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How females and males are represented in Wings 7 Blue

Hur kvinnor och män representeras i Wings 7 Blue

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Abstract

The aim of this degree project is to investigate how how masculinity and femininity are represented and if there is any over-representation of female and male characters in the English textbook *Wings 7 Blue*. Previous research on gender is presented as help in understanding the complexity within gender issues. The results show that males are over-represented and mentioned more than females, both in regard to illustrations and texts. This degree project also shows evidence of an existing stereotypical image of the sexes, both in personality traits and occupations. It is shown that *Wings 7 Blue* enforces gender conformity among young people and does therefore not fulfill the requirements of the steering document in regard to gender equality.

Key words: gender, gender stereotypes, masculinity, femininity, representation

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

*“Sugar and spice and everything nice that is what little girls are made of.
Snips and snails and puppy dog tails, that is what little boys are made of”*
(Stevenson, 1820).

Some of the challenges for girls growing up in today’s society relate to the expectations of being feminine, which is often associated with being sweet, emotional, passive and ladylike, and for boys to be masculine, which is often associated with being strong, professional and not showing emotions. This is unfortunately the stereotypical image of men and women, an image that acts like a barrier, and which influences what men and women choose to study and work with further on (Wagner & Cota, 2008). Schools have a huge responsibility in raising students’ consciousness of how gender identities are reinforced through media, through traditional social structures and through textbooks, and to develop their way of thinking critically and influencing them to try challenging these stereotypes and breaking the gender barrier.

It is true that we are born as either males or females but through society and its unwritten norms we are transformed into men and women. The role that men and women is given is not a natural result of their biological differences, but is determined and influenced by the society they live in. Gemzöe (2003) states that girls and boys are shaped by their parents, the media and the school to act in a certain way, which in turn forms their personality and the way they see themselves and their future position in regard to occupation and family role.

The curriculum for compulsory schools states that there should be no distinction made between girls and boys in regard to equal opportunities (Skolverket, 2000). It further states that teachers are responsible for giving girls and boys the same rights and opportunities and also the same encouragement when it comes to developing their interests regardless of what gender they belong to. While the national curriculum stresses the importance of equal learning opportunities for both girls and boys, some studies show that it is not what is being done in the teaching materials. Moira von Wright (1999) analyzed to what extent textbooks in physics could be said to support gender equality. Wright (1999) found that the texts in many cases rarely showed gender sensitivity or gender awareness. She concluded that the textbooks

analyzed undoubtedly valued the male gender more than the female gender and the texts, therefore, contributed to preserving the injustice between the sexes. Britt-Marie Berge and Göran Widding did a similar study, where they analyzed how gender was represented in 24 different schoolbooks. They found that females and males had equal spaces in the schoolbooks but when the authors talked about males they usually presented them as stronger and superior to woman.

There have also been Swedish studies that state that the pattern of gender differences regarding success in school has changed in recent decades. In a study about gender and success in school, Björnsson (2005) mentions, that girls do significantly better than boys in all areas of education. He further states that in Sweden, as in other Nordic countries with the exception of Denmark, the girls' head-start in school is in fact a reality. Broman, Rubenstein Reich and Hägerström (2002) state in their study *Likvärdighet i en skola för alla* that the grade differences in former 'female subjects' (e.g. English and religion) have become more marked, while the difference in former 'male subjects' (e.g. mathematics and physics) have been eliminated. This, they suggest, might have to do with the fact that girls who make cross-gender choices are met by more positive reactions than boys who challenge their masculine gender role.

Social feminism stresses the fact that schools take part in encouraging and reproducing a sexual division of labor in the workplace as well as in the family and have a major role in transmitting inequality between the sexes. Social feminists further state "that schools play a part in gaining the consent of girls to their subordinate status and their place in the domestic sphere, they are also involved in winning the consent of boys to a division of masculinity which makes them primarily responsible for the economic support of the family" (Measor & Sikes, 1992, p. 25). Masculinity scholars, as a response to feminism, argue that gender inequality affects them just as it affects women. According to some masculinity scholars, there are negative consequences for males that do not follow the dominant male norm, which represents strength, money, status, toughness and respect (Phillips, 2008). Most masculinity scholars further argue that very few, if any, men fulfill the requirements of an ideal or unified masculinity, because of the fact that different social groups construct masculinity in different ways at different times and in different contexts.

We believe that it is important that teachers are aware of the huge responsibility they have when it comes to choosing textbooks and other materials in the classroom. The textbook can

clearly be a strong and powerful tool when influencing the way both children and adults think about human rights values and the concept of gender equality. It is through literature, to a large extent, that adults socialize children into accepting what is right and wrong in the society (Josefson, 2007). For teachers, it is important to bear in mind that gender equality is first and foremost a human right.

1.2 Purpose and research question

The purpose of this study is to investigate how *Wings 7 Blue*, which is a recently published textbook for compulsory schools, portrays men and women. The main focus is to see how the textbook represents the sexes in relationship to one another, and if there is any over-representation of female and male characters. We are also interested in investigating to what extent gender stereotypes exist in this recently published textbook and if the content indirectly enforces gender-based conformity among young people.

We will focus on the following research questions:

1. Do dialogues and images in *Wings 7 Blue* over-represent female characters or male characters?
2. How are the females and males in the texts and illustrations represented?

2. Theory and terminology

Several theories focus on gender and gender issues. These theories differ in various ways but they are all equally important to understand and include in an investigation on gender. In this chapter the terms and theories that are most relevant for our study will be presented and explained.

2.1 Gender and sex

What do we refer to when we look at people as males or females, men and women? On what grounds and differences do we base this classification? Do we look at the individual's sex or at their gender and how society sees them? It is not easy to distinguish the difference between sex and gender and therefore it is very important to verify the difference between these two terms, since they will be mentioned often in this study.

Wharton (2005) states that sex refers to the most basic differences between men and women, differences in genitals, reproductive capacities and other physical differences like height, body structure and sexual characteristics. She states further that men and women, in regard of their differences, share a lot of biological characteristic as well. For example both are warm blooded and have normally 23 pairs of chromosomes, which stresses the fact that men and women are not each others opposites as many tend to believe. Consequently, the term sex refers only to the physiological differences between men and women.

Wharton (2005) explains that gender, on the other hand, refers to all differences between men and women other than the physiological ones mentioned above: "Gender refers to specific social and cultural patterns of behavior and to the social characteristics of being a man or a woman in particular historical and social circumstance" (Wharton, 2005, p. 25). Gender is produced by the society each person lives in and is therefore contextual and can change over time and place.

2.2 Masculinity and femininity

Masculinity and femininity are different traits or characteristics typically associated with being male or female. Wood and Hammersley (1993) state that masculinity and femininity are thought to be opposite ends of a single dimension, with masculinity at one end and femininity at the other. High masculinity implies the absence of femininity and vice versa, which means that people can be classified as either masculine or feminine (Wood & Hammersley, 1993).

Femininity is the quality of being feminine or the trait of being female (Hoover & Goodwin, 2007). The term femininity in particular evokes the normative assumption that women should embody and reflect feminine qualities such as being emotional and gentle. Hoover and Godwin (2007), state that femininity does not purely exist in the material world and is essentially unequal and false because it puts the woman in weak positions in relation to the strength of the man. Feminists argue that femininity is not something all women are born with but it is something that women become through the feminine identity they practice every day. Culturally defined personality traits, physical attributes, abilities, and occupational preferences among other things, all contribute to one's gender identity. "Women in general have greater responsibility for "domestic" activities, such as cooking, food preparation, carrying water, caring for clothing, and making household things" (Ember & Ember, 2004, p. 17).

Hoover and Goodwin (2007) state that masculinity is socially defined and culturally specific behaviors and characteristics understood as belonging to men, and perceived, therefore, as representative of maleness. They further state that masculinity plays an important role when it comes to shaping and forming the male identity and argue that masculinity is a fluid concept that is dependent on cultural values and social circumstances and tends to change over time. However, a persistent view of masculinity is the male's association with leadership and authority: "Males in general have greater responsibility for 'external' activities, such as hunting, metalwork, and weapon making" (Ember & Ember, 2004, p. 17).

Here follows a list of female and male associated traits. These traits are based on the results of a study made by Williams and Best in 1993. William and Best examined gender differences in trait ascription in 25 countries worldwide, with data from almost 9000 participants. The participants had to identify stereotyped traits associated with males and females in their own

culture. More information on the study can be found in *the Encyclopedia of sex and gender* (2004).

