Representation of Gender, Ethnicity and Sexuality in Wings 7, 8 and 9

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Abstract

The text book is a key component in the arsenal of a teacher of English. For this reason, it is important that this book agrees with the Fundamental Values, when it comes to numerous issues.

What this essay seeks to do is to analyze some books in Wings, which is a popular series of schoolbooks used in Sweden. This study focuses on the books that are used at secondary school and includes both the Base Book and the Activity Book for Wings 7, 8 and 9. The investigation is done by studying three topic areas, namely: gender, ethnicity and sexuality. These areas are investigated with the intention of identifying ideologies and examples of representation that connect to these areas.

The findings from the analysis of both ideologies and the examples of representation show that Wings gives a broad and non-stereotypic view of gender roles which is in accordance with the fundamental values. While gender is a positive example of how modern thinking is visible in the books, the same does not completely apply to ethnicity and sexuality. Findings indicate that representation of ethnicity in Wings, when focus is placed on skin-color, is very similar to that which was observed in books used as far back as 1965. In contrast, religion and class are portrayed in a more balanced and modern manner.

Sexuality is depicted in a more complex way and while the books show a balanced view of heterosexuality, virtually no mention of homo/bisexuality can be found.

**Key words:** Wings, representation, critical discourse analysis, sexuality, ethnicity, ideology, discourse, gender, secondary school, Base Book, activity book, English
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1 Introduction

Whenever text is read, an interpretation is made by the reader and meaning is constructed. We can never be sure how the material that we expose our students to is going to affect them or what meanings they will create. What we can do is to look at the material ourselves and try to predict what the students will see and be prepared to address whatever issues might arise. One can compare the reader to a builder, the text to building materials and the meaning can be seen as the construction. In the same way as it can be dangerous to use bad materials to build a house, it can be problematic to use a bad book when trying to teach in accordance with the fundamental values.

What is to be considered good and bad is obviously a very subjective matter, but I would argue that a good book for teaching English must, aside from being an efficient pedagogical tool, also agree with the fundamental values on which the Swedish school is based. I will look at six books in the Wings-series, written by Mary and Richard Glover, Bo Hedberg and Per Malmberg and try to ascertain how their books deal with three kinds of representation. From an ethnical perspective I will ask the question: How are people in various English-speaking countries portrayed and does this representation agree with our fundamental values? Likewise, I ask if the books depict gender roles and sexuality in a fair and balanced manner or if there are tendencies towards any kind of overrepresentation, discrimination or unfair depiction.

Different countries and cultures are often made into something to be studied in various school subjects and there is a possible danger whenever this is done. Even to highly educated adults, it can be easy to draw broad generalizations and conclusions about the cultures that we study and that risk is likely greater to children. Whether by conscious effort or not, when studying another culture one runs the risk of perceiving it as something exotic, something different and most of all, something “Other”. We need not limit ourselves to talking about otherness in terms of other cultures, for anywhere where we can find a norm, we will likely also find something that breaks that norm. As adults, we are expected to stand above racism and xenophobia, but without the values we are thought as children, we cannot expect to do so. Swedish schools do not only have to function as centres for the study of specific subjects that
their students need later in life, but they must also turn the students into “responsible persons and members of society“ (Skolverket, 1994, p. 8). In order for this goal to be reached, some kind of framework of beliefs and ideas must exist in order for schools to adress this issue. In LPO 94, this framework is referred to as the Fundamental Values and the document dictates that "everyone working in the school should encourage respect for the intrinsic value of each person” (Skolverket, 1994, p. 3).

LPO 94 further states that:

- The school should promote an understanding for others and the ability to empathise.
- Activities should be characterised by care of the individual’s well-being and development. No-one should be subject to discrimination at school based on gender, ethnic belonging, religion or other belief, sexual orientation or disability, or subjected to other degrading treatment”(Skolverket, 1994, p. 3)

On the basis of this statement it is made clear that one goal that schools have, is instill a sense of understanding for cultures, ideologies and beliefs that are different from those encountered in the everyday lives of the students. These values are all related to diversity in one form or another and the same document also states that this is done by “fostering in the individual a sense of justice, generosity of spirit, tolerance and responsibility” (Skolverket, 1994, p. 3). The most obvious areas that come into mind when addressing diversity are probably ethnicity or religion. However, I would argue that issues related to gender and sexuality are every bit as important even though they are not as visible.

In I enlighet med värdegrunden? (Skolverket, 2006) the results of five reports are summarized and discussed. Each of these reports study course books used in several subjects with a focus on a specific area. They deal with questions that are similar to those asked in my own study even though the books used in the reports are not from the subject English and they also study a total of five areas rather than three. In Larson & Rosén´s report, which deals with sexuality, it is made clear that “the school is an important actor for the development of democracy, equality, tolerance and the respect for human rights. It is the task of the school to convey the fundamental values that are formulated in the syllabuses” (Larson & Rosén, 2006, p. 4, my translation).

As stated, it is the responsibility of the school as a whole to work with issues that relate to the fundamental values, which obviously includes all subjects, but the different subjects do not rely on course books to the same degree. Skolverket (2006) declares the course book is an
important teaching aid for English, as well as civics (Skolverket, 2006, p. 49-50). Since the book is important, the need to study it is evident and according to Skolverket (2006, p.10), the only governmental restriction that is placed on course books is the fact that they are provided free of charge to the students.

While the syllabus for English at compulsory school is primarily focused on communicative aspects, it does state that one of the goals for English is for the students to "develop their ability to reflect over ways of living and cultures in English-speaking countries and make comparisons with their own experiences" (Skolverket 2000). This goal directly relates to the ethnic part of this study, but all three areas are included in the curriculum, as stated earlier.

**Purpose and research questions**

The purpose of this paper is to analyze and detail representation and ideologies in *Wings 7-9* as with regards to gender, ethnicity and sexuality. The paper will focus on one research question:

What kind of ideological meanings and messages pertaining to gender, ethnicity and sexuality can be found in *Wings* and how does *Wings* represent these areas?
2 Methodology

This section will describe the methodology that was used to acquire the data for this study. In the next section I will explain the key theoretical concepts that are crucial for the understanding of this essay.

Overview of methodology

The books in the Wings series were analyzed using critical discourse analysis (described in detail in the next section) in accordance with Norman Fairclough and this analysis is the foundation of this essay. According to Johansson & Svedner (2001), "If you include multiple texts in your investigation the aspects (that you study) become fewer but at the same time the opportunity for a comparison between them is opened up" (Johansson & Svedner 2001 p. 34, translation, clarification added). This allows me to look for patterns within the individual books and also patterns that transcend the Wings series as a whole.

The analysis will look at three types of representation of gender, ethnicity and sexuality within the books and will also attempt to identify any ideologies that are connected to these areas of representations. The study will look at the books as with regards to the above-mentioned questions and compare the results to interviews with teachers and students. The books that represent the focal point of this essay are part of the same series and include both a Base Book and an activity book. An overview of the books and the results of the analysis are available in chapter 5.

Critical Discourse Analysis in Theory

My tool for the analysis of the textbooks is called critical discourse analysis. Before explaining what that means, I will define the word discourse in this context. Using Foucault
as a source, Fairclough explains that discourse is “the domain of statements” (Fairclough 2003, p.124) and goes on to say that he sees it as “ways of representing aspects of the world – the processes, relations and structures of the material world, the 'mental world' of thoughts, feelings, beliefs and so forth, and the social world” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 124). Discourse is, simply put, the context in which we look at something. Fairclough points out that “different discourses are different perspectives of the world” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 124).

Fairclough further states that one should try to find the “rules which 'govern' bodies of text and utterances” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 123). These rules will be interpreted as the ideologies which my first research question seeks to find in Wings. Chapter 3 will explain exactly what I mean by ideology.

The two ways of seeing representations of discourse are translated into a method for finding the discourse: “(1) Identify the main parts of the world (including areas of social life) which are represented – the main 'themes'. (2) Identify the particular perspective or angle or point of view from which they are represented” (Fairclough 2003, p. 129). The “parts of the world” mentioned by Fairclough refer to the situations and environments in which representation takes place and the perspectives can be seen as ideological eyeglasses through which one sees the world. Representation of white and non-white people through a white-power perspective would for instance be characterized by portraying white people in a much more positive way than other ethnic groups. This could be done by, for instance only describing the negative/positive aspects of a certain group of people, by simply omitting some groups altogether, stereotyping them or in a number of other ways.

When conducting a critical discourse analysis, one looks at what context (discourse) the text is placed in and from that starting point and one studies the way in which the text describes the aspects that are the focus of the study. A text does not need to be limited to representation from a single perspective, since many aspects can be shown at the same time without conflicting with each other. It would, for example, be possible to have a text which both has a feminist and a capitalist ideology and a text which describes women might simultaneously describe some other group.

When dealing with texts, Fairclough explains that “The most obvious distinguishing features of a discourse are likely to be features of vocabulary – discourses 'word' or 'lexicalize' the world in particular ways” (Fairclough 2003, p. 129). That means that when studying a text,
one should analyze what words are being used, and how the words are structured. The choice of a particular word in favor of another, or the structure in which that word is placed, are both aspects that can give indications of the author’s intention. An example of this could be whether you for instance use the word “cheap” or “economical” to describe someone who does not spend a lot of money.

