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Date  04/22/02
ABSTRACT

This thesis, both philosophical exploration and literary analysis, examines the image of childhood within the text of Astrid Lindgren's *Pippi Longstocking* (1945). Through a close textual analysis of three separate passages, one from each of the Pippi books, the thesis writer considers the phenomenological experience of childhood as portrayed through the character of Pippi Longstocking and her friends Tommy and Annika. By considering the ways in which specific words, phrases and descriptions render the author's expression of childhood, the thesis writer proposes a more accurate appreciation for the broad and enduring appeal of the book than has been made to this point. Throughout the analysis, the thesis writer reflects on how the image of childhood within Pippi Longstocking can inform the work of parenting and educating. The thesis concludes by reflecting on what Pippi Longstocking is and how her character and the image of childhood presented within the text offer insight into relationships with children.
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"No matter how slow the film, Spirit always stands still long enough for the photographer
It has chosen."  Minor White

In considering applying to grad school in the winter of 1993 I arranged to meet with one
of the deans at the Faculty of Education.  I wanted to get a feel for the program and be
certain this was what I really wanted to do.  I had become fascinated with
"deconstructing" media and popular culture from a critical perspective while a fourth year
undergraduate and had utopic visions of opening the eyes of the world - teaching
everyone to read our culture as I had come to, with skepticism.  I wanted to continue
playing with my newly acquired skills and at the same time wondered what the same
skills would be like in the hands of young children.  Why cloister these critical thinking
skills to university students if we could turn every 8 year old into a little Noam Chomsky
- it was surely the key to human liberation.

The dean explained how the program worked, how many credits I would need to graduate
and asked if I had any questions.  I did.  Did what they were doing here make a
difference?  She laughed and called in somebody who happened to be walking by the
office at that moment and repeated my question.  He laughed.  And so I laughed - and the
rest is history.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere thanks to Pamela Courtenay-Hall and Ian Wright from the University of British Columbia. Their encouragement and patience were never ending and will always be remembered. To Andrew, Phoebe and Theo – Thank you from Pippi and me. It’s done.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

Is it possible that a spirited fictional character, known for her red braids that stick straight out, could be a metaphor for raising children? This question has intrigued me for a long time. Through reading and writing about *Pippi Longstocking*, the 1945 children's story by Swedish author, Astrid Lindgren, I have come to discover and clarify some of my own perceptions, precepts and biases about the nature and quality of relationships that I presume to have with children. If I have a personal ambition that extends beyond this thesis it is to find ways of drawing attention to the ways in which our interactions and relationships with children may become more respectful and wise. The more immediate task of this thesis is to explore a particular literary moment as I see it speaking to such relationships.

In anticipation of writing this thesis, I became interested in finding opportunities to explore what I believe Melvin Konner brilliantly refers to as, "[those] creative achievements of child culture which ordinarily exist only on the periphery of adult consciousness" (Konner 1991, p32). In other words, that which we cannot know through clinical observation and data collection - that which ironically may very well be threatened by over involvement in the world of children. I am interested in finding small (as we would study a micro-climate or a micro-culture) pedagogical opportunities to both appreciate and inspire reverence in what might be called the wonder or magic of children. The spaces of childhood that we can see but find difficult to name - that which is often below the radar screen of the adult world and broadly referred to with words such as freedom, imagination, play, wonder and magic. These are all terms that might be used to describe the image of childhood in *Pippi Longstocking*. It is my feeling that by examining within the text, the particulars of Lindgren’s image of childhood that render such concepts, a deeper understanding of the story, and the significance of its broad appeal may be had. It is my hope that by dissecting this particularly successful expression of childhood - by looking inside - I may inspire others to look outside; to contemplate and recognize the ways in which contemporary social conventions of parenting and educating impact upon children both positively and negatively.

I have also been propelled by recent media attention to a trend that has been called *Underparenting* (*Globe & Mail*, June 24, 2000, *New York Times Syndicate*, June 13 2000, *Time Magazine*, April 23, 2001, *Globe & Mail*, September 3, 2001), and the appearance of cautionary books with titles such as, *Parental Paranoia* and *Hyper Parenting* (Furedi, 2001, Rosenfeld & Wise, 2000). These books and articles question the nature and quantity of freedom that parents allow children, arguing that to their and our detriment, children today have less freedom than in the past. These issues have received what could only be considered peripheral attention in academic circles mostly having to do with children's sense of place, the impact of the automobile on children's autonomy (Hart, 1979, Hillman, 1993) and the impact of parental involvement on creativity (Grubb and Snyder, 2000). I do not intend to look at these texts within the context of this thesis but...
want to suggest that their presence indicates a unique cultural desire to contemplate the present state of childhood.

This thesis, both philosophical exploration and literary analysis, will examine a classic piece of children's literature, known and loved by both children and adults throughout the world. More precisely, it will examine the image of childhood as portrayed specifically through the character of Pippi Longstocking and her friends Tommy and Annika. The character of Pippi Longstocking is often remembered for her red hair and fabulous strength and many literary aspects of the book, from pedagogy to satire, have been explored over the last thirty years (Metcalf 1995, Russell 2000, Edstrom 2000, Chojnacki 1995). However, it is my feeling that author Astrid Lindgren has captured a poetically enchanting and telling statement of childhood that to this point has not been amply penetrated.

Written in 1945 and published in English in 1950, the story has been translated in some 60 languages around the world. Book sales, literary recognition as "the child of the century" (Metcalf 1995), movie and television popularity as well as personal testimony tell us that Pippi Longstocking is widely loved by young readers and cherished dearly by adults throughout the world. Astrid Lindgren is considered a cultural treasure in her homeland of Sweden and her recent death on January 28, 2002 was marked with much sadness and commemoration both there and abroad. What it is about Pippi Longstocking that speaks to so many people and how this might be relevant to issues of parenting and educating today are both questions I am interested in exploring and will do so within the analysis of my specific thesis question, as stated below.

It is my feeling that by and large, children's literature and most of the conventions surrounding it (reading to and with children, children's libraries, gifts of books) have the potential to directly or indirectly facilitate some of our more positive interactions with children. This would seem especially true with respect to such enduring texts as Pippi Longstocking. Yes, it is true that views and practices of parenting and educating will differ greatly depending on a multitude of social, cultural, and economic variables, however, I look to Lindgren not because she offers any sort of universally acceptable portrait of childhood but because she has provided a particular image; an image that judging from the popularity of Pippi Longstocking with children and adults over several generations and across many cultures seems to resonate deeply.

Please be aware that I am not proposing to reveal any understanding of the world of children or of Pippi Longstocking that others (especially children themselves) have not already clearly expressed. In the spirit of Thomas Pollock, whom Edith Cobb quotes, "the making of a theory is like the making of a map. It does not discover new territory; it analyzes certain existing relationships (Cobb 1977 p.47)." I wish to simply propose a "new route" - a slightly different context for some already existing ideas both about the work of Astrid Lindgren and about being with children. The map itself is mine however. In the words of Ashis Nandy, "The other name of modern childhood is personal history (Nandy 1987)." My interest in children and in Pippi Longstocking is intimately
connected to my own history, to think otherwise would be foolish. For me, asking how I
have come to these questions and acknowledging where they intersect with my own life -
owning my biases, so to speak, has been a significant part of the thesis writing process as
will be disclosed in Chapter Five.

The immediate question of this thesis, however, is about the portrait of childhood that
Astrid Lindgren presents in *Pippi Longstocking* and asks specifically, what constitutes the
image of childhood that Lindgren has given us. The ways to organize such an exploration
(or any exploration) are endless and the criteria with which I could choose to evaluate
such an
investigation (or any investigation) are extensive. I can see the image of childhood that
Lindgren has painted for us as I read the book. I might describe it for example as joyful
or wondrous. I can also identify particular colours or details of the image and talk about
the way the children have great freedom or that Pippi uses her imagination; but what
gives me this impression of freedom; what in the text causes me to apprehend
imagination; what leads to my perception of joy? I could speculate as to how Lindgren
came to envision her particular image by examining her biography but to really see what
is inside the image I have to look for the particular brush strokes as they lay within the
text.

In my analysis I will look closely at the text of *Pippi Longstocking* and notice how the
child characters are portrayed through the use of particular words, phrases, descriptions
and actions. This might or might not include, noticing the way the children move;
noticing how they play, noticing how they speak, noticing the questions that they ask;
noticing if they think, if they reflect, and if they dream; noticing if they have feelings and
if so, how they express them, noticing what worries them and what scares them.

Alongside my thesis question of what constitutes Lindgren's image of childhood, I will
ask, is Pippi Longstocking a child and if, in fact, there are respects in which Pippi is not a
child, in what capacity does she act? It is my hope that in discerning and organizing the
brush strokes with which Lindgren has captured and expressed this image of childhood
through the character of Pippi Longstocking and her friends and by noticing the ways in
which Pippi is not a child, a new appreciation for the depth and richness of the story may
be had.

Throughout the analysis, a secondary level of inquiry will notice ways in which literary
qualities of Lindgren's story can be interpreted symbolically or metaphorically to
represent an image of childhood that is applicable beyond the text. Subsequent questions
that arise from this, pertaining to relationships and interactions with children will be
discussed within the body of the analysis in Chapter Six.

The thesis will be organized as such. Chapter Two provides an overview of the three
Pippi Longstocking books, a character profile of Pippi herself and a statement pertaining
to reader response to the text, suggesting ways in which Pippi might possibly exist as a
role model for children. Chapter Three is a biographical profile of author, Astrid

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Lindgren that relates how the book came to be. I conclude that the root of Lindgren's storytelling appeal has not been sufficiently explored and note the ways in which Lindgren's life story merges with my own research questions. Chapter Four provides an overview of the most current and relevant English language research and available non-English research on *Pippi Longstocking*. A sub-question to my thesis that is only explored within the context of this literature review asks: has the existing research come close to explaining the broad and lasting appeal of the Pippi stories? And in what ways has the character of Pippi Longstocking been misinterpreted within this research? Chapter Five is a Personal Narrative of my thesis writing journey. In Chapter Six I expand and explore the parameters and limitations of my thesis questions. I then examine the thesis questions through an analysis of three separate chapters from the Pippi books, referencing analytic insights to issues of parenting and educating where appropriate. Chapter Seven makes a conclusion about the true nature of Pippi Longstocking, and suggests ways in which such an interpretation might inform our relationships with children as parents and educators.
Hours after watching the amazing birth of a friend's baby this spring, I somehow happened to be telling one of the midwives that I was writing a paper on Pippi Longstocking. The woman was very interested and asked if she could tell me a "Pippi Longstocking story". This is not uncommon for people to have their own stories somehow related to Pippi; whether a story about reading the book, seeing the movie or about dressing up as Pippi. Even those not familiar with the story will know who I am talking about if I describe Pippi with her red braids.

The midwife's particular story went like this. Upon settling into a compartment on a train bound for Italy from Germany in the early 1980s, a fellow traveler from Germany noted that the way my story teller wore her hair in pony tails was like Pippi Longstocking. The next thing she knew, she, the German and a woman from Sweden who was also in the compartment - all roughly the same age, found themselves singing the Pippi Longstocking theme song (from the German Pippi movies, made in the 1970's) - each in their own language. This woman was happy to tell her story, I was pleased she had shared it and I noted how interesting it is that communities (around birth, around Pippi) and relationships tend to intersect.

I realize that Pippi Longstocking is not quite the universal experience that I often believe it to be and so for those readers not familiar, distantly familiar or I pity to think, only familiar through some form of cultural mutation of her character - I offer the following character and story profile completely from my perspective.

Pippi Longstocking is essentially a cultural icon. Washington Post reporter Libby Copeland begins an article titled, "Free Spirit," marking the death of Astrid Lindgren with an anecdote about mothers wrapping the hair of little girls around wire hangers for Halloween (Copeland, 2002). While Pippi's red braids are without doubt her most recognizable feature, Lindgren also tells us that her nose was the shape of a very small potato and covered with freckles. Her mouth is very wide and she has strong wide teeth. Pippi has made her cloths herself, patching fabric together when she ran out of a particular color. The other important part of Pippi's dress is her black shoes which, we are told, her father bought two sizes too big so that she would have something to grow into and that she never wanted to wear any others. And of course the name sake "long stockings", one brown, and one black. Pippi's unique appearance is of course a metaphor for the uniqueness of her character - the root of which I have yet to determine.

Pippi Longstocking. Pippi Longstocking was published in Sweden in 1945 and was translated into English and published in North America in 1950. Pippi is 9 years old and arrives at Villa Villekulla one summer evening after her father has been shipwrecked and lost at sea. She is absolutely certain that he drifted ashore and is now the king of a cannibal island and that he will someday come to get her.
Meanwhile she takes from the ship a suitcase full of gold coins and her monkey named Mr. Nilson that had been a gift from her father. Her father had bought the old house, surrounded by an overgrown garden with the thought that he and Pippi would one day live there when he grew old and could no longer sail the seas. Pippi's mother died when she was a baby and Pippi is sure she is in heaven watching over her through a peep hole in the sky. It is said in the story that she will often look up and say, "Don't you worry about me, I'll always come out on top."

The story is structured around eleven chapters - almost all of which revolve around Pippi's friendship with the two children who live next door - Tommy and Annika. Tommy and Annika are good children who always do what their parents tell them but who have often wished for a playmate. Pippi becomes their dearest friend and through her enthusiasm, imagination, independence, generosity and strength (that she is the strongest girl in the world is essentially the only fantastical element of the stories - there are no talking animals or feats of wizardry etc.) - played out through story lines such as an encounter with a bully, a day at school, going on a picnic, going to the circus, rescuing children from a burning building, going to a coffee party and entertaining burglars, she reveals to them what I recognize or interpret as the wonders of childhood - of believing oneself omnipotent, of knowing great joy and recognizing justice.

Pippi is always encountering adults who impose judgment or show dismay at her behaviour and attitude. Pippi playfully makes use of language and logic to show that often what is believed to be good or true is actually a precept held only for the benefit of some and not all. These riddles and anecdotes make for great chuckling as do the stupefied adults in the story. Pippi's absolute sense of herself, her ability to recognize right from wrong and her complete lack of ego are perhaps what make her all-knowing and wise while at the same time utterly naive.

*Pippi Goes Aboard* was published in Britain in 1956. This follow up to the first book sees the children's friendship in all its glory through nine more chapters. While I wouldn't say the narrative is more complex, I do feel a sense of maturity in the writing which allows the characters to become even more endearing. In the final chapter Pippi is to sail off with her father who as she intuited is the king of a cannibal island and has come back to get Pippi so that she can be the Princess. Tommy and Annika are beside themselves with grief that she is leaving and just as her father orders the gangway pulled up Pippi announces she cannot leave and make her friends so sad. Her father acknowledges her decision and tells her that she's always known what's best. He knows her life will be more regular at Villa Villekulla and that that's surely best for little children. Pippi replies, "Exactly, it's definitely best for little children to have a regular life, especially if they can regulate it themselves." Her father tosses her another suitcase of gold and the story ends.

*Pippi in the South Seas* was published in 1959. The first half of the book sees Pippi through the adventures of her day-to-day life at Villa Villekulla. However, in the middle of the book Pippi's father again comes to get her and this time Pippi takes Tommy and Annika with her to the cannibal island. Their mother agrees to this and says that she has
come to realize that even though Pippi's manners may not always be what they might -
her heart is in the right place. Pippi befriends the "native" children of Kurrekurreddutt
Island, telling them tales of "Western" children and their love for "plutification." There is
a greater cultural sensitivity to this book in which Pippi battles with a shark and two
bandits.

Five chapters of adventure on the island leave Tommy and Annika longing to get home
and so they arrive back at Villa Villekulla in the dead of winter. In the final chapter
Tommy and Annika are sad that they have missed Christmas and Pippi prepares a special
celebration for them. Over dinner they plan to build an igloo the next day and talk about
all the fun they'll always have wherever they are. Tommy and Annika are suddenly struck
by the terrible thought of someday growing up and Pippi offers them special chililug pills
that will stop this from happening. As they go to bed that night Tommy and Annika
wonder if perhaps the chililug pills didn't look a lot like peas and they watch their friend
Pippi through their window as she sits at her table next door, looking dreamily into the
glow of a candle. Tommy and Annika wish she would look their way but Pippi blows out
the candle and the story ends.

While I am not aware of any research that has looked at the response of readers (children
or adult) to the text, it would be an interesting area to look at. Vivi Edstrom does refer
to the lasting influence of Pippi on youth in Sweden as evidenced by forty and fifty year olds
today and gives the example of Danish feminist writer, Suzanne Brogger who claims
Pippi Longstocking as her role model (Edstrom 2000, p.97). The similarity of this
phenomena to the role model that Lucy Maud Montgomery's Anne has been in Canada
(and beyond) has been noted by various writers(Edstrom 2000, Metcalf 1995). That
Anne also has red hair is another obvious similarity. It has been said that Lindgren
herself was a fan of Anne of Green Gables and spent a whole summer playing Dianna
Berry to her sister's Anne behind the barns where they grew up. The ways in which
characters from stories can become characters in the imaginary play of children or the
ways in which such literary characters become role models to children will not be
specifically examined in this thesis but that both are possibilities is interesting to keep in
mind as we consider the image of childhood within Pippi Longstocking and ask how such
an image may inform our own "roles" as parents and educators.
CHAPTER THREE

ASTRID LINDGREN: AUTHOR PROFILE, ORIGIN AND RECEPTION OF

PIPPI LONGSTOCKING

Astrid Lindgren is said to be Sweden's most famous and influential children's author. Eva-Marie Metcalf has said that, "a rare combination of high literary quality, great popular appeal, and a propensity for innovation," explain this stature. Pippi Longstocking brought Lindgren instant fame and set new standards for child-oriented writing. The story has long been a touchstone of children's literature and has been translated into more than sixty languages from Arabic to Zulu (Metcalf 1995, p.3).

Contributing to Lindgren's broad appeal above and beyond her storytelling abilities is her "concern for humanity, her integrity, and her vision" says Metcalf. Both in her stories and in her life she has sided with the powerless and abused, be they children, adults or animals. The 1978 German Booksellers' Peace Award and the Albert Schweitzer Medal in 1989 (awarded by the Animal Welfare Institute of the United States) both honoured her humanitarian accomplishments. She has also won numerous honours and awards over the years for her literary accomplishments, having published over 30 stories between 1944 and 1991. From 1946 to 1970, Lindgren was editor-in-chief of the publishing house Raben and Sjorgen and still wrote at least one book a year.