Female associated traits

Male associated traits

Affectionate	Fearful	Active	Daring	Lazy
Anxious	Feminine	Adventurous	Determined	Logical
Attractive	Gentle	Aggressive	Dominant	Loud
Charming	Kind	Arrogant	Egotistical	Masculine
Curious	Mild	Clear-thinking	Forceful	Opportunistic
Dependent	Pleasant	Confident	Hardheaded	Rational
Dreamy	Sensitive	Courageous	Independent	Self-confident
Emotional	Sentimental	Cruel	Intiative	Serious

Table 1. (Ember & Ember, 2004, p. 14)

2.3 Socialization theory

The feminist argument stresses that early socialization, rather than biological inheritance, is responsible for gender differences in ability and aptitudes (Measor & Sikes, 1992). Measor and Sikes (1992) explain socialization as the process every man and woman takes when becoming a member of a certain society, the process where each individual learns to act and think in a way acceptable in his or her own society. Socialization theory says that the social way of thinking varies a lot among people in different regions of the world. What is acceptable for a woman or a man in one society might not be acceptable in another. These social patterns might vary tremendously within a society over time and through history as well.

2.4 Feminism and education

The name feminism originally comes from the Latin femina (woman) and means 'having the quality of females'. The concept came into use as a perspective on sexual equality in the 1890s (Wiener, 1994). Acker (1994) mentions three major feminist theories that exist: liberal-, socialist- and radical feminism. All three theories deal with the question of women's subordination to men.

“The intent of liberal feminism in education is to remove barriers that prevent girls from reaching their full potential, whether such barriers are located in the school, the individual psyche or discriminatory labor practices” (Acker, 1994, p.45). Liberal feminism has three major themes in regard to education and school: equal opportunities, socialization and sex stereotyping and sex discrimination. Equal opportunities refer to the same rights and same treatments in school for both sexes and are almost the major thing Liberal feminism is recognized for. The second major concern for liberal feminism in education is socialization and sex stereotyping (Gemzöe, 2003). Gemzöe (2003) states that girls and boys are thought to be socialized and shaped from their parents, the media and the school to act, talk and be in a certain way, and that in turn shapes their personality and the way they see themselves and their future position in regard to occupation and family role. This socialization encourages patterns of interpersonal relationship between the sexes that disadvantages girls and put them in a position of dependency and weakness, and also boys who are forced not to show their emotional feelings (Acker, 1994). The third theme in liberal feminism is sex discrimination, which concentrates on equal rights, justice and fairness for the sexes. Liberal feminism implies that there are attitudes and policies that create a structure of disadvantages for females, only because they are females. These attitudes and policies, they mean, have to be changed and fought against.

The second major feminist theory is social feminism; their aim is to remove oppression against women by abolishing capitalism. In regard to education the key question is “how is education related to the reproduction of gender divisions within capitalism?” (Acker, 1994, p. 48). Social feminism stresses the fact that schools take part in encouraging and reproducing a sexual division of labor in the workplace as well as in the family and have a major role in transmitting inequality between the sexes. Social feminists imply further “that schools play a part in gaining the consent of girls to their subordinate status and their place in the domestic sphere, they are also involved in winning the consent of boys to a division of masculinity which makes them primarily responsible for the economic support of the family” (Measor & Sikes, 1992, p. 25).

The third major feminist theory is radical feminism. Acker (1994) mentions that their major concern is to make a fundamental change in the social structure of society, a change that will eliminate male dominance and patriarchal structures. “Radical feminism asserts that it is patriarchy that oppresses women and that their subordination stems from the social, economic and political dominance of men in the society...it is men who have forced women into

oppressed situations and functions...women's domination is therefore the deepest and strongest form of inequality, and the most difficult to eradicate" (Measor & Sikes, 1992, p. 27). Radical feminism indicates that schools encourage men's domination over women, and thereby deny girls a full access of knowledge, resources and freedom. An example of this encouragement is the fact that teacher's attention in the classroom is unequally divided between the sexes to the advantage of boys (Acker, 1994).

2.5 Men's movement

Men's movement has increased over the past 30 years as a result of men's realization that gender inequality affects them, just as it affects women (Blackstone, 2008). Scholars of men's movement have begun to question the male norm as an unhealthy and unrealistic male 'ideal' that is neither natural nor singular for men. Masculinities scholars criticize the notion of an ideal or unified masculinity in their claim that there are multiple masculinities or many ways of being male. "This perspective derives from modern and postmodern theoretical perspectives that rely on the view that gender is socially constructed and that different social groups construct masculinity in different ways at different times and in different contexts" (Blackstone, 2008). Most masculinity scholars argue that very few, if any, men fulfill the requirements that have been constructed for the male norm.

Scholars in several countries, such as Spain, India, Finland, Sweden, Australia, England, and the United States have examined the effect of gender norms on men in many different male cultures. Studies reveal negative consequences for men and boys who do not follow the typical male norm (Phillips, 2008). For example, many males may not be able to describe ways on how to be a 'normal' man, but they don't have difficulties in describing ways to be popular and not be an 'outcast' from the norm. "Boys know that buying expensive cars; being heterosexual and having attractive and popular girlfriends; playing football, baseball, or basketball; being muscular and tall; and being able to fight and win fights if needed are ways to be popular" (Phillips, 2008). These represent the dominant male norm, which is, strength, heterosexuality, money, status, respect, and toughness. Masculinity scholars mean that boys and men still lives in a society where the traditional male norm are ever present.

2.6 Gender and education

According to Acker, “[s]everal studies on gender and education literature imply that teachers play an important part in the thwarting of girls potential” (1994, p. 90). This is done through direct action such as treating the sexes differently or holding different expectations for them. This can also be done “through indirect action such as gender codes, whereby messages about models of masculinity and femininity are contained in everyday school practices such as pupil grouping and timetabling and in the sexual division of labor among teachers” (ibid., p. 90). If we look closely at the work positions men and women have in schools, we see that most mathematics and physics teachers are men, which make these positions to be typically masculine, while most language and art teachers are women which suggest that these positions are typically feminine (Measor and Sikes, 1992).

Acker (1994) states that boys get more attention than girls in the classroom and the attention given to girls is even less if the teacher is a male. He goes further by saying that boys get more academic and behavioral criticism and also more instructions than girls. The main reason for this is that teachers see boys as less hard working, less concentrated and less willing to follow orders than girls. All these differences and gender codes, Acker (1994) suggests, are absorbed by children and repeated in an identical form. “Students are actively involved in inferring the underlying rules, learning to recognize and make sense of a wide range and variety of contradictory and miscellaneous inputs” (Acker, 1994, p. 92).

Gendered differences in schools and by teachers may affect students’ school performance and in a way work as an influence into what girls and boys choose to study further on (Education: gender differences, 2008). Measor and Sikes (1992) explain that a child of a certain sex becomes aware of how she/he are supposed to act and be like at the same age as she/he develops a sense of gender identity and this in turn can lower the school achievement for the child. For example, the reason why boys are better than girls at computers is because computers are seen as toys for boys and they are therefore encouraged and given more positive feedback when it comes to the usage and knowledge of computers (Wagner & Cota, 2008). “Low self confidence in a certain subject may lead the child to avoid it in the future and further polarize the child into gender segregated fields” (Wagner & Cota, 2008).

2.7 Gender stereotypes

The word gender means social ideas and views linked to femininity and masculinity while stereotype refers to ideas that come up when you think of a group of people (Haslam, 2007). Gender stereotype is, in turn, representations of masculinity and femininity shared by the majority of people (Haslam, 2007). Gender stereotypes are thought to develop early and increase very fast throughout childhood. Once children differentiate between the sexes they begin forming gender stereotypes that result in behavior influenced by gender-associated expectations. “A stereotype is neither fixed nor correct and tend to change over time and place” (Wharton, 2005, p. 54). Even if gender stereotypes rarely have a true basis on how people actually are, they have a huge social influence. “People ‘think’ and ‘do’ gender, and thus reproduce a certain gender order” (Wharton, 2005, p. 56). Men and women are supposed to live up to certain norms and "people who go against these norms therefore risk being seen as deviating and are labeled, for example, ‘tomboys’ or ‘sissies’” (Haslam, 2007). He further implies that gendered expectations have a huge effect on the opportunities for men and women in various ways. One example: “because women have the main responsibility for home and children they are seen as less dependable workforce, and therefore not given the same opportunities in regard to their career” (Haslam, 2007). Measor and Sikes (1992) claim that even if there is nothing essential that unites all women, they are still united in that they are seen as women. They mean that all women around the world have to relate to gendered clothing, gendered spaces, gendered labor markets, gendered language and to the fact that people see them as women, all this has a huge affect on their lives. Measor and Sikes (1992) state further that there is no escape from gendered stereotypes, but one can always try to challenge them and try to fill them with a different content.