Aside from the details and word structure, Fairclough points out that “it is more productive to focus on how different discourses structure the world differently” (Fairclough 2003, p. 129). Examples of this could be where the focus of a text is placed and what details are included or omitted from the description of the world.

A modern definition of text does not only include words written on a paper, but also pictures, music and so on. Though there are CDs with recorded speech and music, that are to be used with the Wings books, these have not been studied for this essay. Music has been studied, but only in the form of the lyrics found within the book. Fairclough acknowledges the existence of text in other forms than those consisting only of words (Fairclough, 2003, p. 3) and given the amount of pictures present in a text book and ease with which a picture can be taken in by the viewer, analysis of pictures will also be an important part of this paper. Fairclough does not give any specific instructions for how to deal with pictures, so I will treat them as if though they were conventional texts. That means that I will analyze what pictures have been chosen and what the pictures show in terms of the three forms of representation or ideologies. Finally, I will study the overall impression created by the text and the pictures together using the principles of critical discourse analysis.

Critical Discourse Analysis in Practice

The analysis was conducted by studying the books superficially and then noting every occurrence of representation that relate to gender, ethnicity or sexuality. Next, all texts in the book were closely read and all perceived messages (examples of ideologies) were written down. All messages that could not be connected to gender, ethnicity or sexuality, were removed. Refer to Chapter 3.1: Ideology, for more information about messages. The individual examples of both messages and representation were then analyzed in an attempt to
discern any patterns or tendencies that might transcend the books.

For the ideologies, the next step was to determine if the pattern was strong enough for me to include it in the report. I determine the strength of the pattern by taking into account the number of examples that support the message, the number of areas that I can connect it to and how clearly I deem that the examples show the message.

The examples of representation were also analyzed for patterns, but no examples were removed since the nature of the examples was such that no study was necessary to determine their relevance. Once a pattern was established, the books were re-examined to determine if any further examples could be identified and if they were considered strong enough, they were included. Furthermore, the books were studied in search for any data that might contradict or add variety to the patterns.
3 Previous research

In this section I explain the key concepts that are crucial for the analysis and describe some of the relevant research which has already been performed. First I describe the meaning of two key concepts that are crucial for the understanding of this essay, namely representation and otherness. I also briefly define the word ideology and explain the difference between how I use the words gender and sex in this essay. Furthermore, I define ethnicity. Next I will describe two studies that are similar to my own but have a somewhat different focus. In the next section, I focus on the analysis itself, which includes vocabulary from this section.

Concepts

Representation

For this essay I use the concept representation in accordance with Jostein Grip sund´s definition.

The term representation has an interesting double-originating meaning which one ought to be aware of. ... The word representation initially meant ‘present again’ , but was through the influence of late Latin, soon given the meaning ‘stand for’ - like when a picture stands for the person who was being depicted. It is with this meaning that the word is used when one in media research talks about representation and “forms of representation” (Gripsund 2002, p. 25, my translation).

As stated, this essay seeks to study representation of gender, sexuality and ethnicity in Wings, which means that what is looked at, is how these groups are made to appear. Grip sund points out that representation is not an objective entity, but rather a creation in which the creator is visible. The authors of the Wings series have not written all texts themselves, in fact much of the material consists of extracts from well-known novels and short stories, but since they have selected the content for these books they must also be held “responsible” for representation within these extracts just as if they had been the actual authors.
**Gender and Sex**
For the purpose of clarification I wish to declare the meaning of the words “gender” as opposed to “sex”, when used in this essay. According to Josefson (2005), gender is “a concept that is used to understand and discern the social and cultural factors that create expectations of how girls and boys should be” (Josefson, 2005, p.5, my translation). Sex is sometimes seen as a synonym for gender, but it is rather its biological counterpart. Although I do not oppose Judith Butler (1990) who claims that gender and sex both are constructs, for the purpose of this essay, these definitions will apply during this essay for the purpose of simplification.

**Ethnicity**
The concept of ethnicity is defined as being “Identifying characteristics shared by a group such as culture, custom, race, language, religion or other social distinctions” (development education glossary). During the course of the analysis, these characteristics will be analyzed as with regards to any ideologies that relate to them. Representation of these characteristics will also be studied directly, in the same manner as gender and sexuality.

**The Other**
A key aspect of this study is representation of otherness, or simply, The Other. I will describe the origin of the concept and then connect it to gender, sexuality and ethnicity by explaining the sexual and ethnic “Other” through the use of relevant literature detailing the subject. The basic idea of otherness, according to Ajagán-Lester (2000) is that: The “normative” serves as a basis for comparison against which the “non-normative”, using the definition of The Other, is compared. The other is subconsciously created by an envisaged norm, as a counterpoint to its own existence and it serves the function of elevating its creator. This comparison is reproduced on a societal level, through cultural, economical and other forms of influence. The meaning of the word “reproduced” in this context, refers to how something is done in an uncritical manner which creates a norm for others to follow. Since the dichotomy greatly benefits members of the envisaged norm, then that group is very unlikely to take actions that would change the status quo, since they do not perceive a problem. It is however important to understand that this is not an act of conscious malevolence, simply a lack of action to counteract the process (Ajagán-Lester, 2000).
As an example, one can bring up the wage gap between men and women, which according to Josefson (2005) was at 19% the year 2004. One could argue that if the people who are responsible for setting wages were part of a system in which men were considered better workers (and consequently entitled to a higher pay than women) then those people may themselves set wages based on this notion and hence the problem is reproduced. In a similar manner, parents might decide to buy toy cars for their boys and dolls for the girls, because they themselves were given these toys when they were children. Josefson (2005) clarifies how this works as with regards to gender: “The division the masculine and the feminine is maintained because it is so widespread that it is taken for granted” (Josefson, 2005, p. 17, my translation).

The dichotomy of the “normative” and “the other” can be found in many contexts and I will now describe two such common ones.

**Gender and Otherness**

In *The Second Sex* (1939), French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir describes how, in an otherness-like process, the female sex is “created” through cultural socialization. Among other things, the book brings up issues regarding the way in which the word female is used and how chains of association connect the biological aspects of animals with the societal image of women. De Beauvoir claims that “In the mouth of a man the epithet female has the sound of an insult...“and explains that “The term ‘female’ is derogatory not because it emphasises woman’s animality, but because it imprisons her in her sex” (De Beauvoir, 1939, chapter 1, para. 1). Imprisonment means that women are limited by the roles that they have been given by society, which is patriarchal in its nature. As described in the first part of this chapter, otherness is based on the contrast between the normal and the “abnormal” and in this case the woman is turned into The Other through the way in which she is contrasted to a male norm. De Beauvoir declares in her conclusion that “NO, WOMAN is not our brother; through indolence and deceit we have made her a being apart, unknown” (De Beauvoir 1939, chapter 4, para. 1) and in doing so, hints at the creation of the process in which the man becomes the norm and the woman is turned into “the other”.
Ethnicity and Otherness
The concept of the ethnic Other is examined by Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* (1978). The book describes the way in which the Western world depicts the East in a way that makes it look inferior by elevating the exotic aspects of the east in its attempt to conceal the process. However, this is not something which is done intentionally but happens at an unconscious level. According to Jim Dexheimer at Western Michigan University “Many scholars place the beginning of postcolonial studies in history, literature, philosophy, anthropology, and the arts at the publication of Said’s *Orientalism*, published in 1978” (Dexheimer, 2004, para. 1).

*Orientalism* (1978) deals with a concrete example of ethnic otherness and culture. Said discusses how “other” cultures are made exotic, while never being described in an overtly racist manner. Valid as the concept may be, Said is criticized, for instance by Professor George Landow, who claims that “The book completely neglects China, Japan and South East Asia, and it has very little to say about India. Although purporting to be the study of the West treats all of the East, the book almost entirely upon the middle east” (Landow 2002). It is important to understand that racial otherness is not the same as racism. Racism is a matter of consciously saying that people of certain races are superior/inferior, but when it comes to “the other”, one talks about how other races/cultures are different, exotic or poor (Ajagán-Lester, 2000, p. 10-12). It has also been pointed out that the very same thinking which Said accuses the West of using against the East, is mirrored in the thinking that the east uses against the west. This thinking is referred to as Occidentalism.

Sexual otherness / heteronormativity
As I have explained earlier, otherness is created with the subconscious intention of empowering the definer by creating an opposite with which to compare itself. In terms of gender and sexuality, heteronormativity “is the term used to refer to the institutionalization of heterosexuality in a society” (Lechasin, n.d, para. 1). Judith Butler (1990) is one of the more prominent and controversial writers within this field. While the use of a biological approach as a valid foundation for defining gender is criticized by feminists, in *Gender Trouble*, Butler takes the sex /gender discussion further still and goes on to also question gender, claiming that both gender and sex are discursive mental constructs. While this might be seen as somewhat extreme, in Butler’s way of thinking all concepts are mental constructs which are applied to the world around us. Consequently, the world is “created” for us, not there to be found.
She presents what she calls “The heterosexual matrix” in which heterosexuality and gender are linked. The established norms within society dictate what behaviour is acceptable for men and women. There seems to be a certain structure or a set of rules that governs such concepts as masculinity and femininity. These opposite binaries are closely linked to heterosexual desire and the two dimensions are culturally reinforced by one another.