Astrid Ericsson was born in rural Sweden in 1907. There were no cars and few of the modern conveniences that even two decades later would abound. She describes her childhood as somewhat idyllic - brothers and sisters, parents who cared for each other with uncommon affection, great freedom to play and clear expectations of responsibility at the same time. Lindgren has repeatedly stated that she and her siblings experienced the right combination of freedom and security during their early years. The children had to work on the farm as soon as they were able, an experience that instilled in them a sense of duty and self-esteem, but they could also play with great freedom - it's a wonder they didn't play themselves to death she has said. "Lindgren sees no better way to develop the bodies, souls, and imagination of children than free, unencumbered play lodged securely within a flexible framework of moral values (Metcalf 1995, p63)." Lindgren has reflected that while her childhood without doubt provided fertile ground for her storytelling, and there are occasional anecdotes that grew out of real experience, her stories are, for the most part, not biographical. Much of what she has written, "is rewritings of my experiences in a far distant childhood, whence they gleam into the memory like flashes from a lighthouse (Lindgren as quoted in Edstrom 2000, p.15)."

As a child Lindgren was surrounded by a rich tradition of oral storytelling, and it is said that many of the jokes, tales, and anecdotes that she heard at home from her father, supposedly a tremendous storyteller, became part of her own storytelling. (If you have the privilege of listening to Lindgren read any of her stories in Swedish, as I have on tape, it is easy to imagine being told a story in her presence - she has a strong but gently lilting voice.) Lindgren was introduced to the world of books through fairy tales in a friend's
kitchen. She enjoyed listening to adults and would often assume the job of taking lunch
to the men working in the fields so that she could listen to their conversations and jokes.
Apparently Lindgren was recognized for her writing abilities in grade school, soon
acquiring the title of Vimmerby's Selma Lagerlof, another famous Swedish writer of
stories for children. She rejected this title, however, and for a long time was not
interested in a writing career.

Lindgren experienced the end of her childhood as a loss and has recounted realizing as a
teenager that she had lost the ability to play or to be engrossed in play. (This is a clear
line that I remember from my own childhood.) She has claimed that the joys and fresh,
intense experiences of her childhood years superceded any experiences she had later in
life. She has also said that when she writes, she writes for the child in herself (as do
many authors of children's literature.) Metcalf claims, however, that Lindgren's ability to
remember vividly and in great detail her childhood preferences and desires at various ages
is unique although she doesn't say how she determines this. "Lindgren never lost touch
with the smells, sights, sounds, and feelings she experienced as a girl, and her writing
reflects the intensity and freshness with which a child experiences the world (Metcalf
1995, p.8)."

Lindgren left her small home town in 1925 at the age of eighteen, two years into a
journalism apprenticeship at the local newspaper because she was pregnant and
unmarried. She moved to Stockholm and trained as a secretary, having to leave her
young son with foster parents in Denmark until she could afford to look after him. Those
ergyears of adulthood were not easy ones for Lindgren, however, she was happily
married in 1931 to a man she met while working for the Royal Automotive Club.
Lindgren stayed at home with her children, her daughter Karin having been born in 1934,
and the family moved into an apartment in 1941 that Lindgren lived in for the rest of her
life.

Lindgren wrote travelogues part-time and published stories in family magazines and
Christmas almanacs but it was in 1941, the character of Pippi Longstocking was
developed. Lindgren's daughter had pneumonia and every night she would tell her good
night stories. Karin spontaneously made up the name of "Pippi Langstrump" and thus
started her mother telling the stories of a young girl named Pippi. Eva Marie Metcalf tells
us:

Since this was such a crazy name, the story about Pippi had to be crazy too,
Lindgren decided, and invented a girl who defied all conventions. Since Lindgren
at that time was a proponent of the then new and hotly debated child-oriented
education, defying conventions was a mental experience that she was more then
willing to undertake. If we can talk about Pippi as a construct, that construct is
rooted in new ideas about child education and child psychology that emerged in
the 1930s and 1940s. Lindgren followed the lively public debates about a more
child-centered education and participated in them as a proponent of an education
that respected children by taking into account their thoughts and feelings. This
new attitude toward children had consequences for her storytelling. It resulted in
the creation of a new narrator who speaks and writes consistently from the point
of view of the child (Metcalf 1995, p.30).

Astrid Lindgren herself once said, "If I have brightened up one single sad childhood, then
I have at least accomplished something in my life" (Ohlin, 2002). A separate quote said,
"I have not tried to explain anything with Pippi or any other book. I am writing in order
to amuse the child within myself and I hope that by doing so other children will have
some fun too (Ohlin, 2002)." "I never thought in any way of the children who were going
to read these books. But it seems that what I enjoy myself amuses all kinds of children"
(Reuters, 2002).

Over the years Pippi became a staple of bedtime stories in the Lindgren household with
Lindgren creating more and more stories about the little red-headed girl. But it was some
years later while Lindgren was forced to stay in bed with a broken ankle that she wrote
the stories down and gave the illustrated manuscript to Karin as a gift for her tenth
Birthday. Lindgren realized how much she enjoyed writing children's books and her first
book, The Confidences of Britt-Mari, was published after winning second prize in a
contest. Pippi Longstocking, however, says Metcalf with its roots in the oral story-telling
tradition of goodnight stories, not having been meant for a wider audience and therefore
not bound by any norms or standards, took readers by storm.

It is interesting to note that Ulla Lundqvist has studied the original Pippi manuscript
which is considerably different from the published text. Dubbed Ur-Pippi by Lundqvist,
the original manuscript is more nonsensical, filled with many rhymes and folk songs that
Pippi sings while performing "bizarre and crazy travesties (Vidstrom 2000, p.112)." Ur-
Pippi was apparently along the lines of the absurd and very much in keeping with popular
trends of that time both in adult art and literature as well as children's literature.

I have been pleased with the ready amount of biographical information on Astrid
Lindgren; the freedom and joy with which she experienced growing up are very much in
keeping with my own research interests as they pertain to the image of childhood in Pippi
Longstocking. That Lindgren, as well as being a brilliant storyteller, had a keen
awareness of social policy and was a political influence in Sweden inspire me to consider
the ways in which her fictional writing can inform our own social relationships,
especially, with children. Lindgren has long been dubbed The Storyteller of the World,
however, it is my feeling that the significance of this honour has not been duly explored.
Asking what, in particular, lays at the heart of Lindgren's popularity, especially with
respect to Pippi Longstocking has been a principle influence to the writing of this thesis.
It is my hope that by closely examining the image of childhood in Pippi Longstocking I
might further contribute to such an understanding.
CHAPTER FOUR
LITERATURE REVIEW

When Astrid Lindgren died on January 28th of this year, Swedish national television interrupted its regular broadcast with a special report and newspapers rushed out extra editions about her death. It was reported that flowers and candles piled up outside the front door of the Stockholm apartment building where she lived and died, and that adults came, some with children in tow, and cried (Reuters, 2002). Such an outpouring of grief over the death of an author of children's books is not common and leads me to ask, can there by any explanation for such a reaction?

My thesis rests on the assertion that Astrid Lindgren's *Pippi Longstocking* can be interpreted as an expression of childhood and attempts to discern the particular textual details that contribute to the image as such. A sub-question specific only to this chapter, asks, has the existing research on *Pippi Longstocking* come close to accounting for the broad and lasting appeal of the stories and in this regard, has the character of Pippi Longstocking been typically misrepresented in the literature? As well as being an example of the type of analysis that I propose to do in Chapter 6, the exercise of examining existing interpretations of Pippi Longstocking will allow the reader to become more familiar with the Pippi stories then would otherwise be possible via my own thesis inquiry.

Vivi Edstrom gives a small window into much European language work on *Pippi Longstocking* thanks to Eivor Cormack's 2000 translation of her book, *Astrid Lindgren: A Critical Study*. It is still quite difficult to appreciate the scope of non-English work but this text is of enormous value. Edstrom's is an expansive thematic study and overview of Lindgren's 35 different books; while it deals extensively with the Pippi books, the insights are not what they might be if they were primary source translations. As well, the overview appears biased towards Edstrom's focus on literary theme and her own interest in exploring "chaos" within *Pippi Longstocking* through the lens of post-modernism. That I don't have access to this more complete body of research seems a loss and is perhaps worthy of pursuit by those such as myself who are interested in exploring with integrity the phenomenon of Pippi Longstocking.

Initial reactions to *Pippi Longstocking* when it was published in 1945 were on the whole positive, however, a notorious review the following year by John Landquist declared his inability to understand a book in which a child eats an entire cream cake; "Pippi is something unpleasant that scratches at the soul," This was the first of a slew of criticisms interpreting Pippi as a badly behaved, impertinent heroine (Edstom, 2000, p.43).

Subsequent analysis and critique has considered everything from political ideology to feminism in *Pippi Longstocking*. There is a Web site titled *The Evil of Pippi Longstocking* which identifies Pippi as the "red-haired harbinger of the Antichrist...."
created to fill the vacuum left by Hitler's death." David L. Russell comments that the existence of this Web Site points to the "provocative power" (Russell 2000, p.168) that the character of Pippi still has and gives it little further attention. However, I find the responses to this site very interesting. Most strikingly to me is the protectiveness of Swedes and other Europeans towards the character of Pippi Longstocking and Astrid Lindgren. Many write that they are horrified by the site's suggestions and that the creators had no concept of what a treasure Lindgren is considered.

Interestingly, this Web site is one of the few earnest (if not misguided) attempts to explain the lasting appeal of *Pippi Longstocking*. In some sense, I think that at the very least, the sense of humor that this demonstrates is in keeping with Lindgren and the text. I have seen little evidence of any more comprehensive attempts to explain the appeal of *Pippi Longstocking*, however, many have come up with useful and interesting insights. Of course the criteria with which I make this criticism is entirely subjective and refers only to my own satisfaction with such analyses, implying that my own questions, feelings and insights about the text remain outstanding.

The primary literary ruler for *Pippi Longstocking* has long been its reflection of "the new liberal pedagogy" apparently coming into vogue in Sweden in the 1940's and openly advocated by Lindgren herself around the time the book was published (Edstrom 2000, Metcalf 1995). In this context the story is a model of liberal child rearing and the reader supposedly identifies with Pippi's emancipatory qualities; that she challenges authority, that she is strong. Others interpret Pippi Longstocking as personifying Bertrand Russell's notion of the child's desire for freedom and power (Erol 1991). This function of Pippi as "wish fulfillment" is contrasted by the characters of Tommy and Annika who represent "reality" and with whom the reader is supposed to eventually identify. Others still have focused on the comedy and apparent absurdness of Pippi's character; seeing her as a social critic and "joyful" anarchist (Russell 2000, Metcalf 1995).

In the way that existing research focuses on adult reactions to the text it seems to me quite narcissistic. While many make the claim that Pippi serves to point out the conflicting interests of adults and children (Edstrom 2000, Metcalf 1995), I have seen no research that even attempts to look at what the text has to offer children other than psychological "wish fulfillment" (see below). As a text intended for children it seems ironic that no research has examined the reactions of children to the text. It would be fascinating to know if children's responses to the text have changed over the years. Anecdotal reports suggest that it hasn't but I have seen no evidence of research. An entirely separate but equally interesting area of research could look at adult reactions to the text including the responses of new readers and readers who read Pippi as a child and read it again as a parent. For the most part research has focused on what Pippi works to reveal through satire, comedy and chaos (Metcalf, Russell, Edstrom). While each of these are valid and interesting elements of the text in a literary sense, they don't particularly speak to any sense of affinity with the story. Any work that considers the "image" of the child in *Pippi Longstocking*, tends to examine the contrast between Pippi, who is considered "not real"
and Tommy and Annika, who the reader supposedly identifies as "real"; Pippi thus working to enforce the conformity of Tommy and Annika (Erol 1991).

Arguments about reader identification that conclude readers "identify" with the "good" children next door surely cannot explain the popularity of Pippi Longstocking as demonstrated by the outpouring of grief at Lindgren's death. While I agree that Pippi as a child (if she is a child), is unique from Tommy and Annika, I can't believe this disparity is the central appeal of the story and it couldn't possibly explain adult affection for the text. It seems again ironic that while Pippi serves to expose unfounded beliefs and perceptions about children, research has for the most part not considered what "makes" the child in the text. My intention is not to argue that Lindgren has created a "realistic" image of childhood but I do think many researchers seem to have missed the point of Pippi. *Pippi Longstocking* represents a particular expression of childhood. That the story and character have captured the hearts of so many suggests to me that this expression is worth knowing more about.

Negative adult response to the text presumably still happens today (although is seems more difficult to imagine) and is seen to figure in recent textual considerations, especially on the subversive role of comedy in *Pippi Longstocking* (Russell 2000). How Russell determines that adults react negatively to Pippi is not clear and it is possible that he only assumes this reaction based on what has been said about the initial reactions to the story. It is interesting to note that I found no mention of negative child responses to Pippi Longstocking and no ethnographic work on reader response to the books. In fact, child responses are assumed to be homogeneous in quality and character - primarily having to do with psycho-developmental conceptions of wish fulfillment in keeping with Bertrand Russell's ideas (from the 1930's) about children's dreams of power from positions of inferiority (Edstrom 2000).

Ulla Lundqvist is the pre-eminent Swedish *Pippi Longstocking* scholar. Her doctoral thesis was titled, "The Child of the Century: The Pippi Longstocking Phenomenon and Its Conditions" (Edstrom 2000, p124). Lundqvist argues that the Pippi books attack an antiquated way of thinking on matters related to children. Apparently the liberal educational psychology of A.S. Neill was well received in Sweden in the 1930's but was impeded by World War Two. It is said that Lindgren herself referred to Russell's theories (Edstrom, 2000) which is not unlikely, however, it is problematic that literary analysts some 60 years later refer to such theories in the context of their own arguments without reference to current credibility of the theory.

Edstrom quotes Eva von Zweigbergk on the liberal philosophy,

*Astrid Lindgren's interpretations of the child's world of play and fantasy is unconsciously in exact alignment with the new philosophy of liberal pedagogy. It was the book everyone had waited for, the book about a figure of fantasy, representing the child's wishful dream to do what she wants there and then, defying the forbidden, feeling her own strength and ability, always having fun.*
Pippi Longstocking could be said to be the child's safety valve against the pressures of authority and of everyday life. This could be the secret behind its tremendous success among children, not forgetting its disrespectful humor and its juicy, ready-witted, everyday tenor (Edstrom 2000, p.127).

Russell says, "Lindgren seems to take a great deal of pleasure in attacking the intellectual constraints, the stifling of the imagination, the deadening of the inquisitive spirit that she finds in the traditional classroom" (Russell, 2000, p.172). He references a scene from the book in which in order to accompany the children on a school picnic, Pippi goes to school, only to challenge the teacher at every turn. For example the teacher gives Annika this problem: "Gustav was with his schoolmates on a picnic. He had a quarter when he started out and seven cents when he got home. How much did he spend?" Pippi, in her impulsive fashion, interjects, "Yes, indeed...and I also want to know why he was so extravagant, and if it was pop he bought, and if he washed his ears properly before he left home." From at least one point of view, says Russell, "Pippi is in the vanguard of the quest for relevance in education" (Russell 2000, p.173).

I find Russell's interpretation of the teacher interesting. He says she is "uninspired" and meets Pippi's individuality and challenge to conventional norms with "stony resistance." On the contrary, the teacher is quite thoughtful in her responses to Pippi. In Chapter Four of Pippi Longstocking, in which Pippi first goes to school, Tommy and Annika have told their teacher that a new girl named Pippi Longstocking is coming; the teacher has already heard about Pippi in the little town and as she is a very pleasant teacher, she has decided to do all she could to make Pippi happy in school.

Pippi threw herself down on a vacant bench without having been invited to do so, but the teacher paid no attention to her heedless way. She simply said in a very friendly voice, "Welcome to school, little Pippi. I hope that you will enjoy yourself here and learn a great deal."..."Suppose we test you a little and see what you know. You are a big girl and no doubt know a great deal already. Let us begin with arithmetic. Pippi, can you tell me what seven and five are?"

Pippi, astonished and dismayed, looked at her and said, "Well, if you don't know that yourself, you needn't think I'm going to tell you."

All the children stared in horror at Pippi, and the teacher explained that one couldn't answer that way in school.

"I beg your pardon," said Pippi contritely. "I didn't know that. I won't do it again."

"No, let us hope not," said the teacher. "And now I will tell you that seven and five are twelve."

"See that!" said Pippi. "You knew it yourself. Why are you asking them?"

The teacher decided to act as if nothing unusual were happening and went on with her examination(Pippi Longstocking, pp.53-55)

The teacher is essentially the only adult character in the books whose self-consciousness is revealed by Lindgren. As the scene continues, the teacher decides to not make an ordeal out of Pippi's unusual responses and moves on, thinking Pippi might be more
interested in reading. She doesn't get angry with Pippi and at the same time doesn't pander to her - she remains in a position of authority without abusing it. Further on, the story says that the teacher had now begun to think Pippi was an unruly and troublesome child and starts the class drawing. When she finds Pippi drawing on the floor she asks, "impatiently" why in the world Pippi is not drawing on paper. After listening to Pippi's explanation, and when Pippi counters her suggestion that they do some singing, "the teacher's patience came to an end." She tells all the children to go outside so that she may talk to Pippi alone:

When the teacher and Pippi were alone, Pippi got up and walked to the desk. "Do you know what?" she said. "It was awfully jolly to come to school to find out what it was like. But I don't think I care about going to school any more, Christmas vacation or no Christmas vacation. There's altogether too many apples and ibexes and snakes (referring to learning shapes of letters) and things like that. It makes me dizzy in the head. I hope that you, Teacher, won't be sorry."

But the teacher said she certainly was sorry, most of all because Pippi wouldn't behave decently; and that any girl who acted as badly as Pippi wouldn't be allowed to go to school even if she wanted to ever so.

