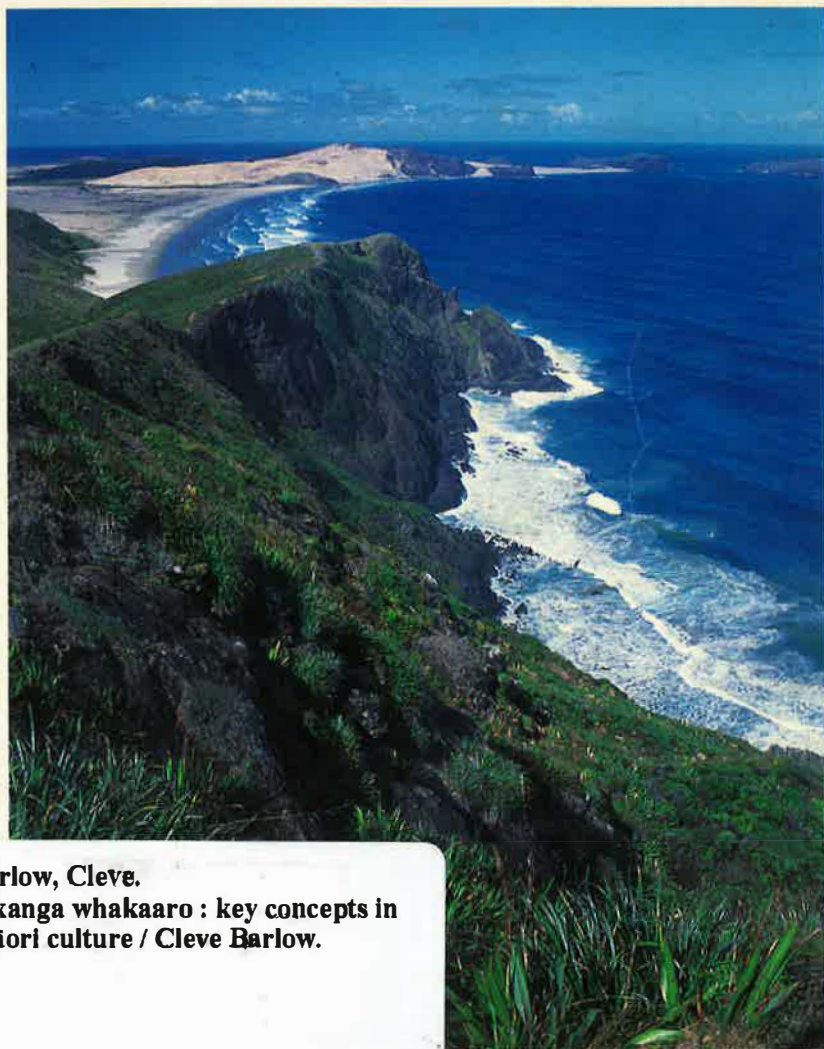


Tikanga Whakaaro

Key Concepts in Māori Culture



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Mauri (Power of the Gods)

Mauri is a special power possessed by Io which makes it possible for everything to move and live in accordance with the conditions and limits of its existence. Everything has a mauri, including people, fish, animals, birds, forests, land, seas, and rivers; the mauri is that power which permits these living things to exist within their own realm and sphere. No one can control their own mauri or life-essence.

When a person is born, the gods bind the two parts of body and spirit of his being together. Only the mauri or power of Io can join them together.

The flesh of a bird is different from the flesh of an animal, and that of a fish from that of a tree. The mauri makes it possible for a thing to exist within the bounds of its own creation. When a person dies the mauri is no longer able to bind those parts together and thereby give life – and the physical and spiritual parts of a person's being are separated. This is expressed in the following saying:

The heart provides the breath of life, but the mauri has the power to bind or join. Those who die have been released from this bond and the spirit ascends the pinnacle of death.

The mauri enters and leaves at the veil which separates the human world from the spirit realm.

While a person cannot control their own mauri, it is possible for someone to establish a mauri for some creation, such as a house. When a house is built, the mauri is established as the sacred heart of the building. This mauri is the power obtained through a covenant with the gods to take care of the house and to fulfil the wishes, desires and hopes of the people who will use it for noble purposes. Likewise with the oceans, rivers and forests; when the food supplies become depleted it is possible to return the mauri through conservation (rāhui) and appropriate ritual ceremony.

e e taea ai ngā mea katoa te korikori, te
i tōna āhua, i tōna āhua. E kore e taea
auri.

i honoa ai e te atua ngā tinana e rua: he
kiko. Na te mana o Io e taea ai te
e wheiao, ki te aomārama. He mauri tō
ika, kararehe, manu, ngahere, whenua,
mauri ko te mana e taea tērā mea te mau
ē te kikokiko o te manu ki tō te kararehe,
mauri ka whakaritea tētahi mea kia mau
a. Ka mate atu te tangata kua kore rawa
i i te hono o te ora, ka wehe nei te tinana
Cua kitea tēnei āhua i roto i te kōrero e

auri ka mau te hono. Ko te hunga mate
ciri wairua ki te tihi o mauri aituā.
ki te ao; ka tāreparepa atu te mauri mate

apūmau i te mauri o tētahi mea, pērā i
gā e ia he whare, ā, ka poupoua he mauri
Ko tēnei mauri ko te mana hei tiaki i te
hiahia, me ngā tūmanako a te iwi. Pērā
i, ina ka rere atu ngā momo kai e taea
inga anō i ngā mahi rāhui me ngā mahi
te momonatanga o te whenua.