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ON DISK

*A MOVING IMAGE RESOURCE FOR
NEW ZEALAND CLASSROOMS*

REPRESENTATION OF YOUTH

REPRESENTATION OF YOUTH ON NEW ZEALAND FILM AND TELEVISION 1912–2003

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ACTUALITES / NEWSREELS

SCHOOL 1928

Frances of Fielding (extract)

L. Hill 1928. Duration 1:54

Early New Zealand filmmaker Lee Hill capitalises on New Zealand's eagerness to see itself on the big screen. In early community comedies like *Frances of Fielding* film makers used locals as actors in short films that would play before features. By setting part of the narrative around the school he could capture as many faces on film as possible, encouraging parents to pay to see their children in the theatre that weekend!

MAORILAND MOVIELOGUES 1934

Maoriland Movielogues No. 5 (extract)

NZ Government Publicity Office 1934. Duration 0:45

Playtime in Maoriland ... Among the Maori Children of Rotorua, New Zealand. Maori children play mati-mati, stilts and spinning tops at Whakarewarewa.

JOHNSON QUADS 1939

Fox Movietone News: Johnson Quads

Fox Movietone 1939. Duration 1:28

Babies being cute and adorable. The subject of celebration. This footage shows the fourth birthday of quads; Bruce, Kathleen, Mary and Vera who were born in 1935 in Dunedin. It is interesting to note the gender values placed on the infants: "Bruce is going to have a solid job asserting his male authority". Interesting that Kathleen, Mary and Vera don't get a mention.

SCHOOL CADETS 1944

Weekly Review 150

National Film Unit 1944. Duration 1:42

John Grierson, the British documentary maker suggested New Zealanders needed to see more of themselves on screen. Most Government film before the establishment of the National Film Unit in 1941 was promotional and travel based. The National Film Unit newsreels were played before Feature films and went some way towards a communal sense of national identity. Children in these Government films promote the idea that New Zealand is a healthy and safe country to grow up in. Opportunities abound.

This particular newsreel shows boys at Christ College learning to handle war equipment. School cadets became a regular part of male secondary school experience, and continued until the early 1970s.

DISPLAY BY GIRLS' SCHOOL 1944

Weekly Review 174

National Film Unit 1944. Duration 1:23

Students from Wellington East Girls' College perform exercises and formations in the school grounds. They are shown as co-operative and healthy; role models for future generations. A comparison could be made with the previous item.

LEARNING MOTHERCRAFT 1946

Weekly Review 248

National Film Unit 1946. Duration 0:36

Small population, plenty of sheep, what's a girl gonna do huh? The word 'career' sounds rather like a criminal offence in this sweet little narrative.

MAORI SCHOOL 1947

Meet New Zealand (extracts)

National Film Unit 1949. Duration 1:35

This extract highlights the benefits of living in a welfare state. Children happily receive free milk, dental care and education.

MEET NEW ZEALAND 1949

Weekly Review 324 (extracts)

National Film Unit 1947. Duration 1:49

MAORI SCHOOL: (RUATORIA) In the Manutahi district of the East Coast, children on horseback ride to Manutahi Native District High School, where the roll is 300. The famous cod-liver oil makes a star appearance. The depiction of Maori youth in the educational arena tends towards the societal expectations of the times – the trades, domesticity, nothing about an equal footing with Pakeha aspirations.

GIRL GUIDES 1955

Pacific Magazine 15 (extract)

Pacific Films 1955. Duration 2:01

LOOKING FOR LEADERS: An item on the Girl Guide movement, designed to encourage older women to join as leaders. Sequences of Girl Guides on camp – cooking sausages and preparing to erect a tent. A Brownie on enrolment makes her promise, and a new adult leader is initiated.

During the 1950s the concept of the teenager was born. An economic boom after World War Two meant that young people had increased financial freedom and leisure time to experiment socially. This led to some criticism from people who questioned the generation's interest in 'rock and roll', and sex.

In 1954 teens Pauline Parker and Juliet Hulme were charged with murdering Pauline's mother. Later that year Hutt College students were caught having sex in a movie theatre and on the banks of the Hutt River. In 1955 a teenager was sentenced to death for murder. This led to a government report into the growing juvenile 'problem': The Mazengarb Report stipulated that films and comics were leading young people astray. *Rebel without a Cause* was banned

from New Zealand theatres. From this point onwards there was an increasing tendency in the media, especially the news, to portray youth as troublemakers.

