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The reframing of stereotypical female representation in *Vikings*

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the analysis of three selected scenes from the modern historical show *Vikings* to answer the question how the show reframes stereotypical representation of women in television. The analysis of the scenes is based on the method outlined by John Fiske in *Television Culture,* which deconstructs the scenes based on social, technical, and ideological codes identifiable in the show. Analogically to Fiske's method, each analysis chapter focuses on how each of these levels is used to encode the social reality of the Viking age and the representation of Lagertha within it. The analysis of the first scene discusses how the stereotypical systems of representation used by the creators of the show are further reframed by the social codes represented by character's actions and dialogue. The focus on technical codes in the analysis of the second scene revealed that the dialogue encodes the ideologies of patriarchy and class that are prominent in Viking society and uses the camerawork to distance the viewer from these ideologies. Instead guiding their attention towards female character's silent defiance. The third part of the analysis focuses on the way Lagertha demonstrates her perspective on patriarchal representation of women and power on the level of ideology. Lagertha is in this scene the hero of a violent encounter that represents a dichotomy between the patriarchal society she lives in, and the dominant, anti-patriarchal ideology encoded in her character. The method of separation at the levels of reality, representation and ideology resulted in clear visibility of contrasts between the stereotypical representations of women, with feminist and anti-patriarchal behaviors encoded in Lagertha's representation, adding more dimensions to the character, and reframing the stereotypical female representation.

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1. Introduction

With the expansion of streaming platforms forming a strong competition to traditional television over the recent years, there is an increase in the variety of women's representations in television series. New creators are motivated to compete to get their chance at the spotlight. Writers are updating their narratives to modern audience's tastes and to stand out among the flood of other 'bingeworthy' television shows, some of them find ways to reach beyond the expected standard narratives of the genre and provide new, nuanced perspectives to old, well known stories. The genre of historical fiction is also experiencing an increase in television series reinterpretations, although many of these shows discuss characters, beliefs and social values of Western European history and Britain, with shows such as *The Crown* or *The Last Kingdom*, very few of them representing other historical European societies and particularly women's life in them. In contrast to these titles stands the show *Vikings* based in 7th century Scandinavia, adapting stories of the early medieval Norse society, and basing its narrative on the sagas of Ragnar Lothbrok, that besides the tales of great journeys and brave heroes, shines the light onto the history of powerful women and heroines of the Viking age.

Vikings is an Emmy Award 2020 winning show, written by Michael Hirst, produced by History running from 2013 to 2020, the narrative of the show implements universal archetypes that are closely tied with the religion and culture of Vikings. Myths had a historical value to Vikings, who believed that similarly to heroes from their legends, gods from their myths not only used to exist but sometimes still walked among them. Ruth Hoberman argues that historical referents are a crucial way of connecting a daydream with reality, lending a dream of heroism with actuality.[1] These narratives were presented to Viking children as history from a young age, providing them with references of character archetypes and behaviors helping them identify their own goals, values and "shape their sense of self."[2] According to Hoberman "History provides a repertoire of stories which collectively define the kinds of lives people live."[3] A collection of known plots, stories, behaviors provides a base for references that shape a person's interpretation of their reality. Yet, modern historical representation of women often reflects the historical inequality of gender to power, "young readers notice that most of history's high

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[1] Ruth Hoberman, *Gendering Classicism: The Ancient World in Twentieth-Century Women's Historical Fiction,* (SUNY Press, 1997), 1.
[2] Hoberman, *Gendering Classicism,* 1.
[3] Hoberman, *Gendering Classicism,* 1.

achievers were male, as were most of its interpreters."[4] Stories of powerful women and their representation are not as easy to find making it more likely for the first most impactful exposures to qualities such as ambition, assertiveness or power to be represented only by male figures, suggesting that to exhibit these qualities a person has to be a man. The representation of women in non-Western European historical fiction shows is scarce, despite the rich mythologies left by other civilizations across the globe that feature both heroes and heroines alike.

Svenja Hohenstein and Katharina Thalmann in their article "Difficult Women" discuss how the initial lack of women's visibility in television series had to be made up for, so in response to this demand came a wave of oversaturation in simplistic female characters, with their simplicity boiling them down to side characters, assistants, or secretaries of a male lead.[5] Although with the intention to provide representation for women on screen, these representations exhibited shallow personalities, limited goals and dependency on male figures. For those reasons, the early representations of women have been recognized to be further reinforcing the patriarchal stereotypes rather than providing women with equal presence in media and complex personalities. By more complex female characters the authors refer to "female characters who defy an easy categorization, characters who exhibit a wealth of, often contradicting, traits, characters who are 'elaborated'."[6] Women who are not easy to put a label on therefore portray differences from what is considered fitting within socially predefined categories.

Analyzing the media representations of female characters in historical fiction is then necessary to understand the meaning of our past and shape our understanding of the mechanisms affecting our present. History channel's *Vikings* is an example of a show with a narrative that often takes on complex social issues in combination with the historical context of the Viking Age. This modern historical fiction series targets wider audiences, while basing their narratives on recent historical findings. The historical sources include records of Viking raids in parts of England, results of excavations done on the battlefields, and Nordic sagas for narrative context. The historical credibility of the sources provides a level of additional credibility to the characters and the narrative, affecting audience's emotional engagement in the story.

