, Tremewan picks up on the similarity of Te Raka's nocturnal visits to those common Polynesian stories about "fairy lovers," usually female, who made their way in to the beds of their human spouses. Like them Te Raka came from the other world inhabited by spirit beings. In these stories, the lovers' visits were secretive, done in the middle of the night, so that none observed them. They would leave again before daylight. Eventually, these lovers from another world were revealed when they were tricked into sleeping on into the day by the expedient of their spouse's house being blocked up so as to prevent any light entering.[28] Other southern traditions of Māui actually relate how he performed this same trick in order to deceive his father who slept on till it was daylight outside. In those versions, as in the Ruapuke one, Te Raka searched about for his maro before finally departing without it.[29] By holding up his father's departure, Māui was able to observe what he did, thereby discovering how he came and went from the house.[30]

In the sixth episode of this story Māui transformed himself into a kererū (New Zealand pigeon, *Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*) and proceeded to introduce a new way of catching these game birds by decoy, rather than spearing them, as his brothers did, which damaged the bird. His mother proudly informed her husband of their youngest son's accomplishment: "Tā tāua tamaiti i whakamate te kai, he tūranga a ngā tuākana, he hopu tou a tāna" (Our boy killed the food, the elder brothers wounded theirs, his were just caught).[31] In the next episode Māui again changed shape, flying down to the spiritual other world as a kererū. There he landed on a garden fence but flew off when the people spotted him and tried to snare him. Escaping their pursuit, he landed on the handle of Te Raka's digging stick as he was cultivating his garden and began to sing:

> Nā, titiro ana te hākoro, kī ake nei, "Ko te tangata pea koe o runga nā?"
> Ka kū iho ai ki te hākoro. Ka whakaake ki raro ki te whenua. Nā, kua whakatangata. Nā, i rokohina atu te hākoro e kō mākūware ana. Nāhana (nā Māui) i hoatu te peha.[32]
>
> Then, his father looked and asked, "Are you perhaps the person from up above?"
> Māui cooed back at him and descended to the ground. Then, he transformed back into a man. Then, he found that Te Raka was digging without using proper rituals, so Māui supplied him with a form of chant.

When Māui flew down to this other world below he came upon a place divided up by fencing into a series of individual garden plots in which people grew kūmara, considered the most prestigious of the food crops imported to Aotearoa and Te Waipounamu by the ancestors from tropical East Polynesia. Māui found his father digging his plot with a kō. He would have been using this agricultural implement to break up the soil in order to mound it up into hillocks in which kūmara tubers were planted. The upper end of the kō, upon which Māui landed, is said to have been shaped like a crescent: the whakamarama or whakaaurei, both allusions to the moon.[33]

Tremewan explains that the karakia teaching incident "reveals Māui's identity to his father and teaches an effective kūmara ritual which can be handed down from generation to generation."[34] In the Māori world, ritual surrounded all aspects of this important plant, from first planting to final storage.[35] Māui's teaching role as a culture hero appears throughout this kōrero. It shows how such heroes introduce to society important knowledge and practices, such as the appropriate ritual for work activities. The storytelling style of this tradition is shown in the characteristic use in the Māori text of "Nā" (Now, now then, then, and), commonly found in animated narrative, as here, or in conversation, and helping call attention to the particular passages.[36]

Realising that the bird was his son, in episode eight Te Raka took Māui to his kāinga to provide him with cooked food. The fires had gone out and Māui offered to go off to Mahuika to fetch some. Fire was contained in her fingers and toes. Once she gave a digit of fire to Māui he went away and extinguished it before returning to Mahuika to ask for more. He kept on doing this until she had used up all her fiery fingers and toes and only had her small toe left:

> Ka kī atu a Mahuinga, "Ehara rawa koe i raro nei. Ko te tangata anō i runga nei, o runga nei."
> Nō reira i mahara nei, ko te tangata rawa anō i runga nei.[37]
>
> Mahuika said, "You are really not from down here. You are definitely the person from up there, the world above."
> Then she thought further about it, he was very definitely the person from above.

Meanwhile, Māui transformed himself into a kāhu as Mahuika lit her fire. Māui sought to extinguish it:

> Ka tukua iho e Māui te kohu. Ka tukua iho he āwhā pūroro. Ka tukua iho he āwhā rarahi nei te pata. Ka tukua iho he huka-a-tara nei. Ka tukua iho he huka kapu. Nā, ka tungutungu tonu a Mahuinga i tōna ahi. Ka uruhia papakia te huka, ka mate. Ka pangaina a Mahuinga ki roto ki te kaikōmaka, ka pakaina ki te putawētā. Kāhore hoki kia ū. Ka pangaina ki te kohe, ka ū. Ka pangaina ki te tōtara, ka ū. Ka pangaina ki roto ki te tūmatakuru, ka ū. Ka pangaina ki te hinehine, nā, toro tou.[38]
>
> Māui sent down mist. He sent down driving rain. He sent down large-splashing rain. He sent down hail. He sent down sleet. Then, Mahuika still rekindled her fire. The driving snow blown upon the fire extinguished it. Mahuika threw some [fire] into the kaikōmaka [*sic*, kaikōmako], and she threw some into the putawētā, but it did not take hold [in either]. She threw some into the kohe, it took hold. She threw some into the tōtara, it took hold. She threw some into the tūmatakuru, it took hold. She threw some into the hinehine [*sic*, hinahina], and it immediately spread.

