



left the tawa tree that still stands outside, for the birds, the tui, the kereru. After this time more people came and chopped down whole forests and nowhere could the birds find a home.

The kuia recounts how when she was growing up, the tawa tree was already a kaumatua of the forest. Now her boys want her to cut it down because it shades the house but she is adamant it stays. Roimata enjoys the more or swing under the tawa and dreams of former days of the tree. Disaster comes when lightening dashes the tawa to the ground one night, but in the aftermath when the aged one is cut up and carted away, Roimata finds new life has sprung forth from the old. She discovers a seedling tawa and declares to her nanny that when she's a kuia, her mokopuna will also have a swing on the new tawa.

Kia koe Miriam taku aroha. P.W.



□ PAPA

Piatarihi Yates, author
Roger Hart, illustrator
He Purapura, Education Dept

Another delightful small book for children from Te Roopu Mahipukapukakura. Papa extols the virtues of a young girl's father.

He's a tangata tino pai and tino kaha. A welcome addition is that this papa is equally adept in being tino kaha in the kihini ki te mahi kai.

Papa will be a forceful reminder that maori language is a language of love and people – and devoid of these two essentials, will not survive.

Kia piki o koutou kaha, e Te Roopu Mahipukapukakura.

□ POTIKI

Patricia Grace
Penguin paperback, \$15.95
Viking hardback, \$24.95

Her new novel takes place in a coastal settlement that is seeking to come to grips with its collective past and a seemingly individualistic future. Toko, the potiki or the last child, comes to the whanau in unusual circumstances. His appearance is misshapen and his utterances are equally mystifying. However he is sheltered by the whanau and takes his place in a whakapapa already mapped out for him.

Patricia Grace has taken maori tikanga and weaved a narrative skilfully in and around. While the whanau and the wider hapu are set to do battle with land developers, a more subtle battle is raging within the iwi, the battle to retain their identity and perhaps redefine their goals.



Patricia Grace (fourth from left) sits almost inconspicuously amongst her ope whakaeke at the launching of her latest novel, "Potiki".

Potiki evokes whakapapa and korero o nga tupuna and lends a spiritual dimension to the events which otherwise could be seen by some readers as far-fetched or trite.

Dominant culture perspectives is something that Maori people have had to live with and although we may not have had the property or land developers knocking at our door, most Maori would recognise the 'Dollarmen' who comes to offer the world to the iwi of Potiki.

That he is steadfastly refused may be wishful thinking in real life, as we all seem to have a price. However the iwi of Potiki face the outward and inward desolation that comes when opposite forces meet. How they hold themselves together and build on their whakapapa is the measure of Potiki.

☆ TE OHU WHAKAARI

Philip Whaanga

Te Ohu Whakaari recently completed a national tour sponsored by the New Zealand University Students' Association. I caught them in Wellington, part-way through the tour.



The lineup had changed since last seeing them a couple of years ago. Tina Cook, the only remaining troupe member – newcomers Neil Gudsell (Kai Tahu), Esther Fala (Nga Rauru) and Paul Maxwell (Ngati Rangiwewehi) – all impressed with their freshness.

For me their first offering was their first.

The story: a carver, Rehua carves a figure called Pou back in the pre-pakeha days. He is one with creation possessing the gift of life. However a cataclysmic happening swallows Pou and he re-emerges some years later in modern day Aotearoa. He sees pakeha flesh for the first time, Raewyn (Tina Cook) tripping along the road. He attacks her but she escapes. A car is also unsuccessfully assaulted but poor Pou is instead run over. He wonders at this strange landscape and limps his way onto a marae. Here he discovers Rehua carved in the poupou inside the whare tupuna and learns that this is his homeland, but vastly changed. Rehua cautions him not to go outside the marae because of the danger, but Rehua cannot accept this imprisonment. He chooses to climb the poutama pattern weaved in the tuku-tuku and makes his way to te ao turoa.

Rehua (Paul Maxwell) and Pou (Neil Gudsell) were stunning in their presentation and the lighting and make-up especially made Pou seem like a carved figure.

The insect sketch featuring Paul Maxwell and Esther Fala was a classic laugh a minute. The ingredients of portraying human behaviour from a grassroots view really worked. Sample dialogue on seeing the man urinating, killing frogs for fun and then taking a swim –

"Look rain, I'll dance in it ... pooh I think it wasn't rain ... pooh the creature was making toilet, what sort of animal makes toilet on another?"

"Look it's killed the frogs but hasn't eaten its lunch, how strange. And now oohh, it's getting out of its skin and swimming ... and hey it's now climbing back into its old skin."