2.8 Stereotype threat

Stereotype threat comes through a certain stereotypical image and occurs when an individual does something that confirms a negative stereotype about the group she/he belongs to. Stereotype threats are transmitted through the society we live in through different factors such as the mass media, the environment, and the schools (Smith & Hung, 2008). The books they read, the classes they choose to take and the career they choose to follow are “all avenues through which stereotype threats survive from generation to generation” (Smith & Hung, 2008). They further state that stereotype threats are very present in schools, one example is

the thought that women are less capable than men when it comes to their mathematical ability. “When stereotypes, such as these are found among teachers and staff at all levels of the education system, the seeds of stereotype threats are plant” (Smith & Hung, 2008). Teachers’ support of this stereotype belief may lead females to lower self-confidence when it comes to their math abilities regardless of their potential competence. When a certain group of people is considered weak in a particular skill, individuals’ within this group who are asked to perform a difficult task in that particular area falls of conforming the stereotype and psychological pressure leads them to underachieve (Smith & Hung, 2008). This, in turn, makes stereotype threats to become an evil cycle that makes people perform badly because they believe they cannot do better. “Furthermore, in an environment where stereotype threats can occur, a stereotype may create internal barriers inhibiting success by lowering self-esteem or confidence and reducing hopes for the future” (Smith & hung, 2008).

3. Previous research

Several studies have been carried out in the area of gender and education. Some studies show that gender inequality still exists in the education system. Other studies reveal that the gender patterns are changing in Sweden and world wide. This section will present a summary of studies done by authorities in the field of gender and education.

3.1 Ingegerd Tallberg Broman - *Pedagogiskt arbete och kön - med historiska och nutida exempel*

In *Pedagogiskt arbete och kön*, Ingegerd Tallberg Broman (2002) writes about the discourse of gender in the classroom situation. For several hundred of years, Sweden had separate schools for boys and girls because the government believed that there are gender differences which make boys and girls learn differently and therefore needs to be divided. This changed in 1960 when the term ‘one school for all’ came to be the new idea for the school system. Since then boys and girls should attend the same school and have an equal education that does not teach girls different things in comparison to boys. Even class and social differences should be equal in the ‘new school’. However, the challenge to create a new school for everyone has been hard and more complex than what was first expected. Society has gone through enormous changes and schools have tried to follow and keep up. The fact that there are far more different cultures involved in the society today makes the school still struggle to accomplish a “school for everyone”.

Another example of the difficulties schools struggle with can be seen in the ‘fordonsprogrammet’ at upper secondary school where many boys attend and just a few girls. Schools still struggle with gender differences in such programs. In 1994, the Swedish government decided as follows: “Regeringen anser att jämställdhet mellan könen bör lyftas fram som en pedagogisk fråga” (Broman, 2002, p.15). Areas of education that can be highlighted in this regard are “val av undervisningsätt, ämnesinnehåll, klassrumsinteraktion, samtalsmönster, bedömnings-dimensioner, utformning av pedagog- respektive lärarroll och ledarskap” (Broman, 2002, p.15). Broman claims that children should not be divided into groups because of their gender or their social or cultural background. She also states that

gender equality has a conventional status but that it actually does not exist in the classroom. Further she writes that “schools should change an ideological question to become a pedagogical question” (Broman, 2002, p. 16), which makes it necessary for teachers to acknowledge the gender differences when they make lesson plans or choose course materials. It also puts a demand on teachers in having good knowledge and understanding of situations when it comes to gender differences and also at universities that educate new teachers to change the content of teachers’ education. All of the points Broman take up were relevant fifteen years ago and still are today since our society keeps on changing.

3.2 Britt-Marie Berg and Göran Widding - *En granskning av hur kön framställs i ett urval av läroböcker*

Berge and Widding (2006) did a study on 24 different school books. They looked at modern school books published in 2000 and forward, in the subjects of biology, history, religion and social studies. They found that males and females have equal space and the authors of the different books are very aware of the fact that they need to bring up the discussion and mention both males and females within the books content. In regard to gender stereotypes they found that when school books talk about men they usually present them as stronger and superior to women. They also found several instances where school books contradict themselves, when they first mention women as strong and later women as housewives. The contradiction may have to do with the fact that there are different discourses, theories and “truths” about gender. Berge and Widding (2006) write that the goals about gender equality mentioned in the documents of the Swedish government are ambiguous and vague, because different ways of understanding gender often is permeated in one and the same document. This shows that there are no clear directions for the authors of school books to follow. The authors have to take into consideration that gender groups are different but they must not treat them differently and a long row of variations of conflicting terms can be accepted as equal. One of the questions Berge and Widding (2006) ask is “Utifrån målen om den kvantitativa jämställdheten blir ’kvinnor’ och ’män’ diskriminerade och kränkta om deras grupp – inte alls finns representerad – är kraftigt överrepresenterad – är kraftigt överrepresenterad och riskerar stereotypisering?” (Berge & Widding, 2006, p. 7). This shows that if a gender group is not presented they are considered discriminated, however if they are over-represented they are also considered discriminated. This is a complex balance of how to discuss gender in school

books, and that in turn might complicate things further for the authors.

3.3 Moira von Wright - *Genus och text - när kan man tala om jämställdhet i fysikläromedel?*

This report was part of a project dealing with equality in textbooks. Wright (1998) conducted a qualitative study of textbooks where she analyzed to what extent textbooks in physics can be said to support gender equality. This has been done by analyzing seven textbooks in physics for compulsory school and upper secondary schools. One of Wrights main questions is "in what way do texts in physics contribute to create and recreate representations of males and females, and how do texts contribute to the construction of symbolic gender?" Wright states in her conclusion that the overall picture of the textbooks analyzed rarely radiated gender sensitivity or gender awareness. The texts analyzed did also in many cases reinforce the traditional gender roles instead of following the goals in the steering documents concerning equality. The conclusion of her text analysis is that the educational materials in physics undoubtedly value the male qualities higher than the qualities traditionally considered female and, therefore, contribute to the restoration of the injustices between the sexes. She also concludes that during her work it has become increasingly clear to her how incredibly complex the whole gender issue is.

Wright (1998) also states in her report that when most people talk about male and female traditions and spheres of society, they in most cases associate in a similar direction. For example child-care is a typically female profession, while engineering a typically male associated profession. She further states that the productive and public parts of society are linked to the male sphere, while the reproductive and private part of society (household, family) to the female sphere. In her study she looks on how the education has been formed for men and women over the centuries, and concludes that higher education has been, and still is, focused on educating for the public life and the lives which are primarily populated by males.

3.4 Ingegerd Tallberg Broman, Lena Rubinstein and Jeanette Hägerström - *Likvärdighet i en skola för alla - historisk bakgrund och kritisk granskning*

In their study they present and exemplify research from class-, gender- and ethnicity-

perspective, mainly research from the last three decades is included. The results are related to the historical background of the school system as a class-, gender- and ethnicity- structured school. In their use of the concept 'school' they include pre-school, nine-year compulsory school and upper secondary school. Their selection of material is essentially based on dissertations and research reports.

Broman, Rubenstien and Hägerström (2006), mention that the most significant change in regard to professions within the field of education is made within the school management. The national average of female school leaders were 59% in 1999, which shows an increase from the past decades. To be a school principal has been a male profession for decades, this has positively changed over time, to become a woman's profession as well.

A clear picture in their review is that girls' are the ones doing well in school, both nationally and internationally, in practically all fields of education. Broman et al. (2006) mention that international studies show that girls are better at reading comprehension and reading, and have a more positive attitude towards reading in general. They also state that the grade differences in former 'female subjects' (e.g. English and religion) have become more marked, while the differences in former 'male subjects' (e.g. mathematics and physics) have been eliminated. Girls continue to have higher grades than boys even in upper secondary school, where the greatest differences between the sexes can be found in Swedish B, religion A and English as second language. It is only in Physical education and health that boys achieve higher grades than girls. In general, they state, that more boys have IG and G while a higher proportion of girls have VG and MVG. The authors also state that girls who make cross-gender choices are met by more positive reactions than boys who challenge their masculine gender role. They mean that females who enter male areas get support, which is not the case for males that do the same.