When Te Raka recognised his son he took him home with the intention of providing him food; a gesture of manaakitanga towards a visitor. However, Te Raka's intentions were undone by the lack of fire for cooking the food. Fire was a central element of any kāinga which literally means a "place where fire has burnt."[39] Cooking food for guests was and is a core part of expressing manaakitanga; it recognises the mana of the people being hosted. Being unable to feed guests appropriately would put at risk the mana of the host. Hence Te Raka immediately set about rectifying this serious lapse. This story underscores just how vulnerable human communities were at this time, reliant on the spirit powers to provide them with the essentials for a fully developed social and cultural world. This is what Māui set out to rectify when he volunteered to obtain fire. In doing so Māui embarked on a further adventure during which he contested against his maternal ancestor Mahuika, and her mana over fire.

Māui's success in extinguishing Mahuika's fires forced her to throw her remaining fire into a series of trees. According to the Ruapuke raconteurs, Mahuika first threw the fire into the kaikōmako and the putawētā. However, the fire did not take hold in either plant. Other Māori sources indicate that the kaikōmako was actually the soft wood most preferred in generating fire; according to other southern traditions, it received the greatest quantity of fire.[40] Fortunately for humanity, Mahuika's fires did take hold in several other trees: kohe, tōtara, tūmatakuru, and the hinahina. The tūmatakuru is especially common in the South Island and this may explain its appearance in the Ruapuke kōrero.[41] The hinahina or māhoe was a soft wood commonly utilised in fire-making.[42] The tōtara was another wood used to generate fire.[43]

In episodes seven and eight, the Ruapuke storytellers play up the contrasting locatives runga (above) and raro (below). In the first of these, Te Raka speculates that the cooing kererū comes from above while in the other episode Mahuika is certain the kāhu is not from her domain below and therefore concludes that he is a being from above. Her repetition of runga is perhaps intended to emphasise this important conclusion. These locatives describe a world organised into two spaces. The one below is inhabited by powerful ancestral beings, such as Mahuika. Some, like Te Raka and Māui himself, can move between these two contrasting spaces. Runga and raro clearly operate as spatial reference points by which beings can orientate themselves as they move about. The responses by both Te Raka and Mahuika to Māui's presence point to an ambivalence concerning his appearance in their world. When it is remembered that Māui was nurtured in the heavens, as far above this lower space as it is possible to go, it is understandable that they express some disquiet towards someone who can move so easily between these contrasting worlds in the shape of various birds. Only a being of great mana, such as a culture hero, can change shape and undertake such journeys.

Māui's actions in destroying Mahuika's authority over fire furthered enhanced his reputation and, of course, his mana. Typical of a culture hero, the human access to fire-making is really just an incidental outcome of Māui's actions. They have access to a few trees which contain a capacity to be utilised to generate fires for cooking and lighting. Nonetheless, this is one of the principal things culture heroes throughout the human world obtain from all-powerful ancestors like Mahuika. The ability to use fire is after all a defining characteristic of human culture.

Tremewan points out that in the 1850 Māori manuscript text Mahuika's sex is not specified, but it is in Wohlers's published version. The gender is important as the kind of contest between Māui and Mahuika differs depending on whether the latter is male or female. Assuming it is a female, Tremewan explains that it becomes "a mythical account of the relations between the sexes, as Māui strives for possession of her fire."[44] For fire, in Polynesia, is symbolically linked to "dangerous female sexuality," as for example in the famous akua (god) of Hawai'i, Pele, associated with the power of volcanoes. In Tremewan's words: "Māui, the male, must conquer and control the powerful female forces which threaten to overpower him."[45] This is clearly the version being retold by the Ruapuke raconteurs confirming they believed Mahuika was indeed a female ancestor of mana.