According to John Fiske our understanding of media is reliant on the same, shared, socially accepted conventions and rules which are encoded on three levels, the reality (social codes),

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[4] Hoberman, *Gendering Classicism,* 1.
[5] Svenja Hohenstein, and Katharina Thalmann, "Difficult Women: Changing Representations of Female Characters in Contemporary Television Series," *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik 67*, no. 2 (2019): 109.
[6] Hohenstein and Thalmann "Difficult Women," 113.

representation (technical codes), and ideology.[7] To provide more clarity to my analysis I will be focusing on these aspects reflected in one character example, Lagertha. Since as the only consistently recurring main character throughout the six seasons of show and the symbol of Viking heroism, she proves to be an interesting case study in the subject of reframing female representation in television series. Viking's cultural isolation from western patriarchal social structures and a 'different' type of morality can bring a more nuanced point of view into the discussion on the representation of gender roles and expand the array of powerful female heroes that broke the mold in the past.

The main objective of this paper is to answer the question of how is the representation of women reframed in the modern historical show *Vikings*? To answer this question, I will be making use of John Fiske's codes of television and provide the analysis based on three sub questions:

1. How is the stereotypical representation of women encoded and challenged by Lagertha on the level of reality?
2. How does the show use the technical codes to represent social roles of women through Lagertha's character?
3. What perspective on the patriarchal representation of women and power does Lagertha demonstrate on the level of ideology?

2. Theoretical Framework

In analysis of female representation in a television series it is important to establish what is understood by representation and how it has been found to function with regards to representing female characters in media. Stuart Hall defines representation as ''the production of meaning of the concepts in our minds through language.''[8] It describes the process of making meaning out of language or "text" through connecting shared signs or images to call into mind an idea of something. According to Stuart Hall the concept of representation is a crucial to making meaning from the world around us and making sense of what we observe.[9] The representation is present instead of the object it

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[7] John Fiske, *Television Culture* (Routledge, 2010), 5.

[8] Stuart Hall, "The work of representation," *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices* 2 (1997), 3.

[9] Hall, "Representation," 3.

represents and serves as its substitute. Representations can also invoke a wider set of meanings attached to them. This allows for expression of more complex ideas and their successful communication between people. The process of making meaning is not straightforward as it is influenced by factors such as the intention of the author or the construction of the language itself. In the case of a television series it is also the presentation of the content through the medium, for example through using montage tricks like implementing the Kuleshov effect which makes the audience derive different meanings from the interaction between shots in a sequence rather than in isolation.[10] The meanings, or mental representations, are classified and categorized in what Hall refers to as "system of representation" which allows for correlating them and establishing relationships between them or distinguishing them from each other.[11] What he means by this is that things in the world exist in different relationships to each other and, whether real or fictional, their mental representations work in a conceptual system that organizes them and forms meaning. The system of representation is what organizes representations, forming meaning and this process provides a reference for future encounters. Representations in television series much like in real life also provide sets of references that interact with the conceptual system and the process of meaning making, which constitutes one of the reasons why inequalities in women's representation in media have become a pressing issue over the last decades.

Hohenstein and Thalmann in their article "Difficult Women" discuss the turbulent process of media changing the representation of women on screen. From initial lack of women on screen through uniform one-dimensional sidekicks into main casts of diverse characters. In the recent years showrunners have started implementing the idea of Complex TV, that is a trend of writing more multidimensional, flawed characters and anti-heroes that humanized the main characters and problematized plot lines.[12] These depictions stand in opposition to the uniform representations of flawless heroes from the old television through providing insight into more dimensions of life, exploring the realm of difference. Complex characters present a variety of differences based on their background, age, social status, individual traits. Personal characteristics traditionally were portrayed as attributed to a specific gender, for example action, ruthlessness or pursuit of success were accredited to men while passivity, selflessness and care to women.[13] The focus of difference here lies on the female characters that break the stereotypical and archetypal representations of womanhood

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[10] Dean Mobbs, Nikolaus Weiskopf, Chris D. Frith, "The Kuleshov Effect: the influence of contextual framing on emotional attributions," *Social cognitive and affective neuroscience* 1, no. 2 (2006): 95.
[11] Hall, "Representation," 3.
[12] Hohenstein and Thalmann "Difficult Women," 115.
[13] Hohenstein and Thalmann "Difficult Women," 116.

on screen, representing a variety of traits, and present their opinions within the modern political discourse about women's rights in a male dominated landscape.

Similarly, Margaret Gallagher points out media representations of women are often not reflective of their own point of view or perspectives on the world. The way women are visible in the media is then reflective of biases that are traditionally implied by media's own agenda, and misrepresenting women's reality into what the social norms, patriarchal or political ideology want them to be.[14] She connects it to the concept of the "symbolic annihilation" of women, by which she does not mean underrepresenting women in media, but conversely basing common female media representations on patterns condemning, marginalizing, or trivializing women's role in society.[15] The recurring presence of the same tropes of behavior among the female representations on television in its effect also made women's life seem as one-dimensional and it belittled the value of women's activities in society.

Hohenstein and Thalmann build on this arguing that a shift that has happened in the female representation in recent television series, which stand opposed to heteronormative expectations set in place by stereotypical female representations written by men. In a corrective mechanism of the industry now facing the rise of streaming platforms and counternarratives that exposed the blatant stereotypical politics, the trends on how to write female characters started shifting again. This happened due to the opening of the writing possibilities to more female writers that have joined in the quickly expanding industry by writing from their perspective, providing more depth to female characters and uprooting the archaic standards of one-dimensional female representations.[16] The structural changes in television industry after the 2010's, such as original programming from streaming platforms, allowed for women to write about women.[17] This allowed for the complexity and differences of character to deconstruct and reform portrayals of female characters on TV engaging them in feminist discourse.[18] The focus on differences is, according to Amanda Lotz, a part of post feminism. As Lotz explains in "Postfeminist television criticism", the concept of post feminism critically renegotiates the feminist ideas and guides the discourse towards the differences among characters and the representation of these differences on screen.[19] The initial issue of the quantitative under