3.5 Mats Björnsson- *Kön och skolframgång - tolkningar och perspektiv*

Björnsson (2005), states in his report that the pattern of gender differences regarding success in school has changed in recent decades. Girls did perform better in languages and humanities, while boys performed better in mathematics, technology and science. Today this has changed, girls now perform significantly better in all areas of the education. In mathematics and science boys had earlier an advantage, but this has been erased during the

last 20-30 years. In Sweden, as in other Nordic countries with the exception of Denmark, the girls' head-start in school is in fact a clear reality. The debate on gender differences follows the same pattern in many other countries as they do here. In nearly all western countries there has been a leveling out between boys' and girls' participation and success in education, according to Björnsson (2005). These patterns can be connected with the trend towards a more equal society, where women have established themselves in the labor market and in previously male-dominated professions. Björnsson (2005) states that in regard to all of this it is crucially important to ask why boys are performing worse and the possible consequences of this. Björnsson (2005) suggests that girls' sexual identity seems to have changed, encouraged by society, they have broken some new ground and broaden their sexual identity, which is not the case for boys. Björnsson states further that girls' change has been on the agenda, but hardly boys. Despite increased paternity leave and other changes to a wider and more modern masculinity, boys' male ideal is still very traditional and still surrounds violence, power and competition. Boys' everyday school is about asserting themselves and seeking popularity within their peers and these in turn are not linked with being good at school. He means that boys are 'forced' more than girls to balance between schools demands and to be popular, although they are well aware of the importance of education. Björnsson (2005) concludes that the direction of the development shows that females perform better as a group than boys do in almost all subjects and that girls' behavior has changed and that they now "take up space" and break traditional gender patterns.

4 Method

In this chapter we introduce the method used when analyzing the texts and illustrations in *Wings 7 Blue*. This chapter also includes a section on how methods are used as well as a section on selection

4.2 The ABC of gender analysis

The method that will be used is the ABC of gender analysis. The ABC of gender analysis is the result of a study that the Forum for African Woman Educationalists (FAWE) requested the gender trainers' team to do. The study involved looking at school books to analyze their gender sensitivity. The study gave birth to the ABC of gender analysis. We chose this method because we find it to be relevant to our study and believe it will be a perfect tool when trying to answer our research questions.

The ABC of gender analysis believes that the author of a text creates a world in which people do things that learners recognize and identify with to the extent that they can see themselves in this world (Kabira & Masinjila, 1997). They further state that apart from learning things through textbooks, children will also learn about what people do, how they relate to one another and how the world is built. This makes the text work as a socializing agent when it comes to the knowledge about how people are and their relationship to each other, which in turn is transmitted to the learners. Kabira and Masinjila (1997) mean that the different worlds in the textbook present a gendered picture because it includes women, men, boys and girls. This means that the text tells a story about women and girls, as well as about men and boys that can be determined through a process of narratological analysis. "Narratological analysis presupposes that any written, visualized or spoken text contains within it a gender perspective that purports to mirror the reality of that which is written about, that which is spoken about and that which is visualized" (Kabira & Masinjila, 1997 p. 9). For example if girls are repeatedly shown as the ones who are always helping the parents in the home with little visibility of boys in the same roles, it is probable that learners would take this as representative of what things are really like or what they should be like. The narratological

analysis proceeds by asking and answering a number of questions that ultimately show the level of gender responsiveness of texts and illustrations.

The texts can be analysed under four categories: a) action, b) focus, c) visualization and d) power.

a) The following questions may be asked about action:

- Who acts and how often do they act?
- What kind of activities are they involved in?

b) The following question may be asked about locus:

- What is the locus of activities?
- Which place signify importance and why?

c) The following questions may be asked about visualization:

- Who sees?
- Who is seen?

d) The following questions may be asked about power:

- Who has the power?
- Who receives power?
- Who is helping and who is being helped?

The illustrations can be analysed under four categories: a) action, b) visibility c) power and d) the clothing of the different characters.

a) The following questions may be asked about action:

- Who is performing what activity?
- How often do they do these activities?

b) The following questions may be asked about visibility:

- What are the sizes of the illustrations showing females/males?
- Is there a pattern in the sizes?
- Who is most visible?
- What color does the background of the illustration have?

c) The following questions may be asked about power:

- Who has the power?
- What sort of power is it?

d) The following questions may be asked about the clothing of the different characters:

- How are boys and girls dressed?
- What are the colors of their clothing (colors are often stereotyped, with girls usually being given brighter colors and boys more darker colors)
- When does the dress of girls and boys attract attention?
- What is the impact of this attention?

4.3 Selection

The textbook chosen for this dissertation is *Wings 7 Blue*. This textbook is used for students attending year seven in Swedish compulsory schools. *Wings 7 Blue* is used in numerous schools and is a modern textbook with many texts directed to the student interests. We did consider other textbooks, but decided for this one because it is the most recently published textbook we could find. This study is feasible because we have limited ourselves in using one type of analysis and only one textbook. However, the ABC of gender analysis is a method that can be applied to any textbook and in any school.

4.4 How the methods are used

We try to answer our research questions by using the ABC of gender analysis as a tool. We look at the general view of how females and males are represented in the texts and illustrations. How many females and males are there in each illustration and text and how are they represented? Not all the questions in the ABC of gender analysis are used in every section, only those we find relevant. Each section is analysed separately. The analysis of each section is in turn divided into four parts: overview, texts, illustrations and summary and conclusion. There are several texts and illustrations that do not contain females or males, those are not relevant and therefore not included in our study.

5 Results and analysis

In this chapter the results of our analysis are presented. The chapter starts with an overview of the content of *Wings 7 Blue*. Each section is then be introduced separately. The analysis of each section is in turn be presented in four parts: overview, texts, illustrations and summary and conclusion.

We feel the importance in mentioning that this analysis and the results found are based on what is traditionally seen as female- and male- norms, and influenced by our personal interpretations of masculinity and femininity. The results might, therefore, be interpreted differently by other people.

5.1 Wings 7 Blue

Wings 7 Blue is one in a series of English textbooks for compulsory schools used in seventh grade. We chose *Wings 7 Blue* because it is a modern textbook published in 2008 containing a wide range of up to date illustrations and texts. The textbook is divided into six sections, which all follow a certain theme; “Music,” “Clothes,” “Food,” “In the house,” “In town,” and “Life in Britain” and contain both fictional and factual written texts. In the different sections there are dialogues, stories, descriptions and lyrics. The last text in each section is a bit longer and more advanced than the rest, and is intended for those who aim for a higher grade. Each section is introduced by an image, a headline and an explanatory text that consist of a brief summary of what the students will study and learn after finishing the section. Each section also ends with an evaluation, where each student is given the chance to reflect on what they have learnt, how they have achieved their goals and what they can do to improve their English. There is also a wordlist in the beginning of each section that works as help when reading the different texts.

5.2 Section 1 – Music

There are eight texts in the section on music, two longer texts, two shorter texts, three lyrics and one longer dialogue. “Rehearsal for an audition” and “The story of U2” talk only about males. The same applies for “Songs” that contains three lyrics, all written and sung by men. The texts that include females are “Dear idol, I love you” which is a letter written by a young girl to her male idol, and “My music isn’t yours”, which is a longer dialogue between two women and two men. The rest of the two texts talk neither about females nor males, and therefore are not relevant for this study. If we look at the total number of illustrations within this section we find thirteen. “Rehearsal for an audition”, “The story of U2”, “Dear idol, I love you” and “Some useful words” all include pictures with only males. “My music isn’t yours” contains a small picture with two females and two males having a discussion about music. The pictures that only include females are in “The idol phenomenon” and “Evaluation”.

The following table presents how many texts and illustrations in the section “Music” contain only females, only males or both sexes. The results are shown in percentage.

	Females	Males	Both sexes
Texts	14 %	72 %	14 %
Illustrations	28 %	58 %	14 %

Table 2

5.2.1 Texts

There are several examples of stereotypical associated traits in the different texts. “Dear idol, I love you” is a letter written by a little girl to her idol, who in this case is a male. She goes on by writing “I am so glad that I finally got the courage to write to you, I am so shy” (Mellerby et al, 2008, p. 18). In the letter she shows her admiration too this famous male singer, while in the same time showing a lack of self-confidence. The contrast is striking, with the famous world known male singer versus the shy little girl. Another example of male and female stereotyping can be found in “My music isn’t yours” which is a dialogue between two females and two males talking about music. The females in this dialogue like to listen to a variation of different music styles but prefer classical music and love ballads, while males favour hip-hop and R ‘N’ B.

Our findings show that the texts containing males are more and longer than the texts containing females. The only text with merely females were “Dear idol, I love you”, which was very short in comparison with for example “The story of U2” which was twice as long. Another thing we noticed is the difference between females and males in regard to their personality traits. The men were referred to as very confident and strong while the women as very gentle and weak. This can be demonstrated in “Dear idol, I love you” where the young girl is seen as very shy and lacks self-confidence, while the males in “The story of U2” and “Rehearsal for an audition” are seen as strong and successful. The types of activities done by females and males were also in most cases gender stereotypical. Most of the men in this section were famous rock stars, and those who were not either listened to rock music or wanted to become famous one day. The females, on the other hand, either listened to classical music and love ballads or played the violin and sang opera.

