



49th Annual OCIES Conference 1-3 December 2021

Professor Carl Mika

University of Canterbury

Keynote Address: Being and convergence within wā: Excessive and stupendous interconnection

Carl Mika is Māori of the Tuhourangi iwi, and is a professor in Aotahi: School of Māori and Indigenous Studies, University of Canterbury. He specialises in Māori and Indigenous philosophy, with a particular focus on its revitalisation within a colonised reality. Committed to investigating indigenous notions of holism, Carl is currently working on the Māori concepts of (for instance) nothingness and darkness in response to an Enlightenment focus on clarity, and is speculating on how they can form the backdrop of academic expression. He also writes and presents on western Continental philosophies. Carl also has experience teaching on education and mātauranga Māori, the law, and global studies. He has held an adjunct professorship at RMIT and is involved in international projects that engage with Indigenous philosophy.



One way of explaining the deep interconnection between things in the world is through the Māori term wā. In this keynote, I consider some of the intricacies of interconnection and its existence in wā, which embraces the non-/human, the in/visible, and the ir/rational.

Nearly all of my writing so far has focused on the first principle of interconnection from a Māori perspective; more recently, I have turned to wā for some further speculative impetus. Wā is mostly translated as 'time and space', but I argue that the use of those terms immediately imposes a colonising gloss by separating things in the world from each other. Instead, I suggest there are other ways of referring to wā so that it retains, as far as possible, its holistic sense. Where wā is now thought of as orderly and linear because it is paired with 'time' and 'space', I borrow Bergson's (2010) term 'duration'. Understanding it differently from him in the Māori context (although liking the term), and expanding on a recent paper of mine that considers wā (see Mika, forthcoming), I speculate that wā can refer to the overwhelming convergence of all things in the world: they are in the sphere of the Now. In Now-ness, things are stupendous rather than manageable: excessive rather than knowable.

In wā, as with several other Māori phenomena, then, the self is repositioned within the dramatic current of the All rather than ejected from it.

References

- Bergson, H. (2010). *The creative mind: An introduction to metaphysics*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications Ltd
- Mika, C. (forthcoming). *Stuck in time and space? Thinking through the Māori term 'wā'*. *Atlántica*

Date: 2 December (Thursday)

Time: 8.30 am – 9.30am (AEDT); 9.30 am - 10.30 am (FJT); 10.30 am - 11.30 am (NZT)

Zoom link: [https://waikato.zoom.us/j/84867365587?](https://waikato.zoom.us/j/84867365587?pwd=bFRmTG95R2txZ2t6Y1FOTTVEbGo2QT09)

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