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[14] Margaret Gallagher, "Media and the representation of gender," *The Routledge companion to media and gender* (2014), 23.
[15] Gallagher, "Representation of gender," 23.
[16] Hohenstein and Thalmann "Difficult Women," 109.
[17] Hohenstein and Thalmann "Difficult Women," 112.
[18] Hohenstein and Thalmann "Difficult Women," 119.
[19] Amanda Lotz, "Postfeminist television criticism: Rehabilitating critical terms and identifying postfeminist attributes," *Feminist media studies 1*, no. 1 (2001): 115.

representation of women in media had to be revised and the system of representation that has been created in the process has to be reframed. Since it is not only the quantity of women starring in shows on television but also quality of their representation, the contradictions and diversity of characters, variety of social roles and perspectives that need to be addressed also for the female characters to be truly equal.

The difference that Lotz refers to spans across differences on social, political and personal levels. She connects it to bell hook's definition of feminism as not only the fight against sexism or for equal rights of women and men, but a commitment to eradicate the ideology of domination on more levels, such as sex, class or race and reorganizing the society from being focused on fulfilling imperialist and consumerist desires and towards self-development and valuing of the individual.[20] This definition identifies that oppression occurs based on more than just one dimension of being and exemplifies the importance of acknowledging and representing differences among people's individual, social and political life experiences. On the other hand, Byerly and Ross problematize the differences in female representation on TV by singling out the notion that it is crucial for women's characters to be "authentic." As the authors claim this imposes an impossible task onto creators of media to create female characters that accurately represent large groups of individuals.[21] It means that authentic portraying of difference on screen also presents limitations.

3. Methodology

3.1   Selection method

Finding an approach to analyze the female representation in such an extensive show as *Vikings* is challenging from many regards. The show spans across 6 seasons varying between 10 to 20 forty-five-minute-long episodes per season, it discusses the fates of distinct female characters and positions them against nuanced dilemmas, providing developments across different dimensions of their existence. To narrow down the content of the analysis to ensure the most accurate breakdown of

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[20] bell hooks, "Black Women and Feminism," (Boston: South End, 1981), 194.
[21] Carolyn M. Byerly, and Karen Ross, "Women and media: A critical introduction," (John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 90.

women's representation in the series within the confines of this paper, I narrowed the selection to one female character, Lagertha (Katheryn Winnick). Lagertha's representation has already made a great impact on young viewers of the series and, as Winnick has shared in interviews, young girls often contact her about how the bravery and the strength of the heroine have impacted their own lives and incentivized them to take part in local feminist movements.[22]

The information about Lagertha's character is more expansive due to longer screen time as a part of the main cast of the show. Lagertha is a shield maiden and the first wife of a farmer Ragnar Lothbrok. Her character is multidimensional, and the narration features many problematic plotlines reflecting what Hohenstein and Thalmann refer to as complex female characters, which as the authors acknowledge makes them also difficult to categorize.[23] To select the scenes for analysis I sorted them focusing on the representation of Viking women's daily life, social roles and particularly instances in which Lagertha contests the pressures of stereotypical social roles and relationship to power of the historical female representation. In my analysis I will focus on three selected scenes from the seasons one and two that focus on Lagertha's character as challenging stereotypical expectations and reframing female representation in historical fiction. The scenes will be described in detail in the analysis chapter and the Appendix 1.

The first episode of the show, "Rites of Passage," provides the historical background of the Viking culture and social roles. Scenes of Lagertha and her daughter Gyda weaving are glimpses of women's daily life in Viking society. The scene I selected from this episode plays out at 7:52 – 9:43. In this scene Lagertha defends herself and her daughter from bandits.

Another scene comes from the first episode of the second season, "Brother's War," at the timestamp of 37:59 – 40:36. In this scene Lagertha is sitting next to her husband, and a pregnant with his child princess who are trying to convince her into a polygamous marriage. In this scene Lagertha is faced with societal pressures which are confronting her sense of self.

The third scene I will analyze is from the episode 6 of the second season, "Unforgiven," at 35:00 – 37:06. In this scene Lagertha is sitting with a black eye at a dinner with her new husband and his guests. In this scene Lagertha defends herself from her abusive husband and takes over her husband's earldom.

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[22] "Vikings Season 6: Alexander Ludwig & Katheryn Winnick Exclusive Interview | History," iHollywoodTV, uploaded Dec 4, 2019,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KwdFM7CbWck.
[23] Hohenstein and Thalmann "Difficult Women," 113.

3.2 Analysis method

To analyze how women's representation is reframed in the show *Vikings* I will be basing my methods of analysis on John Fiske's the codes of television as defined in *Television Culture.* Fiske's main argument is that our understanding of media is reliant on the same, socially accepted conventions.[24] Within works of fiction such as *Vikings* these conventions are consciously selected by the creators of the show to provide a chosen representation of the underlying ideology. The reality that Fiske points out is on its first level of the codes of television and it is encoded by the social codes. This level pertains particularly to things that can be noticed at first glance, such as appearance, make up, costumes, environment, behavior, speech, gestures, expressions, and sounds.[25] The second level of analysis focuses on the technical codes, so how the reality is represented through the medium considering the camera angles, lighting, editing, music, and scripted sound and dialogues. These two levels constitute the "text" that in Hall's definition of representation provides the basis for the process of mental referencing and meaning making. In Fiske's method these aspects serve as the basis to the perception of reality represented through the medium and create coherent and socially acceptable ideological codes that are at the third level of the analysis.[26] According to Hoberman "if the past is, by definition, different, it is available to us primarily as encoded by narrative structures, in ideology."[27] The third level of codes of television provides a way of identifying the ideologies represented in the scenes, for example class, patriarchy, individualism, etc.[28] I will analyze the show based on the following three levels, the reality represented, representation through the medium, and the ideological codes embedded in the scenes.