This matrix is based on duality: man/woman, heterosexual/homosexual and asserts that one cannot exist without the other. The structure is not fixed, but is constantly re-created through our actions, our performances. Butler uses the word “performative” to describe how we create gender and sexuality and hence the very matrix itself. Subjects that follow the norm are not noticed and neither is the norm. When the norm is challenged, then the subject responsible is made visible, while the norm itself remains invisible. The one who is made visible is at the same time turned into “The Other” and studied as such (Butler 1990).

A common generic concept is the idea that exceptions reinforce the rule and this applies in this case too. A few examples of deviation from the rule only serve to strengthen the norm and it is only when the norm is challenged on a large scale or in an unexpected way that we start to look at the norm with skeptical eyes.

The origin of Queer theory (sometimes called queer studies), which is the foundation of Larson & Rosén´s study, can be traced to Judith Butler.

In *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1* (Foucault, 1976), Michel Foucault describes how acceptable and unacceptable sexualities were defined and enforced, first through the use of morality using simple dichotomies of good/bad and natural/unnatural and second through science and scientific objectivity. He claims that “sexual irregularity was annexed to mental illness; from childhood to old age, a norm of sexual development was defined and all possible deviations were carefully described” (Foucault, 1976 p. 36), hence confirming the power of definitions that is crucial to the idea of otherness. This division stretches across the boundaries of morality and into the realm of law and power, which is explained by Foucault: "Power is essentially what dictates its law to sex. Which means first of all that sex is placed by power in a binary system: licit and illicit, permitted and forbidden" (Foucault, 1976 p. 83). Josefson agrees with this statement and also points out that “The view on the body, emotional
life and sexuality has varied during different time periods” (Josefson, 2005, p. 108, my translation). In other words: What is accepted varies from time to time, but the practice of defining accepted and unaccepted sexuality is an ongoing process.

While Foucault never uses the term sexual otherness, the concept is used by other authors, such as Gary Richards (1969), who in *Lovers and Beloved – Sexual otherness in southern fiction* uses this term to represent homosexuality in various forms. The sexual other could be used as a definition for any type of sexuality that does not follow the “norm”, but for the purpose of this investigation, I will focus on representation that follows Richards’ investigation.

**Ideology**

My research question partly deals with the identification of ideologies. Well-known ideologies include for instance socialism, anarchism and capitalism, but the word is not limited to these examples. Fairclough defines ideology as “representations which can be shown to contribute to social relations of power and domination” (Fairclough 2003, p.9). This obviously includes the previous examples but also allows the inclusion of other manifestations that might not have established names. Fairclough also makes it clear that ideologies can “…have a durability and stability which transcends individual texts or bodies of text” (Fairclough 2003, p. 9). This is in a sense what I have looked for: ideas which somehow are connected to society. Meaning is created in the meeting between the reader and the text, in a process known as co-construction. For this reason, the findings of any textual analysis can become subject to very varied interpretations, depending on who the reader is. Co-construction assumes that the reader has a personality and a background of his/her own, which affects the way in which he or she creates meaning from a text (M. Feathers, 2004). However, since the findings are accompanied by textual evidence, the conclusions drawn in this report should be visible to the reader.

A single example in the book that, through my interpretation, creates a social “message” does not constitute an ideology by itself. More messages with the same idea, do however constitute a pattern and hence an ideology through the way that they promote or demote a social discourse. I have made the limitation that the ideology must somehow be related to ethnicity, gender or sexuality for it to be identified, otherwise it lacks relevance for my study.
Readings

Modern theories on reading and textual understanding state that, while a text by itself is static, understanding of a text is something which takes place on an individual level and is therefore subject to influence by many factors. Each reader has a separate background with a unique set of previous experiences, values, set of skills, preferences and his/her knowledge is also unique. Furthermore, the context of the reading can vary depending of any number of external factors such as the reading environment and the reader’s state of mind (Feathers 2004). Since an analysis is based on understanding and understanding is dynamic, it becomes clear that the result of an analysis will depend on the reader. In my study I will point to the textual evidence that I base my conclusions on and explain why I arrived at them, but I do not wish nor expect my readers to reach the same conclusions as I have done.

It is believed that the author encodes his/her message(s) into a text, which is then taken in by the readers and is decoded. Since the sender and the receivers have different frameworks of knowledge, the meaning constructed by the readers/receivers will vary from case to case and will also be different from what the sender intended. How the text was read and the meaning which was decoded from that text is called a reading. Readings can be categorized as being dominant, negotiated, alternative or oppositional. A dominant reading is made when the reader totally agrees with the author and when the reader partially agrees, the reading is considered to be negotiated. An alternative reading is one which differs from the dominant reading but which does not stand in direct opposition with it. When the reader makes a completely different interpretation than the author intended, that reading is classified as oppositional if it directly contradicts the dominant reading (Chandler 2001). When analyzing the texts, I will bring up different ways in which something could be understood and I will refer to readings from the abovementioned categories.

Similar studies

A study that deals with representation from an ethnical perspective, is Luis Ajagán-Lester’s “De Andra” – Afrikaner i svenska pedagogiska texter (1768-1965). His study is centered on
books used in geography and history and uses critical discourse analysis as one of his main analytical tools. The study is divided into four time periods and for each part Ajagán-Lester summarizes his findings. In addition, he also has a short summary in English in which he briefly explains his results. Most relevant for my study is the latest period, ranging from 1958 to 1965. According to Ajagán-Lester, this time period changes the overall representation of Africans from outward hostility and prejudice to a more favorable representation where otherness exists in more subtle dichotomies like high and low culture and how Africa is seen as something that can and needs to be developed. He also explains that science loses its perception of being unbiased and the unquestionable status which comes from that perception. Although he describes a change away from outward hostility, Ajagán-Lester also points out that:

Of what has been said, one can draw the conclusion that our school and school texts have played a central role in the selective process of school knowledge. In this process, certain voices were permitted and legitimate, others were excluded and silenced. By selectively removing anti-colonial and antieurocentric voices, the texts have helped create and recreate a very defined knowledge object: “the Others” as inferior. (Ajagán-Lester 2000, p. 241)

He describes an overall sense of progress as the study reaches its end in 1965 and how the focus shifts from differences to similarities between “us” and “them”.

Larson & Rosén created a report detailing how “sexual orientation is depicted in course books for secondary school and A-courses at upper secondary school” (Larson & Rosén 2006, p. 3, my translation). They look at course books for Biology, History, Religion and Civics using queer theory as an analytical focal point. In order to make their point of view clear, I will include their definition of the term queer theory:

Queer does not signify an identity, but a critical point of view to the normative. The idea is not to determine the essential specific nature of certain sexual characters outside the dominating heterosexuality, but to examine the system of norms and actions which have created the state of exclusion (Rosenberg (2002, p. 6, translation). One should remember that queer theory is not one coherent theory, rather it is more of a mix of studies that critically focus on the heteronormative and “normal” and its relation to the “deviating”. The academic origin of queer theory can primarily be found in poststructuralistic feminism (Larson & Rosén 2006, page 6, translation).

Since part of my investigation will include a study that is similar in nature to queer theory, this definition will also be useful for the purpose of explaining my own research. The
investigation performed by Larson & Rosén first makes conclusions on a subject-by-subject basis and then outlines the overall findings of their data collection. They state that: “It is completely clear that whenever there are questions about sex or questions that in one way or another relate to sex, heterosexuality is assumed unless something else is stated“ (Larson & Rosén 2006, p. 33, my translation).

However, they also make it clear that the heteronormative image is not the only one which can be seen, even though it is the most dominant image. Other key points in their study include the conclusion that while there is no trace left of texts that directly display a negative image of non-normative sexualities, they are the victims of exclusion and of being focused upon as The Other. Exclusion means that they simply are not represented at all. I would like to clarify that being focused upon as The Other means that they are seen as something exotic. Refer to the previous part of this section for a more detailed description of the concept “The Other”.
4 Textual analysis of Wings 7,8 and 9

In this section I will describe the results of my analysis of the books in the *Wings* series. First I will outline the basic structure of the books and explain the scope of the analysis. Next, I will report on what ideologies that, with my reading, were detected in the book. For each ideology I will start with a brief description and then I will provide textual evidence to support my interpretation. After dealing with the ideologies, I will report on my findings regarding representation of gender, ethnicity and sexuality.

The books

For this essay I selected one of the more popular text book series used in Swedish schools: *Wings*. The study was focused on books in the Wings series that are used at secondary school (*Wings* 7,8 and 9), all of which have the same authors. Each step in the series consists of one *Base Book* and one activity book. The books are intended to be used in such a way that the *Base Book* serves as a starting point and then refers to the activity book. At the end of the *Base Books* one can find word lists for the various chapters and at the end of the activity books one can find grammar, facts and an alphabetical wordlist. The table (Table 1) below outlines how the three books are designed in terms of page numbers and number of sections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Number of pages</th>
<th>Number of sections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Wings 7 Base Book</em></td>
<td>144</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Wings 7 Activity Book</em></td>
<td>195</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Wings 8 Base Book</em></td>
<td>144</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Wings 8 Activity Book</em></td>
<td>219</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Wings 9 Base Book</em></td>
<td>143</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Wings 9 Activity Book</em></td>
<td>241</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis does not include the wordlists or grammar sections.
Findings - Ideologies

Based on the principles of critical discourse analysis I have analyzed the six books with a focus on representation and ideologies that relate to one or more of the areas of ethnicity, gender and sexuality with the intention of answering the first half of my main research question: What kind of ideological meanings and messages pertaining to ethnicity, gender and sexuality can be found in Wings and how does Wings represent these areas?