"Have I behaved badly?" asked Pippi, much astonished. "Goodness, I didn't know that," she added and looked very sad. And nobody could look as sad as Pippi when she was sad. She stood silent for a while, and then she said in a trembling voice, "You understand, Teacher, don't you, that when you have a mother who's an angel and a father who is a cannibal king, and when you have sailed on the ocean all your whole life, then you don't know just now to behave in school with all the apples and ibexes."

Then the teacher said she understood and didn't feel annoyed with Pippi any longer, and maybe Pippi could come back to school when she was a little older. Pippi positively beamed with delight (Pippi Longstocking, pp.59-60).

This is just one example of the text being misrepresented. I would argue that Russell is again guilty of misinterpretation in his claim that Pippi is "a fiercely independent child." This implies her independence is something she has to fight for or defend and that she reflects on her independence - that she consciously possesses it, or lays claim to it. I could imagine scenes in which Pippi defends herself on the grounds of independence - "There was absolutely no way that Pippi was going to allow the burglars to steal her gold and thus take away her freedom!" In fact I can find no such narrative example and Russell offers no textual proof for his claim. Pippi just is independent - yes her independence is threatened in a variety of scenarios but this is not the grounds on which Pippi goes to battle. Pippi's foils are more accurately described as fought on the grounds of logic, common sense, wit and wisdom as well as her great strength. Occasionally she will pass moral judgment as to right and wrong but only as a passing reference.

Being taunted by a group of bullies after defending a little boy, Pippi just stands amongst them and smiles. Frustrated by her lack of reaction, the head bully pushes her and she replies, "I don't think you have a very nice way with ladies (Pippi Longstocking, p.34)," and she picks the boy up and places him in a tree. Before leaving them she says that it is
cowardly for five boys to attack one and to then push, "a helpless little girl around (Pippi Longstocking, p.35)." When burglars arrive in the night to steal Pippi's gold coins and say they hope their "little friend" doesn't have anything against them taking it she replies, "Certainly not, ...I hope you don't have anything against my taking it back, little friend (Pippi Longstocking, p.119)."

At the end of *Pippi Goes Aboard*, Pippi is set to sail away with her father only to realize that she can't possibly leave Tommy and Annika who are beside themselves with sadness. Telling her father of her decision she asks if he doesn't think it best for children to have a proper home, to which he agrees that Pippi's life is more regular at Villa Villekulla. "Exactly," said Pippi, "it's definitely best for little children to have a regular life, especially if they can regulate it themselves (Pippi Goes Aboard, p.171)." And so she says good-bye - without any fuss about her need to be independent. Her independence and self-government is for her simply the way life is.

I will disagree with Russell once again and I do so because his arguments are the most recent and problematic simply for their inaccuracy. I think my criticisms of Russell are pertinent to issues of parenting and educating and in keeping with the lessons of Pippi. How often do we attribute meaning or interpret the behaviour of children based on our own precepts? Russell claims that Pippi is *endowed* with great physical strength. The word endow implies a bequeathal that a person has been provided with - that there has been a giving and a receiving. I can imagine the narrative supporting this image - Pippi might find a magic stone, for example, and be thus blessed with fantastic strength. But there has been no such explanation. Pippi is just strong. She is the strongest girl in the world, in fact. There is no explanation as to how long she has been strong, or when she realized she was strong or what she does, if anything, to maintain her strength. Edstrom claims that Pippi's "supernatural" powers are a personification of the dream of freedom, strength and power (Edstrom 2000, p108) and goes on to consider once again how her strength contributes to the comic element of the narrative.

Despite my critique of Russell's interpretation of Pippi's character, his analysis of the subversive nature of comedy is entirely applicable to the text and worth noting. Russell concludes:

Through Pippi's naiveté her ingenuousness, she figuratively disrobes the adults, strips them of their superficial respectability - and this, of course, is what comedy does best. Comedy is subversive in nature; it is revolutionary because it challenges us to examine and reassess our values, and shakes us out of our complacency. But comedy is also an affirmation of the resilience of humanity and an expression of hopefulness, which is why Northrop Frye associated its mythos with the spring, the season of hope. It is also the season we might best associate with childhood. The Pippi Longstockings and Huckleberry Finns become the juvenile gadflies of our culture, child Don Quixote's, exploring possibilities, dreaming of a better world, a world free from the chains of empty social custom and
meaningless convention, a world where each individual can find fulfillment on his or her own terms (Russell 2000, p.176).

Russell is only the latest in a long line to consider the literary function of comedy in *Pippi Longstocking*. Danish critic Ellen Buttenshcon compares Pippi to the rascal in folk poetry (Edstrom 2000, p.144). Eva-Marie Metcalf also discusses humour in *Pippi Longstocking* and sees it in the forms of word play, tall tales, slapstick, nonsense, irony, and situation comedy. For Pippi, life itself is a stage, she is always acting, always ready to entertain those around her with dramatic performances, sometimes complete shows; she turns life into a never-ending play. In her essay, "Tall Tale and Spectacle in Pippi Longstocking," Metcalf points out how uninterested Pippi is in watching the circus, "until the moment when she herself takes over the arena and performs more astonishing acts then anybody else" (Metcalf 1995, p.65).

Edstrom references Ingrid Arvidsson's 1949 essay in which she claims Pippi has "an attractive anarchist streak." Arvidsson sees the mechanics of anarchy and disobedience to be more "ridiculed than glorified." Edstrom, however, claims it is not Pippi's disobedience that is ridiculed but the grown-ups' claim to the whole truth when, in reality, they keep repeating conventions and using conventions as pointers. Seeing this in some parts of the characters as near fascism, Edstrom believes Pippi's life-style to maintain a symbolic role even today (Edstrom 2000, p.113). Lundqvist sees Pippi's apartness from society as her critical function upon which her "emancipatory force" is drawn. Eva-Marie Metcalf's 1990 essay states that Pippi undermines the social code. Metcalf chooses the concept of "post modernist irony" as a comprehensive term for Pippi's emancipatory qualities.

Edstrom, in her own essay of the same year, "Pippi Longstocking as Chaos and Post modernism" puts forth similar ideas. Edstrom claims that Tommy and Annika support Pippi and play along with her but that they serve to mark the boundary to the fantastic by questioning Pippi and scoffing at her stories. Russell believes that while children recognize Pippi as belonging to the world of make-believe, Tommy and Annika, in their conventionality, belong to "our world." He says,

> It is only when Tommy and Annika join Pippi that the magic and wonder are open to them, an arrangement similar to that found in P.L. Traver's *Mary Poppins*. Any fears that children will mistake fantasy for reality seem quite unfounded in light of the dexterous manner with which children move at will in and out of their own made-up worlds (Russell, p.168).

Russell makes two claims here that stand out as troublesome. The first is that children recognize Pippi as make-believe and Tommy and Annika as not make-believe. He sees their role as keeping the children "grounded in reality," stating that similar interpretations have been made of the Banks children in *Mary Poppins*. This strikes me as odd - as if the authors felt some sort of moral code of responsibility to not let their child readers become
lost in the world of fantasy - and that such a thing might happen if it weren't for the existence of these straight-men characters per se. It is as if the act of story telling was a tightrope walk between entertaining the child but being careful to not lose the child - as if the child might never be the same again, suffering some sort of fantastic psychosis because an unknowing author had not thought to 'ground' the child in reality via the more conventional character. I do not want to argue that Tommy and Annika and the Banks children in Mary Poppins don't all serve a valuable narrative purpose - and I would argue that they work to create a contrast to the more fantastic character, a means by which to play out that character but I question with what sort of psychological authority Russell and others make claims of child readers needing to be grounded.

Russell's statement that Tommy and Annika have the worlds of magic and wonder opened up to them by joining Pippi is similarly problematic. For a child reading a story, is not the entire story, make-believe? By the act of reading they are engaging in an act of imagination. Yes, Tommy and Annika seem to have not much of a play life without Pippi but I would argue their friendship with her and all she opens up to them is slightly different then what Mary Poppins offers the Banks children. Through her own imaginations Pippi creates all the wonder and magic that Tommy and Annika experience - for the large part via their own imaginations. Except for situations when Pippi awes or entertains, she basically only serves to prime their own imagination - she provides the story impetus but the children are fully able to keep up with the fantasy. It is only Pippi's great strength, her wealth and her independence that are fantastical in the story and she is not able to provide Tommy and Annika with any of these qualities - except when she convinces their parents to let Tommy and Annika sail on the South Seas with her.

It may surprise some to realize that Pippi doesn't actually possess (except for her strength) any super human qualities - certainly none that compare to Mary Poppins. She can't fly, she can't control the weather, she doesn't do magic and while she talks to her animals, they don't talk to her. Anything that appears magically to Tommy and Annika we easily assume has been orchestrated by Pippi herself - much in keeping with the parental magic of Santa Claus. Pippi doesn't fly, she has no magic potions - but in scenarios such as the apothecary when she buys medicine (see Chapter Six) she serves to show how much magic we seem to weld in our normal lives - medicines, schooling - are all modern day potions. In fact, all of the children's fun is enabled through Pippi's imagination (however enabled by gold coins and pirate ships), so the tales themselves are not so fantastic. These are important distinctions to make in that they reveal how often critics of Pippi Longstocking have made statements about the story that don't actually hold true, suggesting to me that perhaps there are elements of the story left undetected.

Polish writer Hieronim Chojnacki discusses anthropological and ethical meanings of childhood underlying the literary images within the Pippi books and in doing so comes a bit closer to considering what makes Pippi who she is. Chojnacki contextualizes his argument by telling us that up to the close of the 18th century both philosophy and literature upheld a belief that man's maturity was a reflection of his value and that the present represented the culminating point in human development. "At some time this
development was understood as the increase in knowledge, righteousness and sense of beauty (Chojnacki 1995, p.53)." He goes on to explain that it was when the notion of childhood developed out of the Romantic period that we saw a trend in literature: books for children, about children, written from the child's point of view and aimed at criticizing the world of adults.

Chojnacki sees the story of Pippi Longstocking as a metaphor in which the child's perception of the world, as represented by the thinking and behaviour of the child, challenges an adult, authority based model of life and violence. His claim is that symbolically Pippi Longstocking represents a different model of humanity. It is Chojnacki's acknowledgment of the "thinking and behaviour" of the child that pertains to this thesis, however, it is disappointing that he does not demonstrate such "thinking and behaviour" through the text. Chojnacki is unique for pointing out that Pippi possesses qualities of "maturity" although again, he does not give examples but instead forms a somewhat scattered argument that again falls back on notions of fantasy versus reality, child versus adult. Chojnacki does claim that Pippi's "maturity" is demonstrated through freedom and power and makes an argument that her "kind heartedness" offers her a chance of realizing her "childlike humanity." It is interesting that Chojnacki identifies "kind heartedness" as belonging to the realm of "spiritual values." He says,

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Freedom embodied by Pippi has a character of a dream or a wish. When compared with Pippi's limitless possibilities, the limited world of common children deserves a pity. However, the very contrast between these two realities suggests acceptance of the small world. It is only Pippi who may lead the life of freedom and independence; ordinary children cannot and, in the end, would not like to live in this way. Freedom remains an elusive dream (Chojnacki 1995, p.55).
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What gives Chojnacki the authority to make such statements about "ordinary" children is unclear. What is useful for our purposes is noticing that he uses terms such as "freedom" and humanity, however undefined and lacking in textual examples.

Chojnacki is unique in what he notices not happening in the text. For example,

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Owing to her vivid imagination, financial self-sufficiency, strength and shrewdness, she wins all the confrontations in which children are usually defeated....Pippi's treatment of property is very similar. There is something unassuming almost unconscious in the way in which she thinks about possibilities secured by money. ...We do not witness here any homage-paying to that attitude of power. Money has only a practical function, securing freedom and sovereignty to the heroine (Chojnacki 1995, pp.55-56).
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Chojnacki offers no explanation as to what informs these thoughts but for my purposes he definitely moves us in the direction of realizing that the character of Pippi Longstocking
has significance that stretches beyond the typical interpretations as reviewed in this chapter. Chojnacki notices that there are qualities of existence that may be named and in doing so identifies the task of this thesis.

This chapter has reviewed and occasionally critiqued the existing research on *Pippi Longstocking*. I have suggested that the existing literature does not adequately explain the broad and lasting appeal of Pippi and I have identified instances where the character of Pippi Longstocking has been misrepresented. Chapter 5 offers personal reflections on my own noticing throughout the process of writing this thesis. Chapter 6 will step off from Chojnacki and consider, through textual analysis what renders Lindgren's expression of childhood. At the same time I will look at the ways in which the character of Pippi Longstocking departs from this image; in that she does so we can then ask how Pippi might animate our own conceptions of being a child and being with children today. On the relevance of Pippi Longstocking today, Edstrom refers to Eva-Marie Metcalf:

> It is a different matter, she thinks, from what it was in the 1940s. From the point of view of childrearing, children have come a little closer to the *state of total freedom*. Today, on the other hand, they live in a world so dominated by the media, and so totally structured, that there is less space than ever for 'intense primary experiences and uncontrolled action.' In a society where internalized norms and values, shaped by the state and by consumption, continue to govern every citizen in a new form of hidden patriarchy, "the anarchistic, joyous vitality of Pippi still remains a wonderful and funny device for compensation and inspiration(Metcalf 1995, p.129)."
CHAPTER FIVE

PERSONAL NARRATIVE: THE POETRY OF PIPPI LONGSTOCKING

This personal narrative explores my ongoing relationship with the children's novel Pippi Longstocking and the multiple ways that I have come to know it as a text. The ways in which one's 'self' emerges through such relationships and the consequent discourses between self, story and community are resonant themes that have emerged in the process. That life knits itself into our work has been a discovery. Finding a voice has been a joy.

"We dream and the dreams of a bad night are given to us as philosophy. You will say I too am a dreamer; I admit this, but I do what the others fail to do. I give my dreams as dreams, and leave the reader to discover whether there is anything in them which may prove useful to those who are awake (Rousseau 1974, p.103)."

Note to the reader. This is not a dream.

What would my fantasy be? If somebody is unsure what they want to do about something I ask them - "what would your fantasy be - what would you do if you could do anything." My fantasy looks like this.

The Pippi Longstocking Principle
The Pippi Longstocking Principle dictates: In all matters concerning children - parents as well as educators and policy makers shall govern themselves not by what is sanctioned by social precept or as seems justified by the experience of one's own childhood but rather first and foremost by fundamental truth or law about the reality of the child - and if that reality be not known - then the reality of Pippi Longstocking shall be the norm. Pippi Longstocking symbolizes the universal unknowns of childhood - the precious ephemerality of the child's experience and the respect it thus accords. It would be the Hippocratic Oath of being with children.

End of fantasy.

What is it to "be" with children? To be in this world with children. To live both the day to day and the transcendental. Over the last four months, if not the last two years, I have looked at the phenomenon(a) of Pippi Longstocking through every lens that crossed my path; from what does the book tell us about the experience of being a child to what does my relationship with the book mean. Phenomenology to Freudian political theory. Two years ago I operated a home day care with a friend. We called it The Noisy Village(l) and made it our goal to always value "the individual experience of the child." My friend was an artist and I was studying play. The children we looked after were happy and their parents were thrilled. Our own children hated it and we soon became exhausted. But we learned a great deal as have I through this thesis writing process. I have often become
frustrated and felt that I knew nothing. Many times I was sure I had something all figured out only to watch it disappear in an instant. But I have come to see that when I am most comfortable in my 'knowing', I am living my questions(2) - letting them guide me and pull me in the same way my children do. And they've taken me to the most marvelous places. I've come to see that when I'm frustrated I am actually trying to come up with answers and explanations to questions that aren't even my own. In my mind this has come partially from years and years of being in formal learning environments where answering questions correctly and mastering skills is valued more then the processes of inquiry. When I remember to value the process of wondering and asking, my learning becomes meaningful. So how did I get to Pippi? Allow me to tell you.

The Story

She comes to me in the great big Vancouver Public Library - July 1999. My husband's mother is very ill and I go to the library to work. Why am I thinking about my thesis right now? We are far from home - far from our life. But my thesis sticks with me wherever I go. I've been carrying it around for three years and it keeps me company. It is also my nemesis. I'm not certain what I want to say. I've yet to capture it. Make it mine. I want to talk about children, parenting, letting children be, child letting. It occurs to me that I want to let them be like Pippi Longstocking. It would be a pedagogical text. The Annotated Pippi Longstocking Guide to Letting Children Be Free. It's not so far fetched. I love the idea. It stays with me. It will be fun. I tell a friend and she says she has goose bumps. My father-in-law does his best to humour me. I know this is the one. My parents happen to be in Sweden at the time.

I think about the language around caring for children and wonder what it means.

Care: worry, anxiety; serious attention; heed, caution, pains; a protection, charge
Be: exist, live; occur take place
Benevolent: wishing to do good; actively friendly and helpful; charitable
For: in the interest or to the benefit of; intended to go to
Let: allow to, not prevent or forbid; allow to enter; award (a contract for work); let be - not interfere with, attend to; let down - lower; fail to support or satisfy; let down gently - avoid humiliating abruptly; let go - release, set at liberty; lose or relinquish one's hold; let oneself go - give way to enthusiasm, impulse
Of: expressing relation; objective relation (love of music); in search of peace
Rear: the back part of anything; space behind or position at the back of anything; the buttocks; a ranking below
Bring up and educate (children), breed and care for (animals); set upright; build; hold upwards; extend to a great height
Tend: be apt or inclined; serve, conduce; be moving, be directed, hold a course
Take care of, look after (esp. an invalid, animals); wait on
Tender: easily touched or wounded, susceptible to pain or grief (a tender heart; a tender conscience); easily hurt, sensitive; delicate, fragile; loving, affectionate, fond (tender
parents; wrote tender verses); requiring tact or careful handling; early, immature, solicitous, concerned (Concise Oxford Dictionary)

I find much information on the author. She was born in 1907 and is still alive. She wrote over 35 books. I love discovering hidden worlds - worlds that I did not know existed. I am fascinated by the worlds within worlds of our lives. I walk down the street and sense there are worlds around me - unknowns - peoples lives, hobbies, clubs - meeting places, sub-cultures - virtual realities. Windows, doors and mirrors. Full of meaning. There is a Pippi Longstocking culture. I read about Astrid Lindgren's childhood - endless freedom, great joy. Everything Pippi represents. I could not ask for more.

