

***A REVIEW FOR***  
***ALTERNATIVE***  
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***SCHOLARSHIP***

**Title**

*Mihipeka. Call of an Elder Karanga a te Kuia*

**Reviewer**

*Mere Kēpa, Ngā Pae o Te Māramatanga/The Centre of Research Excellence for Māori Development and Advancement, CoRE, Private Bag 92019, the University of Auckland, New Zealand*

*A Book Review*

*Edwards, M. (2002) Mihipeka. Call of an Elder. Karanga a te Kuia. Steele Roberts Ltd: Wellington*

**Contact**

Dr. Mere Kēpa

**Email:** [m.kepa@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:m.kepa@auckland.ac.nz)

*Mihipeka. Call of an Elder. Karanga a te Kuia*  
by Mihipeka Edwards

*“When I came back to being a Māori again, after being swallowed up by the Pākehā lifestyle, I was almost lost to the ways of my own people. I had thought it would be better for my children to be brought up and educated in a Pākehā system. When my children grew up and were at secondary school and university and leading their own lives, as was their father, I was free to turn back to my own people. I should never have left them”. (2002.59)*

In *Mihipeka Call of an Elder* that includes contemplation upon Mihipeka Edwards’ two preceding publications, she sets out to dismantle and then reconstruct the idea of the Kuia (older Māori woman) and her existence. In doing so, Mihipeka has developed a language of subjectivity that is familiar to the reader who shares her fiercely contested lived experience. This language of subjectivity includes qualities of forthrightness, humour, pleasure and pain which result from her experience of being punished for being Māori in the prevailing New Zealand European/Pakeha society.

In a book of potent personal testimonies, historical narratives, and political analysis, Mihipeka addresses a problem both immediate and perennial - how to deal with, begin to change, atone for and in some way acknowledge a lived experience in New Zealand filled with oppression and injustice. Born into an oppressive and colonialist society, Mihipeka expresses at once the profundity of change and the indomitable endurance of the Kuia, in particular and Māori people, in general.

If you have never read about a person or a group of people wondering when or whether they would return home again, this is the book to buy.

Mere Kēpa  
Reviewer