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She's hiding behind a cultural smokescreen

Lamorna Rogers (Opinion, Jan 17) makes some challengeable statements about her tribe's ownership of Northland's Hole in the Rock. She claims the Maori "world view" is that the land and sea are indivisible. This might be commercially convenient now

that many tribes are trying to prove so-called "customary" title to the foreshore and seabed.

But it's not true historically, as there's a different Maori god of the sea, Tangaroa, and several land gods, including Tane, god of the forest. The Maori gods know there's a difference.

The Maori traditional sign of land ownership is fires of occupation, ahi kaa. Fires get

extinguished rapidly on the foreshore and seabed, showing directly that tribes don't own them. The ownership idea is ridiculous, under Maori tradition.

She also states that Maori ownership is all about looking after the land, not about tribal property rights. Yet the main point of her tribe's interest in the Hole in the Rock is their desire to charge tourist boat owners for viewing the hole and sailing through it. Full marks to her, though, for her cultural smoke-screen to hide this reality.

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