"Pippi Langstrump" was the name that Lindgren's daughter suggested for the character of a bed time story. She was nine and sick with pneumonia. My mother-in-law has lost a lung and may die. There is much waiting and we get a new story every day. We stay with a friend in a one bedroom apartment. My daughter is four and we pass the time watching Out of Africa on a friend's TV. We laugh at the same parts every time and she learns to recognize Mozart's clarinet concerto. The Kennedy plane crash distracts us for a few days and we catch up with old friends. I poke around used book stores for copies of Pippi but otherwise am pre-occupied with life.

Over a year passes. My mother-in-law recovers and then dies. We struggle to make ends meet. I work in a day care where the staff are tired and misuse time outs without realizing it. The children have to stay outside even if they are unhappy and their day revolves around our breaks. I pick the kids up when they are cold and try to redirect their energy but within a week I am bored. The only person who seems to appreciate the children is the director and she is very busy, obviously over skilled. I know that worse places exist. My friend calls and proposes our own day care. Her fourth child is three weeks old and they are broke. We would renovate part of their huge studio space and it is such an opportunity that I foolishly agree.

My thesis is definitely on hold again but I look at it as research. We pretend that I can work on it while the children nap. My own daughter hasn't napped in over six months. She hates having to wake up in the morning to go and I tell her that when I was her age my mom had a job and I went to day care. She seems to understand. My friend and I mentor each other and we laugh a lot - mostly at ourselves. Parents love that there are two of us and there is something deeply comforting about sharing the company of another woman all day. But our time is not well spent. My own house falls apart and her family eats a lot of pizza. I fold her laundry when I can and she sneaks me cookies while I rock crying two year olds to sleep. My own daughter hates having to be quiet at nap time. We have children from 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Monday to Thursday and we don't see our other friends. Parents sometimes come early and my friend is barely dressed. She is up at night with her baby and then comes down early to clean "the space." We usually have to ask to be paid.

Our mistake is in getting dressed.
Six months later I am pregnant and commit myself to finishing. I keep a job as a front desk clerk at Queen's University where I should be able to write. My husband works on a renovation at the local health food store and I work from four until midnight. Once a week I go in at midnight and stay until eight in the morning. I give these shifts away when I can afford to fearing I will resent the loss of sleep after the baby comes. I read a lot but am distracted with lending out videos and dealing with lock outs. While some students are sweet, many are rude. On weekends I work at a desk in my neighbours spare bedroom.

I struggle with the notion of play as the "essence" of childhood. I read books and articles but nothing seems to come together. All I want to do is communicate how important it is to let children play - that their life be about nothing but play, just like Pippi. This takes me from neurobiology and Piaget to people who talk about children outdoors, people who research children's sense of place and geography, how cars have dramatically affected the autonomy of children. I find psychologists who speak reverently of wonder in their introductions but with apology become worldly in their analysis. I stumble across Edith Cobb's, Ecology of the Imagination. Her husband was a botanist and she spent her whole life mapping a relationship between the imagination of the child and human evolution. Hers was an independent study.

I do not even read Pippi. I write about how the characters have complete freedom. They have freedom of "space and place." I believe that any child could be like Pippi. That it is only our anxiety - about safety and risk, computer literacy and self-esteem - that is keeping our children from their inherent Pippiness. Leah McLaren writes an article in the Globe and Mail called Free Billy. It profiles parents who have decided to let their kids have their own life - no soccer or piano lessons and ten year olds ride the subway. The movement is called "under parenting" and she mentions the brother of a girl I knew once from Calgary. He and his wife "under parent." My husband and I use Free Billy as our referent for talking about my ideas. We always go back to Free Billy. I know Leah McLaren does not have children and I wonder how she found these people.

The children's museum is the antithesis of Free Billy. We've visited the Brooklyn, the Chicago and Toronto. Some friends spent a year looking at the idea for one in Kingston. Before that I'd never heard of them. The idea is very old but recently popular - changing the nature of museums, letting kids touch. Most are interactive and many play based. I find the whole concept obtuse. Like Birthday parties at MacDonalds. They are play centers where children become the exhibit and parents watch. You follow your child around while they pull and tug and spin, dress up and play veterinary doctor - by themselves. There is zero danger and little solitude. The Toronto Children's Museum is housed in the old Planetarium next to the ROM. I always liked it there.

"Pippi is a Thing-finder." She sets out to find things and discovers what they are. At The Noisy Village we make collection containers. Plastic containers that the pasta shop gives us and we put handles through the lids. The children will take their container on all our
outings and collect things they find. We struggle over whether to let them pick up 
garbage. I say pick up anything - how could one be expected to stop oneself. But people 
get scared. My daughter and I walk in a vacant lot by the water and I show her condoms. 
If she sees a needle she must stop herself from touching it. I show her what they look 
like. If she is with a friend and they find one she must stop the friend. But she must not 
tell other children about them. The politics of awareness.

My daughter is excited about the baby coming and takes delight in the preparations. She 
is sure it will be a girl and my instinct is to prepare her for disappointment. Instead I 
decide to stand by her story. I suspect it's a boy and don't want to be right to her wrong. 
She is five and a half and with obscure explanations starts peeing all over the house. This 
seems understandable but troubling all the same. It signals unease. I come home one 
night and my husband has told her a story of Pee Fairies. Nuisance fairies that start 
hanging around wherever there is about to be a new baby - their job is to make babies pee 
but in the mean time they become mischievous. Whispering in children's ears and 
tickling tummies in the middle of the night - all to make little children accidentally pee. 
She is thrilled and the mystery ends. "I just felt a Pee Fairy," she yells as she runs to the 
bathroom.

I abruptly realize that I will not finish before spring. I wanted so desperately to keep this 
project simple - neat and concise. I've done what I said I wouldn't do - I let it get beyond 
myself and I feel no further ahead. I have my baby and he is wonderful, I do what I can 
throughout the summer. My mother comes for a weekend when I am alone with the baby. 
She takes him for walks and I write for two days straight. I tell her how confused I am 
and try to explain what I want to do. She walks me through my thoughts and it seems 
both simple and inane again. Like a project in grade four. My husband says he'll colour 
the title page.

I work when I can, piecing child care together here and there for short hours at a time. 
Finally we decide that I will go and stay with friends for two weeks while my husband 
and daughter visit family. They will help with the baby and I will just write. "Just write 
everything you want to say." My husband and I talk and talk - we have Thesis meetings 
in the bathroom. We cover new ground, I am ready. I get to my friends, they have 
prepared a desk for me and we plug in the computer immediately. My husband sends me 
with our Social Sciences Dictionary and a friend passes along his Oxford Companion to 
Philosophy. I wonder if there is a "philosophy of childhood" and go on-line. I read 
Heidegger and Husserl. Could Pippi Longstocking be an existentialist text? I panic that 
everything I want to do has already been done in Swedish and I call a friend to see if she 
knows anyone who speaks the language. She knows I have a deadline and says I should 
focus on writing. Acknowledge this may be the case but do not worry.

I call my father one night and he tells me that Astrid Lindgren has died. I finally start 
reading the books. I spend almost two weeks just reading Pippi, underlining and making 
notes. Something tells me to look up "poetry" in the OCP. "A representation or 
expression of an alternative world, in celebration, praise or mourning. Poetry can
transform the emotions of everyday life." Heidegger says poetry has a special relation to being and truth. I feel like I've come along way but I have not touched the computer.

I pick my husband and daughter up at the airport and tell them I need a week at the library. Twelve hours a day, they can bring the baby to nurse anytime. My husband can take another week off work and so I start. Like the second stage of labour I set up camp with my thesis. I carry my laptop home every night in an LCBO bag. I read for two more days and then write. I write and write and write and in between I write my own stories. My daughter is happy with the page counts. I love this time. I hate leaving at night. The time passes quickly. I email a friend that I would be happy never seeing my children again. She is on sabbatical in the UK. and says my enthusiasm will be reflected in the end product. And that yes, writing can be an oasis in "the hurly burly of life." She has seen through me.

After a week I feel that I am getting closer but am still only dancing with ideas. I thoroughly enjoy the work but at the end of each day I am unsure of what I am trying to say. As I walk home in the dark my thoughts organize themselves and I write them down as soon as I get in the door. I tell this to a friend and she tells me all the great philosophers did their thinking while they walked. I start taking a cab home. One night the driver picks me up in front of Watson Hall and asks if I am studying English or History. I tell him I'm just borrowing space in the philosophy department and he tells me he is reading Hume in the bathroom. A week later I run into him with a group of home schoolers at the climbing gym. His daughter has a rough morning and he seems embarrassed.

I realize that every day I am writing a new thesis and I start to loose my nerve. I ask a friend who is a psychiatrist for a psychological profile of Pippi. I have spent weeks "constructing" diagrams to show how Pippi works to expose social conventions for what they are - constraints against human nature. That Pippi is as "rich as a troll" allows her to be independent of adults and thus have complete "psycho social" autonomy. Her world is a Marxist utopia - she requires no ties to the means of production. She is completely free. She is Emile. My friend sees this but reminds me that we are a social being - that social convention exists across all species. "Pippi is not a hermit. She simply exposes the difference between community and dogma. Hubris. A true individual is aware of the community they are in. The knowing subject knows they do not know - has a true interest in the well being of the other. Pippi is a Bhudda."

I say yes but Tommy and Annika get anxious and worried, they are fearful - the obvious result of having to conform. My friend says they are normal. "We can see they have not been mollycoddled and this is good. Normal existential angst." That Pippi lets them be anxious he also likes. "Pippi operates within the realm of the good." She walks with Plato and probably Kant. She is an archetypal Fool. My friend is impressed with the text. "It's a pregnant text." Rich with meaning and open to very complex interpretation. Do I want him to go deeper? I'm barely hanging on now. I feel he has confirmed for me that
there is wisdom in Pippi and I am elated. But he has destroyed my map. I have no idea what I will talk about. I don't know what I know.

I have only two more days and except for my own stories, everything I've written seems senseless. I wonder if there might be beauty in giving up. I am totally afraid. I tell my husband and he tells me to just write it down. Talk about Free Billy, talk about everything. Talk about you. And I realize that I have absolutely no other choice. I have absolutely no other choice but to tell my story. The story of Pippi and wondering and freedom and hope. Of looking to the future and of seeing the past more clearly.

And so I relax - I relax into my thesis. I stop fighting and let it become a part of me. I think about Astrid Lindgren and how she wrote Pippi while in bed with a broken ankle. How it was a story for her daughter when she was sick. I read about the healing properties of traditional story telling. How the Indonesian puppet show creates a spiritual space where children learn and adults are reminded of life's lessons. The shows are visual representation of inner thoughts and feelings - conflict between what the individual wants to do and feels he ought to do. Within the stories one can ask questions and seek meaning in one's life. The Navajo Coyote stories teach people how to behave but are also a medicine intended to knit things together after disorders have left a wound. Dis-ease.

How do our stories inform us and help us imagine new ways of being. I think about Astrid Lindgren leaving home at eighteen to have a baby. The story always jumps from her glorious childhood, the unusual affection and respect that her parents had for each other and the joys of learning to read and write - to baby. Without explanation. This detail of her biography is omitted in most literature for children. She went to Stockholm and the baby was raised by a foster family in Denmark until she could support herself. She meets her husband while working for the Royal Automotive Society and they have a daughter. During my research I read Swedish words and pronounce them out loud. I casually pretend I can speak the language.

What compels us to write stories? To make up a story and write it down - to give it life. To make ourselves public. To ask for an audience. I wonder if storytelling is a feminine science. An exploration of shared consciousness. The knowledge of "we-ing" - the symbolic representation of a shared experience in the world. I think of the movie Life is Beautiful, where the father, his family imprisoned during the holocaust, devotes himself to preserving his son's childhood. He creates a world within their world where he and his son are on the same side of a game earning points for staying in character and following the rules. He is a fighting clown - I think he is also the Fool. He is Pippi. The storyteller within a story that creates magic.

A friend reads Pippi Longstocking to her son. He is seven. He has probably heard it before but it is new. She reads it very slowly - soaks it up with him. Thinks of me. He does not read. They get to the first chapter of the third book and the "fine gentlemen" announces children are the worst things he knows. My friend knows she has never read this part to her other children - they were probably younger - maybe she read, "children
make me nervous." She made the story her own to protect her children. "I think so too" says Pippi. "All children ought to be shot." The little boy's eyes open wide. He snuggles into his mother - rubs his hands together and says, "This is going to be good."

My daughter comes with me to the Philosophy department on my last Saturday of work. She brings an old picture book copy of *Robinson Crusoe*. I do not tell her this was one of Astrid Lindgren's favorite's. I read about Ruth Sawyer. She is a story within a story. An overlooked pioneer in the world of children's literature. A story teller, a story writer, and a writer about stories - she influenced publishing and librarianship - was a link between the oral and print tradition at the turn of the century. I read that she "combined child-rearing with a career but intimately incorporated child-rearing into her career." The essay is hard to read and I don't finish it. My daughter asks how I write. Do I "just write what I think - look in a book and then write some more?" She acts out her question with her whole body. I tell her that at first I read a lot but now I am telling a story and yes, I just write. She is satisfied.

I wonder why Pippi wants to be a pirate? I wonder if I am a pirate. If "being" in this world has become an act of piracy. My daughter tells me we're not normal. We eat differently from other people. She says it's good but hard. She and a friend discuss eating at each other's house while we drive in the car one day. The little boy's sister sits in the middle and says nothing. She is always watching. This little boy and my daughter go back and forth - what she likes to eat at his house, what he likes to eat at her house, what she doesn't like at his house, what he doesn't like at her house, what she doesn't like at her house, what he doesn't like at his house, what she does like at her house, what he does like at his house. They are both normal. They live on the same block. He has just moved from Columbia. Their worlds are both the same and a world apart. They love each other.

I think about The Pippi Principle and wonder how ideas can seem so perfectly simple and utterly complex at the same time. I wonder what Pippi sees in the light of the candle and I wonder how I got to this point. I wonder about stories and voices and listening. And about relationships. Our many, many relationships. And I realize that while The Pippi Principle is a dream what Pippi means to me is not.

We read a poster on an office door. Someone has cut out an image of The Thinker and above the head pasted a balloon which reads, "Is there truly such thing as being a mensch?" I cannot explain to my daughter what a mensch is, though the word is not unfamiliar. We later meet the man whose door it is and ask him to explain the word. "I don't know." he says. "That's what I'm trying to figure out." I ask if this is really part of his work and he says yes, in a small way - that the idea of a mensch has German origins but is also a Yiddish expression referring to a man who always does the right thing. And so he humbly says, that in answering the question - what is a mensch - he believes one can know what it is to be ethical. I tell him how much I like his concept - that I am studying *Pippi Longstocking* - that we have something in common. I don't know if he
gets it. But in an instant I realize that he has changed everything for me. His work is an on going dialogue with a question. There is beauty in the question.

The philosopher's son is four. He has come from Toronto to see his father's office for the first time. They offer my daughter a vegan chocolate pudding which she inhales but the four year old just stands at my desk, his pudding in front of him. His eyes are filled with the world. I continue working, my daughter eats, and the philosopher, very conscious of his son being dreamy and not eating, asks him what his intentions are. "I'm going to eat it," says the little boy thoughtfully. I can see that he is so busy eating with his eyes that to do two things at once would be impossible - like eating and drinking at the same time. He doesn't look around, he doesn't touch anything, or ask questions. He just looks out the tall window behind my desk and at me and my daughter and smiles with absolute joy - for nothing more then being.

Some More Stories

Astrid Lindgren do you love me?
My dancing eyes, my beautiful spirit.
All my sorrow and my shame.
Sweet thanks to you for letting me be.

- I wonder if it is only when there's not a lot of room to move that we adopt the idea of appropriate place -we find our place and stick to it - like a game of musical chairs. I come home and my daughter tells me she's rearranged the ledge over the bathroom sink. Did I notice she asks? Go look at it, she demands. I tell her I'll see it in the morning. I know I won't like it. It's mine to arrange. Without consciously setting out to find things to organize the act of sorting, clearing and rearranging - pleases me. My daughter has always arranged. Tiny collections of objects, on a table, in a basket, in a bag - I could re-enter a room every hour and notice what most would probably not - that she had been rearranging. But she also colonizes. She takes over space with her personal objects. She will rearrange a mutual space such as the bathroom ledge and claim a portion (by no means an unjust portion) of it for her own. Last night this included a general rearrangement so that when I went to reach for a wash cloth with the baby hanging off my hip they were not where they have lived since a week before his birth 9 months ago, the addition of her own mirror at the end of the ledge closest to the toilet and a hand towel hanging from the clip that holds the shade on a brand new light fixture, the strength of which has yet to be determined. What possesses her to do this I wonder. To have an aesthetic opinion.

- I decided that radio news was not appropriate for children to hear. How can it be right for them to have stories of murder and war passing through their 'space' every hour - stories that have nothing to do with them, that aren't about people they know, that come from places they have no sense of, acts they have no concept of? I find that we are slow
to question what is without invitation filling our personal space - engaging our senses.
Three years ago a clerk at a bus terminal somewhere in Upper New York State thought I was nuts for asking that there be a space for us to 'experience' our two hour wait without having to watch CNN on 15 different televisions and its incessant coverage of teenagers killing each other somewhere in Colorado. "No we can't change the channel," she says - it's just there - like at the airport - but why don't you take your child into the video game room. "Weren't those teenagers into video games?" my husband asks. He finds us a seat at the end of the terminal and covertly turns one of the televisions off.

We don't have to give it our ears, I decide. It's not going to fill the mind and imagination of my child - the way Watergate did one summer when I was very small. Watergate, Watergate, Watergate - every hour. What is a Watergate - how could it be so serious and consume every one's attention so. Cold war (why was it so cold), rape, nuclear waste - I "heard" it all from the radio and nobody asked what I'd heard - and I didn't think to ask anything - nobody else was. My daughter like listening to the news but "we're turning it off," I say - they weren't thinking about children when they decided what to talk about on the news today. They're just stories - stories some one else decides we might be interested in - they're not about anyone we know. Turn it off please. And she does. She's believed my story. We shouldn't listen. And she'll help protect us.

