

## Representation of the Kiwi bloke

This essay will look at how ideas of masculinity have evolved in New Zealand, how it is used in advertising and explore stereotypes of the New Zealand male based on platforms created through the media.

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Kiwi men have been depicted as a man who doesn't pay too much attention to how he looks, loves rugby, is DIY mad, likely to live rurally, doesn't say much, doesn't express much emotion and hangs out with a bunch of mates of the same stereotype. This main stereotype used throughout of the media is common, portraying an image of how a real kiwi man should be. The kiwi man is pressured and forced to feel like the image portrayed through the media and who are made to feel as if they can't be what they should. The media platforms used and products it features in are aiming at a particular group of men who can identify with the stereotype. By having a product aimed at a particular stereotype such as beer companies like Speights or Mammoth Supply Co.'s yoghurt, men feel especially as if they are being exploited, usually encouraging the average kiwi man to not only buy the product but also to have to be the stereotype.

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Texts that demonstrates this particular stereotype are Footrot Flats, written by Murray Ball, who wrote the comic strip which was later released as a movie portraying a "typical" kiwi man. The Speights beer advertisements and Mammoth supply company specializing in "real" food for men because a yoghurt without nuts is a feminine food and that for a man is thought as not being a real kiwi.

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Footrot Flats started off representing Kiwi men with the stereotype as being emotionless, strong and silent. There is an image of a staunch farmer who doesn't put a lot of effort in his presentation and little enthusiasm on how he is portrayed. This is all shown in various ways. The main character in Footrot Flats Wal Footrot represents this staunchness and pride as being two main personality traits portrayed. This is done through dialogue when describing his missing dog as something it is not, inflicting that he is a beast "muscles like steel cables fangs like a row of broken bottles" when in reality he is a small harmless dog. Wal is trying to prove that he should own a big dog to go with his big ego. When Wal opens his wardrobe to reveal a bunch of plain black singlet's it gives the audience an impression he doesn't put a lot into his presentation meaning a black singlet for every occasion. This representation communicates that in order to be a real kiwi bloke men should show little interest in their appearance, own a bigger breed of dog rather than a small and remain staunch. This also convinces a wider audience that the typical kiwi bloke is of this description, and in particular farmers.

The stereotype of a kiwi man usually is distinguished as a farmer, so the typical ideal setting and character would be a farmer even though only a small percentage of the New Zealand population live on farms. This stereotype is used so that the producers don't have to explain further into Wal's character, the stereotype is also reinforced by the selection on what the character shows. The writer of Footrot Flats ideal kiwi bloke is portrayed as a rugged farmer that doesn't mean that is his own perspective, or what a kiwi bloke should be like, although it

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does indicate that the audience being New Zealanders will identify with it and that type of character.

2 Another text that shows the typical kiwi bloke are the Speights series of adverts which advertise beer. The Speights adverts are usually set in rural areas and show men working the land – for example mustering sheep. The men tend to be dressed in things like swandris and outfits that are appropriate for riding horses. In each of the adverts we see a variety of situations but there is always two men, usually an older man and a younger man, having a 'brief' conversation that ends with 'good on ya mate'. In one advert the younger man is talking about his new 'city' girlfriend and all the great things about her: she's beautiful, flash car, corporate box at Eden Park. But she doesn't drink beer and so it looks like he turns down the option to live in the city with her – instead preferring the outdoors life with his mates and beer. These men are Southern Men, a version of the kiwi bloke.

2 The advertisements for Mammoth Supply Co reinforce an image to show men how to be a manly man. According to Mammoth Supply Company all men should know what not to do, one was that its not acceptable for me to ever share an umbrella, or "it's ok for a man to carry a bag but never a 'man' bag", or "A man can grow facial hair but men don't groom facial hair." While the adverts do tend to be set not just in rural areas, we still see that the men aren't too interested in how they look and while they are hanging out with mates, they still don't talk much or share much emotion. New Zealand men can be quite masculine but I feel this takes it a little too far and for the men I feel as if they had felt the same when the company let on what kiwi men can't and can do this revolves around all media platforms and social stereotypes. Also the Mammoth supply co makes it look and biases the wider audience and New Zealanders that kiwi men do not respect homosexuality, they are portrayed and deceived differently and unlawfully through the media platform as well as product platform.

The pressure kiwi men must have to make men behave in a specific way is socially acceptable makes this advertising despicable. Men who feel they aren't manly enough because the media is telling them that they are not, they are more likely to prove their masculinity which enter statistics that represent a kiwi man, and be true alpha male. Men should really be encouraged just to be themselves if I took a television advertisement as a true depiction of the average kiwi male, I could be led to believe that the kiwi man was much different to what I feel a real kiwi man is.