A Maiana version of the Creation myth (showing Narian as an Absolute Spirit).

In the beginning was only Narian, the Manibai (First of all things). No man shall say, “I know whence he came”, or “At such and such a time he was not.” He sat alone in darkness as a cloud that floats in the void. So for a great while he waited. Then a thought came to him; he said, “I will make Te Moti (The Darkness and the Forming together).” So he held his left hand in the shape of a bowl and made water therein. His water was thick with a red mud.

When his left hand was full to overflowing he covered it with his right and shook the water between his hollow palms; he pressed it flat, he rounded it and rolled it; he worked upon it with his fingers until it became sticky and swampy. Then he beat it flat and laid it beneath him and sat upon it as on a seat.

As he sat, a great swelling grew in his forehead. For three days it grew and on the fourth day it burst and a little man sprang from its middle. Then Narian the First of All said to his son, “Thou art Narian my son. Sit on my knees.” So Narian...
the Younger sat on his father's knees and for a great while they rested. And again Narean the First of All said to his son, "Lye in my right eye or in my left as thou wilt." So Narean the Younger lay in his right eye or his left as he wished, and so for a great while they rested.

Then Narean the First of All began to look on the swampy thing he had made. He called aloud to his son, and his son answered, "O!" He said, "Come forth from my eye. Go down and tread on the swamp." So Narean the Younger went and trod on it; his father said, "Where are the ends of it?" He answered, "It has no end." His father said again, "Where is the middle of it?" He answered, "I know not." So his father plucked a hollow tooth from his jaw and thrust it into the swamp saying, "Here is the middle. Suck at this tooth. What is the taste?" Narean the Younger said, "It is sweet as blood." His father said, "Push it farther in. Suck again. What is the taste of it?" He answered, "The taste is very bitter," and Narean the Father said, "It is the bitterness of the sea that lies beneath."

Then Narean the Father said to his son, "Go in under the swamp through the hollow
tooth, for it is thy doorway." And Nareau the Younger entered. It was very narrow, for the swamp above lay on the sea beneath; between the two was a great stinking and rottenness. And in the rottenness grew a great multitude of maggots.

So Nareau the Younger made Tiku-tiku-Butterfly—toungong the Dragonfly and sent it before him saying, "Go tell me the names of this multitude." It flew away and settled on the forehead of the maggots and called their names, saying, "This is Riiki, the Eel"; "That is Tabakea, the Turtle;" "Here is Bakamaniku, the Sting-ray;" "There is Na Kika, the Octopus," and so he did until the whole company was named. Then Nareau went and stood before each in turn, saying "Move, Eel!" "Move, Turtle!" "Move, Ray!" "Move, Octopus!" and behold, as every maggot heard the voice of Nareau he was turned into the beast that Nareau had called him......

It would be superfluous to carry the tale further, as its continuation coincides with the Nononti version given in Chapter , in almost every detail. This version has been included in our material rather as a curiosity than for any future use as
evidence to support a theory. It appears to offer ground for a conjecture that at some period this folk had groped after the idea of an absolute Creative-spirit. The contrast between the grand simplicity of this basic concept and the crudity of its presentation in our myths is enough to suggest that it has travelled far from its original source. It compares sadly with the rugged beauty of the Maori versions, which name the successive aeons of time through which the universe struggled up from primordial and chaotic darkness, by steps of one thousand years, to Light and Man. But this is not difficult to understand. Whencesoever the race may have come to people the atolls of Micronesia and whatever theology that they brought with them, their spiritual and physical being must have been profoundly affected by the artistic nature of their surroundings. Nature has no exuberance in the line islands. There are no barbaric colorless towering mountain ranges, no rushing streams to whet the imagination of a primitive folk; no store of gay or precious materials to act as stimulants to their artistic fancy; nothing but a few trees patiently fostered in a flat and sandy soil. The struggle for existence has been overhard; the ingenuity of the folk has been turned to the practical issues of
mere living. Thus their religious system, which may once have been elaborate, has simplified itself as their outlook on life was simplified by circumstance, and, if their ancient philosophy was a high one, its debris remains unfortunatel preserved by a modern race that has forgotten its weirdness.  

The period of three days allotted to Nanean's gestation in his father's forehead reads inconsistent.

ly after we have been told that this was the age of Darkness, before the Sun was made to measure time. The word which has been rendered "day" from the native text is *Boon", which means "night." This measure of time by the hours of darkness is common throughout Polynesia, perhaps because the seafaring Pacific nations did all their navigation, when possible, by night when the stars appeared. But it has been doubtful to us whether we should rather *Boon* in this place as "day"; it may be the equivalent of Polynesian *Bo*, which in the Maori creation myths is a period of 1000 years during the age of Darkness. Using this interpretation we find that Nanean's gestation took thirty centuries instead of three days. It is true that Gilbertse
story-tellers of today take it for granted that the
shorter period is intended, but we may regard them
as purveyors of traditions which contain much
beyond their knowledge. The conservation of native
races has preserved intact many of the ancient
phrases and word-order used by their forefathers,
while the deglamorization of their theology alluded
to above has robbed the inherited formulae of
meaning to the modern folk.

We are again reminded of Polynesian nature,
though faintly in this version, in the allusion to
Nanamau the Father’s right and left eyes. It would
have been more satisfactory had they become Sun
and Moon in the sequel, but as a matter of fact
our tradition agrees with the Nortoni account
and shows the luminaries to have been created
from an oyster and a penwinkle.

The swampy mixture of heaven and earth
attested to in this tale is rather more lightly
 touched upon in the Abemama version, which
describes the muddiness of Nanamau’s entrance
 under heaven, and the freezing of Riki’s head
in the midst of mud. The detail has possibly
some connection with the Marshall Islanders’ belief
that the created world was bounded on the
south by a vast swamp.