I stand visiting with my midwife at the market. Her husband joins us and he delivers the news. We are stunned and I tell them I have to take my children and go home. I am oblivious to the fact that their own children are at school. My daughter is confused and I tell her that something has happened in New York - very serious, very sad. Many people have been hurt - probably killed. It sounds like somebody or some people wanted to intentionally hurt a lot of people. That's all we know - we can't know more because we're not there to see with our own eyes. But people are going to start hearing about it very soon and they're going to want to talk about it - and because they also aren't there - they're going to make up stories - and I'd rather not hear all the stories - because stories are very personal and tell us as much about the story teller as about the subject of the story and so we're going home. And Papa and I will try to get as much information as we can and we'll try to figure out what has happened together. So for now, we're going home. I'm crying - let's think about the people that are hurt and our friends in New York - they might be scared. When we get home I call a friend in California - I've seen her husband peek at the television screen in the morning from behind a pretty piece of fabric - before their children are up. I picture him seeing the news. Don't look I say - we don't anymore she says. I tell her what is going on three hours away from her. I needed to protect her as I had been protected. I hope I did the right thing in calling.

A new friend drops by - she's never been in my house. She's not heard the news. She has just moved back to Canada from Columbia - she is not afraid of anything. Her husband is in a bad mood at home - she does not want to be there - I keep her with me all day - our children play - we discuss our marriages - I don't let her out of my site - she holds my baby - I feed her so she won't leave - I feel guilty that she does not realize the magnitude
of what is going on - I pass on information as I get it from my father who keeps calling - he knows I don't listen to the news.

Five months later - I don't get to the radio fast enough and we hear that there is an investigation on a pig farm - fifty women dead. My daughter pretends to have heard nothing. I decide I am doing my daughter no favour by keeping her within my story and we listen to the news during the next hour. I tell her this is precisely the type of news story that makes me not want for her to hear it. Fifty dead women from Vancouver's lower east side and a pig farm. What kind of story is that? They've left out details, I say, and it bothers me that we can't ask them. I try to explain. "Vancouver's lower east side." That's like a code - a secret message. Unless you know the secret language you won't know what that means. I tell her what it means. If they won't give us all the parts of the story then our imaginations make up the rest - 50 women dead does not mean 50 mothers of your neighbourhood friends dead. If we feel like our imagination is filling in parts of the story we have a responsibility to ask for help with the details. But that's my story too. I've probably told her too much.

- It's early morning and the baby nurses while I slowly wake up. He bites me. His baby violence has the immediate effect of capturing my full and complete attention. It pulls me out of my own thinking/story/thesis and back to our mutual world. It tells me he is present. That he is a part of me. That I am connected.

Walking to campus I am reminded of 'the' dream and wonder if I will always remember it.

Weeks before the birth of my daughter I dream that I have had the baby but that when you have a baby there is about a 48 hour period before the baby gets hungry - before the baby needs you. So during this time I run around frantically doing errands and last minute 'things' - effectively wrapping up my life. I finally come home and everyone looks at me and says, your time is up, the baby is hungry, you must look after it now.

My daughter breast fed until she was 5 years old. Friends would see me getting frustrated by the intensity of our nursing relationship and ask why I did it. I felt it was the only way she could secure my attention. That if she was not attached by our nursing tether, I would become so busy and distracted with my own 'activity' that she'd lose me. It forced me to stop - she was nursing for her life.

END NOTES

(1) The name was inspired by another of Astrid Lindgren's books, The Children of Noisy Village.

(2) "Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves like locked rooms or books that are written in a foreign tongue. The point is to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually without noticing it, live your way some distant day into the answers." R. M. Rilke
I love the story of Pippi Longstocking. Within the text I apprehend an image or feeling for the world of children that I find unique and utterly wise. The image of childhood that Astrid Lindgren has created through the character of Pippi Longstocking speaks to me and thus my decision wise, or unwise, to attempt demonstrating it to others - all the while ambitiously hopeful of convincing readers that Pippi Longstocking might serve as a model on some small level for parenting and educating. (At the very least my "imagination" is in keeping with Pippi!) Attempting to accurately comprehend what effects this likeness so that I may communicate it to others has been a challenging task to say the least. I have learned a great deal and found new appreciation for the integrity of a question. The work itself has been tremendously poetic as I stumble along sometimes blind and sometimes awake to the tenets of thesis writing.

In Chapter Two of *Pippi Longstocking*, Pippi introduces Tommy and Annika to Thing-Finding. The concept of Thing-finding is that you search until you discover. There is joy in the searching and joy in the finding and what you discover is determined as much by you as by the thing itself. If you find a rusty old can and put cookies in it, it becomes a "delightful Jar with Cookies." If you decide to not put cookies in it you have a "Jar without Cookies." Determining how to speak about *Pippi Longstocking* has been a lesson in Thing-finding, and as such, a lesson in life. That Pippi speaks to the lessons of life will, I hope, become obvious. The task of this chapter is circumscribed by naming the thing; naming that by which Astrid Lindgren has composed her image of childhood; noticing the words and phrases with which she describes the children and the voices with which Pippi and the children express themselves. It is my hope that by paying attention to these narrative details as they contribute to Lindgren's image of childhood, a more complete appreciation of the story's endurance and appeal will emerge.

What is the image of childhood rendered by Astrid Lindgren within the Pippi stories? What is at the heart of this image? Essentially this question asks, what is the phenomenological experience of childhood as generated within the narrative, through the character of Pippi Longstocking and or her friends. I want to be clear that I am not interested in Pippi's subjective relationship with these concepts, if in fact she has such a relationship and for the most part she doesn't. She makes little reference to friendship, imagination or wonder and in fact makes almost no reference to being a child. What I am interested in is the rendering of these concepts, within the narrative, by Lindgren, for the reader.

Through a textual analysis I will attempt to espy the particulars of Lindgren's representation of childhood as depicted through the characters of Pippi Longstocking and her friends. Depending on my interests and intentions, this could be a very complex task making rigorous use of philosophy (existentialism, ethics, phenomenology) and even
psychoanalytic theory. My intention with this thesis, however, is to make what might be considered the first step in such a synthesis - to point out that in extracting and naming the textual referents to the "child experience" of Pippi and her friends I can begin to appreciate the textural richness of that image within what is otherwise a relatively simple narrative, if not an extremely pithy one. Judging by the broad and lasting appeal of the story and the respect and dearness with which Lindgren has always been regarded, I think it is worth considering the ways in which the text is full, all the time impressing a particular image of childhood. Is the image realistic? Of course not. Can it inform contemporary conceptions of childhood? Perhaps. I must acknowledge that childhood is not for all children a positive experience and I don't think Lindgren would want to pretend otherwise; and in fact she introduces less then happy characters including mean and unhappy children into the story.

Is it possible to generate an explanation for why the story of Pippi Longstocking has appealed to so many people for so many years? It may be possible. Can I discern from the text what is pertinent to my experience of the story? Yes. Can I know with certainty what it is about Pippi Longstocking that impresses others? I'm not sure. This is potentially tricky for many reasons. Conceptions are uniquely constructed by individuals, however, common experiences of perception can be proven and there does seem to be a common positive response to *Pippi Longstocking*. This response might be generated by the humour in the story or it might be generated by the characters themselves; there are of course any number of possible individual responses to several different elements of the story. I suggest, however, that the appeal might possibly be explained as a response to the image of childhood that Lindgren has created within the text.

This analysis has been structured around three passages, each of which forms the respective heart of a particular chapter. "Pippi is a Thing Finder" from *Pippi Longstocking*, "Pippi Goes on a School Outing" from *Pippi Goes Aboard*, and "Pippi Longstocking Doesn't Want to Grow Up" from *Pippi in the South Seas*. Isolating these three passages provides both a starting point and a way to delineate the analysis. I have chosen these particular passages for several reasons, largely having to do with my personal aesthetic - they are passages that I like. I like them for what they reveal about childhood as experienced by Pippi Longstocking and her friends and in particular what for what they reveal about the relationship between the three children. They also happen to be passages that are not often referred to or examined closely in the literature. They are all "in between" chapters if you will and in this sense speak to the questions of my thesis and hopefully to the character of Pippi Longstocking herself.

While it would in some ways be interesting to examine the complete text from this perspective it would be exhausting and is not necessary for the purposes of this thesis. In summary then, my primary thesis question asks, what constitutes Lindgren's image of childhood within the text of *Pippi Longstocking*. I want to notice and describe the image of childhood as it is informed by particular words, phrases, descriptions and actions within the narrative itself. This exercise of "noticing" contains an element of self-reflexivity in that this is what the character of Pippi works to do through her questions,
stories and tall tales. That her character is sophisticated enough to do this may well indicate, in response to my second research question; in what ways does Pippi defer from the image of childhood, that Pippi is, in fact, not a child. If in fact she is not a child, in what capacity does she act? All these questions will be sufficiently illuminated within the three chosen passages although references to other parts of the books will be given. The ways in which literary qualities of Lindgren's story can metaphorically or symbolically contribute to an appreciation and understanding of childhood that reaches beyond the text will be an ongoing secondary level of inquiry. Throughout this process the reader can reflect as to whether or not a narrative image of childhood as presented in a text such as *Pippi Longstocking* can positively inform personal conceptions of childhood and thereby influence parenting and educating practices. Is the impression of childhood rendered by *Pippi Longstocking* great enough or significant enough to have value beyond its literary appeal?

For each passage I will introduce the story and suggest particular things to notice about Pippi and the children while reading. I will also provide specific questions to keep in mind while reading although I may or may not answer them specifically in my analysis. I will then give the complete text within which I have italicized particular words or phrases to notice and reflect upon. In most instances they are verbs, adjectives or adverbs used by the children, or that describe the children and that I feel contribute significantly to the over all experience of the passage. Following the passage I will discuss what I have isolated as the particular narrative elements that contribute to the overall impression of the passage and thus the image of childhood within *Pippi Longstocking*. If from this synthesis, emerges new insight into the phenomenon of Pippi Longstocking I will have accomplished something.
PASSAGES AND REFLECTIONS FROM “PIPI IS A THING-FINDER”

In this second chapter of *Pippi Longstocking*, the full title of which is, "Pippi is a Thing Finder and Gets Into a Fight," Tommy and Annika have risen an hour early in their excitement to go and see Pippi whom they have just met the day before. "We may stay all day," Annika tells her mother, demonstrating the sanctioned freedom with which Tommy and Annika live. This morning Pippi is busy making *pepparkakor* - a "kind of Swedish cooky." She has made, we are told, an "enormous" amount of dough and rolled it out on the kitchen floor. (One can imagine why the Pippi stories were so well received as feature films - they are in my opinion visually delightful.)

While reading the following passage remember that the children have essentially just met. Notice the rapport of the children and the ways in which Pippi makes it unique. Notice the fluidity with which Pippi moves between play and work and ask whether she differentiates between the two. Do Tommy and Annika differentiate between the two? Notice what strikes Tommy and Annika as unique about Pippi and pay attention to what we find unique about Pippi but that the children do not apprehend as such. Notice the intensity with which Pippi does everything. Do Tommy and Annika demonstrate comparable intensity? Also notice how the children watch Pippi both for pleasure and for cues to their own behavior. Does she consciously set out to captivate them or are they simply enamored by her presence? If in reality children demonstrate this phenomenon, becoming enchanted with the activity of those around them, in what ways as parents and educators are we respectful and disrespectful of it? Finally, consider the ways in which, as parents and educators we both encourage and discourage thing-finding.

Selected from "Pippi is a Thing Finder," *Pippi Longstocking*, pp.27-32

"Because," said Pippi to her little monkey, "what earthly use is a baking board when one plans to make at least five hundred cookies?"

And there she lay on the floor, cutting out cooky hearts for dear life.

"Stop climbing around in the dough, Mr. Nilson," she said crossly just as the doorbell rang.

Pippi ran and opened the door. She was white as a miller from top to toe, and when she shook hands heartily with Tommy and Annika a whole cloud of flour blew over them.

"So nice you called," she said and shook her apron - so there came another cloud of flour. Tommy and Annika got so much in their throats that they could not help coughing.

"What are you doing?" asked Tommy.

"Well, if I say that I'm sweeping the chimney, you won't believe me, you're so clever," said Pippi. "Fact is, I'm baking. But I'll soon be done. You can sit on the woodbox for a while."

*Pippi could work fast, she could.* Tommy and Annika sat and watched how she went through the dough, how she threw the cookies into the cooky pans, and swung the pans into the oven. *They thought it was as good as a circus.*
"Done!" said Pippi at last and shut the oven door on the last pans with a bang.

At this, Tommy asks what "they" are going to do now. Pippi answers, she doesn't know what "he" is going to do but she can't lay around and be lazy.

I am a Thing-finder, and when you're a Thing-finder you don't have a minute to spare."

"What did you say you are?" asked Annika.

"A Thing-finder."

"What's that?" asked Tommy.

"Somebody who hunts for things, naturally. What else could it be?" said Pippi as she swept all the flour left on the floor into a little pile.

"The whole world is full of things, and somebody has to look for them. And that's just what a Thing-finder does," she finished.

"What kind of things?" asked Annika.

"Oh, all kinds," said Pippi. "Lumps of gold, ostrich feathers, dead rats, candy snapcrackers and little tiny screws, and things like that."

Tommy and Annika thought it sounded as if it would be fun and wanted very much to be Thing-finders too, although Tommy did say he hoped he'd find a lump of gold and not a little tiny screw.

"We shall see what we shall see," said Pippi.

"One always finds something. But we've got to hurry up and get going so that other Thing-finders don't pick up all the lumps of gold around here before we get them."...

Tommy and Annika looked at Pippi to see just how a Thing-finder acted. Pippi ran from one side of the road to the other, shaded her eyes with her hand, and hunted and hunted. Sometimes she crawled about on her hands and knees, stuck her hands in between the pickets of a fence, and then said in a disappointed tone, "Oh, dear! I was sure I saw a lump of gold."

Annika asks Pippi if they can really take everything they find and Pippi replies, yes, everything they find lying on the ground. Presently they come upon an old man who lies sleeping on the grass outside his cottage.

"There," said Pippi, "that man is lying on the ground and we have found him. We'll take him!"

Tommy and Annika were utterly terrified.

"No, no Pippi, we can't take an old gentleman. We couldn't possibly," said Tommy. "Anyway, whatever would we do with him?"

"What would we do with him? Oh, there are plenty of things we could do with him. We could keep him in a little rabbit hutch instead of a rabbit and feed him on dandelions. But if you don't want to, I don't care. Though it does bother me to think that some other Thing-finder may come along and grab him."
They went on. Suddenly Pippi gave a terrific yell. "Well, I never saw the like," she cried and picked up from the grass a rusty old tin can. "What a find! What a find! Cans - that's something you can never have too many of."

Tommy looks at the can and is doubtful. He asks Pippi what it can be used for.

"Oh, you can use it in all sorts of ways," said Pippi. "One way is to put cookies in it. Then it becomes a delightful Jar with Cookies. Another way is not to put cookies in it. Then it becomes a Jar without Cookies. That certainly isn't quite so delightful, but still that's good too."

She examined the can, which was indeed rusty and had a hole in the bottom.

"It looks almost as if this were a Jar without Cookies," she said thoughtfully. "But you can put it over your head and pretend that it is midnight."

And that is just what she did. With the can on her head she wandered around the block like a little metal tower and never stopped until she stumbled over a low wire fence and fell flat on her stomach. There was a big crash when the tin can hit the ground.

Pippi exclaims that if she hadn't had the can on her head, she'd have fallen flat on her face and been hurt, thus proving its usefulness. Annika responds by telling her that if she hadn't had the can on her head, she wouldn't have fallen to start with.

Before [Annika] had finished speaking there was another triumphant cry from Pippi, who was holding up an empty spool of thread.

"This seems to be my lucky day," she said. "Such a sweet, sweet little spool to blow soap bubbles with or to hang around my neck for a necklace. I'll go home and make one this very minute (Pippi Longstocking, p26-32)."

At this the children are interrupted by a boy rushing out of an open gate belonging to one of the nearby cottages as he is chased by a group of older boys. My analysis of the above passage will be broken into four parts, each pertaining to a specifically discerned dimension of the text:

Enthusiasm, Dearness and Intensity of Experience, Work and Play

Kinship, Children as a Captive Audience, Modeling

Thing-finding; Existential Curiosity and Intellect

Gifts; What Pippi Longstocking has to Offer

Enthusiasm, Dearness and Intensity of Experience, Work and Play

What better place to start an analysis of Astrid Lindgren's rendering of the experience of childhood in Pippi Longstocking then here. "Pippi is a Thing-finder" conveys the enthusiasm and intensity with which Pippi Longstocking goes about her work. Or is it play? She doesn't seem to differentiate between the two and as the saying goes; she makes much work out of play and much play out of work. The reader can just imagine
Pippi lying on the floor, "cutting out cooky hearts for dear life." What does this expression mean and what does it reveal about the way Pippi does things? To do something for dear life implies one does it with a quality of attention relative to the value of one's life. Pippi is cutting out hearts as if her life depended on it. This expression might also imply a quality of joyousness to the work. Pippi demonstrates similar enthusiasm for household chores in Chapter Six of the same book when she scrubs the floor by strapping two scrub brushes to her feet and skates over the floor like a "skating princess" (pp. 76-78). That work is considered separate from play is very much a part of western culture but it is interesting to notice that children are not drawn to making such distinctions on their own. My father tells a similar story of being twelve years old and once a week having to wash the wooden floors of a bakery where his mother worked. The floors would be covered in flour and it was a huge job but once he opened the back doors and splashed some water around he would have a ball, running and sliding, all the time getting the job done.

Along with enthusiasm, intensity, dearness and joy, I sense the great freedom with which Pippi goes about her chores. She is clearly not compelled to abide by the conventions of baking and floor washing, even if she were aware of them in which case I might more accurately describe her as ingenious. Regardless of the method, Pippi seems to make little distinction between work and play and approaches both with veracity.

Moving on to Pippi welcoming Tommy and Annika, Pippi speaks "crossly" to Mr. Nilson, her monkey, for climbing around in the dough, showing us she is capable of being angry. This small detail suggests that Lindgren's image of childhood is not completely that of Pollyanna.

