Discovery Myths of New Zealand: Some Cultural, Historical, and Philosophical Perspectives

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Abstract

The discovery of New Zealand, first by Polynesia and followed by Europe, have become important narratives in the nation’s evolving sense of identity.[i] However, these narratives are neither straightforward in themselves, nor always completely complementary with each other. The purpose of this particle is to explore some of the historical, cultural, and philosophical bases of these discovery myths, with a focus on their construction and reconstruction. What emerges from this survey is that the discovery myths are an example of history being appropriated at times for ideological purposes, and that the character and content of these myths is necessarily fluid in order to accommodate the shifting requirements for which they are employed.

[i] Elements of this article are taken from my book Encounters, the Creation of New Zealand, A History, Auckland, 2013.
However, some realised that a historical perspective was needed to understand the origins of the contemporary environmental crisis. This is where environmental history came into being. This essay is divided into two parts. The first and smallest part explores what environmental history is and some or its roots. Once a historian discovers the connection between nature and culture, a whole field of new subjects opens up and history becomes more interdisciplinary than ever before. It is not only using other humanities and social sciences, but it also starts to use the natural sciences. It is true that environmental history brings many new “characters” on the stage of history.