In accordance with modern language theories, representation is dependent on the reader and therefore what is presented here is a series of examples of readings, not an objective summary of something which has been found.

Please note that the examples themselves do not necessarily need to directly relate to one of the three areas, but the ideologies which can be found within them do. Many examples that I bring up here will be taken from an opposing reading of the text, but I will also account for other ways in which the text could be interpreted.

The definition of an ideology made by Fairclough applies to these ideologies in the sense that they influence power relations within society through the values and messages that the reader creates from the material in the text. What these ideologies are, in accordance with the principles of critical discourse analysis, are rules that govern texts. Both the entire book and the parts that make it up can be considered to be texts. I will however outline ideologies that have been extracted from the articles that make up the book, rather than the entire book. Nonetheless, in my reading the ideologies occur in so many places that I consider them to be representative of the book as a whole. I will follow the following principle when I go through my findings: First I will present the principle of the ideology and then I will give examples and explain why I argue that the texts could be interpreted in this way and explain other ways in which it could be interpreted. Finally I will explain which of the three research areas that the ideology applies to and how.
Ideology - Conformity

Principle
Conforming to society is in my interpretation, a very common principle that I argue exists in Wings. Society needs people to follow rules and act in a rather similar manner in order for everything to run smoothly, which in my reading of the texts is a prominent ideology. In general terms, rules concerning gender, for instance, dictate what kind of behavior is expected from a man and from a woman and the same could be said about ethnicity: If you belong to a particular social class, have a particular skin-color or religion, then there are expectations placed on you that dictate how you should act in order to fit it. In terms of critical discourse analysis, the governing rule in this case is: You must conform. This rule is not stated overtly, but is imbued in the texts through consequences that are linked to individuals that do and do not adhere to this rule, as I will show in the examples.

There are both positive and negative aspects of conformity. The socialization of children into democratic citizens is as we read in the introduction, very much consistent with fundamental values and as such inherently positive. However, conformity also creates stereotypes and “molds” that people are forced to fit into.

In my reading of the texts, there are fourteen cases where “Conformity” could be seen as something which is promoted. Some of them are more and some are less clearly stated, but the general theme is consistent. As I stated earlier, some of the examples that I bring up here do not directly connect to the three areas by way of the content which is presented, but the ideology which is identified in my reading of the text does.

Examples
The first example in which my reading of a text resulted in what I consider to be a conformist agenda can be found in Wings 7, exercise A. The text reads: “Tell the truth! (Headline) Every day you find yourself in different situations where you must decide what to do. Most times you know what you should do. But do you always do it? Look at the following situations and choose your answer honestly“(p. 64). The book then goes on to ask the reader five questions that he/she is expected to answer honestly. A dominant reading of this text could claim that this is simply an exercise in morality that does not have an agenda. Judging from the genre
and the intended audience, this does make sense, but one can also read the text in a different way. An alternative reading, in my opinion, is to say that by having the students think about right and wrong, they become more productive members of society, by conforming to its given norms of behavior. Within this interpretation, one could also argue that children are being forced into following a given template regarding behavior and as such are deprived the opportunity to think for themselves. The activity book has an example that I argue acts as a means of reinforcing the conformist concept of telling the truth. The story is from the same section as the text about telling the truth and is titled ‘The whole truth – or just a yolk?’. The story is about a boy who seems to get into trouble all the time. When he is questioned by the principle about how a fried egg ended up in his atlas, he tells a long story and tries to explain what happened. Throughout the telling of the story, the principle is suspicious and skeptical but at the end he seems unsure what to believe. The story portrays the boy as being good-hearted and somewhat naïve, which makes his account credible despite the fact that it is very strange and unlikely. At the end of the text we read: “When he had gone, the Headmaster said to himself, ‘If that boy is telling the truth I must let him off, but if he isn’t telling the truth he is the biggest liar I have ever met!’” (Wings 7 Activity book, p.77). What was argued in the previous text is, in my reading, reinforced through consequences in this story. We do not know if the boy told the truth or not, but the text tells us that if you do tell the truth then no harm will come to you.

The previous example does contain one question which could be considered to question the principle of not lying and it asks the reader to “Try to find explanations for one or a couple of these mishaps” (Wings 7 Activity book, p.77). The book then lists some situations, such as “that you were late for school this morning” and “that you have not done your homework”. It could be argued that by asking the students to do this exercise, they also practice becoming better liars, yet I would argue that the text itself stays true to the conformist principle that I claim exists in the Wings series.

Sometimes the dominant reading of the message can be humorous and fun, but an alternative reading of the text shows something else. In Wings Base Book 7, one can find the seemingly innocent fable about the boy who thought he was a bear and tried to live like one. The fable ends with: “He made his way to a dark cave where a family of bears lived. He went into the cave and greeted them with a loud roar. The bears were very surprised. In a few minutes, there wasn’t a trace left of poor Eddie” (p. 66). While the moral of the story (and most likely,
the dominant reading of the text) is explained as: “You can fool some of the people some of the time. But don’t try to pull a fast one on an 800-pound grizzly bear” (p. 66). True as that might be, an alternative reading would say that the moral of the story is: If you try to be something that you were not born to be, then bad things will happen to you. Had the boy realized that he was human, rather than a bear, then he would have conformed to human behavior and would not have been eaten. We do not know what the author’s intention was, but since the book makes it clear that we are talking about a fable and the definition of a fable is “a traditional short story that teaches a moral lesson, especially a story about animals” (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Updated Version), I would argue that the stated moral in the story is questionable because it lacks a link to reality in general.

Application to research areas

Gender:
Conformity in terms of gender is for instance the notion that boys should wear blue and girls should wear pink clothes, which is a norm that is established by a society that in one way or another seeks to conform to what is considered to be the “natural” order of things. Josefson explains how: “The social and cultural patterns of masculinity and femininity are deep within us, often so deep that they appear natural” (Josefson, p. 9).

An alternative reading of the second example translates to: If you are a man/woman, then act like one or you will be in trouble. Josefson demonstrates that this is not just a matter of being excluded by the group that you “should” belong to, but that it applies to the way that you feel if you are not complacent with your expected standards of behavior (Josefson, p. 22). In the example, the consequence was made visible in a very dramatic way, but I would argue that being eaten alive can be seen as a symbolic replacement for exclusion.

Ethnicity:
Conformity would mean that if you are white then you should dress/act in a “white way” and for instance not listen to hip-hop or have dreadlocks because doing so will cut you off from the mainstream. The boy is human, but he does not feel like one so he is divided between two identities, in what could be compared to the child of an interracial couple. His choice is to either conform to his human or his bear-identity and he makes the wrong choice, which is explained through the consequence of his death.
Sexuality:
The boy is unhappy because he does not feel that he is part of the group that he believes that he really belongs to. In my reading, this is metaphorically comparable to the difficulties faced by non-heterosexuals that are trying to find their sexuality. Josefson explains how ”a lot of people may feel bad during the time period during which they are searching for their sexual identity” (Josefson, p.108). Pressure from the outside, in the shape of peer pressure and societal expectations, conflicts with pressure from the inside, which is similar to dilemma faced by the boy in the fable. The need to conform, but the uncertainty regarding what to conform to, is the key in my reading of the text.

**Ideology – Critical Thinking**

**Principle**
My reading of the Wings books shows numerous examples of what can happen if one blindly accepts something. This blindness is comforting and makes life easier but at the same time limits the afflicted. However, when critical thinking is applied to previously unquestioned statements or assumed facts, the people involved are in a way set free of limitations and reach more profound conclusions, which I will demonstrate in my examples.

**Examples**
My first example of this ideology is the story is called “The most mature thing I have ever seen” and is about a girl called Lisa who starts at a new school, where the untold rules are unknown to her. The text informs the reader that groups are a big part of the way of life at the school and that everyone must fit in somewhere or risk being left out. The girl unknowingly violates one of the rules, dictated by the students themselves, by walking across the meeting place in the school yard, instead of walking around it. The girl is ridiculed by all groups but is finally saved by the kind actions of a boy, resulting in the removal of the rule. The morality, in terms of my reading of this story, is that people who group together can do things because they are conforming to the behavior of the group, rather than because of their individual decisions or motivations. Having the courage to break free from conformity and think for oneself is a core element of the moral of this story, in my alternative reading of the text. I argue that this is expressed through causality in the sense that the people at the school are set
free of the rule when they start to question it and start to think for themselves.

A dominant reading of the same story need not contain any ideological aspects at all, but would only be an example of how the unlikely people can become your friends. Another theme in the dominant reading likely includes the human need to group, which is depicted in the story: “Around the quad the various school cliques assembled. The druggies lined up on the south side. The punkers were next to them. Next to them were the nerds and brains. The Jocks stood on the north side, next to the surfers” (Wings 9 Activity Book, p. 45). This depiction does not need to have any value at all and could simply depict a known reality, but in my reading of the text, the groups are the source of the rule which the girl breaks. The following text is located after the previous extract and reads: “Everybody knew their place… Nobody at Monroe walked across the middle of the quad. To get from one side to the other, students walked around the quad. Around the people. Around the stares” (Wings 9 Activity Book, p. 45). The part about everyone knowing their place is the key, since their place is dictated by what group they belong to. In my reading, the book once again uses causality to promote an ideological standpoint. In this case, I argue that the consequence is the rule itself, created by an uncritical view on conformity. At the end of the story, when the students do adapt a more critical view, they are rewarded by the abolishment of the rule: “As soon as the bell that ended the last morning class started ringing, the students swarmed toward their lockers. Then those who didn’t eat in the cafeteria headed with their sac lunches across the quad” (Wings 9 activity book, p. 47). As stated in the principle: critical thinking is rewarded with insight and the “profound” realization that the rule was meaningless.