My analysis will be focused on the character of Lagertha, played by Katheryn Winnick and to further the context of the scene I note down the characters she interacts with. Following Fiske's codes of television, I will analyze the selected three scenes by categorizing the various aspects of the scenes between the categories of reality, representation, and ideology in the following chapters.

The first chapter of the analysis will be addressing the first sub question on the encoding of stereotypical representation of women in the show and Lagertha's character and actions. I will be focusing on the first scene from the angle of the reality and representation, first two of codes of

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[24] Fiske, *Television culture,* 5.
[25] Fiske, *Television culture,* 7.
[26] Fiske, *Television culture,* 6.
[27] Hoberman, *Gendering Classicism,* 5.
[28] Fiske, *Television culture,* 6.

television as described by Fiske. This part will focus on the aspects that are made observable on the surface and through the camera environment, the characters appearance, clothing, make-up, behavior expressions and gestures, actions and how they are portrayed through the camera and editing.

The second chapter of my analysis will discuss the second of my sub questions, focusing on how the social roles of women are represented through the dialogue and challenged by Lagertha. I will analyze the way the show uses the technical codes of television to represent the character following the second level of Fiske's method considering how the show uses its technical means to deliver the narrative through camera, lighting, editing, sound, and speech. These carry the conventional representational codes such as the dialogue, action, narration, etc.[29]

The third chapter will address the third subquestion on the perspective that Lagertha's character represents on the relation of women and power. The analysis will provide information about the socially acceptable ideology represented in the selected scene and connecting it to the existing theory on female representation in media. According to Fiske "The process of making sense involves a constant movement up and down through the levels of the diagram, for sense can only be produced when "reality," representations, and ideology merge into a coherent, seemingly natural unity."[30] Inherently the way to distinguish the ideology behind the representation is through referencing and connecting the various aspects of the representation, so the third chapter will be building also on aspects discussed in previous two chapters. The table containing the observations from all the three selected scenes will be divided into the three levels outlined by Fiske and attached in the Appendix 1.

4. Analysis

This analysis section is divided into three parts and is following Fiske's codes of television, that provide an in-depth analysis of the selected scenes based on the researched sub questions. Before analyzing how the representation of Lagertha's character is encoded, the historical dimension of the character needs to be briefly addressed as it provides the groundwork from which the fictional character was

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[29] Fiske, *Television culture,* 6.
[30] Fiske, *Television culture,* 7.

created. Lagertha is based on accounts of a legendary Viking shield maiden going by the same name recorded in chronicles by Saxo in the 12th century. The accounts of Lagertha in Norse sagas serve as the base of her story, providing her with historical validity and, in Hoberman's terms, lends actuality to her representation.[31] The story of her leadership at the revolt against the Swedish king Fro, where she took charge of a group of women, dressed them as men to fights against an oppressive invading king who put them into brothels, or the story of her killing her second husband with an arrowhead and took over his earldom.

4.1   The challenge of visual representation of women

In this first chapter of the analysis, I will be answering the question of how the stereotypical social codes are visually represented and challenged by Lagertha through their encoding on the level of reality.

The first social codes of the scene are established with the main character, Lagertha teaching weaving to her daughter Gyda in her wooden Viking farmhouse. Lagertha is a Scandinavian middle-aged woman, with long blonde hair and wearing a simple light blue dress. Similarly, to her young daughter who is wearing a linen outfit, the appearance and clothing of women encoded as simple and feature no make-up or jewelry. The cast of *Vikings* is primarily white, reflecting Byerly and Ross's point that authentic representation imposes limitations on the creators of the show.[32] The restrictions of historical accuracy in the portrayal of Viking culture are reflected in predominantly white casting not allowing for the casting of various ethnicities in the main cast or as local population of Scandinavia. The simple, worn appearance of the character's clothes and the environment encodes a connection towards a low-class, farmer family and stereotypical roles and activities associated with them. Gallagher argues that patriarchal media often portrayed women as what they wanted them to be.[33] The first scene encodes the stereotypical representations of women's activities in the medieval based narratives and references the way in stereotypical patriarchal societies, mothers were supposed to teach their daughters how to do chores and take care of the household. In this scene the activity of

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[31] Hoberman, *Gendering Classicism,* 1.
[32] Byerly Ross, "Women and media," 90.
[33] Gallagher, "Representation of gender, 23.

weaving, although nowadays rather uncommon, is among the stereotypical activities often shown of women living the medieval societies and establishes connection to a "system of representations" associated with traditional low-class feminine activities, further connecting them to the ideals of motherhood and femininity.