The relationship between the male Māui and the female Mahuika was recalled every time Māori men or women wished to create fire to cook food, or to provide light and warmth. Making a fire (hika ahi) involved the forceful and rapid rubbing of a pointed stick (te hika) into a stationary piece of wood (known by various names including te kaunoti) in order to produce sufficient friction to set alight the wood dust produced through the rubbing process. The smouldering dust was transferred to dry plant materials and then some kindling to start a fire.[46] The wood involved came from one or other of the trees into which Mahuika had deposited her fire. The language used to describe the making of fire highlights how, in Tremewan's words, "once under human control, the fire-making process itself becomes a graphic symbol of sexual relations."[47] This association of ideas occurs in an explanation from one of Elsdon Best's Māori consultants: "'*Kei te wahine te kaunoti; kei te tane te hika*' (The lower stick is with the female; the male has the rubbing stick). He meant that the female possesses the receptive organ, the male the active one."[48] Hika, used for the upper stick and the rubbing action, also means "to copulate."[49] Best notes that this upper stick was also known by such terms as kāureure or ureure, derived from ure (penis).[50] At one level, making fire is symbolically linked to the human capacity to generate offspring through the act of sexual intercourse. At another level, fire-making from the woods Mahuika implanted with her fiery self symbolically recalls her contest with the young and arrogant male, Māui, whose victory over her bequeaths to humanity a capacity to make fires whenever we choose to. People were no longer dependent on the ancestral powers, the atua.

Some features of the oral narrative about Mahuika are worth noticing. There is again the frequent use of repetition to help draw out the episode and emphasise the drama of what is occurring for the listeners; an event of momentous importance for Māui and for us people. The first example of repetition ("Ka tukua iho" [sent down]) appears in Māui's struggle to contain Mahuika's fiery personality by sending down various weather phenomena to quench her fire. The second example ("Ka pangaina ki te . . . ka ū" [threw into the . . . took hold]) appears when Mahuika endeavoured to preserve some of her fire in particular woods. These repeated sentence forms focus a listener's attention on what is different in each utterance, namely, on the different types of weather or woods. The construction of passages filled with one or two repeated sentence structures is typical of the oral style. Such sequential patterns or "'parallelisms,'" adding one line upon another, also create "acoustic patterns," and when used by a skilled raconteur "had a cumulative effect that is telling."[51] Such word and sound patterns must have helped the raconteurs remember and retell their story as well as creating an aesthetically satisfying narrative for an audience.[52]

In episode nine Māui abused his grandfather, Muri-raka-whenua. Instead of treating him as a venerated ancestor, Māui took the food intended for him and fed himself, starving his

grandfather to death. This allowed Māui to seize Muri-raka-whenua's jawbone and fashion it into a hook while performing the appropriate rituals. In the ancient Māori world people might turn the bones of a much-hated enemy into a hook in order to destroy their mana through the associations with a food activity.[53] Here Māui does this to a grandparent, someone with whom a grandchild would normally have a warm and extremely loving relationship. Such an act reveals Māui's persistently ambivalent attitude to members of his family, a result of his abandonment by his mother. This is the prelude to what is arguably the most important episode in this kōrero: the fishing up of land in episode 10.

This key episode opens with Māui's brothers, in fear of their youngest brother, departing in the night to go fishing at sea. Māui eluded their precautions and hid on board their canoe, only being discovered once they were out at sea. The brothers' response is worth quoting as it leads on to the important actions of this episode:[54]

> Ka karanga atu ngā tuākana kia whakahokia ki uta. Ka kī atu ngā tuākana atawhai kia waiho ki runga o te waka. Ka kī atu anō ngā tuākana atawhai kino kia whakahokia ki uta. Ka kī atu ngā tuākana atawhai, "Waiho anō i konei noho ai, he maka hoki ū āna kauranga e hoatu."[55]
>
> The elder brothers shouted out that he be returned to shore. The kinder elder brothers said he should remain in the canoe. The unkind elder brothers said he should be returned to shore. The kinder elder brothers said, "Let him stay here, as for him having a fish-hook, do not give him one."

The older brothers began fishing and Māui asked them for a baited hook, but they refused to. In response, Māui struck his own nose causing blood to flow out. He smeared this blood on to his own hook and started fishing. At that precise moment, Hine had a premonition ("timu") about her youngest son: "Ko Māui-pōtiki pea āhaku, kei te whakatāne i a ia." (It is perhaps my Māui-pōtiki, making a man of himself!)

The fish then bit on his line and Māui pulled it up on to the boat's prow and secured it with a poua chant. Upon the fish biting, he chanted a whāngai chant: "Kai mai e waro wararī, e waro, ka wanaka ake." ("Bite here, o roaring depths, o depths moving threateningly upwards."):[56]

> Ka tangi te poa o te ika. Ka karanga atu ngā tuākana, "Māui, kia tukua atu taua ika rā."
> Ka kī atu a Māui, "Ko taku ika anō tēnei i tae ai au ki te moana."
> "Māui e, tukua atu, he atua tāhau."
> Nā, ka karanga atu a Māui, "Ko taua ika anō i tae ai au ki te moana."
>
> The fish's mouth made a sound.[57] His elder brothers called out, "Māui, let that fish go."
> He replied, "This is my own fish that I came to the sea for."
> "O Māui, let it go, you have a spirit being."
> He called out, "That is the very fish I came to the sea for."