5.2.2 Illustrations

There are several illustrations in this section that expose a typical male stereotype. In “Rehearsal for an audition” we see five teenage boys dressed in black t-shirts and worn out jeans, with instruments and notes all over the room. The boys in the picture all portray a chill and calm attitude, while in the same time being very competitive and eager to win the audition they are going to attend. In “Some useful words” we have one picture that reveals a member of the famous rock band Kiss wearing a black leather jacket with spikes, having ruffled long hair and black make up all over his face while he is stretching out his mouth to the audience. This man looks like he does not care about anything or anyone, a classic rock star look that more often than not is associated with maleness. In “The story of U2” we have two pictures showing the members of the famous band U2. In the first picture we see the leading-singer of the band dressed in tattered clothes looking confident. The second picture presents all members of the band wearing black suits, looking at the camera with a dominant gaze on their face. We also have numerous examples of pictures with female dominated stereotypes. In “Some useful words” we see a woman singing opera in a revealing black dress showing her cleavage. In the same part we find another picture of a younger woman playing the violin, wearing a tight low cut top. This young woman has a soft and very gentle look on her face. The only picture that did not reveal a stereotypical image was in “The idol phenomena” that portrayed a girl with short spiky hair and no make-up. The girl’s hair and tough look are not typically associated with feminine attributes, if you look at the general view of what people

normally see as feminine. This is the only example we could find within this section that did not portray a stereotypical image of the sexes.

Our findings reveal that men appeared more than women and the pictures that portrayed males were bigger and covered a larger area of the page. This pattern is very obvious and can be seen in several of the pictures in this section. For example in “Rehearsal for an audition” we have one picture with five boys that covers two pages, in comparison with the small picture illustrating a female in “The idol phenomena” that does not even cover half of the page. Another example can be found in “Some useful words” where we have two pictures, one portraying a female and the other a male. The pictures are almost the same size, what differs them is the color and who the picture illustrates. The first picture reveals an unknown actress acting as an opera singer with a light blue background, while the second picture presents the singer of the famous band Kiss with a dark blue background. Even if the pictures are the same size it is very obvious that the picture portraying the singer of the band Kiss is more visible and the one that will capture the reader’s attention, in our view. In regard to the females and males clothing we can say that most males were wearing dark and baggy clothes, while most females were dressed in light, tight and very revealing clothes. In for example “Some useful words” we see an opera singer wearing a black very revealing dress showing her cleavage. Her cleavage draws attention, but not necessarily a positive kind. The only picture that did not show a stereotypical image was the girl with spiky hair in “The idol phenomena”, but it went to the extreme to such extent that if women are to be powerful they have to look like men. The picture did not reveal any power or strength; it only exposed a woman that wanted to go against what is seen as the female ideal in regard to looks. The woman in the picture did not portray any self-confidence in our view.

5.2.3 Summary and conclusion

If we summarize our results we find that only three texts include females in comparison with seven texts that only speak about males. Males are mentioned twelve times in the different texts, while females only three times. If we look at the illustrations we find that six of them include only males, four pictures only females and three portray both females and males. In regard to the illustrations the difference is even greater; we found a total number of eight females versus nineteen males. These findings clearly show that males dominate this section of the book. To conclude our findings we can state that the hard-hitting image of the different men in the pictures is very masculine and demonstrates some kind of superiority, which

normally is associated with maleness. The representation of the females, on the other hand, reflects a very gentle and emotional picture. Do power and self-confidence go hand in hand with maleness? In this case it does and the stereotypical identity of male is therefore confirmed. This is a good example of the belief Radical feminism has that schools encourage men's domination over women. By working with this section students are indirectly influenced into thinking that men are superior to women, and thereby an unequal image is transmitted.

5.3 Section 2 – Clothes

There is a total number of ten texts in this section, three longer texts, four dialogues and two shorter texts. There are several texts in this section that include both females and males: “What are you wearing today”, “In the shops”, “What do they look like”, “Wanted: where is Bob?”, “Can you describe them” and “Case of the two Leo Browns”. “New clothes” and “Top model” are two texts that only include females and contain three girls that love clothes and fashion. The only text that merely includes males is “In the department store”, that talks about two males working in a fashion store. If we look at the total number of illustrations within this section we find seventeen. The pictures in “In the department store” and “Wanted: Where is Bob” portray only males, while “New Clothes” and “Top model” only show females. “Before you start,” “What are you wearing today,” “In the shops,” “What do they look like?” and “The case of the two Leo Browns” all contain pictures that include both sexes.

The following table presents how many texts and illustrations in the section “Clothes” contain only females, only males or both sexes. The results are shown in percentage.

	Females	Males	Both sexes
Texts	22 %	12 %	66 %
Illustrations	21 %	21 %	58 %

Table 3

5.3.1 Texts

There are quite a few texts within this section that present a stereotypical image. In “New clothes” we find two girls reading a fashion magazine for the newest trends. These girls are represented as very self-absorbed when it comes to looks and the latest fashion. This can be demonstrated from the following sentence “I want this sweater! It is the hot new look to

have...“ (Mellerby et al, 2008, p. 34). The same can also be observed in “What are you wearing today” where we have a young woman also very self-centered, only wearing the latest fashion. She goes on by saying “I love the latest fashion! I read a lot of fashion magazines and try to follow the latest trends” (Mellerby et al, 2008, p. 36). Within the same part we find two texts that talk about males and their favorite clothes, where one goes on by saying “The latest fashions are not my cup of tea. I prefer classic clothes that you can wear anywhere and that are never out of fashion” and the other “I don’t want to stick out in any way. My clothes should be soft and comfortable and not too expensive” (Mellerby et al, 2008, p. 36). These two males do not care about the latest fashion as long as the clothes look and feel good. We also found a few texts that did not illustrate a stereotypical image of the sexes. The text “What are you wearing today” shows a very strong independent woman who is eager to go her own way and having her own personal style regardless of what people think of her. Another great example we found was the detective woman in “The case of the two Leo Browns” that shows a very strong-minded old woman with a dominant personality.

Our findings reveal that almost all texts contained both females and males, these texts were also the longest ones in this section. The only text with simply females was “New clothes” which was almost twice as long as “In the department store” which was the only text with merely males. We saw a difference in regard to the personalities of females and males in the different texts. Females were represented as fashion freaks, very self aware in regard to looks and clothes, while males were described as the total opposite. This can be demonstrated in “New clothes” and “Top model” where we see several girls who are very interested in the latest trends and only wear the latest fashion in the belief that looks are very important. These girls can be compared with the men in “What are you wearing today” who are only interested in wearing comfortable clothes that fit. The difference is striking with the males that are comfortable with the way they look regardless of what clothes they are wearing versus the females who have to follow the latest trends in order to be able to look good. This might have to do with the belief that females are more self-conscious than males when it comes to looks, and therefore less confident in regard to personality. There were also some positive examples in this section that did not portray a stereotypical image and they could be found in the types of activities done by females and males. This can be demonstrated in “The case of the two Leo Browns” where we see a female detective with a very dominant personality and also in “Can you describe them?” where we find a female as a security guard. This can also be shown in “Wanted: Where is Bob?” where we find a woman working as a police officer. These women

all have occupations associated with males and are portrayed as very strong and self confident.

5.3.2 Illustrations

There are a few illustrations in this section that portray a stereotype associated with males. In “In the department store” we see a tall blond man working in a men’s fashion store wearing a brown suit. Other examples are the two men in “What are you wearing today?” where both are dressed in blue baggy jeans along with a dark sweater looking extremely cool. All men portrayed in these pictures look very masculine in the way they stand and are dressed. This can also be demonstrated in “The case of the two Leo Browns” where we have a male lawyer with short hair and glasses wearing a dark grey costume, acting very determined. This section also holds several illustrations that portray a female associated stereotype. In “New clothes” we observe two young girls wearing skin-tight tops and light blue jeans, reading a fashion magazine looking very girly and cute. Another example can be demonstrated in “What are you wearing today” where we see a self-centered young female in a tiny skirt, a red jacket and high heels. This can also be observed in “Top Model” where we have five young female models wearing petite tops looking very beautiful and innocent. All girls portrayed in these pictures seem to be very self-absorbed when it comes to the way they look. We also found some pictures that did not illustrate a stereotypical image of the sexes. In “In the department store” we can see a man wearing a tiny white t-shirt showing his stomach looking very feminine. The same can also be demonstrated in “In the shops” where we find a man wearing skin-tight jeans and a tiny top showing his stomach. These two men are slim and dressed in very bright and tight clothes, standing in a way that normally is associated with females, with their feet crossed. Another example is the man in “Wanted: Where is Bob” who has a long pony-tail, holding a teddy bear close to his chest looking like he is dreaming. An example of non stereotypical image of women can be illustrated in “What are you wearing today” where we find a young girl with short green spiky hair wearing black military boots, an old black leather jacket and a dark tartan skirt with a black leather belt. She has a tough look on her face and an appearance of a punk rocker.