The established stereotypical scene is then presented with a contrasting apparition of two bandits who interrupt women, entering the house from behind them. They are tall, burly Viking men, dressed in dark leather clothing and equipped with axes. The woman sends her daughter away, politely talks to men and smiling backs away towards the inside of the house. Bandit's appearance can be seen as an immediate threat to the women, given that the bandits have aggressive expressions and use threatening gestures. The men's dark and aggressive appearance is juxtaposed to light, feminine and polite appearance, and expressions of Lagertha. The arrival of the bandits reveals a clear representation of opposites in the appearance of the characters which references socially pre-existing "systems of representation" that, according to Hall, are responsible for organizing the meaning and correlating information with each other.[34] The contrast between light versus dark clothes encodes a dichotomy of good vs evil, men vs women, femininity vs masculinity. The initial system of representation of the reality in this scene refers to images of a patriarchal society, that Hohenstein and Thalmann refer to as where women take care of the house and children, and men fight and gather food.[35] In this scene the show makes use of the social codes that were often used to portray women's role as limited or unable to do masculine things. As Hohenstein and Thalmann point out women's characters are constructed as nurturing and objects of action rather than agents.[36] Through establishing a direct male threat to women the show is referencing the systems of representation that associate of femininity with care, agreeability and weakness and masculinity with strength, threat, and aggression.

The representation of the environment constitutes a dark room of Lagertha's house with faint lighting coming from the fireplace and passing through the cracks from the outside. In the Dialogue 1 of the scene Lagertha asks bandits what they want, and they respond that they saw that women are alone at home. As Fiske claims dialogue, although it belongs to the technical codes, can be scripted in real life by conventions of our culture, which also qualifies it then within social codes.[37] Since speech can constitute a social code, this part of the dialogue directly encodes the conventions which guide bandit's reasoning as the patriarchal ideology. The one-dimensionality of bandit's view on women

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[34] Hall, "Representation," 3.
[35] Hohenstein and Thalmann "Difficult Women," 109.
[36] Hohenstein and Thalmann "Difficult Women," 116.
[37] Fiske, *Television culture,* 4.

connects it to what Gallagher refers to as symbolic annihilation.[38] Here the implication of trivializing women's role in society is the assumption that if men are gone, women are defenseless because they are unable to do the things that men do.

Camera pans out as Lagertha turns around showing the men smiling and celebrating their sure victory. The editing cuts to a close-up of Lagertha's hand reaching into the fire for the iron rod and the tense music increases in volume and pitch before the next part of dialogue is delivered. The bandit threatens to kill Lagertha if she does not oblige, to which she takes up his challenge and tells him he could not kill her if he tried. Although Lagertha's initial appearance was encoded by what Hohenstein and Thalmann refer to as feminine qualities of nurturing, smiling and polite, when bandits refuse to leave, she uses her polite stance to gain time as she smiles to buy herself time as she goes into the house to grab a weapon. Defying the bandits' patriarchal expectations, Lagertha grabs a hot iron rod from the fireplace and shows resistance to their aggression and fights, which encodes behaviors that are stereotypically associated with men. The fight scene begins with the camera showing the bandit striking first and Lagertha defending herself. Camera pans following the actor's movement and the implementation of jump cuts create a feeling of a fast paced and dynamic fight. When the bandits strike, Lagertha swiftly uses it like a sword to burn one of the bandits on the face and hook the other by his cheek, kicking them both out of the house. Fiske argues that extreme close ups can be codified as representing villainy.[39] When bandits are hit, the camera does an extreme close-up on their faces and emphasizes the villains being severely punished that codify the strength of the heroine. After the fight she quickly runs to the shed to check on Gyda, encoding motherhood as still highly important to the character. When Lagertha finds Gyda, the camera angle is positioned low next to the girl, emphasizing the Gyda looking up to her mother. Although feminine qualities in stereotypical media representations would make Lagertha perceived as weak or on the losing side of this conflict, she uses them to surprise and capitalize on the overconfidence of the bandits by equipping herself and defeating them.

Separating the aspects of reality from the other levels allows for identification of the social codes referenced in the show and provides a connection to the stereotypical conventions of the scenes as well as the actions taken by the characters and their responses through body language. This scene firmly deconstructs the stereotypical patriarchal representation of women that it draws from. It does so by referencing the social codes established by stereotypical representations of women in media and equipping Lagertha's character with abilities that go beyond the patriarchal outlook on women's

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[38] Gallagher, "Representation of gender," 23.
[39] Fiske, *Television culture,* 6.

traditional social roles. Like "Difficult women" described by Hohenstein and Thalmann, Lagertha's character portrays an array of contrasting qualities that contest the categorization set by the stereotypical patriarchal representation of women.[40] The show uses the stereotypical representations as a base setting to build on by providing the character with high self-awareness and combination of traditionally female and male behaviors, such as weaving and fighting with a sword. As Gallagher points out, stereotypical representations of women in media have in the past been guilty of trivializing women's role in society and limiting their representation to the fulfillment of it.[41] Through representing the added dimension of women's life the show does not trivialize motherhood or femininity, instead building on these ideological codes to deconstruct the patriarchal binary oppositions of gender roles and reframe them through the empowered actions of Lagertha. The show establishes its social codes based on visual references to the pre-existing stereotypical media representations of women and uses them to confront the stereotypical binary system of representations with a female character that through her actions deconstructs and challenges its limited categorization.

4.2   Women's social roles in dialogue

In this chapter I will analyze the second scene focusing on how the show uses the technical codes and the dialogue to represent social roles of women through Lagertha's character.

Fiske argues that categories of the codes of television are not clear cut and speech can be placed among the social codes but also the technical codes of scripted speech and dialogue can encode the social conventions of a culture.[42] This means that speech can represent a character or a conflict, connecting to what Hall refers to as "systems of representation" and in combination with the technical level shape its reception and representation. In the first episode of the second season dialogue is used to portray the differences between Lagertha and the newly introduced female character, princess Auslag. Princess meets Ragnar during one of his voyages, their meeting results in her becoming

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[40] Hohenstein and Thalmann "Difficult Women," 113.
[41] Gallagher, "Representation of gender, 23.
[42] Fiske, *Television culture,* 4.

pregnant with Ragnar's child after which Auslag follows him back to Kattegat, where her and Lagertha first meet.