With that, he pulled it up and released it; it was land. When the fish was completely freed, they saw various things upon the land. There were storehouses, houses, barking dogs, burning fires, and people sitting and moving about. This was "te Ika a Māui" (the Fish of Māui).

Kōrokoroko was the name of the fish that Māui had raised up.[58] It had come up to the surface and turned into land.

This episode makes it clear that Māui's elder brothers feared him so much that they departed their home at night-time just so that he could not find out what they were doing. They were concerned of course at what he might do if given the opportunity. They recognised that his mana made him an exceptional being, one who could transform the ways of the world if he chose to. Their secretive actions resemble those of their father who visited their mother in the dead of night. People did not usually travel about at night: it was a time when otherworldly creatures were abroad and best avoided. Such fears would not of course have concerned Māui. Just as he did with his father, Māui stayed up one night in order to observe where his brothers went. When he saw what they were doing he followed them down to their boat and hid himself. As we might expect of a culture hero, he did what was necessary in order to achieve his ends, in this case to fish up a land with Muri-raka-whenua's jawbone hook.

The brothers' consternation when Māui popped up, seemingly out of nowhere, caused a heated debate to break out amongst the brothers, underscored by the references to those who possessed the quality of atawhai and those of a more malicious temperament, characterised as atawhai kino (bad atawhai). Atawhai is an important Māori cultural concept encompassing not only kindness but a demonstration of liberality and generosity towards others, particularly through hospitality. It is the mark of a great rangatira, by definition a person of high rank and mana, who was expected to show atawhai, or atawhai tangata, towards other people.[59] The use of repetitions draws attention to the contrasting views of these two sets of brothers: the unkind ones twice insist that Māui "kia whakahokia ki uta" (be returned to shore) whereas the atawhai-possessing brothers are happy for Māui "kia waiho ki runga o te waka" (to remain on the boat) or again "Waiho anō i konei" (remain here). While the kindly elder brothers won the argument about letting Māui stay with them, none of the brothers wanted him to take up a hook and line to fish. Their determination not to give in to their younger brother's importunities reflects their underlying anxiety, based on experience, that if given the chance, he would end up disrupting the natural order of things. Culture heroes could not abide conventions but rather strove to revolutionise the existing world.

Being who he was Māui did not heed the instructions of his elder brothers, itself an inversion of normal social practice. Although not exactly stated in this narrative, he clearly took Muri-raka-whenua's jawbone from his person and proceeded to cause his own blood to flow and serve as a fitting bait. Tremewan highlights how dangerous it was for a person to use parts of his own body as bait for fish to eat.[60] A person's mana and tapu extended to their physical being. Anything that touched a part of that person's body, including elements such as blood, would become invested with that person's tapu and mana.[61] Hence a fish that ate some part of a person of rank would itself become tapu and unable to be eaten by the person's descendants without risking harm to the consumer.[62] A culture hero of course was not bound by the usual prohibitions and sanctions affecting people, and Māui was able to utilise his blood to achieve his intended objective.

The Ruapuke raconteurs mark the significance of this action by having Māui's mother, Hine, experience a premonition or timu; more literally, she experienced an involuntary contraction of the muscles, which would have been taken as an omen or sign.[63] Having experienced such a contraction, she divined that it concerned her youngest child and she pronounced, doubtless with much maternal pride: "Ko Māui-pōtiki pea āhaku, kei te whakatāne i a ia." (It is perhaps

my Māui-pōtiki, making a man of himself!)[64] Just as previously Māui had revealed his power to transform himself into birds like the kererū and the kāhu, he now changed from being a cheeky nuisance of a boy beginning to demonstrate his great powers, to a young man fully possessed of an audacious confidence in his own extraordinary, even supernatural, abilities to change anything he wished to.

Wielding the jaw of his great ancestor, Muri-raka-whenua, which was covered in the tapu blood of Māui himself, he now had a fish-hook capable of carrying out his greatest deed. Reciting a powerful chant to help him secure his catch, Māui began the task of hooking his fish. As his elder brothers realised, this was no ordinary fish, but one of tremendous proportions, and therefore a supernatural being, an atua. Deftly using partial repetitions to underline the drama of this moment, the oral narrative depicts the elder brothers addressing their younger brother and ordering him to let it go. The first instruction seems the politer of the two commands, reflecting perhaps an attempt at persuasion: "Māui, kia tukua atu taua ika rā" (Māui, let that fish go). The second has a stronger, more abrupt tone, pitched more as a direct order: "Māui e, tukua atu" (O Māui, let it go). Clearly, this response reflected their dawning realisation at the type of fish he was in the process of pulling up. Despite these efforts, their younger brother, as usual, paid no heed to the admonitions of his senior kinsmen. Māui's repeated replies, though a little different from each other, reveal his actions as a long-intended goal: "Ko taku ika anō tēnei i tae ai au ki te moana." (This is my own fish that I came to the sea for.) Even when his brothers warned him he was hooking an atua, something any average person would have sought to avoid at any cost, Māui could not be deflected from his purpose.