My second example is rather famous and is actually a listening exercise with an accompanying text. While I did not have access to the material which would have been listened to by students reading the text, the information in the book and the questions that are included are sufficient to argue my point. The text is called “The Wave” (118-119) and is located in Wings 9 Activity book. The book describes what takes place in each scene and allows the reader to follow the major changes that take place while the details are played out on the CD. The events are based on a true story and revolve around how a teacher creates a movement called “The Wave” and gradually makes the group more and more heterogeneous in a way similar to what the Nazi party did during the prelude to the Second World War. The aim is clearly to make students aware of how easy it is to become part of a group and lose one’s individuality. This is made clear by the assignment: “What you can do (Headline) 1
Work with some friends to discuss how Mr Ross (the teacher in the story) got his pupils involved in the movement called The Wave. 2 Can you see similar things happening anywhere around you now? If you can, describe what they are (“Wings 9 Activity book, p. 119). The first question makes the students think of some of the methods with which groups can create a collective identity, such as symbols, clothes, mantras and rituals. Doing this is the first step in the process of protecting themselves from the unwanted influence of such groups.

The events that occur in the story serve as the effect in this causality, while uncritical thinking becomes the cause. The teacher in the story sought to show his students what the situation was like in pre-war Germany and was so successful that he almost replicated that very same chain of events in his experiment. Once the group was created, its members became hostile to those who were outside the group and the group ideals overrode the individual ideals of the members. In my reading, the second question places the text in a modern context. This is necessary because historical events tend to be seen as very vague and distant. If the dangers are not perceived as real, they will not be effective in promoting a critical view of the world. The described events will be seen as something which happened to somebody else, but could not happen to those who read/hear about them.

**Application to research areas**

**Gender:**

Groups in schools can be created based on many common denominators and the most common one is gender. The groups in the first story are created using other parameters, but the same principle applies, in the sense that they create their own codes and rules that the members of the groups must follow if they do not want to be excluded. Josefson claims that these rules exist from a very early age and that they are reinforced throughout our lives. This is done through the expectations that we have on ourselves and others, as well as the fact that corporations make money because of these rules (Josefson, p. 17-36). In the same way as the groups in the story fail to look at themselves in a critical manner, men and women who fail to do the same are affected by consequences. For the groups in the text, these consequences are segregation, lack of individuality and fear/hate for outsiders. Men and women face the consequences of being left out of the activities of the opposite gender, or exclusion if they fail to comply with the rules of their group (Josefson, p. 27, p.31). Critical thinking does however open up new paths, by questioning the rules and the motives behind their existence.
Ethnicity:
This can include groups from the same country or general geographical area, as well as groups consisting of people who share a common religion or social class. In the first example, groups are formed on an ethnical basis, using criteria such as being part of a subculture (punkers, skaters, etc) or having certain skills (brains/nerds and jocks). They are limited by the expectations that they place on themselves and the expectations of other groups, but also on the superordinate rules that apply to the entire school. The group in the second example conforms to the same set of beliefs, which I argue is comparable to a religious ethnical classification. These beliefs become more important than what the students themselves believe and it makes them aggressive towards those who are not part of their group. Had they been able to adapt a critical approach to these beliefs, I argue that they would have been able to co-exist with other groups.

Sexuality:
The inclusion/exclusion process which applies to gender, does in part translate to sexuality as well. Standards of sexual behavior are set by if you are a man or a woman and those who do not follow the accompanying rules are subject to reprisals by society (Josefson p.111). In some ways, the properties of heterosexual women have become associated with homosexual men and vice versa. By conforming to the traits and skills that are associated with heterosexual masculinity, men and women become included in these groups. However, when they do not conform but instead follow the ideals of the opposite sex, they risk being excluded from the heterosexual group (Butler 1990).

Ideology – Euro-centralism

Principle
The discourse of Euro-centralized thinking is clearly detectable in these books in my reading of the texts. My analysis showed numerous examples in which The West (Europe) is represented as the “civilized” world and also the notion there was nothing to say about the “exotic” parts of the world before they were “discovered” by the West. This is visible in a number of ways, but is most clearly identifiable when the books account for encounters
between western “explorers” and other cultures.

Examples
In *Wings 7 Base Book* we can see James Cook, dressed in a uniform standing at attention with his musket and his sword. We also see a British ship and a British mine, yet the chapter is not about Britain but New Zeeland. What we do see is a picture of Maori wood carvings and two pictures of wildlife. The book tells us to look in the Activity Book to find out more about new Zeeland. Section 6 of the Activity Book is about Australia and New Zeeland. The first headline of the chapter is called “A new continent” and the introduction reads:

In 1642 a Dutch explorer, Abel Tasman, was on a voyage in the Pacific Ocean. He came to a ‘Great south land’, and thought he had discovered a new continent. More than a hundred years later James Cook, an Englishman, sailed away to find that continent. (p. 136).

If the continent is uncritically described as new, then this implies that the only things that matter are things known by the western world or that directly interact with it. What follows is a description of how James Cook traveled from England to New Zeeland and encountered the Maoris. The book describes this encounter: “Cook and his men also wanted to make peaceful contact with the people who lived on the islands. Unfortunately the native people, the Maoris, were afraid and suspicious of the white strangers. There was fierce fighting, and some of the Maori were killed (p. 137)”. While it may be impossible to say exactly what happened, it is safe to assume that history, as always, is written by the victor and is going to have a bias that favors the west.

There is also a picture, showing Cook and (judging from the text) a botanist named Daniel Solander surrounded by jungle. There are no traces of weapons or anything hostile at all in the picture. The Maori are also described and depicted here. The prominent picture shows a tattooed Maori warrior wielding a big wooden sword. After the brief introduction, there are three headlines: “The Maoris and Cook”, “The Maoris and the British” and “The Maoris today”. In the first subchapter we can read about some basic facts about the Maoris (numbers, customs, etc) in a seemingly objective way. There are two noteworthy things to point out here: First, there is only the white point of view, with no attempts to neither tell the story from “the other side”, nor encourage the reader to analyze the text from a critical perspective. Secondly, the majority of the information about the Maoris relates to interaction between the
Maori and the “explorers”. If, for instance, the Maori were such a violent people, who exactly did they fight before the white explorers arrived? In what ways were the Maoris similar to the whites? All we know is how they were different. These questions are omitted from the text and one can only speculate as to the reason why. I cannot say if it is a matter of intentional omission or not, but this and other examples show similar tendencies.

These tendencies show us that the west is the “norm” against everything else is compared, which creates the dichotomy of superior/inferior cultures. Nowhere is it overtly stated that the other cultures are primitive or inferior, instead their exotic nature is emphasized and no mention of similarities between the west and the Maori can be found. Students, who see this type of representation without anything to balance the scales, could very well be influenced by the idea that other cultures are so very different from our own. The notion of something being different does not automatically lead to racist thinking, but it is arguably easier to relate to the familiar than to the different.

Representation of the white people in this context is not completely positive, since the book later describes how whites victimize the Maoris and how today the Maoris live as second class citizens in their own country. In addition, the whites are referred to as “the white strangers”, which indicates that they are intruders or at least outsiders and there is one instance in which the word “explored” is placed within citation marks, indicating a hint of critical thinking.

**Application to research areas**

Euro-centralism is primarily linked to the racial/ethnical component of this essay, but the idea of value related to gender and sexuality being linked to cultures, is a possible extrapolation of this ideology. I say possible, because no examples of can be found in any of the books. However, as Foucault pointed out, there has been a clear distinction between “good” and “bad” sexuality and that definition is determined by the one who is powerful. The definer has been a white male, which creates a cause/effect relationship between culture and acceptable/unacceptable sexuality. In this way Euro-centralism is in a sense linked to both sexuality and gender, because it helps dictate “norms”. Josefson also points out that the norms for sexuality and gender are inconsistent and depend on both time and culture.
Ideology – Questioning stereotypical ideas

Principle
Although not numerous, there are some examples of how the Wings series shows the reader that things need not necessarily be as they first appear or the way one would expect them to be. In the books, this idea is presented in a few examples, but examples of this ideology when it comes to traditional gender roles will be explained in the next part of this chapter. The examples that I have noticed in the books seem to focus on the relationship between adults and children and how they typically behave.

Examples
Wings 8 Base Book contains a poem with the name “Get Out of Bed” and at first it seems to be a typical dialogue between a child and an adult, containing some familiar excuses as to why the boy should not need to attend school. However, in the final paragraph everything is changed:

You faked a headache yesterday.
Don’t pull that stuff on me today.
Stop acting like a silly fool –
The principle cannot skip school! (P. 82)

The implication of the ideology, in my reading of the texts, is to get the students to question things that they might assume to be true, like the fact that adults are unaffected by early mornings and relationships to others. There is also a similar theme to the story in Wings 9 Activity book, called “The outsider” (p. 35). It is first implied that the story is about a student who comes to a new school and encounters the bullying teacher, who makes his life miserable, but in the end it is revealed that the bully is a in fact a student and the outsider is a teacher.

