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Title *Vā, hau, mauri, qi, atmosphere and entanglements: Alternative concepts of space, spirit and power*

Abstract

How come the people of Te Puea Marae in South Auckland (Aotearoa-New Zealand) were, in the Winter chill of 2016, able to organize accommodation for the homeless, when most of society failed? Could there be something they see which others can't? If that were the case, then could we, too, act in different ways, provided we were able to think about the world and how we are related differently? How would that bear on the matter of environmental aesthetics? Would it enable us, for example, to engage with space generatively and creatively, rather than closing borders and building walls to keep others out of our delimited territories?

What would it take to make room for "unspoken wishes" – our own and those of strangers? In the face of changes caused by climate change and the displacement of growing numbers of people, would it enable a generosity of spirit in which architecture, understood as "thinking applied to the space where we live", translates diverse and sometimes conflicting needs into "meaningful space"? Could a different ecological aesthetics contribute meaningfully to creative adaptations of our relationships with earth, water, and air?

One of Tim Ingold's friends once remarked that "the whole of biology would be different had it taken the mycelium as the prototypical exemplar of a living organism". No doubt it would also change our understanding of *environment*. Similarly, *atmosphere* (as Gernot Böhme deploys it in his sensory aesthetics) has the potential to shift our thinking about in- and outside, boundaries, and relationships. In Asia and the Pacific, *vā* (space-between), *qi* (vital energy, air), *mauri* (life force), and *hau* (vital essence, air, breath) provide concepts that take us away from prevailing Western thing-ontologies.

Bio

Tina Engels-Schwarzpaul is professor of spatial design and postgraduate studies at the Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand. Her scholarship focuses on cross- or trans-cultural research in art, architecture, design, and performance in Aotearoa, the Pacific, and Europe studying the pitfalls and potential relationships between these cultures. She has an interest in practice-led PhD research which has led to the book publication *Of Other Thoughts: Non-traditional Approaches to the Doctorate*, and she was executive director of *Interstices: Journal of Architecture and Related Arts*. She is also the translator of a collection of Gernot Böhme's essays *Atmospheric Architectures*.