The final section of this episode serves as a kind of coda, and depicts the kind of fish-land that Māui succeeded in drawing up to the surface from the depths of the sea. The Ruapuke raconteurs unfold a vivid spectacle, exaggerating the scale as much as possible by listing all the diverse creatures and objects that Māui and his brothers could see and hear on the face of this new land. Authority over this land is straightaway established by Māui naming the fish-land after himself; it becomes forevermore, Te Ika a Māui. In some southern kōrero, Kōrokoroko (more accurately, Ko Orokoroko) is the name Māui gave to the whole island, or to the tip of Te Ūpoko-o-te-ika-a-Māui (The Head-of-the-fish-of-Māui, i.e., Wellington).[65] By naming the land, Māui's mana was extended throughout this new island; it became his. It no longer belonged to the sea domain from whence it had been pulled up.

When Māui first made his appearance on board ship, his elder brothers cried out: "kia whakahokia ki uta" (return [Māui] to shore). The locative, ki uta (to shore, to land, to the interior), alludes to an important orientation in Polynesian thinking which pairs uta with its opposite direction ki tai (to sea, to the coast). For example, in one version of the creation story by Te Rangikāheke of Te Arawa, the panicked offspring of the atua, Tangaroa, debated where they should flee after finding themselves under attack from the hostile descendants of that elemental and angry atua, Tāwhiri. Some decided to run inland and some to water ("wai"), the latter term perhaps reflecting the perspective of Te Rangikāheke, living in the Rotorua area, in sight of numerous fresh water lakes. He concludes this episode: "No reira enei pepeha, 'Taua ki uta, taua ki te wai.'" (Hence these sayings, "We to the land, we to the water.")[66] In Mātiaha Tiramōrehu's southern creation story he has the beings, Raki (Rangi) and Takaroa (Tangaroa), proceed from an inland direction to the beach ("tātahi") for a fight, a location in between uta and tai; the latter the domain of Tangaroa, Polynesia's preeminent oceanic atua.[67] Douglas Oliver, in his monumental Tahitian ethnography, argues that this

contrast between uta and tai "was a fundamental one to these land-dwelling but sea-going Islanders."[68] The anthropologist, Alexander Mawyer, notes similar usages throughout Polynesia, suggesting that this is "a standard model of the Polynesian cultural figuration of sea-land orientation."[69] This Ruapuke story, in its allusions to such ancient orientations of the land and seascape, is in touch with the wider Polynesian world of ideas which the ancestors of these southern storytellers inherited and passed on.

The final episodes describe Māui's subsequent triumphs and his death. In episode 11 Māui marks his greater mana as a fisher of land by marrying Hine. When her father, Tuna (Eel), had sexual relations with her, Māui devised a new way of catching him and then cut him up, creating from his body and brains, new sorts of eels and plants. Māui, the husband, obtained utu against his father-in-law for the hara of incest. Māui, the culture hero, created new species of animals and plants, and a way of catching eels that later generations of people utilised.[70] In the next episode, Māui and his brothers solved the problem of shortened days by catching the sun and forcing him to lengthen the hours of daylight, thereby improving people's quality of life.[71]

In episode 13 Hine's brother, Irawaru, lived with Māui and his wife, but greedily ate all their food, prompting Māui to transform him into a dog which then ate Māui's excrement. When Hine enquired where her brother was, Māui told her to call out "Moi, moi" (the call of a dog). When she did, Irawaru ran to her and she realised what had happened. She said to her husband, "Māui rawehanga" ("Māui, you trickster"), before breaking down and weeping, while her brother nuzzled her and helplessly whined.[72] Māui dispensed condign punishment for a greedy in-law who abused his hospitality and was made to eat faeces, thus establishing the customary tension between brothers-in-law. As culture hero, he had introduced an important companion animal. In the last episode, Māui decided to overcome Hine-nui-o-te-pō, the presiding atua of Te Pō (the world of death), by entering her genitals after telling his brothers not to laugh till he came out again. They did and Māui died.[73] If he had succeeded, then humanity, like the atua, would have been immortal.

