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Astrid Lindgren and Philosophy: the Vexed Figure of Karlson on the Roof

The presentation focuses on philosophical interpretations of Astrid Lindgren's books. Firstly, basing mainly on *Pippi og Sokrates* by Norwegian authors Gaare and Sjaastad, it recapitulates the philosophical ideas embedded in Lindgren's books on Pippi Longstocking, putting particular stress on the critique of Western culture. Secondly, in this background, it attempts to locate the vexed figure of Karlson, the main character of the trilogy concerning Karlson on the Roof, concluding that the previous readings are not satisfying. Instead, it advances the view that the figure of Karlson can be best understood in the context of later Wittgenstein's conception of language games. According to such an account, Karlson appears as a figure of the other. The otherness can be here understood as one's diverging from the extant, everyday language games, together with the habits and *Lebensformen* that they function in. While the existing language games' rules constitute the sphere of the ordinary, the deviation from them forms the sphere of the jiggery-pokery, which functions as a counterpart of unusualness, extra-ordinariness or otherness. Presenting such otherness to the reader implicitly serves two pedagogical goals. First, it acquaints children with possible forms of one's being the other. Second, it opens a sphere of "whatifness", i.e. the account of what the world would look like if certain concepts, or practises, were different. Thus the domain of "whatifness", presenting alternatives to the ordinary, brings the reader closer to a better understanding of their own *Lebensform*. The presentation refers to the creative dimension of the term "controversy": the controversial issue is the mere figure of Karlson who – as Astrid Lindgren once told – "in the book he appeared as obnoxious, touchy, sulky, unbearable guy, in whom our all unpleasant and silly, grudgingly disclosed features were emphasised and multiplied", but who, at the same time, appears "the best playmate".

Keywords: Astrid Lindgren, Karlson on the Roof, Wittgenstein, language games, otherness

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He deals mainly with the philosophy of language (Brandom, Wittgenstein), theory of argument and rationality (Toulmin) and epistemology. He is also interested in the application of philosophical ideas within early education. His main books are *Robert Brandom's Neopragmatism* (2013), and *From Paradigm to Cosmopolis. The Philosophy of Stephen E. Toulmin* (2005). He is also a translator of philosophical texts into Polish (of such writers, among others, as Wittgenstein, Searle, Toulmin, Cavell, Conant).