The scene starts with Lagertha, dressed in a simple blue dress and basic jewelry is sitting next to her husband, Earl Ragnar (Travis Fimmel) at the main table in the dining hall. Ragnar is nervously playing with Lagertha's hair and looking at her while she plays tensely with the tablecloth. Both characters are acting nervous which increases the suspense from the very beginning of the scene. Among the general chatter of the feast the princess walks in, wearing a long ornated dress and jewelry and make up surrounded by her servants who begin to put down bowls full of food on the table. Fiske claims that "physical differences in the social codes of setting and dress are also bearers of the ideological codes of class, of heroism and villainy, of morality, and of attractiveness."[43] In this scene the appearance of the princess through her clothes, make-up and jewelry, which according to Fiske, is considered a material signifier positioning them within the codes of gender and class.[44] This appearance encodes the princess as higher class than the codes in Lagertha's representation and use it to emphasize the contrast of the characters.

In the Dialogue 1 of the scene Auslag tells Lagertha that she selected and prepared the food, to later admit that she only has paid for the ingredients and had them prepared by her slaves. The camera does its first close up on Lagertha's face when Auslag says that she did not cook the food and instead had her servants prepare it for them. According to Fiske, extreme close ups at the face of the characters can be used to emphasize tension felt by them.[45] Lagertha is surprised and although this was a casual dialogue exchange between the characters the music is tense and rising in volume. This part of the dialogue refers to the background of the two women, although Lagertha considers Auslag's gift as an unnecessary generosity and hard work, because of her background as a farmer and a mother of two. In turn Auslag shows her that it required no effort from her due to her position as a princess, underlining the initially unsaid class difference between the characters. Intense music alongside close ups of Lagertha's face express the tension the character is feeling. Fiske argues that the camera distance is used to swing sympathy away from the villain and towards the hero.[46] The shots of all three characters are taken from Lagertha's side and put Ragnar and Auslag into the background, these shots are juxtaposed to constant close ups of Lagertha's face and expressions establishing a close connection between the viewers and the heroine.

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[43] Fiske, *Television culture,* 10.
[44] Fiske, *Television culture,* 12.
[45] Fiske, *Television culture,* 9.
[46] Fiske, *Television culture,* 6.

The Dialogue 2 of the scene provides information on the Viking society's approach to love and relationships which are used as social pressures and confront Lagertha's personal values with the society. Both characters insist for Lagertha to be in a polygamous marriage with them, justifying it as socially accepted and common. As Fiske points out "in the code of gender, there is no class difference between hero/ine and villain/ess: the economics of patriarchy are the same for all classes, thus making it appear universal and natural that man provides for his woman."[47] Although there is a present class difference between the two female characters, the aspect of them being dependent on a male is presented as a "natural" socially accepted norm. The dialogue is encoded to reflect the social and marriage practices in the Viking age as well as project these expectations onto the female character. According to Ben Raffield, practices of polygyny were common in the Viking-Age Scandinavia and they "have been shown by anthropological studies to legitimize behaviors that reinforce male power."[48] These behaviors included bartering with women in marriage, female seclusion or the neglect of children.[49] Although in practice polygamy has led to neglect of children, Ragnar uses his social position to manipulate these facts. The dialogue of the male character points out that his wife is living at his house which encodes her as dependent on him and with limited options. Furthermore, throughout the dialogue with Ragnar, Lagertha only asks questions while the husband responds. According to Fiske "The representational convention by which women are shown to lack knowledge which men possess and give to them is an example of the ideological code of patriarchy."[50] The dialogue in this scene is used to establish the patriarchal stereotypical representation of marriage and the social role division between men and women as well as among women themselves.

The dialogue in this scene reflects the correlation between various aspects such as sex or class which as bell hooks points out are interconnected in the systems of oppression.[51] The dialogue ends and Lagertha does not respond to Ragnar's offer. A sudden lack of dialogue also has a significance, which are then at an interplay with the technical codes that delivered the dialogue. These codes such as the camera close ups and the blurring of the other two characters bring focus to Lagertha's expressions and focus on her actions instead of her words. Lagertha's expression shows that she is trying to hold back tears, but she does not voice her resistance which encodes her defiance of the social pressures imposed on her. Instead, she looks determined ahead, no longer discussing with Ragnar, but decided of her need to leave. The interplay between the codes of reality emphasized by

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[47] Fiske, *Television culture,* 13.
[48] Ben Raffield, Neil Price, and Mark Collard, "Polygyny, Concubinage, and the Social Lives of Women in Viking-Age Scandinavia," *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 13 (2017): 165.
[49] Raffield, "Women in Viking-Age," 165.
[50] Fiske, *Television culture,* 6.
[51] hooks, "Feminism," 194.

the representation level and the dialogue in this scene also connects to Lotz's argument on the necessity of the dimension of difference in female representation and the individual outlook on social roles they are willing to take on.[52] The dialogue between the characters encodes classist and patriarchal image of the traditions within the Viking society, which are confronted and reframed by the visual portrayal of Lagertha's responses that place her on the opposing side of both ideologies imposed on her and emphasizes the in-depth damaging effect that these interconnected systems of oppression have on the character, despite her portrayal as strong or independent. Identifying the technical aspects of the scene allows for acknowledging how the medium itself steers the narrative and viewer's the attention to set the specific angle on the representation of women's social roles. The dialogue encodes women's representation of social roles as dependent on men and with their roles limiting to taking care of the children. The technical codes of camera are used to distance the viewer from the ideologies of class and patriarchy represented by the dialogue and guide viewers' attention towards acknowledging the subtle expressions of those who's opinion is forgotten in the dialogue.