Hine's utterance in the penultimate episode confirms the Ruapuke raconteurs' view of Māui as primarily a trickster: a restless challenger of powerful ancestral beings, breaker of conventions, developer and teacher of cultural practices, improver of human lives. Like all culture heroes he is a transformer of a created world: "For the mythological hero is the champion not of things become but of things becoming."[74] Despite useful innovations, Māui is never benign. Despite his acceptance into a family and his apparent domestication as a husband, he is never constrained by human expectations; he goes to any lengths to achieve his self-appointed goal, with little regard for others. Nonetheless, his human connections appear at the end when he is killed by Hine-nui-o-te-pō. He fails to achieve his aspiration to place humanity on a level with the atua. The deeper order of the world reasserts itself.

Heroes exist in the traditions of every human society, archaic or contemporary, although their exact form varies depending on the particular social and cultural context. For culture heroes like Māui, birth is the first and greatest challenge they must overcome. Abandoned by parents, they only survive through the intervention of nurturing beings, either of no social importance or of supernatural status. As in this Ruapuke story, typically nothing is told about a hero's childhood until he becomes a youth and begins to demonstrate his powers. For most heroes, this is the start of their story as they defeat a series of individual beings possessed of great powers. As with Māui, such heroes invariably demonstrate their power over the

elements. These victories result in various positive enhancements for human life; in Joseph Campbell's words, "[The hero's] adult deeds pour creative power into the world."[75] In classical European traditions, following his successes the hero typically becomes the king, marrying the daughter or widow of his predecessor, and dispensing just laws, before suddenly losing divine favour, and dying or disappearing from the world. In this Māui story, success also brings marriage and ultimately sudden death by a god. In the longer run, the achievements of every hero continue to be honoured and remembered for the fruit of their successes is a better world for humanity.[76] Perhaps that is one reason why those old people of Ruapuke retold the story of Māui in the context of colonisation: he stands for the capacity to challenge those in power, to subvert norms and expectations, and to effect creative changes in our world.

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[1] Volney P. Gay, "Winnicott's Contribution to Religious Studies: The Resurrection of the Culture Hero," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 51, no. 3 (September 1983): 373.
[2] Gay, "Winnicott's Contribution to Religious Studies," 373, 377; Joy Christine O. Bacwaden, "Lumawig: The Culture Hero of the Bontoc-Igorot," *Philippine Studies* 45, no. 3 (Third Quarter 1997): 329, 332, 340–41, 350–51.
[3] Gay, "Winnicott's Contribution to Religious Studies," 374–75; Bacwaden, "Lumawig," 330, 332–33; Paul Radin, *The Trickster: A Study in American Indian Mythology with Commentaries by Karl Kerényi and C. G. Jung* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956), ix–x, 124–26, 155, 165–68.
[4] Bacwaden, "Lumawig," 338–40.
[5] Quotation from Bacwaden, "Lumawig," 332.
[6] Katharine Luomala, *Maui-of-a-thousand-tricks: His Oceanic and European Biographers*, Bernice P. Bishop Museum Bulletin 198 (Honolulu: The Museum, 1949; repr., New York: Kraus, 1971), 28–35.
[7] Christine Tremewan, trans., ed., *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand: He Kōrero nō Te Wai Pounamu* (Christchurch: Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies, 2002), xi.
[8] Sheila Natusch, "Wohlers, Johann Friedrich Heinrich," in *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Volume One, 1769–1869* (Wellington: Allen & Unwin and the Department of Internal Affairs, 1990), 606–7; Trewewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, xii–xiii, xxi.
[9] Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*; J. F. H. Wohlers, "The Mythology and Traditions of the Maori of New Zealand," *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute* 7 (1875): 3–53; Wohlers, "The Mythology and Traditions of the Maori of New Zealand," *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute* 8 (1876): 108–23.
[10] William Wyatt Gill, *Myths and Songs from the South Pacific* (London: Henry S. King, 1876); Gill, *From Darkness to Light in Polynesia* (London: [Religious Tract Society], 1894; repr., [Suva]: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1984); J. Prytz Johansen, *The Maori and his Religion in its Non-Ritualistic Aspects* (København: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1954), 280.
[11] Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, xii.
[12] Wohlers, "The Mythology and Traditions of the Maori of New Zealand" (1875): 31.
[13] Gill, *From Darkness to Light in Polynesia*, 8; also see R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians: Studies in their Anthropology and Folk-lore* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1891; repr., New York: Dover Publications, 1972), vii; Niel Gunson, *Messengers of Grace: Evangelical Missionaries in the South Seas 1797–1860* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1978), 210–14.
[14] Wohlers, "The Mythology and Traditions of the Maori of New Zealand" (1875); Wohlers, "The Mythology and Traditions of the Maori of New Zealand" (1876).
[15] Gill, *Myths and Songs*, xix; also see Michael P. J. Reilly, "Works by Mary Layman Gill (Mrs Wyatt Gill) and William Wyatt Gill," *Journal of Pacific History* 27, no. 1 (1992): 107–114.
[16] F. Max Müller, preface to *Myths and Songs* by Gill, v, xii, xvii–xviii.

