

## The Representation of the Kiwi Bloke

New Zealand has a wide variety of media representations, one of the most known is the representation of the Kiwi bloke. The Kiwi bloke is a representation portrayed in many different media platforms and is most commonly used as a form of entertainment. **The Kiwi Bloke is a very practical and manly man. He doesn't enjoy going to the city very much. He'd prefer to watch the rugby with a few of his fellow blokes accompanied with a few beers. He tends to keep his emotions to himself which gives him the tough exterior that other blokes respect. The most common representation of a Kiwi Bloke is a European man who has lived in rural areas all his life and pursues a career in farming. The Kiwi Bloke also has a very do-it-yourself attitude. He takes on projects where he builds something for his property and is determined to do it without professional help.** These representations create an expectation for New Zealand men to live up to especially in rural areas. The more of a typical Kiwi Bloke you are, the more accepted you will be by other blokes. In 3 media sources representing the stereotypical Kiwi Bloke I have researched to gain a greater understanding on the effects of the representation to explain to the reader of this report how the representation of the Kiwi Bloke impacts on Kiwi identity and culture.

**Many of the kiwi blokes that are part of the 'kiwi bloke' representation come from rural areas and are farmers. This idea of being part of the land is an important feature of NZ as our history is tied to the land. Farming has been one of our most important parts of our economy and particularly during the 1970s with Britain moving to the EEC, the need for NZ to make the most of its natural resources was an important issue. Prior to the mid 1970s according to census figures farming was prosperous for NZ. Census figures show that although in the 1880s nearly 60% of NZs population lived in a rural area, by the 1970s this has dropped to around 30% of the population. The fact that so much of our history has been tied up with farming though led to much of our popular culture reflecting the values and messages of those communities.**

**The first media source that shows this is a clip from the television show 'The Wonderful World of Fred Dagg' created by John Clarke.** In this clip John Clarke portrays the Kiwi Bloke with his character 'Fred Dagg'. Fred Dagg is one of the most iconic symbols for the Kiwi Bloke as it encompasses the majority of the stereotypes surrounding it. He wears a black singlet, reasonably short shorts, gumboots and a wide brimmed hat. He is a farmer and is of European descent. The character of Fred Dagg first appeared on NZ television as part of Country Calendar, a long running show that focuses on stories about farming and farming communities in NZ. It was satire at the end of the show but soon went on to get his own following.

In this specific clip, the first section shows a trip to the city for the Kiwi Bloke. In the first bit of dialogue he mentions that he makes the trip into town at least once every 5 years. This is typical of a Kiwi Bloke as they would not usually associate themselves with the city as they prefer more rural areas and are more laid back compared to people that live in the city. He also states he finds the city confusing in regards to driving as it is a lot more complicated than rural areas. Since he rarely visits a lot changes over the time he has been away such as streets have changed directions (two ways now only one way) or a block of flats is now there. In this trip to the city he is as he would think dressed up'. He is wearing a coat jacket and a

3 button up shirt with a tie, but he is still wearing shorts and gumboots yet he sees nothing wrong with it. This trip into town does reflect back though on how NZ culture was changing, and the divide between rural and urban.

As stated earlier Fred Dagg is one of the most iconic symbols for the Kiwi Bloke. John Clarke's contribution to the representation of the Kiwi Bloke has been massive as it is one of the earliest Kiwi Bloke representations on the media platform of television. The television show Fred Dagg featured on was on New Zealand screens from the mid to late 1970s. Being one of the earliest representations it made a great impact in shaping Kiwi identity as Fred Dagg was quite stereotypical of the Kiwi Bloke and in turn set an example for aspiring Kiwi Blokes. Being more of a stereotypical Kiwi Bloke would make you more accepted by other Kiwi Blokes, especially in rural areas. 6

Like Fred Dagg, Footrot Flats is a New Zealand comic strip that bases in a rural area and focuses on the life of a dog and his owner who is a farmer and a typical Kiwi Bloke. His name is Wallace (or Wal) Footrot. In his description in this collection of comic strips he is described the perfect Kiwi Bloke. He wears the typical black singlet, shorts, gumboots and wide brimmed hat. History of the black singlet – this stemmed after the WW1 when men often wore a dark singlet which hid dirt. The singlet tended to be made from material which would hide grime and be strong enough to handle tough conditions. Over time this black singlet became more well known with men working in rural areas rather than in cities. 4

Wal excelled at tractor reversing and rooster imitations at school. It also states that he is a stalwart of the local rugby team. Rugby is religiously watched by the Kiwi Bloke and is usually accompanied by a beer or 2. It is one of the most iconic activities for the Kiwi Bloke as it is part of the Kiwi identity as well. The impact created by these comic strips has been large as it has been a very popular series. It creates the representation of Kiwi Blokes having a tough exterior. Wal is often shown as not caring about the dog but every now and then shows affection. The Kiwi Bloke is represented as a tough man often. Footrot Flats has wider significance to New Zealand culture as it often incorporates Rugby which some could say is the national sport.

Another text that links to this representation of the kiwi bloke are the beer ads for Speights... [paragraph removed]

6 In these sources the Kiwi Bloke is represented as a tough, hardworking, beer loving, rugby enthusiast. This is the only representation of a 'true Kiwi Bloke'. The representation's impact on New Zealand's culture and identity has been substantial as it has created an ideal for men to aspire to be as much of a Kiwi Bloke as they can to be accepted by other blokes. Through the Kiwi bloke, New Zealand's love for rugby and beer is also expressed. The Kiwi Bloke is one of the most represented stereotypes in New Zealand media and is a major part of our nation's identity.