Application to research areas
Gender:
This ideology is linked to gender, in the sense that there are expectations how men and women should behave, yet everyone does not follow these expectations. If we for instance see child playing with toy cars, then cultural norms make us assume that the child is a boy, even though this might not be the case.
Ethnicity:
We do our best to make things simple and we assume that we can do so without any negative consequences. One consequence of this is racial profiling, which is defined as: “when race is used by law enforcement or private security officials, to any degree, as a basis for criminal suspicion in non-suspect specific investigations” (Amnesty USA – Racial profiling). Statistics show that a particular group of people is more likely to commit a particular crime, so whenever such a crime is committed, it is assumed that the person responsible is of particular skin color or has some other ethnic characteristic.

Sexuality:
In a predominantly heterosexual world, assumptions about sexuality are made based on assumed facts that relate to probability, statistics and stereotypically generated expectations. It is assumed that sexuality follows a given pattern and that any deviations from this pattern can be detected by studying looks and behaviour. People that follow their gender-dictated template are assumed to be heterosexual and vice versa.

Findings – Overview of Representation

In the previous section I detailed the ideologies that pertained to gender, ethnicity and sexuality. In this section I will account for representation of these areas without including ideologies. This will answer the second part of the research question: What kind of ideological meanings and messages pertaining to gender, ethnicity and sexuality can be found in Wings and how does Wings represent these areas?

Representation - Gender
These are the findings that relate to representation of gender. I will divide this representation into two categories. First I will focus on representation of pictures, illustrations and the design graphics of the book. This part includes the use of colors and clothing but does not detail any kind of textual representation. The second part focuses on representation of properties and character traits. This part uses text from the Wings books to argue my case.
Gender: Representation through colors and clothing

The use of colors to indicate masculinity and femininity is not completely stereotypical, but there are strong tendencies to link, for instance pink/light colors to women and blue/dark colors to men. In Wings 7 Base Book we can find one very good example of how color is used as a way of indicating who is male and who is female. The headline is called “In the town” (p. 98-99) and if we look at the people shown in the picture, we notice that six out of a total of eight men wear blue shirts, while the remaining two wear dark red and dark green clothes. I should point out that the graphic style makes it hard to identify the sex of some of the people in the picture.

The same thing can be seen in the Activity Book for year 7, but the contrast is much clearer and instead of light/dark as a divider we see how pink and blue are used. The picture (p. 23) shows four children sleeping in two cribs and the text makes it clear that we are talking about two boys and two girls. While the book does not specifically say that the children wearing blue are boys and the children wearing pink are girls, the order in which they appear in the text (“Two brothers and two sisters”) and cultural rules both indicate that so is the case. Josefson points out that “If a baby wears the same amount of blue and pink clothing, there is often confusion among those that do not know the baby” (Josefson, p. 17). By doing so, she does not say which color is linked to which sex but I would argue that this is common knowledge. The use of colors in this way is something which creates dividers of what we expect from girls and boys and this, together with other expectations, limits our options in life (Berg, 2005, p. 9). In Wings, the link between sex and color is not absolutely firm and we can for instance see how both women in Wings 7 Base Book are wearing black pants(p.78) and this is by no means an isolated occurrence.

When it comes to clothing, the most easily identified type is picture representation. We can find a rather stereotypical example of this in Wings 7 Base Book. The purpose of the exercise (found on p. 30) is to describe what people are wearing, using a combination of the names of various pieces of clothing, colors and patterns. There are two photographs (one of a boy and one of a girl) and one cartoon figure of a girl, with the names of the characters below the pictures. The girl is dressed in a school uniform, with a skirt, sweater and coat. She is standing next to a book case, while talking on the phone. The boy, sitting in a locker room, is
dressed in shorts, a sports sweater and he is putting on running shoes. While there are numerous similar examples where clothing is linked to sex, this particular example is among the more stereotypical ones because it not only uses stereotypical clothing but also activates, which I will discuss in the next section.

Examples where we see men or women wearing clothes that conflict with stereotypical views are more complex to discuss. Women do wear pants to some extent, even though skirts tend to dominate the picture of female representation in Wings. The question of whether or not there are men wearing clothing that conflicts with masculinity is very hard to answer since pretty much any type of clothing could be masculine, provided it has a masculine color. The use of colors in combination with clothing does add variation and helps ensure that representation is not one-sided.

Gender: Representation through behavior and character traits
We see that men in Wings in general like sports while women like school and books. The example from the previous part, which dealt with clothing, is a good example of this tendency since it shows the man in a locker room and the woman in a library. Since the pictures are placed next to each other, the book is telling us that this is the way that men and women are expected to be. The pictures (p. 30) also tell us that women are neat, while men do not care about order. In her book “Genus- hur påverkar det dig?”, Josefson lists traits which she claims are considered to be masculine and feminine. Aside from neatness, the other traits found in the pictures completely overlap with the traits described in Josefson’s book and also occur in various other places in Wings, for instance in Activity Book 8.

The book shows us how to write letters of introduction by using two examples written by students. One was written by a boy (p. 18) and the other by a girl (p. 19), but we do not need to analyze the letters themselves to see the pattern, since the questions for the pages are enough. This is a translation of the questions:

A Answer these questions.
1 If you compare the letters to each other, you will see that they bring up pretty much the same things. The letters are alike. Why is Anna’s letter longer?
2 Look at the introduction. What has Martin forgotten to write in the beginning of the letter?
3 If you look at Anna’s letter you will see that she has divided the letter into seven paragraphs, aside from the opening and end-phrases. What do the paragraphs contain?
In this example, both the girl and the boy are athletic (most likely because the letters would be easier to compare if both students wrote about the same things), with the boy playing ice-hockey and the girl playing basketball. This might be seen as an attempt to counteract stereotypes. However the two children conform rather well to the stereotypical male/female archetypes. Martin likes hamburgers, football and rugby (even though he says that he does not understand the rules). In contrast, we find out that Anna has glasses (which is not a trait by itself, but has come to symbolize intelligence) and that she likes music, watching TV and walking in the forest. Her letter is used as a “good” example of a letter, further reinforcing the notion that girls do better in school. Martin ends his letter with the formal, non-emotional “Yours sincerely Martin”, while Anna ends with “Love from Anna”, which would indicate a representation of the more emotional nature of women. Josefson also attributes emotions to women, using words such as “soft”, “show emotions” and “be warm” (Josefson, p.8). Another example of emotional women can be found in the article “Poems for young lovers and dreamers” (Wings 9 Activity Book, 58) which shows a girl writing inside a heart.

We can relatively easily find a woman in an otherwise typically male role such as spy (The story “Noor Inayat Kahn”, p. 133 Wings 9 Activity Book) and detective (all mini-mysteries), yet non-conformative men are rare. There are however two good examples and we can find the first in Wings 9 Base Book. The text is named “Skills” (p. 84) and is rather short, but manages to inverse the traditional roles. It contains two accounts of young people telling us about their skills. The first part shows how Jane describes her mechanical abilities, while the second part gives us an account of Ted’s ability as a housekeeper. The second good example can be found in the story “Superbabies”, located in Wings 7 Activity Book. In this story the man is the one who is good with children while the woman panics at the first sign of baby-related trouble.

Though weak men are unusual, examples when women are the strong leaders are more common, but the women tend to be mentally rather than physically strong. One notable exception is the story “Thank you, ma’m” (Wings 9 Activity book, p. 41), in which the victim of a robbery turns the tables on her assailant. What makes the story notable is not just the fact that the victim is a woman, but that she is also old and hardly a typical hero.
In almost all mini-mysteries, the main character is female; the assistant is male, while the villain is a single male or a couple (man + woman). In Wings the duality of the smart woman and the strong man is something that seems tied specifically to heroic characters, since intelligence is not solely attributed to women. In my reading of the texts, the books have a tendency to use the concepts of the smart woman/stupid man and the strong man/weak woman rather often, though they do not always occur at the same time in a clear duality. Similarly, the story “Long Claws”, which I will discuss further in the next part of this section, is also a very good example of both a strong woman and a stupid man.

A good example of how men tend to be more gifted physically than intellectually can be found in the article “The Body”, in Wings 8 Base Book. The article is meant to teach children the names of various body parts, using an illustration of a man. The man is holding a dumbbell in each hand and has very big muscles. We can draw no conclusions as with regards to the intelligence of this man, but the next example more clearly illustrates how men tend to be shown as less intelligent.

Wings 8 Activity Book contains a story called Vacation ‘58, which is about a family that is trying to go on a vacation to Disneyland. The father does everything he can to make the journey as quick and efficient as possible, which only results in a series of disasters and that he almost gets his family killed in the process. It is interesting to note how the typically male traits are given a negative value, since this is typically not the case. Josefson explains: “Research has shown that what we perceive as typically male is generally considered to be worth more than that which we perceive as female” (Josefson p. 9, my translation). In this story, the man is imbued with a lot of “positive” male traits, such as being goal-oriented and practical, but he is also very stubborn and rude. He is not unintelligent in a traditional way, but instead his stubbornness overrides his judgment.