When the commentary in this newsreel states: “at a time when the people of New Zealand are concerned about juvenile activities, the Girl Guides Association shows how young people can get training, that will develop the personal and moral character so much needed in the world...”, (bad grammar aside), it reveals the social control notions prevalent at the time.

JUKEBOX 1955

Pacific Magazine 16 (extract)

Pacific Films 1955. Duration 1:33

This extract shows children and teens listening to records. Here, an independent film company looks at the effect that the radiogram is having on young people in New Zealand. The only reference to the ‘delinquent’ problem however is the mention of the ‘rowdy rhythms of the jukebox’.

HUTT VALLEY YOUTH CLUB 1958

Pictorial Parade 79

National Film Unit 1958. Duration 2:42

Here the National Film Unit attempts to illustrate how potentially delinquent teens are being channelled into more productive activities through the Hutt Valley Youth Club who meet on Sunday afternoons at the Taita Community Hall.

ADVERTISING

COOKERY NOOK 1955

Cookery Nook (extract)

Pacific Films 1955. Duration 3:06

This promotional film for Edmonds Baking Powder, depicts a happy family working together to achieve results. Because it was an advertisement the

teenagers are still portrayed as responsible and co-operative. This ad is a classic example of prevailing gender biases, with the father being incapable of making a cake and the daughter and her friends having to take over!

TOURIST & PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT 1973

Tourist and Publicity Department

Colenso 1973. Duration 1:14

Craig Scott, an early New Zealand pop star, is seen walking along a beach with other young hip New Zealanders. The government tourism department changes its' tack from natural splendour to 'nature is groovy'.

FERNLEAF BUTTER 1989

Fernleaf Butter: Dad s New Flat

Saatchi and Saatchi 1989. Duration 1:25

This was a groundbreaking ad in that it was the first involving a broken family. To a certain extent advertising emulates the society it is attempting to persuade (although generally it is targeted at a high socio-economic group). In doing this it makes a connection with its target audience. The girl in this ad is seen as having a warm and open relationship with her father.

TV3 MILLENNIUM 1999

Millennium Advertisement

Colenso 1999. Duration 1:36

An emotive TV3 ad celebrates the millennium with the future as its theme. The children are shown as happy, inspired, capable and full of possibilities! Not a lot of teenagers on show – could be coincidental. A high percentage of millennium advertising by the big public and private sector corporations used the younger generation as its theme. What will the other 999 years show?

YOUTH SPEED 2000

Land Transport Advertisement

LTSA 2000. Duration 1:49

While males between 15 and 24 are high risk in terms of speed related fatalities, and these ads are designed to deter speeding amongst this age group, it could be suggested that all the ads do is reinforce a negative stereotype of youth that perpetuates the problem.

FICTIONAL NARRATIVE

KINGPIN 1985

Kingpin (extract)

Morrow Film Productions 1985. Duration 2:48

This feature film set in a juvenile detention centre portrays teenage boys as criminals: the characters are even introduced in terms of their criminal records. While it is not an unsympathetic portrayal, it still reinforces the stereotype of teens as potentially dangerous.

MARK II 1987

Mark II (extract)

TVNZ/Mike Walker 1987. Duration 3:45

Also sympathetic to the characters, this film portrays teenage boys as being wayward and involved in criminal activities.

Youth are often portrayed by the media in association with crime, gangs, drugs, homelessness and delinquency, augmenting an inaccurate public opinion. This depiction of youth also undermines teenagers having a positive self identity.

HEAVENLY CREATURES 1994

Heavenly Creatures (extract)

Wingnut Films 1994. Duration 3:13

Based on the Parker/ Hulme case this 1994 feature film depicts the girls as sexually active and violent. While Jackson capitalises on the story's scandal (the death of Honora Parker and the media suggestion that the girls were lesbians), he also sympathises with the girls showing the gradual descent into fantasy that provoked the murder.

SHORTLAND STREET 1998

Shortland Street 31/07/98 (extract)

South Pacific Pictures 1998. Duration 1:25

Soap operas, situation comedies and other forms of television drama are one forum used to discuss teenage issues. This episode of Shortland Street discusses the risk and humiliation involved in asking someone on a date.

Dramas can also act as a barometer for normalcy. When teens see characters problems on screen it puts their own into perspective and gives them reassurance that their problems are not unique.