4.3   Representation of women and power

This chapter will analyze the third scene building upon the theoretical discourse surrounding the female representation in television to answer the question of the perspective on the patriarchal representation women and power demonstrated by Lagertha through the encoded ideology.

According to Fiske "The textual opposition between hero/ine and villain/ess, and the violence by which this opposition is commonly dramatized, become metaphors for power relationships in society and thus a material practice through which the dominant ideology works."[53] Analyzing the oppositions between codes used to represent the heroine and the villain encode information on the dominant ideology represented by the scene. The third scene takes place in a dark environment of a dining hall of Lagertha's new husband Earl Sigvard, whom she has married after having denied Ragnar's pressures for polygamous marriage. Lagertha is sitting next to her husband in the middle of a table in a dark dining hall. Her hair is up and braided, she is wearing a yellow dress and has a black eye and visible wounds across the left side of her face. She is staring angrily straight ahead. Her husband's he is

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[52] Lotz, "Postfeminist television criticism," 115.
[53] Fiske, *Television culture,* 9.

drinking and talking to guests and his actions contrast the encoded silence of Lagertha. The camera close-ups bring focus to Lagertha's face and limited expression in this scene. The codes of wounded characterization and Lagertha's tense behavior around her husband refer to the system of representation of domestic violence victims, the symptom of patriarchal ideology prominent among the Viking society described by Raffield.[54] Hohenstein and Thalmann discuss this trope as the representation of women as passive objects of men's action.[55] Lagertha is sitting in the middle of a crowded dining hall yet none of the guests address her appearance or behavior to help her. While Sigurd is talking in the Dialogue 1, Lagertha remains silent. This dichotomy once again, as per Fiske, shows male dominance in the conversation and establishes the ideological code of patriarchy.[56] The social codes established in this scene are based on the system of representations of the dominance of the patriarchal ideology, which has normalized behaviors such as domestic violence and passivity of society towards it.

When Sigvard tries to pull Lagertha's dress open, she grabs a knife and stabs him in the eye. Then she turns around immediately holding up the knife in case his guards would attack her. The guard takes out his sword and comes closer to Lagertha, and then cuts of Sigvard's head. Lagertha shocked, looks at Sigvard's head and once she realized she became the new Earl looks proudly forward. Lagertha's hesitation after killing her husband reflects her realization of having openly opposed the patriarchal ideas, reflecting what Hohensten and Thalmann discuss as problematic behavior of complex characters.[57] Lagertha's behavior goes against the patriarchal ideology that was represented by the guests of the Earl, with her actions encoding her as vastly different from the stereotypical representations of women. Her actions encode strength which stands in opposition to patriarchal stereotyping and emphasizes difference on the level of reality, which in Lotz's terms, reflects post-feminist values.[58] As Fiske points out, "heroes and villains are equally likely to use violence and to initiate it, but that heroes were successful in their violence, whereas villains finally were not."[59] Lagertha in this scene is encoded the hero who slays the villain in their own self-defense. The guard's assistance to Lagertha's defense further encodes her actions as justified and representing of the dominant ideology.

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[54] Raffield, "Women in Viking-Age," 165.
[55] Hohenstein and Thalmann "Difficult Women," 116.
[56] Fiske, *Television culture,* 6.
[57] Hohenstein and Thalmann "Difficult Women," 115.
[58] Lotz, "Postfeminist television criticism," 115.
[59] Fiske, *Television culture,* 9.

According to Hohenstein an Thalmann, an important aspect of female representation in modern television shows is for them "to explicitly engage with questions of gender and representation and thus frequently establish a feminist discourse that criticizes stereotypical and sexist portrayals of female characters so often found in earlier TV series."[60] Although feminism was not a functional ideology in the Viking times, Lagertha's character exhibits feminist attitudes and the scene's focus on reframing of the stereotypical representations and the difference of female characters positions it within the postfeminist discourse.[61][62] The textual opposition between the heroine and the villain lies in the contrast between Lagertha's social encoding as the silent victim of patriarchy, whereas Sigvard is encoded by technical codes as an outspoken, aggressive personification of male supremacy. The contrasting social encoding of Lagertha's character as the hero of this violent encounter is used as a metaphor for women's relation to power and encodes the anti-patriarchal, feminist ideology represented by Lagertha's character as the winning, dominant ideology of the scene.

5. Conclusion

The main goal of this paper was to answer the question about how the historical show Vikings reframes the stereotypical representation of women in modern television. In my study I have analyzed the selected scenes from the show and deconstructed them based on Fiske's codes of television.

The separation of the levels of reality, representation and ideology revealed that the use of codes associated with stereotypical representations of women are presented in a direct contrast with encoded feminist behaviors of Lagertha's character to reframe the patriarchal ideology in representation of women in *Vikings*. The contrasts between the stereotypical representations of women, with feminist and anti-patriarchal behaviors encoded in Lagertha's representation result in the creation of multidimensional character that opposes patriarchal categorization and reframing the stereotypical female representation in historical fiction television. The first sub-chapter of the analysis deconstructed the selected scene from the first episode of the first season of Vikings titled "Rites of passage" focusing on the level of reality encoding the representation of women through Lagertha. The

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[60] Hohenstein and Thalmann "Difficult Women," 113.
[61] Lotz, "Postfeminist television criticism," 115.
[62] Hohenstein and Thalmann "Difficult Women," 119.