[17] First four episodes at Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 75. Details on maro: Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 80, 88; Herbert W. Williams, *A Dictionary of the Maori Language*, 7th ed. (Wellington: Government Printer, 1971), 183.
[18] Wohlers inserted parentheses ( ) in his published Māui text.
[19] The underlined *k* found in this passage was used by Tremewan to indicate a distinctive feature in the dialect of southern Māori speakers who use *k* where *ng* is used in northern dialects (e.g., Kāi instead of Ngāi). Southern Māori speakers today recommend not underlining this *k* but at the time Tremewan published underlining was acceptable. I have therefore retained this older convention in quotations from her work. Elsewhere in this chapter the southern *k* is not underlined, including in my translations.
[20] Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 75. Tremewan made minor changes to clarify possible mistranscriptions in Wohlers's Māori text and to modernise the language, including punctuation, macrons and the hyphenation of names. Diamond brackets < > indicate places where I have intervened in Tremewan's reo text.
[21] Te Raka is listed as if one of Hine's children whereas this is the name of Hine's husband, the father of Māui and his brothers. Tremewan points out that Wohlers' text suggests he got confused by the list of Māui names provided by his Kāi Tahu narrators. Tremewan explains that in this Ruapuke version Hine and Te Raka had five children, the first four being named Māui-mua, Māui-waho, Māui-roto and Māui-taha. These are the children actually being referred to here. Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 75, 80, 87, 370n1.
[22] Unless otherwise indicated translations in this paper are my own interpretations of the original reo.
[23] Useful comments on direct speech in Jane McRae, *Māori Oral Traditions: He Kōrero nō te Ao Tawhito* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2017), 134–35, 141.
[24] Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 87.
[25] Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 76.
[26] Thornton describes this style as paratactic, with minimal grammatical subordination: Agathe Thornton, "Two Features of Oral Style in Maori Narrative," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 94, no. 2 (June 1985): 173.
[27] McRae, *Māori Oral Tradition*, 118, 128, 131; Thornton, "Two Features of Oral Style in Maori Narrative"; Reilly, "Narrative Features and Cultural Motifs in a Cautionary Tradition from Mangaia (Cook Islands)," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 125, no. 4 (December 2016).
[28] Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 91.
[29] James Herries Beattie, *Traditional Lifeways of the Southern Maori*, ed. Atholl Anderson (Dunedin: University of Otago Press in association with Otago Museum, 1994), 387.
[30] Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 91.
[31] Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 76. She notes that the superfluous *a* before tāna appears to have been added by Wohlers: *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 370n3.
[32] Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 76. Tremewan suggests that whakaake in this text may be a transcription error, possibly for whakaangi (float, move easily): Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 370n4.
[33] Elsdon Best, *Maori Agriculture*, Dominion Museum Bulletin No. 9 (Wellington: The Board of Maori Ethnological Research for the Dominion Museum, 1925), 32b–37 (especially Figs. 23, 24), 40–41; for the meanings of whakamarama and whakaaurei see, Williams, *A Dictionary of the Maori Language*, 22, 180.
[34] Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 91–92.
[35] See Best, *Maori Agriculture*, 47–119; a useful summary of the ritual sequence in Raymond Firth, *Economics of the New Zealand Maori*, 2nd ed. (Wellington: Government Printer, 1972), 265.
[36] Bruce Biggs, *Let's Learn Maori: A Guide to the Study of the Maori Language*, rev. ed. (Wellington: Reed Education, 1973), 97; John C. Moorfield, *Te Aka: Māori-English, English-Māori Dictionary and Index* (Auckland: Pearson, 2011), 115; Williams, *A Dictionary of the Maori Language*, 216.