BEING EVE 2001

Being Eve (extract)

South Pacific Pictures 2001. Duration 4:59

This recent New Zealand soap written for teens portrays them as intelligent, mature and complex, and treats its viewers as such with inter-textual references and sensitive subject matter. As we follow the central character Eve's life we are faced with a variety of everyday issues that reflect a teenager's life: friendship and loyalty, boyfriends, new siblings, popularity, fear, school, overseas exchange programmes, religion, exams and learning to drive.

RAIN 2001

Rain (trailer)

Rose Road/Communicado 2001. Duration 2:13

The portrayal of the children in this feature film by Christine Jeffs is complex. While we watch a family unravelling through the perspective of the daughter

Janey, and are sympathetic towards her, we are also frightened by her emerging sexuality and the lack of understanding she has of it.

WHALE RIDER 2003

Whale Rider (trailer)

South Pacific Pictures 2003. Duration 1:56

A more straightforward and positive portrayal of a child is Niki Caro's Pai (based on the character Pai in Witi Ihimaera's novel). Here the child is undervalued by the adult: she is the true leader and it takes time for the rest of the community, particularly her grandfather, to recognise this. The child in this feature film represents the future and is also a link to the past.

While earlier representations of children were positive, and film generally seemed to be more sympathetic towards youth (in part because it has time for more complex portrayals), media coverage of youth since the 1950's has been increasingly negative or self interested, reinforcing stereotypes that create a negative self image and affects the way the community as a whole perceives them.

TELEVISION / DOCUMENTARY

REBELS IN RETROSPECT 1987

Rebels in Retrospect (extracts)

Vanguard Films 1991. Duration 2:01

Footage of antiwar protests during the 1960s, including Tim Shadbolt. The fast cut images are out takes, taken by TV crews. Little of this footage actually made it to air in New Zealand. This was not true in the United States where young people were seen on television and in other forms of media as having a voice and affecting change as the counter culture emerged as a powerful political force.

RUNAWAYS 1996

Runaways (extract)

Ninox Films 1996. Duration 1:59

The teenage runaway in this documentary extract is depicted as violent and unpredictable: a physical threat to his parents. While the documentary does give the runaways and their parents a voice, it only superficially addresses the causes behind the delinquent behaviour.

ONE NETWORK NEWS 2000

One Network News 06/02/00 (extract)

TVNZ 2000. Duration 0:55

Youth rarely appear in the news but when they do they are often portrayed negatively and in connection with violence; either as the perpetrators or the victims. In one study done on a Californian TV Station 7 out of 10 stories on violence involved youth, but only 14% of arrests for violent crimes involved youth and only 2% were victims of violence. This is a disproportionate representation of youth. This story suggests that youth drinking is out of control.

THE DRUM 1998

The Drum 01/08/98 (extract)

Screentime 1988. Duration 1:03

Youth give their views in response to the question “Has everyone the right to have children?” Children’s television is now giving youth a chance to be heard. Their unsolicited responses usually seem intelligent and considered.

MAI TIME 2001

Mai Time: Smokefree Pacifica Beats 2001

TVNZ 2001. Duration 3:04

The Pacifica Beats section of the Smokefree Rockquest focuses on contemporary Pacific sound, featuring stage performances as well as a behind-the-scenes look at the competition. Pacific Stylez from Sacred Heart College in Napier use traditional Pacific instruments to make contemporary Pacific music.

HE WAI 2001

He Wai: Episode 1 (extract)

Whitegloves Television Production Ltd 2001. Duration 3:30

Music video from twelve year old Ronald Karaitiana, with plenty of positive messages about mixing the traditional and the modern in contemporary Maori music and arts.

SCHOOL RULES 2002

School Rules: Episode Two (extract)

Imagination Television 2002. Duration 2:00

Dating dramas, sports aspirations and modelling. For six months camera crews followed nine students from Selwyn College, Auckland and give a birds eye view on their lives, loves, the good times and the bad. Hasn't TV programming changed!

ASSIGNMENT 2003

Assignment: It s About Time 2003 (extract)

TVNZ 2003. Duration 3:32

Media coverage of youth would be less biased if it presented news reports on youth crime in proportion to the amount of crime actually committed by youth, and produced in depth stories that discussed the underlying causes related to youth crime and violence.

News programmes like Flipside and Headliners attempt to target a younger audience, and cover news items that are more relevant to teens. It is interesting to consider whether these programmes succeed in challenging the mainstream representation of youth, or reinforce more of the same stereotypes. Some teens found the trivialising of news on these programmes patronising.

Here Assignment looks at how New Zealand's child murderers might have been deterred.

*NOTE: COURTCAM SEQUENCES ALTERED FOR LEGAL REASONS