A more direct example of male stupidity is the boy from the story “Trips Week” (Wings 8 Base Book, p. 19). He intended to get drunk, but he bought beer without alcohol because he could not read the label and managed to convince himself that he was drunk. “Equal rights” (Wings 9 Base Book, 85-88), which is also dealt with in the next section, is a good example of how a woman uses her intelligence to overcome an obstacle. The obstacle is a store owner who discriminates against women by paying them less and the solution is to fool the owner into thinking that she is the daughter of an important union man. What we see here is not just
how the woman is smart enough to do this, but also how the man is stupid enough to fall for
the trick and accidentally gives her the idea from the start.

While men typically are the sporty ones and women the smart ones, we do see examples of
the opposite. In the article “Rock On” (Wings 9 Activity Book, p. 67-69) we see a very athletic
woman and in “Smart ice-cream” (Wings 8 Activity Book, p. 74-77) there is a very smart boy.

However, as I have argued in the previous examples, these are exceptions that prove the rule.
The first article is based on real events and details how a female rock climber becomes
national champion. In the article, a spokesperson for a group of rock climbers states: “Girls
love the mental and physical challenge of moving up the wall and the fact that, when you are
rock climbing, you can be athletic without playing a team sport” (p. 67). The woman that the
article is about also tells us how she: “was the only girl climbing, and so there were nobody
but guys to compare myself to and they were so much stronger than me” (p. 69). I would
argue that the overall focus of the article is not on rock climbing per se, but rather on the fact
that girls can be good at sports too and by pointing that out, the article places focus on
something which is considered to be atypical. Doing so is by itself not negative, but when this
is pointed out so clearly, I argue that the book is also reinforcing the notion of “normal”
behaviour for men and women.

The story of the smart boy is a cautionary tale of what happens when people get greedy and
the protagonist is an exceptionally smart boy, who is also very arrogant and selfish. When a
magic ice-cream truck turns children smart, the boy is envious and tries to destroy the ice-
cream and he also eats a lot of it himself in the belief that he will become even smarter. The
result is that the boy is punished for his arrogance and greed, by becoming stupid.

While “Smart ice-cream” is a moral story above all, a more realistic example is “Getting
there”, which can be found in Wings 9 Base Book (p.118-120). The reason why I claim that it
is more realistic is because the story acknowledges the existence of multiple intelligences,
rather than seeing intelligence as a single attribute. The boy in question does not do well at all
in school and hates everything that relates to school, except reading. The story briefly follows
his path from his early teens to adulthood and ends with him working as a teacher at the same
school that he hated in the beginning. Other aspects of his character are also noteworthy, in
the sense that he is described as a very clumsy and unhandy boy who seems to be as far away
from masculine ideals as it is possible.

Sometimes there are representations where stereotypes are perpetuated using only a few words in a way which at first might appear harmless. In *Wings 9 Activity Book* we can read a short article about what do to about our feelings. One of the paragraphs gives the following advice: “HAVE A GOOD CRY You will be surprised how much better you feel. Girls are often much better at this, but boys shouldn’t be afraid of doing it too” (p.57). This statement might seem harmless enough, but what it does is to reinforce the notion that men and women have different essential qualities. This is important because there is a difference in the value of these qualities as far as society is concerned (Josefson, p. 39). By pointing out these differences, the book at the same time helps widen the rift between the sexes.

**Summary – Representation of Gender**

I have analyzed how gender is represented in the six books. The findings sate that so-called heteronormative representation clearly dominates even if there some examples that deviate. That means that there are more examples of men who look like and act in a traditionally “masculine” way and women who look/act in a “feminine” way than examples of the opposite.

**Representation - Sexuality**

Overall, the examples of sexuality are not very numerous and tend to center around a single theme which is repeated throughout the books. I will start by going through the examples and then I will discuss my findings in the section summary.

In the first example there is a woman present, although she is not the focus of the example. Instead, there are pictures in magazines that the men look at in an objectifying way. The way in which this is shown is only as a footnote in the story: “I looked across at the two kids in the corner. They were pretending to pick Penny Chews while they gawped at the girls on the magazines” (*Wings 9 Base Book*, p. 85).

A clearer example can be found in *Wings 8 Base Book*. The story is called “Trips Week” (*Wings 8 Base Book*, p. 17) and is about a boy who goes on a camping holiday with his
school. The dominating picture shows a group of students canoeing along a river and the protagonist can be seen in the centre. One can observe a heart hovering above his head while his eyes are wide and he has a grin on his face. His gaze is set on a slim female student with blonde hair, who is also mentioned in the text. The boy is so obsessed with the girl that he unknowingly hits another student in the head with his oar.

While male representation of sexuality tends to be consistent, females are sometimes depicted as neutral and non-provocative, as in the previous example, but the opposite is also exemplified in the books. We can see an example of this in *Wings 8 Base Book*. Once again the male in the picture is looking at the woman in what I argue to be a sexual manner, but this time the pose and attitude of the woman is of a highly provocative nature (*Wings 8 Base Book*, p. 73).

Although heterosexuality dominates, there is one example of sexuality which could be interpreted as bisexuality. The example can be found in *Wings 9 Activity Book* in a story titled “The Child” (*Wings 9 Activity Book*, p. 90 – 96). In short, the story is about an African American girl named Karen, who finds out that she is pregnant and whose boyfriend leaves her when she tells him. The main content of the text consists of her thoughts about becoming a mother and also the significance of ethnicity. There are a few passages when Karen looks at a white girl in which there are hints of bisexual tendencies, however they could just as easily be seen as envy. Here is a passage from the text in which I have highlighted words which hint at bisexuality when seen in this context:

> She turned her eyes away and noticed a white girl seated in the middle of the car. She had long dark hair that spilled over her shoulders like silk threads. A book was open on her lap. Karen wished she could have hated her. Instead, she wanted to ask her what she was reading and what it was about. She wanted to smooth her hair and see if it was as soft as it looked. She wanted to go home with her and see the pictures on her walls and the color of the spread on her bed (*Wings 9 Activity Book*, p. 93, Highlights added).

I cannot conclusively say that Karen’s thoughts are of a sexual nature, but I argue that the use of the highlighted phrases does suggest that it is a possibility. The next time she refers to the girl however, the text hints at motives that seem to relate to envy: “She looked at the white girl robed in her straight hair. That girl was someone just because. That was the same reason Karen wasn’t” (*Wings 9 Activity Book*, p. 94). This is the only visible example of sexuality
that might not conform to the “norms” of society. There might very well be numerous people in the book who are homo or bisexual, but they are not represented as such which makes these groups more or less omitted from representation in Wings. Josefson has a possible explanation and asserts that “In our society, heterosexual relationships are considered the norm, and most laws and rules are written in order to suit heterosexuals” (Josefson 2005, p. 108, my translation). The lack of focus could also be seen as a way to avoid placing homo/bisexual groups in the spotlight as “the other” and instead simply take their existence for granted.

**Summary – Representation of Sexuality**

I argue that the examples strongly link sexuality to gender roles, in the sense that we see the man as the active participant and the woman as the target of male affection. Josefson’s list of masculine and feminine traits agrees with this and the list declares the following traits to be stereotypically masculine: “‘date and pay’, ‘have sex with many’, ‘take the initiative’” (Josefson, 2005, p. 8). The examples which I have discussed follow Josefson’s list, in my reading of the texts. Representation of sexuality was by and large consistent and the dominant form was heterosexuality, with only one vague example which points to the existence of something else. The boys in the first example are rather young and might not be seen as problematic, which would be a valid opinion by itself but since there is no mention of girls in the same age doing something similar, we get a one-sided and stereotypical impression. The second example repeats the facts men are active, but at the same time it shows a woman who is consciously trying to be seen in a sexual light. So while this woman is not completely passive, she is not completely active either. The final example is also the most complex, in the sense that a woman is both the active and the passive participant, but the vague nature of the example makes non-heterosexual representation hard to spot and does not threaten the dominant nature of heterosexuality.

**Representation - Ethnicity**

My studies regarding representation of ethnicity has been conducted using three separate classifications: skin-color, social class and religion. In my summary, I will attempt to show how these three areas intersect with one and other.
Representation of ethnical groupings based on skin-color

*Wings 7 Base Book* shows a Jamaican person with a fruit basket on his/her head and is the sole example of representation of Jamaicans in that book. In the *Activity Book* we can read more about Jamaica as an introduction to the lyrics of “No Woman, No cry”. Judging from the text, the picture on that page is of Bob Marley and it shows a man with long dreadlocks. One should point out, that pictures of Bob Marley tend to show him in this way and it might not have been possible to find a picture of the singer that does not perpetuate the exotic nature of Jamaicans. Regardless, we see a simple Jamaican farmer and singer with dreadlocks but we do not see a modern Jamaican businessman or anything that resembles western society. This tendency of focusing on the differences between cultures rather than the similarities is very common, which I will show in my examples.

In *The Wisdom of the Old Ones* (*Wings 8 Base Book*, p. 96-97) we can read about the duality of Native Americans as with regards to modern society and old customs. While one could argue that the book is trying to get students to consider the fact that older cultures might have something to teach us, the focus of article is on how different the Native Americans are. We can also see this in a picture which shows an old black-and-white photograph of two Native Americans on horseback, dressed in clothes which one would expect to find in a western movie.

