Copyright Statement

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

This thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- Any use you make of these documents or images must be for research or private study purposes only, and you may not make them available to any other person.
- Authors control the copyright of their thesis. You will recognise the author's right to be identified as the author of this thesis, and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate.
- You will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from their thesis.

To request permissions please use the Feedback form on our webpage. [http://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/feedback](http://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/feedback)

General copyright and disclaimer

In addition to the above conditions, authors give their consent for the digital copy of their work to be used subject to the conditions specified on the Library Thesis Consent Form.
The University of Auckland

Thesis Consent Form

This thesis may be consulted for the purpose of research or private study provided that due acknowledgement is made where appropriate and that the author’s permission is obtained before any material from the thesis is published.

I agree that the University of Auckland Library may make a copy of this thesis for supply to the collection of another prescribed library on request from that Library; and

I agree that this thesis may be photocopied for supply to any person in accordance with the provisions of Section 56 of the Copyright Act 1994

Or

This thesis may not be photocopied other than to supply a copy for the collection of another prescribed library

(Strike out 1 or 2)

Name (print): ..................................................................................................................

Student ID: ..................................................................................................................

Signature: ...................................................................................................................

Date: .............................................
High-Wire Dancers:
Middle-Class Pakeha and Dutch Childhoods in New Zealand

Relinde Tap

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology,
The University of Auckland, 2007
Abstract

In contemporary New Zealand discourses the 1950s, 1960s and the early 1970s are seen as the era of the ‘Golden Weather’. This time came to an end when social change on an unprecedented scale took place from the end of the 1960s onwards. During the 1980s and 1990s the changes became very rapid due to transformations as part of the neoliberal reforms. Neoliberalism established new ways of governing the self through discourses of personal reflection, flexibility and choice as well notions of uncertainty, instability and risk. Risk discourses can be found at different junctures in New Zealand’s history, but contemporary discourses surrounding the self and childhood have shifted risk discourses in new ways. This has led to new regimes of rationality and practices of childhood and an increased governance of children and their families. This research documents the contexts and the interrelationships which influenced the new regimes of rationality and governance of childhoods in New Zealand. It also discusses the way a range of contradictory and conflictual cultural repertoires are negotiated and reproduced in the middle classes.

In the last decades Pakeha and Dutch middle-class families in New Zealand have faced the prospect of declining fortunes. They have therefore adopted a cultural logic of childrearing which stresses the concerted cultivation of children. These regimes of concerted cultivation include risk discourses which affect everyday relationships and practices. This more global middle-class regime coexists with a local regime based on the New Zealand narrative of the time of the ‘Golden Weather’. Within this local repertoire a ‘typical’ New Zealand childhood is seen as safe and quite relaxed. This perceived childhood space is filled with beaches and other activities associated with nature which give children the opportunity and freedom to explore and develop a distinct Kiwi self. This local figuration is in contradiction with the often hectic pace of concerted cultivation and the anxieties surrounding risk discourses. Dutch middle-class parents in New Zealand also use concerted cultivation and they have adopted some of their host country’s figurations surrounding childhood and the outdoors. However, there is a difference in emphasis as Dutch parental narratives of self are more focussed on relationships with people rather than nature.

Keywords: Childhood; Cultural Repertoires; Class; Governance, Neoliberalism; Risk
Acknowledgement

The PhD writing process is a journey which takes many years to complete. During this exciting and stimulating, but at times exhausting and difficult journey, I was accompanied by an awesome group of people who supported me in multiple ways. The first group of people I would like to acknowledge are the parents who contributed to my research. I value the time, knowledge and experiences they shared with me. Parenting today is full of joy, but also full of ambiguity and I was enormously touched by parents’ openness and willingness to share such personal information with me.

Thank you/Dank Je!

I owe a deep depth to my supervisors who supported me through the PhD process. I would like to thank my primary supervisor, Associate Professor Julie Park for her invaluable contribution. Her knowledge about New Zealand society, anthropological frameworks and the PhD process are beyond par. Her contribution to this thesis, however, does not only encompass her role as an academic supervisor, but include her ongoing friendship, care and support on a personal level without which this journey may never have been completed. My second supervisor, Professor Cris Shore, too has been invaluable. His knowledge about neoliberal regimes, the processes of governmentality and policies have greatly contributed to this PhD. His stimulating and enthusiastic conversations regarding anthropology in general and my PhD topic in particular have challenged and greatly contributed to my anthropological thinking. Thank you Julie and Cris, I could not have asked for two better, more complementary and supportive supervisors.

I also like to thank Professor Karen Nero, whose support as my second supervisor was imperative in the beginning stages of the PhD process until her appointment at the Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies in Christchurch. Martin Forsey and Allison James contributed to this thesis as examiners. Their questions in the oral exam clarified issues and made me re-think parts of this thesis. Thank you!

The people who make up the Anthropology Department at the University of Auckland have been a major part of my life during this PhD research. Numerous people within the Department contributed to my intellectual stimulation and growth and supported me in various ways. The co-participants of the PhD reading group, especially, provided a stimulating environment in which to explore critical theoretical
thinking and understanding. Carolyn Morris, Senka Božić-Vrbančić, Donna McKenzie, Christine Dureau, Judith Huntsman, Judith Littleton and Julie Park all joined this ‘think-tank’ at different times. Susanna Trnka also became a good friend and colleague during the later stages of the PhD process. Sally McAra also contributed to my thesis through our conversations over the years. Toon van Meijl, a Dutch anthropologist, supported me by sending books, articles and sharing his knowledge of Dutch and Pakeha society.

My thanks and friendship especially go to Carolyn Morris, Donna McKenzie and Senka Božić-Vrbančić who became much treasured friends as we shared our intellectual as well as our personal journeys. Their support, care, love and friendship continue and are a wonderful bonus to the PhD process.