In regard to the size of the different illustrations we found one picture in “In the department store” with only males that covered two whole pages, it was the only illustration of that size. The rest of the illustrations had almost the same dimension. All illustrations within this section had bright background, the only thing that differ them was the clothing of the different

characters. A good example of this can be illustrated in “New Clothes” and “Top model” where we see several girls dressed in really tight, light and revealing tops looking very girly, in comparison with for example the male in “In the department store” who is dressed in a dark brown suit looking very handsome. Another thing we noticed was that the females in this section were all very slim, which was not the case for the men where some of them were quite round.

5.3.3 Summary and conclusion

If we summarize our results we find that six texts contain both females and males, two texts include only females and one text only males. Males are mentioned sixteen times in the different texts, while females are mentioned eleven times. If we look at the illustrations we find that five of them include females and males, two portray only males and one picture only females. There are a total of thirteen females and twelve males in the illustrations. We also found three illustrations that did not portray any human characters; those are not relevant to our study. To conclude our findings we can say that this section contained a smaller amount of female and male associated stereotypes in comparison with the previous one. We found some examples of female and male stereotypes, but also a great deal of examples that did not portray a stereotypical image of the sexes. A big part of this section goes against the stereotypical image of what is seen as masculine and feminine, and thereby demonstrated a better example of how the content of schoolbooks should look like in able to transmit a fair image of the sexes. Images that challenge the way society see gender and gender roles.

5.4 Section 3 – Food

There are a total number of twelve texts within this section, four longer texts, four shorter texts and four dialogues. All dialogues in this section include both females and males. “How do you like the food?” is a dialogue containing two girls and two boys having a discussion about the food at school. “Eating at McDonald’s” and “Fish ‘n’ chips” are other dialogues with both females and males. “What’s for dinner” is also a dialogue containing one male and three females having dinner. In this section we have one longer text, “The whole truth – or just a yolk?” that talks about three males; a boy and his two teachers. The boy’s mother is also mentioned in the story but has a very small role. “In the kitchen” and “The case of the pilfered

pizzas” are two shorter texts. The first text contains two females and the second text one female and two males. The rest of the texts in this section talk about food and recipes and are therefore not relevant for this study. If we look at the total number of illustrations within this section we find totally twenty-three. We found two illustrations in “Eating out” and “Evaluation” that contained only females. We also found two illustrations in “The whole truth – or just a yolk” that only portrayed males. A large number of the illustrations portrayed both sexes. This can be portrayed in “Eating at McDonalds” where we see one girl and two boys serving food. This can also be observed in “Table talk” and “What’s for dinner” that contain two families eating dinner. In “The case of the pilfered pizzas” we see one female and one male trying to solve a crime. There are also several illustrations in this section that only portray food and therefore are not relevant for this study.

The following table presents how many texts and illustrations in the section “Food” contain only females, only males or both sexes. The results are shown in percentage.

	Females	Males	Both sexes
Texts	15 %	13 %	72 %
Illustrations	19 %	17 %	64 %

Table 4

5.4.1 Texts

There are several examples of stereotypical appearance of the sexes in the different texts. “In the kitchen” is a short text that talks about a mother in shock after the mess her daughter has made in the kitchen. The mother is described as hysteric and weak and dependent on other family members to calm her down. She is also shown to be the one responsible for the home in regard to cooking and cleaning. The same can also be demonstrated in “What’s for dinner” where we read about a family having dinner. The mother is described as the one responsible for cooking, cleaning etc, and the father for bringing home the money. This can also be revealed in “The whole truth – or just a yolk?” where we find, once again, the mother responsible for the kitchen and house duties. In the same text we find a male, a headmaster, with a very dominant personality and one thing on his mind: to maintain order and discipline in the school.

Our findings reveal that women dominate this section of the book. They are mentioned in the different texts more often than males. Our findings also show a high presence of a

stereotypical image of the sexes. We found that almost all texts contained both females and males. The only text with simply females was “In the kitchen” which was very short in comparison with “The whole truth – or just a yolk?” which was more than twice as long and only contained males as the main characters. Another thing we noticed was how different women and men were represented in regard to their personality traits. We found for example one female that was being described as very weak and hysteric, where she had to call her sister in able to calm down from the mess her daughter has made in the kitchen. This can be compared with the male in “The whole truth – or just a yolk?” who is very strict and goal oriented, the only thing on his mind is to reveal the truth about the fried egg that he found inside a book. In regard to occupation we found that females were shown as the ones responsible for the home and all the duties within it, while males were being shown as working and bringing home the money. This is shown in several of the texts in this section. Examples of this can be found in “In the kitchen” as well as in “What’s for dinner?” and “The whole truth – or just a yolk?” where women are being shown as house wives with no occupation and the men the ones that work. We can for example see a man working as a headmaster and another as a geography teacher in contrast to a house wife as almost the only occupation for females in this section. We only found one example of none stereotypical occupation for females within this section in “The case of the pilfered pizzas”, where the female was a well-known detective whose work was to solve crimes. It was unfortunately the only example we could find.

5.4.2 Illustrations

There is a large number of pictures as well that expose a stereotypical image. In “Eating out” we see three young females all wearing tight tops looking very girly. They are eating some kind of salad, a healthier alternative. In “Table talk” we observe a family that consists of a mother, a father and their two children, a boy and a girl. The mother is preparing for breakfast while the father is sitting at the table looking very distant and not at all present. Once again we see the mother as the one responsible for the house duties. In “What’s for dinner” we see a female and a male, where the female is the one looking very slim and elegant while the male is very hubby and round. “The whole truth – or just a yolk” portrays an old male wearing a dark suit with a tie holding a map looking very strict and powerful. In regard to the illustration we found one female in “The case of the pilfered pizzas” that did not portray a stereotypical image. It is the same detective woman we found in previous section. This woman shows a

very high presence and strong personality. This is unfortunately the only example we could find within this section.

Our findings reveal that women dominate this section of the book in regard to the amount of times they appear. All illustrations except one portray both females and males. All pictures had almost the same dimension and very light background. The illustrations did, on the other hand, portray a stereotypical image in regard to the clothing and body structure of the different characters. Females were dressed in very bright and close fitting tops or t-shirts, while all males were dressed in baggy clothes. The body structure also differed. We found a female in “What’s for dinner” who was very slim in comparison with her husband who was very round. The same applies for several of the pictures within this section.

5.4.3 Summary and conclusion

If we summarize our results we find that six texts contain both females and males, one text include only females and none with only males. Males are mentioned eleven times in the different texts, while females thirteen times. If we look at the illustrations we find that five of them include females and males, two portray only males and one picture only females. There are a total number of nine males versus eleven females. To conclude our findings we can say that females did appear more often than males in this section, however in a very stereotypical way. Females were in most cases portrayed as either housewives or the ones with no occupations, while males as the ones responsible for economic support of the family. This corresponds with the statement of Social feminism that schools play a big part in gaining the consent of girls to their place in the domestic sphere and are also responsible in winning the consent of boys to a division of masculinity, which makes them mainly responsible for the economic support of the family. This in turn has huge effects on the opportunities for women where they, because they have the main responsibility for home and children, are seen as less dependable workforce and therefore not given the same right in regard to their career (Acker, 1994). One should not forget that the school book is a powerful tool that influences the individual and in turn the whole society into certain gender codes.

5.5 Section 4 - In the house

There are a total number of six texts in this section, one longer text, one mid-size text, two shorter texts, and two dialogues. “In the house” and “Tidy up” talks only about males. In the

dialogue “Looking for a house” there are both males and females. The same applies for “Saturday Morning in Elm Tree Road” where we can find an equal number of females and males. “Jamie’s story” includes also males and females, where the males have the main role. The total number of pictures in this section is eleven. The illustration in “In the house” portrays an equal number of males and females. “Tidy up” contains two pictures with only males. “Jamie’s story” shows two pictures, where one portrays two males and one female, and the other only one male.

The following table presents how many texts and illustrations in the section “In the house” contain only females, only males or both sexes. The results are shown in percentage.