There are however some attempts to place a certain focus on the modern lives of non-white races and to some extent bring them closer to modern western society. *Wings 9 Activity Book* are about Inuits and this section shows evidence of more balanced racial representation in the sense that we first get to read a story about a traditional Inuit family, followed by description of the modern lives of contemporary Inuits. The story is named “Long Claws” and is fictional. The story shows the brave nature of the Inuits and in particular the female protagonist Upik. The focus is very much placed on the harshness of the weather and the danger of nature, which is manifested in the form of a grizzly bear. The two main characters are on their way home with an animal that they have killed, when they are forced to confront the bear. Once more, the “wisdom of the other” is visible in the narrative: “At that moment, looking into its eyes, Upik realized that the bear was neither good nor evil. It was a hunter like themselves, desperate to feed itself and remain alive in the lonely snow-filled wilderness. She lowered the rifle. She could not bring herself to kill the bear” (*Wings 9 Activity Book*, 153).
While the girl is depicted as wise, her brother stubbornly refuses to give up the dead animal and by doing so almost gets both of them killed. If we look at the modern part, we get to read about a “typical” Inuit family. Although we note the existence of such modern items as the channel CBC, the newspaper “The Edmonton Journal” and a “dinosaur magazine”, one cannot avoid noticing the underlying simplicity in what is described. We read about how the people only receive mail twice a week, how small the community is and how the teacher shares one newspaper with both other teachers at the school and with her neighbors. Further traces of balanced representation can be found in the Base Book, which shows a modern building with an accompanying text that describes how “They have TV and video and play computer games using electricity from a small generator”(p. 123).

White is not seen as an ethnical group in terms of any kind of universal representation. What I mean by that is simply that there is no single tendency regarding the depiction of white people. Instead, we note that the representation of white people is divided into the representation of white men and white women.

Representation of ethnicity based on social class
Class is not discussed directly in any of the Wings books, but indicators of class can be observed. Middle-class is the “default” social class and as such remains invisible and without any particular indicators. When the default class is not used, we can observe visual or textual hints that tell us if the characters are upper or lower-class. Examples of visual hints related to working-class representation are: torn/dirty/overused clothing, environments that are in ruins or people performing hard physical labor. Upper-class hints are much rarer and are restricted to clothing and elaborate housing.

In Wings 7 Activity book, one can find two clear examples of textual hints related to working-class people. The way which the book shows us that they are poor is the same in both examples and consists of telling the reader that the protagonists live in “shacks”. The stories are “Storm boy” and “No Hero”, both of which show heroic white characters that triumph over difficult circumstances by using wits and courage.

In the first story, the main character saves the crew of a tugboat and in the second example the hero bravely wrestles a big bear. No profound “rewards” were given to these heroes when they completed their tasks. In “Storm boy”, the story ends when the crew has been rescued
and we learn nothing more about how the hero was affected by the incident. Hester King, the hero of “No Hero”, performs his feat for financial gain and to amuse the spectators, so his reward is simple and materialistic. As the title implies, the text does not show the poor man as a hero but rather cheapens his brave actions by pointing out that he was desperate and only interested in money. Just like the hero of “Storm boy”, the working-class protagonist is not particularly strong but relies on cunning to overcome his obstacle. Lower-class is not equivalent to heroism, but is closely related to hardship and struggle. From the farmers in dirty clothes that stack vegetables in Wings 7 Base Book’s article about Zambia, to Activity Book 9’s story “Out of Bounds”, about the hardworking people in an unnamed war-torn African country, we can see these hints. While not as uncommon as upper-class, there are a number of examples of working-class representation that deviate from the norm and attract attention. The majority of these examples realistically show black working-class people living in distant countries.

My reading of the texts only detects a few clear hints of upper-class belonging and in three of these cases, these hints can be found in the clothes the people are wearing while the fourth example relates to a house with clear aristocratic icons. In “Politeness pays”, found in Wing 8 Base Book, we can see two men in black suits and a woman in a fur coat. The book does not give the impression that upper-class people are more polite than others, since there are similar pictures showing middle-class people acting every bit as polite as their rich counterparts. The second example is also a picture and it is connected to a text about the inventor Michael Faraday, showing a man in similar clothing. When looking at the text, it is however made clear that Michael was not born rich. Consequently, no claims can made that the book is representing upper-class people as being more intelligent than other social classes.

**Representation of ethnicity based on religion**

In Wings, religion is not an issue that is discussed or on which there is any focus. Whenever religion is mentioned, it is in a matter-of-fact unbiased way and never as the main issue. When the books talk about the history of an English-speaking country or about a famous person, religion is mentioned but only as a simple piece of information. Christianity is visible only in sense that most stories and exercises take place in the western world, but my study has only found two cases where a character has been depicted as overtly religious. The first case is the story “The Child”, from Wings 9 Activity Book. It has a scene when the girl talks to her
mother about her pregnancy. When the mother is informed that her daughter is pregnant, she says: “You think I be working two jobs and praying all the time, for you to go get yourself knocked up the first time a boy look at you and say hi? Help me, Jesus! Help me”(p. 91).

I argue that Wings does not try do make any assertions about religion and skin-color through this text, since the girl is not depicted as being religious, only her mother. Religion could be considered to be a matter of generation, but I have not perceived any other such connections and my second example shows that young people also can be religious.

My second example indicates that religion neither is an issue of being white or black, since the religious person in this case is white. In “Survival at sea”, the protagonist writes “I ask God why He has put this test before me”(Wings 9 Base Book, p.70). The accompanying picture, showing an image of the afterlife with angels and a tunnel of light, is the only picture with any kind of religious meaning that my investigation came across. While there are instances when expressions such as “my god” and “Jesus” are used, there is nothing in any other case that indicates that an actual religious meaning can be attributed to them.

**Summary – Ethnical representation**
Ethnical representation through skin-color follows clearly stereotypical guidelines. The result of this is not always that non-whites are seen in a negative light but this view does seem to dominate. For the most part, the exotic properties of non-whites tend to be brought to the front. The majority of the people represented in Wings are white, which means that no matter what aspect one looks for, the most examples will involve white people. The vast majority of the people in the series are middle-class.

When looking at the way in which skin-color and class intersect, one can draw the following conclusion about the people represented in Wings: Most black people in the books are not working-class, but most working-class people are black. The lack of examples that indicate the presence of religious beliefs makes any kind of intersectional analysis impossible.
5 Concluding discussion

The results of the part of the study that addresses sexuality seem to bear some similarities with the study performed by Larson & Rosén. Their conclusions appear in the findings for this study as well, in the sense that we see virtually no trace of The Sexual Other in any of the books, if one uses the definition used in this report. This lack of representation is consistent with Larson & Rosen’s idea that heterosexuality is the “default” sexual orientation, unless something else is expressively stated, which it is not as far as the Wings books are concerned. While Larson & Rosén have found multiple examples of alternative sexualities, only a single possible instance was revealed in the study of Wings. Furthermore the example was of a very vague nature and will probably go unnoticed to the majority of the students who read the books unless their teacher addresses the question directly.

Though heterosexuality is what is seen in my reading of Wings, there is variation as with regards to the nature of heterosexuality. This is shown in the way in which women’s sexuality is represented and Wings presents a spectrum of women that all have different levels of participation in their interaction with others. Variation once more occurs as with regards to women, but not men since they are represented as being sex-crazed and active, no matter if they are children or adults. This does not mean that the books are full of men acting in this way, but when male sexuality is shown, the results are uniform in nature.

Ethnical representation is varied. When it comes to the part which deals with skin-color, the results show similarities with the study performed by Ajagán-Lester, which showed a clear tendency for improvement with regards to the representation of non-white people. Although Ajagán-Lester also describes tendency to make other cultures and peoples appear in an exotic light. Given that his study ended with books that were used over 40 years ago, the level of improvement since then seems surprisingly low if one looks at Wings as a typical modern book. However, if one looks at the other aspects of ethnical representation, one notices that there is open-minded representation of both social class and religion.

Representation of gender was much more diverse and even though my reading shows a
tendency to follow the heteronormative template, the number of exceptions does indicate that the authors seem to have made an effort to broaden the spectrum of representation to avoid the occurrence of too many stereotypes.

We noticed a tendency to depict women in a more non-stereotypical way than men, which might be explained by looking at the current political climate and its ideas of political correctness. The stereotypical image of women is attributed with properties such as sensitivity, weakness and intelligence, but to conform to political correctness, women must be portrayed as strong and independent. This is a fact that Josefson points out when she addresses the complex nature of societal expectations that are placed on women (Josefson 2005, p. 31). While women are portrayed as strong and independent to some extent, the opposite does not apply to men in the same degree: men are generally not violating their template but instead seem to follow it rigorously by being strong, logical and often selfish.

The ideologies detected in the books are ambiguous. On one hand, they seem to coincide with the fundamental values, in the sense that they encourage students to become productive members of a democratic society and act in accordance with democratic principles. We also see ideologies that show tendencies to instill individuality and a healthy sense of critical thinking. But on the other hand, the way in which the books so uncritically describe the euro-centralized encounters between the West and the “other cultures”, seems to promote dichotomy-like thinking. Some steps to question the euro-dominated view of the world have been made, but they are minor and disappear in the greater scheme of things, which shows that Said’ critique from 1978 remains valid even today.

Skolverket’s study, which draws some of the same conclusions as those that resulted from my investigation, offers some explanations as to why we will never see a perfect textbook. Among the reasons, Skolverket lists lack of space and the need to make the book attractive, both to the students and the teachers. According to the report, books must be close enough to the mainstream if they are going to sell, so whatever book one makes, there will always be compromises (Skolverket, 2005, p. 47-49).
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