Kinship, Children as a Captive Audience, Modeling

I love the image of the children shaking hands with each other. They are both social and civil, notably in the absence of adults, demonstrating a quality of kinship. That Pippi shakes hands "heartily" means with "good will, appetite or courage for life," says the Oxford Dictionary, the handshake is symbolic of Pippi Longstocking's approach to life. Of course these may also be mannerisms in keeping with Swedish if not European social conventions of the day, for both adults and children, which would be worthy of reflection in the context of contemporary North American culture. How has our culture, in becoming less civilized, (assuming this is the case - I was never taught to shake hands as a child but when I make an effort to do so it makes me very happy) robbed children of any such proclivities, and how do these questions figure in relation to Sweden having long demonstrated progressive social policies with regard to children?

The inherent civility of children would be an interesting area of child psychology to look at, but in this instance it is most important to note the civility of Pippi and the children. Another area of child psychology that would be relevant to Lindgren's expression of childhood is the tendency for children to watch and observe the activity of other children.
and more particularly adults. From an evolutionary perspective it would make sense that children learn by watching others and are therefore inherently compelled to watch the activity of those around them. This tendency is demonstrated in *Pippi Longstocking* on several occasions. Watching Pippi get her cookies into the oven we are told Tommy and Annika, "thought it was as good as a circus." Looking closely at the passage, however, the image is of Pippi working fast, throwing the cookies into the pans and swinging the pans into the ovens. While this indeed is a lively image it is hardly a circus.

We've all seen and been captivated by people who are "quick" but Pippi is not walking the highwire while baking cookies. In other scenes Pippi will stand on her hands while speaking with adults or willingly attempt to defy gravity but not here. The point is not to argue with Tommy and Annika's perception of Pippi but rather to be clear about what renders that perception and to ask how it is informing. They are impressionable; a captive audience of sorts. That Pippi's fast baking is "as good" as a circus means not that she is performing but that Tommy and Annika enjoy watching. It is easy to catch their attention. I know they are clever and curious; they ask many questions and are interested in the answers, they contemplate and reflect, and they are often skeptical (as opposed to Pippi whose questions are primarily rhetorical.)

All of this contributes to the image of childhood presented in *Pippi Longstocking*. The children experience joy in the practical aspects of life, and they observe others both out of interest, and to learn. Tommy and Annika watch Pippi to see what a Thing-finder does and presumably model her behaviour. However, I can think of no examples in the text where Pippi watches others out of interest or to learn. This is interesting to consider with respect to the perceived phenomenon of having to entertain children in order to teach them, the idea being that unless you entertain them you can't keep their attention. An interesting area of research might consider ways in which the attention of children is diminished or increased as a result of human process oriented activity within their presence. Most importantly such research would notice how children's willingness or unconscious desire to watch and model behaviour increases or (we could assume) decreases, when the watching is an enforced behaviour, as would be the case in most traditional school settings.

**Thing-finding; Existential Curiosity and Intellect**

Why is Pippi a Thing-finder and how does it inform our impression of childhood? On the surface Thing-finding is a game or an activity, an ice-breaker of sorts that serves to introduce Tommy and Annika to Pippi's world of play. Tommy and Annika are both curious and clever, able to clarify Pippi's ideas by asking questions, eager to join in and careful to observe exactly how Pippi thing-finds.

Tommy and Annika like the idea very much, however, in saying that he has a preference for finding gold Tommy reveals that he does not completely comprehend the game. The point is to name what you see and to see everything as it is in relationship to you. If you
want to see a jar with cookies, you put cookies in the jar. If you choose not to you have a jar without cookies. Pippi is a gentle role model and says, "We shall see what we shall see." In other words, whatever appears is what you find. Where Thing-finding differs from children just picking things up off the ground is that as a Thing-finder you are conscious of your looking, conscious of your want to find. Once you are conscious of wanting to find, you simply have to notice what appears, and what becomes of what you find, is up to you. Thing-finding is about the relationship between the finder and the find.

Notice that apart from the "rusty old tin can" and the "empty spool of thread" the children do not actually accomplish much Thing-finding. The textual objective seems to be less about how the children classify their finds (and in fact Tommy and Annika find nothing) then that they classify. It might be interesting to ask what determines the significance of things for Thing-finders, is the nature of a thing for example determined by any sort of immediate need that the Thing-finder may have as in the theory of direct realism. There are, however, not enough examples to speculate about this relationship. In recognizing herself as a Thing-finder Pippi is simply drawing attention to her own conscious awareness of the world around her. That consciousness is what Thing-finding represents as is symbolized by Pippi's decision to use the can to "pretend" it is midnight. She uses the can to consciously enable her own imagination.

Similarly, Pippi's anecdote about finding the "very fine wooden leg" where "no human being had ever set foot before" - demonstrating we can assume that in fact someone had been there before, is a metaphor for the notion that what we presume to be the conditions of our environment are not always so. That Pippi finds the leg and sees it as a leg, giving it to a one-legged old man as opposed to consciously determining its referent as she does with the can and the wooden spool, perhaps indicates a lesser self awareness when she was in the jungles of Borneo. That the great wooden leg find was so unexpected and that the best finds usually happen where people live might indicate that self-consciousness is most likely facilitated within communities rather than in isolation.

Pippi horrifies Tommy and Annika with her suggestion of taking the old man they have found sleeping on the lawn. Why does Pippi do this? Is she testing their morality? Is she revealing her own immorality? Perhaps she is exercising their moral response, letting them flex their moral muscle. At the very least she reveals that Tommy and Annika respond personally - the children render responses to objects and ethical dilemmas. Is she allowing the children to discover their own goodness? Perhaps this is simply a lesson in the way that people are treated like things. The saying, "children must be seen and not heard" comes to mind as does the contentious issue of children becoming commodified by corporate interests in schools.

In terms of Pippi's relationship with Tommy and Annika it is significant to note that Pippi does not hesitate to elicit a response of fear or anxiety in the children. While she facilitates the activity of Thing-finding and as will be demonstrated further on, cares for them in an almost parental sort of way, she does not mollycoddle them. (I might also note that Pippi herself is never afraid of anything.) This leads me to ask about the ways
in which as parents we avoid having our children experience fear and anxiety (or danger and risk) or that conversely in classroom and school situations it is easy for a child's anxiety to be completely undetected. These are all complex issues beyond the scope of this thesis however it is notable that Pippi's game of Thing-finding can give rise to such questions.

What Thing-finding really does is to introduce Tommy and Annika and the reader to Pippi's way of being in the world and as such could be a metaphor for looking at the world of children. Thing-finding is about the nature of objects and about object relativity. In making Thing-finding a game, in saying that the "whole world" is full of things and that "somebody" must look for them Pippi is saying that in the finding and the naming we are each figuring our own relation to the world of objects. This, of course, is one of the major existential themes. What am I in relation to that? It is something we all do. Pippi does not claim ownership of Thing-finding or claim that it is a concept particular to her. She doesn't explain Thing-finding and conclude "that's what I do." Rather she says, "that's just what a Thing-finder does." In the following example however Pippi claims to be unique in her discovery.

Chapter Three of *Pippi in the South Seas* is called "Pippi Finds a Spink." In this chapter Pippi "discovers" a new word. She has noticed that the word "spink" has not preconceived meaning attached to it. She knows what it isn't - a vacuum, the top of a flag pole but she doesn't know what it is.

"Just think," said Pippi dreamily, "just think that I have discovered it - I and no one else!"

"What have you discovered?" Tommy and Annika wondered. They weren't in the least bit surprised that Pippi had discovered something, because she was always doing that, but they did want to know what it was she had discovered....

Tommy and Annika thought for a while. Finally Annika said, "But if you don't know what it means, then it can't be of any use."

"That's what bothers me," said Pippi.

"Who really decided in the beginning what all the words should mean?" Tommy wondered.

"Probably a bunch of old professors," said Pippi. "People certainly are peculiar! Just think of the words they make up - 'tub' and 'stopper' and 'string' and words like that. Where they got them from, nobody knows. But a wonderful word like 'spink,' they don't bother to invent. How lucky that I hit on it! And you just bet I'll find out what it means, too."

She fell deep in thought (*Pippi in the South Seas*, pp. 21-22).

Both Thing-finding and "spink" finding display Pippi's propensity to make the world her own. What the reader can take from these examples of Pippi's existentialism is summarized below.
Gifts; What Pippi Longstocking has to Offer

For me, Thing-finding and "spink" finding provoke questions about being with children. In what ways are we conscious in our relationships with children and in what ways are we unconsciously governed by sanctioned conventions of parenting and educating? How often do we consider what constitutes the being of a child and how often do we call upon such reflections in the midst of our parenting and educating relationships both on a personal and a policy level? How are children like objects? How through contemporary norms of parenting and educating, in which learning is considered a commodity for the future but is disguised as play; and play, is sanctioned, organized, and supervised by adults, sometimes in commercial settings; can a child's sense of freedom or their imagination become objectified? How do children situate themselves in relation to such practices? What becomes of their sense of freedom?

It is interesting to ask how this analysis would stand against the notion of freedom and power or wish fulfillment. Pippi Longstocking possesses childlike qualities of enthusiasm and intensity, freedom of movement, a desire to be civil, and she is joyful; all qualities shared by Tommy and Annika. Pippi Longstocking, however, is unique and not childlike in the way she models and facilitates the activity and behavior of Tommy and Annika and that she introduces the concept of Thing-finding, which, we recognize as an existential awareness of object relativity. In this respect, children and adults alike could presumably identify with Pippi Longstocking's desire for truth and knowledge, and with Tommy and Annika's tendency to gravitate towards her.

The second half of the chapter sees Pippi Longstocking defend a little boy from a neighbouring bully. Afterward Pippi prompts Tommy and Annika to look in a hollow log and an old tree stump. They are each surprised and delighted at discovering a notebook and a coral necklace.

Tommy and Annika ran home. Annika held her coral necklace tightly in her hand.

"That certainly was queer," she said. "Tommy, you don't suppose - do you suppose that Pippi had put these things in place beforehand?"

"You never can tell," said Tommy. "You just never can tell about anything when it comes to Pippi(Pippi Longstocking p.39)."

And so Tommy and Annika are going to be very cautious when it comes to their friendship with Pippi. Like a child who knows it is wise to believe in Santa Claus, Tommy and Annika will willingly wrestle with any doubts they may have about their new friend in order to receive the gifts she has to offer them. As the reader I am left asking, how is it that Pippi just is in everything she does?
PASSAGES AND REFLECTIONS FROM “PIPPI GOES ON A SCHOOL OUTFITING”

Previous to this chapter Pippi Longstocking has gone to school for the (the first was in Pippi Longstocking), and received permission to accompany the children on an outing in the woods. The first third of the chapter finds the children off to the woods and playing a game with Pippi. In this passage, notice the ways in which Lindgren brings the excursion to life, and how we almost feel a part of the group of children as they walk down the road. Notice Lindgren's references to other living creatures and how she enhances the vitality of her characters with breath; sighs, shouts and whispers. Do any parts of the passage arouse personal childhood memories? Does Lindgren create a sense of timelessness? Notice again how Pippi facilitates the game of monster, drawing the children into the fantasy; and heed how the children delight in being afraid. Notice the details of the monster's movement and ask why "the monster" is written in the second person. Pay attention to whether as a reader you notice the role of Pippi's strength in the game or whether it is just part of the fantasy; do we forget about it?

Also important is the character of the teacher. She has a definite presence in the narrative, however, notice her attitude toward the monster game, and the respect with which she shares the children's company. Can the teacher's gentle presence be a metaphor for the role of the storyteller - providing direction but letting the listener's imagination flourish? In what ways does Lindgren's image of play and the presence of the teacher seem suggestive of child culture sitting on the periphery of adult consciousness (Konner 1991).

Selection from "Pippi Goes on a School Outing," Pippi Goes Aboard pp.50-59

There was a sound of the tramping of many feet on the road, and lots of chattering and laughter. Tommy with a rucksack on his back, and Annika in a brand new cotton dress, and the teacher, and all the other boys and girls in the class were there except one poor child who had developed a sore throat on the very day of the outing. In front of them rode Pippi on her horse. Behind her sat Mr. Nelson with his pocket mirror in his hand. He caught the sunlight in it, and looked full of glee when he succeeded in dazzling Tommy with the reflection.

Annika had been quite sure it would rain on this day. She had been so sure of it that she nearly felt angry beforehand. But no, they were lucky; the sun kept shining from sheer force of habit, although it was the day of the outing, and Annika's heart leapt for joy as she walked along the road in her brand new cotton dress. All the children, for that matter, looked very happy and eager. Along the roadside there were baby willows, and once they passed a whole field full of cowslips. They all decided they would pick a bunch of willow and a big posy of cowslips on the way home.
Annika sighs and asks Pippi if it isn't a lovely day to which Pippi agrees with a curious statement about not having had such fun since fighting a "Negro boxer" in San Francisco and offers Annika a "little ride" on the horse.

Annika said she would love it, and Pippi lifted her up and put her in front of herself on the horse, but when the other children saw this, they wanted rides, too, of course. So one after the other they had a ride, but Annika and Tommy had just a little longer than the rest. One girl had a sore foot, and Pippi let her sit behind her all the time, but Mr. Nelson kept pulling her plait.

They were on their way to a forest which is called Monster Forest, because it is monstrously beautiful. When they were nearly there, Pippi jumped from the saddle, patted her horse, and said:

"Now you've carried us a long way, you must be tired. It isn't fair that one should do all the work."

She lifted the horse in her strong arms and carried him all the way to a little glade in the forest where the teacher had called a halt. Pippi looked all round and shouted:

"Come on, you monsters, all of you! We'll see who's the strongest!"
The teacher explained that there were no monsters in the forest. Pippi was very disappointed.

"A Monster Forest without monsters! What will they think of next! Soon, I s'pose there'll be fires without fires, and Christmas parties without Christmas trees. It's jolly mean! The day they start having sweet shops without sweets I'll give them a piece of my mind. Well, there' nothing for it but to be a monster myself."

At this Pippi utters such a "terrifying roar" that the teacher has to cover her ears and several of the children are "frightened out of their wits."

"Yes, let's pretend Pippi's a monster!" shouted Tommy in delight, clapping his hands. The children all thought this an excellent idea. The monster settled in a deep crevice in a rock which was to be its den. The children ran around outside, teasing it with shouts of:

"Silly, silly monster! Silly, silly monster!"

At this the monster rushed out uttering fierce howls, and chased the children who scattered in all directions to hide. Those who were caught were dragged into the hollow, and the monster said they were going to be cooked for dinner: but sometimes they managed to escape when the monster was out chasing other children. This meant climbing up the steep rock which formed the wall of the crevice, and that was quite difficult; there was only a small pine tree to hang on to, and it was a problem to know where to find a foothold. It was very exciting all the same, and the children thought it was the best game they had ever played. The teacher lay on the grass reading a book and glanced at the children every now and then.
"That's the wildest monster I ever saw," she murmured to herself.

It was. The monster jumped, and howled, and threw three or four boys over its shoulder at a time, and dragged them back to the hollow. Sometimes it climbed the highest tree at a terrific speed and leapt from branch to branch just like a monkey: sometimes it threw itself on to the horse and caught up with some of the children who were trying to escape between the trees. When the horse came galloping near them, the monster bent down and lifted them up in front and rode like lightning back to the hollow, shouting:

"I'm going to cook you for my dinner!"

The children are having such a wonderful time that they do not want to stop but all of a sudden there is complete silence. Tommy and Annika come running to see what is happening and find the monster kneeling on the ground looking very "queer" and watching something clasped in its hand.

"He's dead! Look! He's quite dead!" said the monster
It was a baby bird that was dead. It had fallen from its nest and been killed.

"Oh, what a shame!" said Annika. The monster nodded.
"Pippi! You're crying!" said Tommy suddenly.
"Crying? Me!" said Pippi. "Course I'm not crying."
"But your eyes are red," persisted Tommy.
"Red?" exclaimed Pippi, and borrowed Mr. Nelson's mirror to have a look. "Is that what you call red eyes? Then you should have been with me and Daddy in Batavia! There was an old man there who had such red eyes that the police wouldn't let him show himself in the streets!"
"Why?" asked Tommy.
"Cos people thought he was a stop signal, silly! The traffic came to a standstill when he turned up. Red eyes? Me? Don't you believe I'm crying because of a stupid little bird like that!" said Pippi.
"Silly, silly monster! Silly, silly monster!"

The children came running from all over the place to see what the monster was up to. They found it putting the stupid little bird very gently on a bed of soft moss.

"If I could, I would make you alive again," said Pippi with a deep sigh. There followed a colossal roar.
"Now I'm going to cook you for dinner," she shouted, and with shrieks of joy the children disappeared among the bushes.

There is a girl in the class whose name is Ulla. It has been arranged that the children would go to Ulla's house for lunch.

So, when the children had played the monster game for a long time, and had climbed the rock, and sailed bark boats on a big puddle, and seen who were brave enough to jump from a high stone, Ulla said she thought it was time they went to her house and had some orange squash. The teacher who had read her
book from cover to cover, thought so too. She gathered the children together, and they left Monster Forest.

This ends what is essentially only the first third of the chapter. On the way to Ulla's Pippi wrestles with a man for beating his horse and at Ulla's the teacher speaks very thoughtfully with Pippi about needing to learn some manners. The above passage has provided an image of among other things, friendship and play as will be discussed below under the following headings:

Vividness, Vitality, Happiness and Timelessness
Pippi's Naivete; Monsters in the Closet
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Vividness, Vitality, Happiness and Timelessness

This passage demonstrates Lindgren's ability to bring her image of childhood to life; the vividness of the image, for me being symbolic of the children's fresh perception of the world. The sun shining from "sheer force of habit," can be seen as a metaphor for the child's propensity to live and to flourish, the unconscious act of expanding or maturing. Like the sun shining when Annika was sure it would rain, Lindgren seems to say that children possess a life force, a vitality that with "luck" will not be dampened. (Lindgren herself was a declared agnostic and there are many references to "luck" throughout the stories.) I can feel Annika's heart as it leaps for joy, and feel the pride with which she wears her new dress. The children are happy and surrounded by blossoming life; "baby willows" and "a whole field full of cowslips." I can hear the "tramping of many feet" on the road, almost as if the group is approaching from a distance; details such as having "passed" a field, almost lend a sense of motion to the passage. I can hear the "chattering" and "laughing" of the children, knowing how much they have been looking forward to this excursion; pity the "poor child" forced to stay home with a sore throat.