[37] Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 77. Note that Wohlers hypercorrected the name Mahuika to Mahuinga, assuming this was an example of the southern *k*.
[38] Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 77. The southern dialect word pakaina is elsewhere written as pangaina.
[39] Williams, *A Dictionary of the Maori Language*, 81.
[40] Beattie, *Traditional Lifeways of the Southern Maori*, 292, 388; Elsdon Best, "The Polynesian Method of Generating Fire," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 33 (1924): 89.
[41] Moorfield, *Te Aka*, 116.
[42] Best, "The Polynesian Method of Generating Fire," 89.
[43] Best, "The Polynesian Method of Generating Fire," 102. Other southern traditions add further fire-generating trees to the list including kahika (kahikatea, *Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*) and haumaukoroa (probably haumakōroa, haumangōroa, *Raukaua edgerleyi* or *Raukaua simplex*): Beattie, *Traditional Lifeways of the Southern Maori*, 559.
[44] Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 92.
[45] Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 92.
[46] Descriptions of fire-making in Beattie, *Traditional Lifeways of the Southern Maori*, 114, 292; Best, "The Polynesian Method of Generating Fire," 99–102.
[47] Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 92.
[48] Best, "The Polynesian Method of Generating Fire," 88.
[49] Williams, *A Dictionary of the Maori Language*, 49.
[50] Best, "The Polynesian Method of Generating Fire," 89; Williams, *A Dictionary of the Maori Language*, 108, 468.
[51] Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, 2nd ed., ed. Stephen Mitchell and Gregory Nagy (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000), 54–7.
[52] McRae, *Māori Oral Tradition*, 40, 65, 67, 72, 132.
[53] On using enemy bones as fish-hooks: Beattie, *Traditional Lifeways of the Southern Maori*, 273, 487; Best, *Fishing Methods and Devices of the Maori*, Dominion Museum Bulletin No. 12 (1929; repr., Wellington: Government Printer, 1977), 36; Te Rangi Hiroa (Peter Buck), *The Coming of the Maori*, 2nd ed. (1950; repr., Wellington: Maori Purposes Fund Board and Whitcombe and Tombs, 1970), 216.
[54] The following Māori text of episode 10 at Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 77–78.
[55] Wohlers hypercorrects kauraka (do not) to kauranga in this episode.
[56] This is Tremewan's translation of the chant: *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 84.
[57] Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 94, suggests that poa may be a southern version of a fishing karakia (chant), however, the conjecture of mouth seems more appropriate in this context. In Tahitian, poa = mouth and throat: Williams, *A Dictionary of the Maori Language*, 286.
[58] Tremewan interprets kōrokoroko as laid bare. Williams, *A Dictionary of the Maori Language*, 144, gives this word, quoted from this text, but provides no English gloss for it. I have followed other southern Māori traditions which suggest it is a placename: Beattie, *Traditional Lifeways of the Southern Maori*, 390, 564; Beattie, *Our Southernmost Maoris* (Dunedin: Otago Daily Times and Witness Newspapers, 1954; facsimile ed., Christchurch: Cadsonbury Publications, 1994), 154.
[59] Tānia M. Ka'ai and Michael P. J. Reilly, "Rangatiratanga," in *Ki te Whaiao: An Introduction to Māori Culture and Society*, eds. Tānia M. Ka'ai, John C. Moorfield, Michael P. J. Reilly and Sharon Mosley (North Shore, New Zealand: Pearson Education, 2004), 92; Reilly, "Leadership in Ancient Polynesia," in *Disputed Histories: Imagining New Zealand's Pasts*, eds. Tony Ballantyne and Brian Moloughney (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2006), 48; Williams, *A Dictionary of the Maori Language*, 19.
[60] Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 93–94.
[61] Best, *Maori Religion and Mythology*, Dominion Museum Bulletin No. 11 (Wellington: Government Printer, 1982), 25–27.

[62] See the example of Rongomai of the Māhuhu waka: Te Rangi Hiroa, *The Coming of the Maori*, 60.
[63] Williams, *A Dictionary of the Maori Language*, 419.
[64] Tremewan notes that a similar utterance is used in another Ruapuke kōrero by the mother of Whakatau to remember his achievements: Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 94.
[65] Beattie, *Traditional Lifeways of the Southern Maori*, 390, 564; Beattie, *Our Southernmost Maoris*, 154. Orokoroko is the form used in these sources.
[66] George Grey, *Nga Mahi a Nga Tupuna*, ed. H. W. Williams, 4th ed. (Wellington: A. H. & A. W. Reed, 1971), 3. Interestingly, Grey translates wai in this episode as sea: Grey, *Polynesian Mythology and Ancient Traditional History of the Maori as told by Their Priests and Chiefs*, ed. W. W. Bird, illus. Russell Clarke, Illustrated New Zealand ed. ([Christchurch?]: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1956), 6.
[67] Matiaha Tiramōrehu, *Te Waiatatanga mai o te Atua: South Island Traditions*, ed. Manu van Ballekom and Ray Harlow, Canterbury Maori Studies 4 (Christchurch: Department of Maori, University of Canterbury, 1987), 3.
[68] Douglas L. Oliver, *Ancient Tahitian Society*, vol. 2, *Social Relations* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1974), 584.
[69] Alexander Mawyer, "Oriented and Disoriented Space in the Gambier, French Polynesia," *Ethos* 42, no. 3 (2014): 288.
[70] Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 78–79.
[71] Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 79.
[72] Text and translated passage from Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 79–80, 86.
[73] Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand*, 80.
[74] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1949; repr., London: Abacus, 1975), 284.
[75] Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 283.
[76] Last paragraph based on Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 269–308; Lord Raglan, *The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth, and Drama* (London: Watts, 1949), esp. 178–99; Otto Rank, *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero: A Psychological Exploration of Myth*, trans. Gregory C. Richter and E. James Lieberman, expanded and updated ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 47, 67, 71.