	Females	Males	Both sexes
Texts	0 %	33 %	67 %
Illustrations	0 %	60 %	40 %

Table 5

5.5.1 Texts

There are some examples of a stereotypical image in this section. The text “Looking for a house” is a dialogue containing one male and one female that talk about buying a place to live in. They are discussing whether they are going to live in an apartment or a house. The woman wants to live in a house with a garden while the man wants a living close to busses and subways so they do not need to use their car. The difference is striking with the man that is thinking practically versus the woman that is more thinking with her feelings. A stereotypical image can also be shown in “Tidy up” that talks about a boy with a messy room that his father wants him to clean. The stereotype in this text is the situation with an obnoxious male teenager that does not want to clean up his room, which is something usually associated with boys and men. The text “Saturday morning in Elm Tree Road” is about four men and four women that are describing what they normally do during a Saturday morning. Men and women do different sorts of chores around their homes, like mowing the lawn, getting the mail, sleeping after having worked night shifts etc. In this text we can clearly see the stereotypes of males and females in how they think and act differently. The last text “Jamie’s story” is about a boy who does not want to move with his parents to another town. He runs away to his cottage that he has together with a friend but realizes that he misses his family and comes back. Running away is something also normally associated with males.

Our findings clearly show that males dominate this section of the book. The longer texts are about males while the shorter texts are about both males and females. There is no text in this section that only contains females. Another thing we noticed was the difference between males and females in regard to personality traits. This can be demonstrated in “Looking for a house” where the man is portrayed as the practical down to earth kind of man while the woman is a dreamer that is merely using her feelings and not thinking about the practical side of things. In this dialogue the man tries to convince his wife that she needs to think like him, which portrays him as the strongest one. The stereotypical image of men can also be demonstrated in “Tidy up!” which contains two males that are arguing about a messy room. The teenage son ignores the father and lives in his own little world. The father who is doing the yelling has the role as the strong family member, the mother does not need to take that role and she is not mentioned either. The types of activities done by males and females are very gender stereotypical as well. The males are the ones doing the practical things like mowing the lawn, which can be demonstrated in “Saturday morning on Elm Tree Road”, while the women are shopping, getting dressed or the ones complaining. We also noticed that the females in this section have jobs like secretaries or other non-productive jobs. The only female that does work is the student mentioned in “Saturday morning on Elm Tree Road” who works night shift at the hospital, which is a low paid job.

5.5.2 Illustrations

The illustration in “In the house” portrays three females and three males. The picture reveals an apartment that is built up to be a film studio. One woman is pretending to be murdered and is lying on the floor with blood all around her, wearing a skirt. The second woman is standing next to her with a weapon and reading from a manuscript, she is wearing tight jeans and a white slim top. The third woman portrayed is some sort of a secretary taking notes; she is dressed in a polo neck sweater and long pants. She is standing next to a man who is giving her instructions. The man giving instructions has a beard and a huge belly, and dressed in baggy jeans along with a baggy t-shirt and a cap. The second man is moving a table and is seen from the back, dressed in a black tank top, grey pants and sneakers. The third man is filming and is wearing a white shirt, a vest and grey pants. This is a stereotypical image where the males are portrayed as superior and hard working, while the females are victims and secretaries, dressed in tiny and revealing clothes. The illustrations in “Tidy up” portray a boy sitting in a messy room watching TV, with a towel wrapped around his waist. The second picture shows the

same boy playing computer games, and an angry father sticking his head into the room screaming at him. A female teenager would normally not be portrayed with a messy room with a mother yelling at her.

Our findings reveal that the majority of illustrations within this section portray males. Only two pictures include women, but they are not the main characters of the pictures. The illustrations that include men are also bigger and cover a larger area of the page. The biggest illustration found portrays females that serve the men, where the males have dominant roles. This can be demonstrated in “In the house” where we see female secretary writing down directions given by a man. The only times females occur in the different pictures are in “In the house” where we find an equal amount of females and males, but the males are portrayed as stronger and the ones in control.

5.5.3 Summary and conclusion

If we summarize our results we find two texts containing only males, while three texts have an equal amount of males and females. Males are mentioned ten times and females only seven. If we look at the illustrations we see that one picture has an equal amount of males and females while three pictures only contain males. There are a total number of twelve males versus nine females in the different illustrations. To conclude our findings, we can say that males are definitely in majority in both texts and illustrations. The women were in most cases portrayed as weak in the few parts that include both sexes. Men, on the other hand, were shown as superior and the ones in control. Measor and Sikes (1992), state that it is men who have forced women into oppressed situations and functions. This can be shown from the content of this section where men are in control of the women. Measor and Sikes (1992), state that women domination is the deepest and strongest form of inequality, and the most difficult to eradicate. If schoolbooks reveal such an image, then it is not strange that stereotypical images still exist to such an extent in the society.

5.6 Section 5 – In town

There are six texts in this section, one longer text, two dialogues, one shorter text, and two texts containing two different shorter parts. “In town” is about a female, while “The ticket inspectors” and “Which way” is only about males. “How stupid of me” and “High beams” include both females and males. The total number of pictures is twenty. “In town”, “Which

way” and “High Beams” contain both males and females. “How stupid of me” contains one female. “Famous British cars” and “The Ticket inspector” contain only males.

The following table presents how many texts and illustrations in the section “In town” contain only females, only males or both sexes. The results are shown in percentage.

	Females	Males	Both sexes
Texts	20 %	40 %	40 %
Illustrations	6 %	27 %	67 %

Table 6

5.6.1 Texts

The text “How stupid of me” is about a girl trying to get to the train station. She asks a man and his son about the bus and he suggests to her to take another faster bus. This text portrays a young happy girl who is lost and in need for directions. The man even hands the girl money since she does not have change for the bus. He acts like a father figure and is the one offering help. The stereotype reveals a young female in need for help, where a male is the one offering the help. “The ticket inspector” is about an inspector that finds a “free-rider” without a ticket. The inspector is very strong-minded and forces the passenger to leave the train. Occupation and trait typically associated with males. “High Beams” is about a girl that is being followed while driving home late one evening. When she finally arrives home, she tells her parents to call the police. It turns out that the man following the girl was only trying to protect her from the man lying in the back of her car trying to injure her. The stereotypes in this text are the young girl who is the victim of a male criminal, and the old man who is the hero.

Our findings reveal that the majority of texts in this section are about males. In regard to personality traits we can say that the texts that include both sexes show males as superior to females. It also reveals men to be the ones very strong-minded and tough, and also the criminal ones. The few texts that include females portray them as innocent that need to be taken care of. For example in “High Beams” the males are portrayed as both tough and criminal or heroes that protect young women. This can also be demonstrated in “How stupid of me” where the female is in need of being taken care of while the man has power and knowledge. The difference is striking with the females that are shown as victims or the ones in need versus men who are portrayed as heroes.

5.6.2 Illustrations

There are several illustrations that reveal a stereotypical image. The illustration in “How stupid of me” portrays a girl smiling with a map in her hands. She wears a red sweater and white pants and has a bag over her shoulder. She looks like a typical young girl in town. The man shown in “Famous British cars” is a very stereotypical male owning a very expensive sports car. He is dressed in a black suit and is wearing a bow tie and a white shirt. Females are rarely portrayed standing next to expensive cars. The picture in “High Beams” illustrates a girl standing on the doorsteps with her father. The girl looks very afraid in both pictures. She is small and blond with tight clothes showing her cleavage. In the background we see a male farmer standing next to a police officer that is taking a young male into the police car. This clearly shows the stereotypical image of the girl who needs to be taken care of by her parents and the old farmer who rescues her. The young man who was trying to injure her is portrayed as a criminal and tattooed man with shaved head, which is also a very stereotypical appearance for male criminals. The only picture that is not stereotypical is the one that is comical which is found in “Which way?” The illustration portrays mummies and other funny characters asking for direction to the museum. However, the old man giving directions is very stereotypical in regard to clothing and appearance.

Our findings reveal that men appeared more often than women. We found two illustrations that portrayed only females while the rest only portrayed males or both. In regard to personality traits we can say that the few times women appeared they were shown as either the victims or the innocent ones which can be demonstrated in “High beams”. This can be compared with the man portrayed in “Famous British cars” that is standing next to an expensive car looking very wealthy. In regard to the females and males clothing we can say that most men were wearing dark clothes while most women were dressed in light and tight clothes. This can be shown in “Famous British cars” where the man is dressed in a black suit, in comparison with the illustration in “How stupid of me” where the girl is dressed in light, really girly clothes. We also noticed that the pictures in “How stupid of me” and “High Beams” both portraying females were very colourful while the picture in “Famous British cars” portraying a male had a dark background and the only thing visible is the man and the car.