I am very grateful to the Ministry of Social Development, the New Zealand-Netherlands Foundation and the Anthropology Department at The University of Auckland for providing me with grants during the PhD process. Their monetary sustenance supported me at different phases of the process. At the end of the PhD process I received a Building Research Capacity in the Social Sciences Doctoral Research Award which allowed me to take time off work and study-full time to finish this journey. It contributed greatly to a physical and mental space which allowed me to pull together the threads which I had been gathering during the past years and to weave them into this finished product. Thank you all, your support was invaluable!

I would also like to thank Heather Anderson and Mike Clark, the directors of Kiwicare Pre School, where I have worked part-time for the past four years. They provide a work environment where excellence is encouraged and stimulated. A big thank you also goes to all my early childhood colleagues, especially Donna, Jasmine, Rachel and Rehana, who extended my thinking and love for our work with children and families.

Friends sustain you on life’s journey and without them this PhD would not have been possible. I would especially like to thank my friends Morgan Lebeau and Philip Searle. Their love and support have been invaluable since I arrived in New Zealand more than 25 years ago. Truda Henselmans and Frans Bos are supportive and very valued friends in the Netherlands. They are part of my extended family at 'home'.

Shirley May Patterson and Elizabeth Boogaard-Wynn also need a special thank you. They first became valued colleagues in early childhood education and over the years have become valued friends. I also like to thank David Madigan for our continued partnership as parents of our son Kees and his encouragement and support for my
academic development which started this intellectual journey in the study of childhood. Andy Douglas shared the last phase of this PhD journey with me. I would like to thank him for his love, support and the peaceful trips away on his boat which saved my sanity at stressful times.

My deep love and appreciation goes to my family in The Netherlands with whom I shared my childhood and whose love and support still sustain me today. My sisters and brothers: Bernlef, Reinilda, Brenda, Walfried and Redbad who are all so much part of me and my memories of childhood. To my parents who gave me a curiosity about life which has resulted in this thesis; my mother Annie Tap-van de Wal with her interest in people and their daily lives, my father Wim Tap with his love for books and learning. Dank je voor alles wat julie me gegeven hebben!

My deepest love goes to my son Kees Madigan Tap who is now on the verge of adulthood. His entrance into my life has been a journey in itself which has provided a depth and richness to my life I never thought possible. This thesis is dedicated to him.
# TABLE OF CONTENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1: THE DISMANTLING OF TRADITIONAL CERTAINTIES</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Code: Neoliberal Rationalities and Techniques</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Creative Stutter: The Ethnographic Self and Theoretical Framework</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Theories of Michel Foucault and the Disciplining of Society</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governmentality, Neoliberalism and the Regulation of Childhood</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourdieu and the Reproduction of Childhoods</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beck and Risk Society</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critique of Risk Society</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complicated Categories and Multiple Identities</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropological Frameworks</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Talk</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Unfamiliar Within the Familiar</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Thesis in Outline</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2: INSTANCES AND TRANSFORMATIONS OF CHILDHOODS</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regimes of Rationale and Practice</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Paradigms of Childhood</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instances and Transformations in Academic Discourses About Childhoood</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 16th and 17th century: New Discursive Constellations</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 18th Century: Sites of Investments and Gardens for the Young</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 19th Century: Disorder and the Increasing Regulation of Childhoods</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 20th Century: Children’s Rights and the Universal Child</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving from a Standard Adulthood to a Flexible Being-Hood</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regimes of Egalitarian Individualism and Sameness</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5: COMPLICATED CATEGORIES OF CLASS ............................................................... 109

CLASS TALK ................................................................................................................................. 110
CLASS RESEARCH IN NEW ZEALAND ...................................................................................... 113
MOTIVATIONAL LANDSCAPES: MYTH AS A CHANGING PHENOMENON .............................................. 115
CLASS AND THE MEDIA ............................................................................................................. 118
PARENTAL DISCOURSES OF MIDDLE-CLASSNESS ...................................................................... 120
MIDDLE-CLASS CHILDHOODS AND CONCERTED CULTIVATION ................................................. 124
A FEEL FOR THE GAME: COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL SKILLS ............................................. 128
THE CONCERTED CULTIVATION OF LEISURE ............................................................................ 130
LEISURE AND CYBER SPACE .................................................................................................. 133
CHANGING MEANINGS OF PARENTHOOD ................................................................................... 134
DUTCH MIDDLE-CLASS CHILDHOOD ............................................................................................ 140
TRAVELLING DISCOURSES OF DUTCH CHILDHOOD .................................................................... 140
CLASS OR ETHNICITY? ................................................................................................................. 142
A DUTCH MENGELMOES ............................................................................................................ 144
CONCLUSION .................................................................................................................................. 145

CHAPTER 6: THE INDELIBLE MARK OF CHILDHOOD ............................................................... 147

THE USE OF STORIES IN ANTHROPOLOGY .............................................................................. 149
METAPHORS OF CHILDHOOD AND CHILDREN’S PLACES .................................................................. 150
PARENTAL MEMORIES OF THEIR OWN CHILDHOOD: THAT WAS THEN! ...................................... 151
A TYPICAL NEW ZEALAND CHILDHOOD: BEACHES AND HOLIDAYS ............................................ 155
NARRATIVES OF ‘BAD’ CHILDHOODS ............................................................................................ 158
THE RISK OF LOSING THE ‘KIWI SELF’ ....................................................................................... 160
DUTCH NARRATIVES OF SELF AND DUTCH CHILDHOODS CONSTRUCTIONS ......................... 164
‘THE ROUGH GUIDE’ TO THE KIWI SELF ..................................................................................... 168