If I wanted to speak of the "essence" of Lindgren's image of childhood, it might surely be found, in a Sartrian sense, within a passages like this one. Lindgren has provided an image that is vibrant and sensual. Small details like the children "deciding" to pick posies of cowslips on the way home, are reminiscent of the way a group of children can take a suggestion, chaotically discuss it and render a decision, within what seems like a moment. For readers who have experienced such childhood dynamics, or who can remember picking flowers as a young child, such images may elicit, familiar memories. It is not that the experiences themselves are particularly unique, but the way in which Lindgren can so succinctly touch upon them. The image is neither excessive or sentimental, and yet it is substantial. Lindgren never gets inside the characters, she doesn't share intimate details of a particular character's experience or knowledge. The image she provides is at a distance; I can see the parts in relation to each other, but the minute details are left to my memory and imagination. I will touch upon this again in a discussion of play below.
Pippi's Naiveté; Monsters in the Closet

Pippi is also very proud, as she sits tall on her horse, leading the group. Her statement about the "Negro boxer" is somewhat curious (the gratuitous racial identification of the boxer likely indicating a stereotype of American athletes common for that era) and may speak to the discussion of object relativity, in "Pippi is a Thing-finder." What is a lovely day to you, says Pippi, may mean an entirely different thing to me. She is parental in the way she offers Annika a ride, "putting" her in front of herself, and giving Tommy and Annika a little bit longer than the rest. I almost have the sense that Pippi is physically larger than the other children, although there is nothing in the text to indicate that, except for her strength, she is any different from them. My sense is substantiated by a quote from Sweden's Prime Minister Goran Persson after Lindgren's death this winter. Upon Lindgren he reflects, "With laughter and seriousness, fantasy and a little audacity, one becomes tall even if one is little -- that's what she taught us (Copeland 2002)."

Pippi's naiveté is demonstrated when she calls the monsters out of the forest. To have a monster forest, without monsters seems, to Pippi, absurd, and she is subsequently disappointed. She is not afraid of monsters and cannot condone there being a monster forest without monsters. I read her dismay as saying, why would you take the monsters out of the forest? Pippi displays similar naiveté and lack of fear in Chapter Eight of Pippi Longstocking, "Pippi Entertains Some Burglars." Pippi is not at all threatened by burglars that come into her house to steal her gold because she has no precepts about such fears; she ends up entertaining the burglars all evening, until they beg to leave. She theoretically exhausts them at their own game; just as she does with the children in the monster game who absolutely thrill at being afraid:

In the sense that Pippi challenges what makes us afraid; as with the burglars, and disputes our ideas of fear, and our apprehensiveness towards being afraid; "a Monster forest without monsters!" and "fires without fires," she pushes us to examine our precepts about what is frightening and the way that we conceptualize fear and most importantly to realize the vitality in doing so. It is not that Pippi is reckless or that she thrills at risk. She simply has no concept of being afraid. In this sense Pippi differs dramatically from Tommy and Annika who have a very practical sense of risk and danger. In Chapter Two of Pippi Goes Aboard, the vitality of modern medicine becomes her metaphor for a similar critique. Pippi is out shopping with Tommy and Annika and notices the sign for the "Apu-the-ca-ry" and decides she needs some "meducin."

"I may not be ill now," said Pippi, "but I'm not taking any chances. Every year masses of people are taken ill and die, all because they didn't buy meducin in time: you bet I'm not going to be caught out that way."

...whooping cough and blisters on the feet and tummy-ache and German measles and a pea that's got stuck in the nose, and all that kind of thing. It wouldn't be a bad idea if it could be used for polishing furniture as well. A real meducin, that's what I want.
On the next page Pippi proceeds to put all the medicines that the apothecary has sold her into one bottle and drinks a large dose. Annika knows that some of the medicine was meant for putting on the skin and is worried.

"Oh Pippi," she said, "how do you know that the medicine isn't poisonous?"

"I shall find out," said Pippi gaily. I shall find out tomorrow at the latest. If I'm still alive then, it's not poisonous, and the smallest child can drink it."

Tommy and Annika considered this. After a while Tommy said doubtfully, and rather dolefully;

"Yes, but supposing it is poisonous, after all, what then?"

"Then you'll have to use what's left over for polishing the dining-room furniture," said Pippi, "and poisonous or not, the medicine won't be wasted (Pippi Goes on Board pp.32-35)."

Pippi defies Tommy and Annika's practical sense of danger and in doing so makes them "feel a little queer in the tummy (Pippi Goes on Board p.36);" and so the chapter ends. In the context of parenting and education, Pippi pushes me to examine what worries and concerns I have for children and how they inform the decisions I make. Are the monkey bars really dangerous or do we just not like seeing a child get hurt? How have broader social issues around law and liability had a constraining affect on children and how do they inform our concepts of risk? Two years ago in Ontario, a single auditor deemed hundreds of school playgrounds unsafe according to an inappropriately informed standard and had all the equipment removed within a period of days. I am only touching in the most delicate way, what are obviously huge and complex issues; the point is that in recognizing the way in which, Pippi Longstocking works to challenge notions of danger, and the role of fear in being human, she might be considered a metaphor for thinking of such issues in the context of parenting and education.

**Play: Freedom, Fantasy, Passion and Purity of Experience**

The monster game is an image of complete freedom; largely enhanced by the faraway attention of the teacher; Pippi and the children assume their respective roles with passion and abandon. Tommy is delighted with the idea of Pippi being a monster and clapping his hands says, "lets pretend!" From that point on Lindgren refers to Pippi only in the second person; "the monster," thus taking me the reader right into the game with the children. The children tease and provoke the monster in order to get it to chase them, thrilling in the fear of the game. That the monster game "was very exciting," "the best game they had ever played," demonstrates the intensity and enthusiasm of the children within Lindgren's image. The children are thrilled by the game, they love being scared, and it would seem they love Pippi. Lindgren evokes the passion and intensity with which the children delight in the game.
This image of the monster game, like the children walking on the road, places me as the reader at a distance; and yet I have a vivid sense of what the game is like. I can notice the monster roaring and the children shrieking; the children move fluidly between extremes of fear and pleasure; wallowing in both sensations; confidently moving safely between them. The roars, the shrieks and the sighs, all contribute for me to Lindgren's image, in which the children are alive, they breathe; there is breath in fear, in tenderness, and in pleasure; each gives life.

It appears that not only is the monster scary but the chase itself is dangerous. The children climb steep rock, which is difficult to do, and have to find a foothold, "with only a small pine tree to hold on to." I can sense the thrill of escaping the monster, and recall childhood games of hide and seek. The image is of course fantastical as "the monster" swings from branch to branch like a monkey, scooping up children as it rides by, quick as lightning. So engrossing is the passage that I almost lose sight of these impossibilities; my imagination lets me do so; anything is possible. This is where the text becomes especially interesting, and can speak to the imagination of adults. When I become unaware of what is "possible" and not "possible;" or what of Pippi could be real and what could never be real, I am reminded that I may not always be aware of what is real or not real within the world of a child; or that what I sense is real, may not be so, and vice-versa. This of course applies to the discussion surrounding fear; how often do I discern between what is an imagined threat and what is real?

The monster game, in it's intensity and excitement is unique within the Pippi books, however the lyrical description of the play is not. The way in which Lindgren strings together, the details of the children playing, has a rhythm, almost reminiscent of play, and life itself; of one game rolling into another, minutes rolling into hours, endless days. Play, like listening to, or reading a story, can be a meditation of sorts; especially in the way that even a small amount of play time, or a brief description of play in this instance, has an endless quality to it. (I can also recall the feeling of being drawn away from play, by an adult's call, or a bell. It is lovely that the children decide when it is time to leave and the teacher agrees.)

"Pippi Leaves Kurrekurredutt Island," Chapter Eleven from *Pippi in the South Seas*, provides an equally lovely image of the evolving nature of play that Lindgren captures, the way in which Pippi facilitates the play, and the mutual adoration amongst the children for Pippi.

Wonderful days followed - wonderful days in a warm, wonderful world full of sunshine, with the blue sea glittering and fragrant flowers everywhere....

Momo and Moana and all the other Kurrekurredutt children already considered Pippi irresistible. They had never had such a good time before and they were as fond of Pippi as Tommy and Annika were. Of course they were fond of Tommy and Annika too, and Tommy and Annika were fond of them. So they all had a marvelous time together and played and played all day long.
Pippi had taken blankets there and when they wanted to they could spend the night and be even more comfortable... She had also made a rope ladder which reached all the way down to the water below the cave, and all the children climbed up and down on it and swam and splashed to their heart's delight. Now it was perfectly safe to swim. Pippi had blocked off a big section with net so that the sharks couldn't get in. It was such fun to swim in and out of those caves filled with water...

Sometimes they would play that Pippi was Buck trying to get into the cave to steal pearls. Then Tommy would pull up the rope ladder and Pippi would have to climb up the side of the cliff as best she could. All the children would shout, "Buck is coming, Buck is coming!" when she stuck her head into the cave, and they would take turns poking her in the stomach so that she tumbled backward into the sea. Down there she splashed around with her bare feet sticking out of the water, and the children laughed so hard that they almost fell out of the cave.

When they got tired of being in the cave they would play in their bamboo hut. Pippi and the children had built it, though of course Pippi had done most of the work. It was big and square and made of thin bamboo cane, and you could climb around inside it, and on top of it too. Next to the hut was a tall coconut tree. Pippi had hacked steps into it so that you could climb all the way to the top. The view was wonderful from up there. Between two other coconut palms Pippi had rigged up a swing of hibiscus fiber. It was marvelous, because if you swung as high as the swing would go, you could throw yourself out into the air and land in the water below.

Pippi swung so high and flew so far out into the water that she said, "One fine day I'll probably land in Australia and then it won't be much fun for the one who gets me on the head."

The children also went on expeditions into the jungle. There was a high mountain and a waterfall that cascaded over a cliff. Pippi had made up her mind that she would like to go down the waterfall in a barrel...(Pippi in the South Seas, pp.97-99).

This passage is reminiscent of an idyllic summer holiday. The children all love each other and play "all day long." I love the images of Pippi working to make the cave comfortable for the children to sleep, making the rope ladder, building the bamboo hut and protecting the children from the sharks, all the while playing. Tommy mischievously pulls up the rope ladder and Pippi climbs the cliff "as best she could." The children "take turns" poking Pippi in the stomach reminding me of the way children can delight in the endless repetition of such a game. I can hear them laughing so hard that they almost fall, delighting in the absolute absurdity of the game. Pippi hacks steps in the coconut tree so that the children can climb to the top and the view is wonderful. References such as this tell me that the children's days are about more then fun, they are about beauty. They are soaking up the world, swinging on the hibiscus swing, working and playing away the days in the company of each other on a cannibal island. Just as I can discern the
particulars of Lindgren's image, children discern what constitutes the world around them, through play and through friendship.

In concluding this discussion of play, I will point out that Lindgren also makes reference to what the children like doing. In "Pippi Writes a Letter and Goes to School," Chapter Three from *Pippi Goes Aboard*, Pippi places a letter she has just written into a drawer. Lindgren provides insight into what delights the children;

She put the letter back in the envelope and stowed it away in one of the small drawers of the big cupboard which she had in the parlour. There was hardly anything that Tommy and Annika enjoyed so much as looking at all the lovely things in Pippi's cupboard. Very often Pippi gave them a little present, but there was no end to the things in the drawers (*Pippi Goes Aboard* p.43).

From this passage, Pippi feels almost like someone's favourite grandmother and in this sense Lindgren's image of play might be considered romantic. Consider the following passage from "Pippi is Shipwrecked," Chapter Six, also from *Pippi Goes Aboard*.

When Tommy and Annika had finished their homework the fun began. If the weather was fine, they went in the garden, rode on the horse for a little or climbed up on the roof of the shed where they sat down to drink coffee, or else they climbed the old oak which was quite hollow, so that they could get right inside the trunk. Pippi said it was a very remarkable tree, because ginger beer grew in it. It must have been true, because each time the children climbed down into their hiding-place in the oak, there were three bottles of ginger beer waiting for them. Tommy and Annika could not understand where the empties went, but Pippi said that they faded away as soon as the ginger beer was drunk. A remarkable tree, Tommy and Annika thought.

"Sometimes bars of chocolate grow in it, but only on Thursdays," said Pippi, so Tommy and Annika were most particular about going there every Thursday to collect bars of chocolate. Pippi said that if only the tree was watered properly now and then, she thought they could get it to grow bread rolls as well, and perhaps even a sirloin of beef.

If it was rainy weather they had to stay indoors, and that was fun, too. They could look at all the fine things in Pippi's drawers, or they could sit in front of the stove and watch Pippi making waffles and roasting apples; or they might pop down into the big box where the firewood was kept and sit there, listening to Pippi's stories of exciting adventures from the time when she sailed the ocean (*Pippi Goes Aboard*, pp.102-103).

This passage introduces a chapter in which Pippi takes Tommy and Annika overnight to an island, recreating the experience, Robinson Crusoe style, of being shipwrecked. There is a purity to the play experience as expressed by Lindgren. Am I sentimental about imaginative play and about the very simple play activities that Lindgren refers to? "Sailing bark boats on a big puddle," and jumping from high stones; do these activities have any relevance to the world of children today? Would the story be the same if the
children were playing video games or riding snowmobiles? It is my feeling that if they experienced the same intensity of pleasure, the same range of emotion, the same freedom of engagement, the same quality of kinship, the same passion, the same use and expression of their bodies; in doors and out doors, then yes.

**Pippi's Tenderness and Sorrow**

The intense pleasure of the monster game, is beautifully contrasted, with the tenderness of the exchange between Pippi and the dead bird; and the children's surprise at finding Pippi crying. I find it peculiar that she hides her sorrow, it seems not in keeping with her character. (Notice as well that the children are not struck in the same way as Pippi.) The conundrum itself, however, would be in keeping with Pippi's character, and could be a possible explanation; "Don't be surprised" is the lesson, what appears may not be what is. This makes me wonder how often children's personalities are misjudged or not appreciated, overlooked perhaps or masked by the child themselves, not wanting to reveal some part of themselves. I love the fluidity of this scene; the hush and the sorrow. Pippi lays the bird down with a sigh, and then she roars, and the game is on again, the children disappearing with shrieks. Once again, Pippi has cradled the extremes of emotion, with Lindgren, all the while maintaining the integrity of the chapter. The tone would be very different if after finding the dead bird, the children became somber; I could imagine some sort of ritualized burial, taking the story on a completely different direction. The way in which as a reader I stumble upon Pippi's sorrowful moment is almost like the experience of tripping and stumbling while playing a game. I am caught off guard, perhaps shocked and sad and then I go back to the game.

Within this passage, I am impressed first by the vividness of the children walking and talking, and the intensity with which the children experience pleasure, and fear, while playing. The children are alive and they are happy. Secondly, is the richness and fluidity of the play description, and I indulged my reader with several other examples from the books. The passion with which Pippi and the children play, their abandon to the game if you will, is obvious; and of course the freedom with which they play, completely uninhibited by the teacher.

All of this is contrasted to Pippi's sorrow in finding the dead bird, which is puzzling. She shows a tenderness that takes the children by surprise, separating their experience from hers. This example of Pippi's naiveté, as well as the others I provided, lead me to question once again, how childlike her character actually is. For me, all of these observations and questions are cradled within the character of the teacher, whose presence in this passage, is entirely felt, but totally respectful. Somehow she symbolizes the balance between the intensity, and range of experience that are so much of what this passage is about. I wonder if her presence allows the wildness of the monster game; it is safe; and yet the manner in which she is aware but remains completely outside of the children's experience, does not attempt to enforce security. The character of the teacher seems almost symbolic of Lindgren the storyteller. Her message is wise, but she allows the reader to take it on their own terms.
PASSAGES AND REFLECTIONS “PIPPI LONGSTOCKING DOESN'T WANT TO GROW UP”

The children have returned from Kurrekurredutt Island and Tommy and Annika are very sad to have missed Christmas with their parents. It is still Christmas break, however, and the following evening the children finally manage to break away and go visit Pippi. She surprises them with a Christmas dinner and presents and like all travelers recently arrived home the three children reminisce about their trip, reflecting how strange it feels to be back. Tommy and Annika are "overwhelmed with happiness" and the three make plans to build a snow hut in the morning.

In this, the final passage of the Pippi books, Tommy and Annika are suddenly struck by the thought of someday growing up and not being able to play with Pippi. Notice that while Pippi empathizes with their fear, it is not clear that she shares the same anxiety. She does not reveal this to Tommy and Annika, however, and with a simple ritual she rocks the brother and sister safely between the extremes of sorrow and pleasure. Pippi offers no guarantees but says, "we have to hope for the best."

Recall Lindgren's own dismay at leaving childhood and try to also recall the realization that you would one day grow up; that the state of childhood was not eternal. I can vividly remember at about the age of three or four, realizing that my clothes were not growing bigger as my body did. I had always assumed they did. That I would outgrow my clothes and my childhood were not consecutive existential moments in my own youth but they both occurred. Is it possible that we outgrow our lives; that we just keep growing and growing? I often wonder if Pippi's shoes will ever fit or are they symbolic of some sort of eternal evolution? Does the candle flame represent another world? Is it possible that Pippi's uniqueness is a metaphor for all we don't know, the "world" of possibility that exists beyond our everyday conceptions of life. Is she fearlessly aware of this? These are simply questions to keep in mind as we prepare to say good bye to Pippi.

Selection from "Pippi Longstocking Doesn't Want to Grow Up," Pippi in the South Seas, pp.110-116

"We're going to have a wonderful time tomorrow," said Tommy. "What luck that we came home in the middle of Christmas vacation."

"We're always going to have fun," said Annika. "At Villa Villekulla, on Kurrekurredutt Island, and everywhere."

Pippi nodded in agreement. They had crawled up on the kitchen table, all three of them. Suddenly a dark shadow passed over Tommy's face.

"I never want to grow up," he said emphatically.

"I don't either," said Annika.

"No, that's nothing to wish for, being grown up," said Pippi. "Grownups never have any fun. They only have a lot of boring work and wear silly-looking clothes, and they have corns and minicipal taxes."

