



Tales of the Maori, James Cowan. Reed Publishers.

"In all of this I have drawn chiefly on my own knowledge and experience, the spirit of the environment in which I was reared and the narratives of my people, pakeha and Maori, for the Ngati Maniapoto and Waikato and their kindred are as much my own folk from my earliest years as any of my pakeha blood."

In the author's own words he set out to write the popular tales of the Maori people and if at times his quaint way of portraying Maori 'savages' interferes with the narrative, the vivid content more than compensates. Cowan (1870-1943) was one person at the turn of the century interested in chronicling stories and tales he picked up around New Zealand. A professional journalist he was able to get first-hand accounts of legacies of the Land Wars, and the people, both Maori and pakeha, who found they now had to live side by side.

Also in this book are tales of *kehua*, *patupaiarehe* and 'wild men', and while it's up to the reader to believe the accounts, the tales have a way of carrying their own history. At times the reader may feel he's reading a Maori adaptation of Grimm's Fairy Tales, but that could be partly put down to Cowan's romantic style of writing with a flourish.

However there's no doubt that Cowan was at home with the Maori in his tales and although a little patronising, he doesn't spare the hero worship of say a Ngati Tuwharetoa woman, Hurihia who warned her people of a Waikato invasion.

And then there's the cunning of a *tohunga-a-moko* of the Ngati Tu who plied his work so thoroughly with a visiting tribe that the warriors' tattooing was too painful for them to defend their own pa.

It's the painting of this broad canvas of Maori life in heroic style that appealed most to me but I could see how some people might be put off.

Best of all most of the tales are short and sharp and leap all about the country in location although familiar figures like the half-caste trader pop up here and there.

More than anything else, Cowan's *Tales of the Maori* captures a time in our history when might was right and survival was everything. Cowan's book captures the words of veterans from both sides of the Land Wars and the words of the elders of a society that was rapidly changing. There's a sense of history throughout the individual tales but always a warmth that comes from a good story-teller such as Cowan.

Run Ue Run, Dark Way Home, Tama Werata. Hillary College Production Centre, Otara.

Tama Werata and Hillary College, Otara have done themselves proud with two short stories written and published on a do-it-yourself basis. *Run Ue Run* and *Dark Way Home* are aimed at adolescents, and coming from the melting-pot of Otara, are sharp and glowing reminders of another side of life.

Dark Way Home uses earthy language to tell of two boys trying their hand at living on the streets. Josh and Jockey could be anyone's kids, getting their kicks by having on authority, be it the cops or parents. If your idea of street kids comes from what you've seen on television, you'll learn a great deal. Although this is no primer for street gang recruits, it's easy after reading this to see what attracts kids onto the streets.

Dark Way Home takes the reader under the wing and in a disarming way shows the appeal of 'sleeping out' and 'five finger discount'. It doesn't celebrate the phenomenon of street kids or glorify the life-style but it does allow adults a picture-window view, for those willing to get down on hands and knees and take a look inside.

Indeed Tama Werata might be surprised by readers taking more from his work than was intended, but it's hard to take in *Dark Way Home* without considering the reality of our kids on the street. That's what makes *Dark Way Home* so powerful.

In contrast Werata's other book is set at the other end of the time-scale. *Run Ue Run*, is a historical work set in the 1300's in Aotearoa, with a Maori youth as the central character. He grapples with the terrors of his time, tribal warfare, a *taniwha* and growing up in the midst of this turmoil.

Once again the tale is very real despite the timegap. The sense of *aroha* and feel for the land as a living entity

comes through strongly. Ue may be just a boy but his ancestors are very real to him and he calls on them often to sustain him in his trials.

For readers who like adventure stories with a historical slant, I would recommend this story. *Run Ue Run* succeeds in bringing familiar historical themes like *whanaungatanga* to life, a great accomplishment in giving the work a sense of past and present.

Illustrations show carvings and weapons of the time in which the story is set and a glossary explains the Maori words. A short history of Aotearoa is also included to complement the fictional nature of the tale.

Both *Run Ue Run* and *Dark Way Home* come in soft-bound form and are printed at Hillary College.

Tama Werata is an adult writer interested to enter the minds of adolescents and to write material to encourage them to want to read. Both *Dark Way Home* and *Run Ue Run* are designed to fit into any programme to foster reading or to appeal to the interest of the individual reader of any age. They are particularly written to be read aloud and with vigour to catch the oral language style. The school publishers are interested to receive readers response.

Reremoana Hakiwai, Ruth Flashoff, The Reremoana Hakiwai Educational Trust Fund.

The book follows the life of an incredible Maori woman, Nanny Hakiwai, from her birth in Manutuke, south of Gisborne, home of her Rongowhakaata tribe to her final resting place at her home Marae Omahu (Fernhill) Hastings.

It covers the transition from country life to an urban one, through her schooling, marriage and contact with many people among whom special reference is made to Te Kooti, one of the well-known figures in New Zealand history. There are many reminiscences and her own personal opinions about the problems, (and solutions) facing today's Maori people, especially Maori youth.

Nanny Hakiwai was loved and cherished by many, and they considered it an honour to be numbered amongst her friends.

This book will appeal to many people, to her family and many friends as it will serve as a visual reminder of their Nanny Hakiwai. It will be of particular interest to many people Maori and European from East Cape to Waipawa and of course to all Maoridom.

About the author.

Ruth Flashoff has been writing since 1928 when she studied under the late Alan Mulgan at Auckland University. A record of her writing is to be found in the International Writers Who's Who