5.6.3 Summary and conclusion

If we summarize our results we find one text with only females, two texts containing both males and females and two texts that only talk about males. There are a total number of four females and eleven males in the different texts. In regard to the illustrations we find, that out of the sixteen pictures that portray people, three of them include both males and females, three pictures contain only females and ten only males. In the pictures there are a total of ten females and nineteen males. To conclude our findings we can clearly state that men are shown as superior to woman. Women are mentioned as victims that need to be taken care of. The men that are mentioned or portrayed in this section are either strong, rich, intelligent or heroes. These attributes all correspond to what is seen as masculine traits in the male scale. If, as Gemzöe (2003) states that masculinity and femininity play a big role in shaping and forming the male and the female identity, then schools and society in general should be really concerned about the content of this section. This section reveals males to be the total opposite of females with masculinity at one end and femininity at the other and therefore does not show men and women as equals.

5.7 Section 6 – Life in Britain

There are fourteen texts in this section, four mid-size texts, one longer text divided into three parts, two texts that are divided into smaller parts and seven shorter texts. The texts “Teenage life in Britain, “Joshua Lord” and “Famous British books - The lord of the rings” only contain males. “Teenage life in Britain, - Jessica Law” contains one female. “Famous British books - Harry Potter” and “Famous British people” include both males and females.

The total number of pictures is sixty-eight. Thirty-six of the pictures will not be analysed because they do not contain people and therefore are not relevant for this study. “Teenage life in Britain - Joshua Lord” and “Famous British books - The lord of the rings” contain only males. “Teenage life in Britain - Jessica Law” and “Famous British books - Harry Potter” contain only females. “Sports in Britain” and “Famous British people” portray both males and females.

The following table presents how many texts and illustrations in the section “Life in Britain” contain only females, only males or both sexes. The results are shown in percentages.

	Females	Males	Both sexes
Texts	20 %	40 %	40 %
Illustrations	12 %	23 %	65 %

Table 7

5.7.1 Texts

Both texts with British teenagers reveal typical stereotypes associated with boys and girls in Britain, with girls interested in shopping and boys that are into soccer and sports. The text in “Famous British books - Harry Potter” reveals the publishing agents that do not believe in a book’s success because a female wrote it. This is very stereotypical for the male dominated world not to believe in women’s capacity of doing successful things. Harry Potter did turn out to be a huge success worldwide. The females in “Famous British people” are both famous, one because she is married to a well-known prince and the other because she is the daughter of a famous singer. All men, on the other hand, have become famous because of something they have achieved by themselves. This could be interpreted as fewer women become famous and if they do it will only be through the help of men.

Our findings clearly show that males dominate this section of the book. There are four longer texts: two of them are about males and two of them about females. In regards to personality traits we found the two texts ”Teenage life in Britain” to be stereotypical for boys and girls, where the boy is doing sports while the girl is shopping. The types of activities done by males and females in this section are gender stereotypical as well. The men are doing sports like in “Sports in Britain” while the women are designers or princesses like in “Famous British people”. Men are presented to have occupations as sport stars, pop singers and politicians, while females are represent as authors, designers and princesses. All of these occupations are very gender stereotypical. All men within this section are either famous or rich like in “Famous British people” in comparison with the very few women that do not show the same traits like in “Sports in Britain”. The women are shown to be very dependent and if they have the ability and power to stand on their own two feet this are taken away from them as with the female author in “Famous British books – Harry Potter”.

5.7.2 Illustrations

The pictures in “Teenage life in Britain” show a boy playing football and a girl shopping with her hands full of bags. This clearly reveals the stereotypes that teenage boys are active and doing sports while teenage girls go shopping. Almost all illustrations in “Sports in Britain” portray males in action that are tough and rough, especially in the pictures that show football, rugby and cricket. The only female we can see in this part is playing tennis wearing shorts and a tight top.

Our findings show that men are portrayed in more and larger pictures than women. This can be demonstrated in the picture that portrays a boy in “Teenage life in Britain” that is very large in comparison with the picture that portrays a girl within the same part. There are more males than females in the pictures illustrated in “Sports in Britain” and these pictures are full of action. The pictures in “Famous British people” portraying the females are smaller than the pictures portraying males. Women are also revealed to be more conscience when it comes to their choice of clothes, since the majority wear fashion clothes. The illustrations in “Famous British people” portraying females also have brighter background colour in comparison with the pictures portraying males.

5.7.3 Summary and conclusion

If we summarize our findings regarding the texts we can say that two texts only contain males, one text only females while two texts include both sexes. We did not find anything in this section that did not portray a stereotypical image of the sexes. In the pictures we can see that out of the seventeen there are twelve pictures that only portray males while two include both females and males and four only females. To conclude our findings we can clearly say that there are more males than females in this section. Males are also portrayed as strong, intelligent, superior and famous because they have talents, while women are portrayed as either spoiled or famous because of men. Acker (1994), states that socialization encourages patterns of interpersonal relationship between the sexes that disadvantages girls and puts them in a position of dependency and weakness. This is a great example of this socialization where women are shown to be famous only through the power of men and thereby the ones that are dependent. It is very difficult to influence the inequality between the sexes that we see every day if gender codes such as these still exist.

6 Concluding discussion

Despite the fact that several studies made in Sweden and worldwide show evidence of changing gender patterns, where girls are the ones breaking traditional gender patterns and taking up more space, this is not the case for *Wings 7 Blue*. Our study reveals that *Wings 7 Blue* does not follow the same trend, instead it shows the opposite. One of the research questions we set out to answer was if the dialogues and images in *Wings 7 Blue* over-represent female characters or male characters. Our findings showed that males are over-represented in both texts and illustrations, which was not the case for the females. We also set out to investigate how females and males characters in the texts and illustrations were represented. Our results showed that the content of the textbook revealed a stereotypical image of the sexes, where males were shown as stronger and more superior to women. We found that the sexes showed traditional characteristics typically associated with them being female or male, where men showed traits associated with leadership and independence and usually had occupations as lawyers, inspectors, and rock stars and were in several cases shown as the family providers. The few women in the textbook were also described in a stereotypical way, especially when it comes to their occupations, which in most cases consisted in being either housewives or being involved in other non-professional duties.

The results found in this study bear some similarities with the study performed by Berge and Widding (2006) where they in the conclusion mention that some school books had a high presence of a stereotypical image and could therefore be perceived as discriminating, which we feel is the case for *Wings 7 Blue*. Our study did also reveal similar results as the study done by Moira von Wright (1998), where she concludes that the schoolbooks she analyzed undoubtedly value the male qualities higher than the qualities traditionally considered female and, therefore, contribute to the restoration of the injustices between the sexes.

Men and women were in several cases not shown as equals, and that in turn does not match the goals of the policy documents for compulsory schools, where the National Agency for Education states that there should be no distinction made between girls and boys and that teachers are responsible for giving girls and boys the same rights and opportunities and also the same encouragement when it comes to developing their interests regardless of what

gender they belong to. We feel the task to be difficult if the content of the textbook reveals a stereotypical image, as it is in this case.

If learners are exposed in school to certain images of how men and women should be it is more than sure that they will take it with them outside the school and conclude that this is how things normally are and should be. Feminists argue that femininity is not something all women are born with, but that it is something that women become through the feminine identity they practice every day. If girls from an early age are shown a gender-based image on how they are suppose to be like, they will have difficulty not to follow this image and slowly fall under the belief that they are inferior to men. It is through children that stereotypes are passed on in the society we live in and continue from generation to generation. It is important to have in mind that even if gender stereotypes rarely have a true basis in how people actually are, they have a huge social influence and affect how people see themselves. The enormous social influence gender has on individuals is mentioned in the socialization theory where they believe that society, which includes the school, shapes the individual to become gender aware. Socialization theory states that the society as a whole shapes us into certain gender patterns that we are expected to follow and if we go against these patterns we are considered deviant.

We believe that unequal opportunities and stereotypical gender patterns might start within the school, for example from gender biased teaching materials. When using teaching materials that do not represent gender equality we immediately end up in discriminatory situations. This means that sex discrimination might very well start within schools through, for example, teaching materials and continue into society as a whole.

We believe that schools, by choosing gender based materials, play a part in gaining the consent of girls to their subordinate status and their place in the domestic sphere and are also involved in winning the consent of boys to a division of masculinity, where they are mainly responsible for the economic support of the family, and thus function as a conduct for the reinforcement of the gender based conformity among young people. Therefore it is very important that schools and teachers are aware of the huge responsibility they have in making sure that the picture given in the texts is equal and fair, since textbooks can contribute to a cultural shift in which the principle of gender equality is more fully achieved.

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