"It's called municipal," said Annika.
It's the "same nonsense" anyway, says Pippi. She goes on about all the problems with adults; they're full of superstitions, they think something awful will happen if they stick a knife in their mouth, "and thing like that."

"And they can't play, either," said Annika. "Ugh, how awful to have to grow up." "Who says you have to grow up?" said Pippi. "If I remember right, I have a few pills somewhere."

"What sort of pills?" said Tommy. Some very fine pills for people who don't want to grow up," said Pippi and jumped down from the table. She hunted through closets and drawers and after a while she produced something that looked like three yellow peas. "Peas!" said Tommy, surprised. "That's what you think," said Pippi. "These are no peas. They are chililug pills and were given to me in Rio by an old Indian chief when I happened to mention that I wasn't wild about the idea of growing up."

Annika is skeptical that the tiny little pills can prevent the children from growing up but Pippi declares that absolutely it can be done.

"But they have to be taken in the dark, and then you have to say this: "Pretty little chililug, I don't want to get bug."

"You mean big," said Tommy. "If I say 'bug' I mean 'bug,'" said Pippi.

Pippi goes on to tell Tommy and Annika about a boy who said "big" by mistake and he grew such long legs that he walked around like a giraffe.

"Oh, I wouldn't dare eat one of those pills," said Annika, terrified, "in case I might say the wrong thing." "You won't say the wrong thing," said Pippi reassuringly. "If I thought you'd do that, I wouldn't give you one. Because it would be boring to have just your legs to play with. Tommy and me and your lets - that would be fine company!"

Tommy reassures Annika that she won't make a mistake.

They turned the Christmas tree lights out. The kitchen was in complete darkness, except near the stove where the fire glowed behind the stove door. They sat down in silence in a circle in the middle of the floor, holding one another by the hand. Pippi gave Tommy and Annika each a chililug pill. Chills ran up and down their spines. Just think, in a second the powerful pill would be down in their stomachs and then they would never have to grown up. How marvelous that would be! "Now," Pippi whispered.
"Pretty little chililug, I don't want to get bug," they said all together and swallowed their pills. The deed was done.

Pippi turned on the ceiling light. "That's it," she said. "Now we don't have to be grown up and have corns and other miseries. Though the pills have been lying around in my closet for so long that one can't be absolutely sure that all the strength hasn't gone out of them. But we have to hope for the best."

Annika suddenly thought of something. "Oh, Pippi," she said in alarm, "you were going to be a pirate when you grew up."

"Pshaw, I can be one anyway," said Pippi. "I can still become a nasty little pirate who spreads death and destruction around me."

She was quiet for a while, thinking. "Just imagine," she said.

Pippi imagines a lady walking by and seeing the children running around in the garden, many years from now. She might ask Tommy how old he is and Tommy will reply, 'Fifty-three, if I'm not mistaken.'

"If a lady walks by here one day many, many years from now and she sees us running around in the garden, perhaps she will ask Tommy, "How old are you, my little friend?" And then you'll say, 'Fifty-three, if I'm not mistaken.'"

Tommy laughed merrily. "She'll probably think that I'm small for my age," he said.

"Of course," said Pippi. "But then you can explain that you were bigger when you were smaller."

Just then Annika and Tommy remember that their mother has told them not to be too long.

"I think we'll have to go now," said Tommy.
"But we'll be back tomorrow," said Annika.
"Fine," said Pippi. "We'll get started on the snow hut at eight o'clock."

She walked with them to the gate and her red pigtails danced around her as she ran back to Villa Villekulla.

"You know," said Tommy a while later when he was brushing his teeth, "if I hadn't known that those were chililug pills I would have been willing to bet that they were just ordinary peas."

Annika was standing at the window of their room in her pink pajamas, looking over toward Villa Villekulla. "Look, I see Pippi! she called out, delighted.

Tommy rushed over to the window too. Yes, there she was. Now that the trees didn't have any leaves they could look right into Pippi's kitchen.

Pippi was sitting at the table with her head propped against her arms. She was staring at the little flickering flame of a candle that was standing in front of her. She seemed to be dreaming.
"She - she looks so alone," said Annika, and her voice trembled a little. "Oh, Tommy, if it were only morning so that we could go to her right away!"

They stood there in silence and looked out into the winter night. The stars were shining over Villa Villekulla's roof. Pippi was inside. She would always be there. That was a comforting thought. The years would go by, but Pippi and Tommy and Annika would not grow up.

That is, of course, if the strength hadn't gone out of the chilliug pills. There would be new springs and summers, new autumns and winters, but their games would go on. Tomorrow they would build a snow hut and make a ski slope from the roof of Villa Villekulla, and when spring came they would climb the hollow oak where soda pop spouted up. They would hunt for treasure and they would ride Pippi's horse. They would sit in the woodbin and tell stories. Perhaps they would also take a trip to Kurrekurredtut Island now and then, to see Momo and Moana and the others. But they would always come back to Villa Villekulla.

And the most wonderful, comforting thought was that Pippi would always be in Villa Villekulla.

"If she would only look in this direction we could wave to her," said Tommy.

But Pippi continued to stare straight ahead with a dreamy look. Then she blew out the light (Pippi in the South Seas, p.110-116).

While the story of Pippi Longstocking is over I am left with a sense of timelessness. As I push toward the conclusion of this thesis I recall not having had any recollection of this ending when I began and yet every time I a deeply touched by the image of Pippi sitting at her table looking into the flame of the candle. In fact as I started reading the stories to my daughter when she was almost four I had no vivid recollection of the actual stories what so ever and yet I had a keen sense of who Pippi was and knew that she meant something to me.

Sorrow, Love, Intimacy and Growing Up With Dignity

The enthusiasm of the children is clearly expressed through their language; "We're going to have a wonderful time tomorrow," says Tommy. "We're always going to have fun," says Annika. Pippi simply nods and allows the children to go on. They have crawled up on the kitchen table and I envision small children getting close to each other, huddling with their backs to the world, being very serious and quiet. I can picture Tommy's face as the thought of growing up suddenly occurs to him. This is a black moment. Annika agrees emphatically that she also does not want to grow up. The children have been struck with a common existential realization. "I am going to grow up."

Pippi is not impressed by the thought in the way that Tommy and Annika are. She agrees that, no, you wouldn't want to grow up but she doesn't seem as darkened with the image. Adults can't play," says Annika. While the children have never distinguished between their own work and play this portrait of the adult world is clearly not favourable. The
children are emphatic about not wanting to grow up and I almost have the sense that their
dread is as much about not being able to play with Pippi as it is about growing up.
Perhaps they sense Pippi herself may not grow up.

Pippi offers hope with the ritual of the chililug pills but note that she promises nothing.
Tommy and Annika are skeptical and afraid of what will happen if they don't say the
rhyme correctly but they are not in the least daunted by the thought of eternal youth.
Chills run down their spines. They are absolutely serious. There is silence as they
swallow. Do we appreciate the ways in which children are thoughtful? Do we notice
when children give their full attention to something (other than television) or do we only
see when they appear to give no attention. Do we ensure that children have spaces to be
solemn, to be dignified, to be ceremonious? That Pippi creates these spaces is one of her
gifts.

In the way that Pippi attends to the children this passage is reminiscent of Chapter Five in
Pippi in the South Seas. Tommy and Annika are recovering from the measles, they are
terribly dreary and Pippi who is forbidden to be near them, entertains them from a ladder
outside their window. She wears a different costume every day and terrifies Tommy and
Annika by swinging back and forth on the ladder. The passage goes on demonstrating
Pippi's absolute devotion to Tommy and Annika and their wellness. "Eat your good
cereal," she says when they are much better but still not feeling like eating (Pippi in the
South Seas p.44-45).

Tommy and Annika notice that the chililug pills look like peas but they are willing to
believe Pippi's story. Stories are like bridges in this way. They offer a connection from
one place to another, a place that might otherwise not be accessible. The chililug story
might only make Tommy and Annika feel better tonight but for that it is worth it. The
story offers them comfort and security from which they can go on to face the realities of
growing up. I think it is common in our culture to believe that children must face reality
and that to pretend otherwise is foolish but it is my sense that such thinking is
contradictory to the wisdom of storytelling. Stories allow us to face our fears and to put
them in perspective. They offer a means by which to connect our own individual being to
a larger world.

Annika is struck by the thought that Pippi has forfeited her opportunity to be a pirate but
Pippi assures her it will be fine. She quietly thinks and says, "Just imagine." This is the
first instance of Pippi demonstrating conscious awareness of her own imagination. She
makes the children laugh with the idea of an old woman asking how old they are, "many
years from now." They will be running around in the garden, a symbol of pleasure. I
almost have the sense that Pippi has grown up before, that she knows what the children
are feeling; that she remembers. Comforted by the thought of never having to grow up,
they assure themselves that Pippi will always be in Villa Villekulla.

I appreciate the silences in this passage and I wonder how many children know the gift of
solitude (as opposed to loneliness). Pippi whispers for them to swallow. She quietly
thinks. She sits at her table alone, staring into the candle. She is all by herself and this upsets Annika. Pippi does not seem lonely, however. "She seemed to be dreaming."

Tommy and Annika stand in silence and watch over the winter night. Winter is a season of stillness when things don't seem to change but we know that tomorrow will come, as will spring. The children are comforted by the thought that Pippi will always be in Villa Villekulla. They adore Pippi and want her to see them. She does not look though and I am left asking, what does she see in the light of the candle?

I think this passage speaks to the poignancy and depth of the Pippi stories. For all that Pippi Longstocking has come to represent, fun and humour and happiness, she is also about the questions that come with life. That the questions can be lived with joy and thoughts of what will come tomorrow is perhaps Lindgren's legacy. As Maggie Muggins (an old children's book character) used to say, "It's been such a lovely day, I wonder what I shall do tomorrow."
CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION: THE ROLE OF PIPPI LONGSTOCKING

Upon the death of Astrid Lindgren, there was much surveying of the literary world as to the magnitude of Pippi Longstocking. Asked what causes Pippi's braids to stick straight out, children's literature expert, Kathleen Odean, answered, "Sheer energy (Copeland 2002)," "She defies gravity," said children's book historian Leonard S. Marcus. He went on, "She's not bound by the usual rules. ... Some girl heroines in literature -- Ramona Quimby, Harriet the Spy, Eloise -- all live in some version of the real world. Pippi though, "seems to live in a world of her own making (Copeland 2002)."

This thesis has been primarily concerned with Astrid Lindgren's image of childhood or the child's world, if you will, in the novel *Pippi Longstocking*. My hope is that by attending to this image, a more complete appreciation of the story can be had perhaps shedding light on the broad and lasting appeal of the text. Through a close textual analysis that noticed particular details of Lindgren's image of the child as depicted through the characters of Pippi, Tommy and Annika, it has become obvious that Pippi herself is not a child.

Within the character and story of Pippi Longstocking, Lindgren has created an image of childhood that in its vividness and enduring vitality can itself be considered a symbol of childhood. The image is clear and bright; there is sunshine, happiness and joy. Children laugh and they cry. They contemplate, reflect and express themselves. The children experience the world with intensity and passion and they are alive, open to possibility and experience. They wonder and imagine and play; and within their play is great freedom. There are few externally imposed restrictions and the presence of adults is gentle and respectfully distant. The children are tender and naive and sometimes profound. Amongst this image of childhood, however, Pippi Longstocking stands out.

I have at times been tempted to ask if Pippi is a dream, perhaps a fantasy of Tommy and Annika's? Is it possible that Pippi lives next door and just *pretends* that her parents don't live there? Is she actually able to lift people and horses or have Tommy and Annika, via their imaginations, simply imposed this attribute upon her as a reflection of their fondness towards her? Regardless, on the surface, she is the little girl next door and very much in keeping with Lindgren's image of the child; she laughs, she plays and has great fun in the company of Tommy and Annika and other children. A closer examination, however, has revealed that there is more to Pippi.

The way that Pippi experiences and operates within the world, the fearless naiveté with which she acts and the care and wisdom that she shows to Tommy and Annika, requiring nothing in return, makes her unique. In concluding this thesis, I ask, what is Pippi Longstocking? Pippi Longstocking shows a joy and propensity for fun that at first glance is childlike; her independence, generosity and caring make her like a parent; that she has super human strength and is fearless make her fantastic and of another world. For me the
reader it is of course an imaginary world but there appears to be a common Pippi experience amongst readers across several generations and even across cultures that begs to be explained.

It is my feeling that much of the critical confusion that I examined in Chapter Four stems from confusion about what Pippi is and what she isn’t. Compared to Tommy and Annika, Pippi is not realistic, this is true. Tommy and Annika, however, are not real either. They are all characters born in the imagination of Astrid Lindgren, communicated through words and brought to life again in the imagination of readers. Everytime somebody reads Pippi Longstocking she comes to life again. That the book has been read so many times by so many people in so many places tells me that Pippi really comes to life, that she speaks to some element of life even if it is on an unconscious level; Pippi speaks to some element of human experience or potential experience that people are drawn to.

In her book, Seventy-Eight Degrees of Wisdom, Rachel Polack discusses the archetype of the Fool. Polack says that the Fool represents true innocence, a total openness to life or a kind of perfect state of joy and freedom; there is no difference between possibility and reality for the Fool. Nothing is held back and nothing is calculated. The Fool is naturally honest and gives love, to everyone, without thinking about it. The Fool demonstrates a complete lack of fear that comes through a total faith in living and in your own instinctive self (Polack 1997, p.18). Is Pippi Longstocking an archetypal Fool? I think so.

Pippi does not wish or want for anything, she does not worry about anything, she does not begrudge anything or anybody, she has no attachments, she is a free spirit. Polack says the Fool also works with jokes and disguises to prod us from complacency. Pippi does not follow the same rules that everybody else does. This is not to say she does not follow any rules but rather she works to point out where rules or laws have gone astray and made us ugly rather than beautiful. Most importantly Pippi encourages us to confront what is ugly in each of us, to face our fears with dignity and humour, to chase the “monsters” if you will and to recognize what they show us about ourselves. In doing this there is great joy. In doing this we become strong, perhaps even stronger than humanly possible.

That Pippi has great strength, lives without parents and has unlimited financial resources make her not real, not possible. She is a fantasy and yet at the same time there is something about her that makes her very alive and present. She represents a way of being in the world that many different people of all ages over a significant length of time have been able to relate to.

The Fool symbolizes the journey of looking inside oneself. "For those willing to take the chance, the leap can bring joy, adventure, and finally, for those with the courage to keep going when the wonderland becomes more fearsome than joyous, the leap can bring knowledge, peace and liberation (Pollack 1997, p25)." The Fool reminds us that our own inner selves know best what to do. I have often asked myself why Pippi Longstocking wants to be a pirate when she grows up. I think that the answer lies in the notion of
claiming what is true about ourselves, as humans and as individuals; to take what is rightfully ours, even if, as in the act of pirating, it means taking it unlawfully. Pollack writes,

The Fool teaches us that life is simply a continuous dance of experience. But most of us cannot maintain even brief moments of such spontaneity and freedom. Due to fears, conditioning, and simply the very real problems of daily life, we necessarily allow our egos to isolate us from experience. Yet within us we can sense, dimly, the possibility of freedom (Pola 1997, p.28).

As parents and educators I think we can learn from Pippi. She is without doubt a free spirit, childlike in many respects and as such is a reminder to recognize the gentle beauty of children. More importantly she is a reminder to separate ourselves from what we see. To remember that we don’t know everything and that there is beauty in recognizing this. It is my feeling that children immediately recognize the wisdom in Pippi. For children, Pippi does not represent some sort of wish for power and control. If anything she is the opposite. As the Fool, Pippi speaks to the child’s sense that there is more to life than meets the eye. That life is bigger than it appears, an endless exploration to be had. This is what forms their indomitable spirits, that allows them to thrive, often against huge barriers. Children thirst to grow. This is not to say that children are completely independent able to get along in the world on their own. Children live and thrive in relation with others, just as Pippi does. She is entirely unique but able to operate within the community. We are all in relationship to each other. Like Russian dolls, nesting inside of each other, a toy that is loved across cultures by all children.

Out of the blue one day, as we watch our children play, my neighbor tells me that his son had recently said a funny thing. They had been looking at the full moon together and the little boy who just turned three and speaks mostly French said that the moon was going to have little baby moons, the words for being pregnant and being full very similar in French. That my friend was touched by his son’s thought touched me as much as the image of baby moons. It doesn’t surprise me when children see moons within moons. I feel it is vital as parents and educators that we make every effort to respect the integrity of children, that which makes them who they are and gives them a sense of belonging to something larger. The Fool points to the places where we have lost these connections. Tommy and Annika are drawn to Pippi their friend as we are drawn to Pippi Longstocking the character. Lindgren was drawn to storytelling as I am drawn to writing about Pippi. In writing for an adult audience my analysis of Pippi is a metaphor for being in the world, looking at the world, acting in the world with children. Pippi especially thrives in relation to the teacher and to her father. They are adults who watch over, who are respectfully present. To be aware from a distance takes as much energy as controlling everything. It is like the act of hearing. One has to be present to hear, the process is as active as speaking. It is my thought that only in recognizing and nurturing the potential of children - by letting them be that we can get to the Pippi metaphor and be wisely in the world.
Exactly what Pippi sees when she stares into the candle cannot be known but it is worth considering. When I stare into the flame of a candle I can imagine another world and I am comforted by a feeling of awesome smallness. When I stare into the flame and feel its warmth I am also intensely aware of danger. The flame has enormous potential to harm but if I use it wisely, it reveals just what I need to see (1).

As Tommy and Annika watch Pippi through the window, their anxiety satisfied by her story I wonder how stories frame and give insight to our own lives. Throughout the writing of this thesis I have wondered about our willingness to share our stories; our histories and our problems; our dreams and ambitions. What brought Astrid Lindgren to write for children? What brought me to write this thesis? Tommy and Annika’s fear is cradled by Pippi’s story. Stories cause us to look both out and in just as Tommy and Annika go back and forth through the gates of Villa Villekulla. Storytelling is about time and timelessness and worlds of wonder but it is rooted in this world. The story may take us beyond this world but the storyteller cannot. An excellent storyteller can bridge worlds, providing fantasy and escape, joy and sorrow while all the time lending understanding to our reality. Perhaps this is what it means to be the storyteller of the world. Perhaps this is what it means to be Pippi Longstocking.
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