level of reality in this scene references stereotypical systems of representation women in media, associating femininity with passivity and weakness. These codes are enhanced by the comparison to the brutality of the bandits, who are encoded as the losing villain and the weaker side of the conflict. The shift in power dynamic deconstructs the initially established connection to the stereotypical representation of women by problematizing Lagertha's character representation with attributes commonly associated with men in patriarchal societies, like sword fighting. The social codes established by the show refer to the stereotypical media representations that have been in the past been guilty of trivializing women's role in society and their discredit their one-dimensionality.[63] The codes used in the level of reality consciously establish Lagertha's connection to the stereotypical representations of femininity and expands on her ability to fight and defend herself, confronting the limited understanding of women and rudimentary categorization of patriarchal societies. The second part of the analysis focused on answering the question on the way the technical codes are used to represent women's social roles through the character of Lagertha. The scene analyzed comes from the episode 1 season 2 "Brother's War." The dialogue in the scene was used to encode the women's representation as "naturally" dependent on men and on their social status. The technical encoding of camera steers the narrative on Lagertha, and the brings focus to the level of reality and her actions instead of words. The technical codes are used in this scene to focus viewers' attention to the silent, subtle expressions of defiance to social norms. The last part of the analysis addressed the question of the ideological level on women and power demonstrated by Lagertha. The analysis discussed the opposition of codes social and technical codes that represent the two sides of conflicting ideologies. The act of taking over the earldom overturns the initial system of representation. The new power dynamic encodes the character with a strong of independence and strength problematizing the initial stereotypical representation of womanhood on screen. While the initial encoding and dialogue establish the dominance of the villain, the action of the character contradicts the implied weakness and passivity and establishes Lagertha's character as a representation of anti-patriarchal and feminist on the level of ideology.

Although the show reframes stereotypical female representation through the encoding of feminist attitudes in the behavior of its main female character, it shows limitations regarding the representation of women. Hohenstein and Thalmann discuss the contribution of female writers to the representation of female perspective in media, however *Vikings* is written and created by Michael Hirst, a male writer from England, which although Lagertha's character represents progressive feminist attitudes, she is not a creation of a female writer and the encoding of her appearance as a

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[63] Gallagher, "Representation of gender," 23.

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white, tall, blond woman is still reminiscent of stereotypical portrayals of women in media. The female representation at the level of cast is also lacking women of color and non-European societies. The cast is predominantly white reflecting the historical circumstances such as the initial isolation of Vikings from the other societies, or the limitations of the naval technology in cross continental travel. This lack of representation does not go unnoticed in later seasons and the show features a more diverse cast and local actors when portraying the Mediterranean or Eastern Europe and Rus.

The small selection of scenes allowed for a more detailed analysis of these codes, focusing primarily on the codes represented in the selected scenes. This type of analysis does not allow for analysis of the large-scale codes implemented in the narrative of the show.[64] Among the researched scenes many were appropriate to serve as examples in an analysis of women's representation, such as scenes allowing for a comparative analysis of female characters of other societies or the character development of Lagertha, however for the purposes of clarity in this paper they had to be omitted and they can serve as ideas for future research.

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7. Appendix 1

	Reality Appearance, make up, costumes, environment, behavior, speech, gestures, expressions, and sounds.	Representation Camera angles, lighting, editing, music, and scripted sound and dialogues.	Ideology Socially accepted ideological codes.
Scene 1	Inside of a wooden house	The room is dark with the light coming form the fireplace and behind the bandits	
Lagertha 	Sacandinavian middle aged woman, blonde, long hair, simple blue dress, teaching weaving. Assertively sends Gyda away. Talks to the men, smiling. Uses iron rod as a sword to fight off the bandits. Runs to check on Gyda.	**Dialogue 1:** Lagertha: Gyda, feed the goats. Go on. What do you want? Bandit: We know you're all alone here. All the men are gone. Camera pans on women weaving, Camera zooms in on Lagertha's face asking the men what they want. When men refuse to leave camera zooms in on the iron rod and pans onto the bandits along high pitched tense music. **Dialogue 2:** "If you're thirsty, I will give you a drink. If you're hungry I will feed you. Otherwise, you must go." Bandit: I don't want to kill you woman. Lagertha: You couldn't kill me if you tried for a 100 years. The camera follows the fight scenes through close ups and jump cuts.	Femininity

		After the scene the camera follows Lagertha outside to find her daughter.	
Gyda	Young girl, dressed in brown simple clothes. Weaving with her mother, scared of the bandits, hides in a shed, where she waits for Lagertha.	Low camera angle shows Gyda hiding in a shed after the departure of the attackers. Positions Gyda to look up to Lagertha.	Motherhood
Bandits	Tall, burly Scandinavian men, dressed in dark leather clothing, carrying axes, aggressive, attack Lagertha, get defeated and thrown out of the house.	Men enter when the women are weaving on a loom. They threaten to rape them. "We know you're all alone here. All the men are gone." During the fight scene the camera zooms in on attacker's when they are hit by Lagertha.	Patriarchy
Scene 2	Inside the dining hall of Lagertha's and Earl Ragnar's house		

Lagertha 	Dressed in a simple blue dress, no make-up, long blonde hair with sides braided towards the back. Surprised when Auslag brings food. Sad and tearing up when Ragnar suggests polygamy.	Camera zooms in on Lagertha's face when she is accepting Auslag's food. Then switches between women during the conversation. When Ragnar convinces her with the idea of polygamy him and Auslag are pushed into the background, and the shot focuses on Lagertha.	Individualism
Auslag 	Tall, Scandinavian, dark blonde long hair, strong make-up, smiling politely. She brought food to the dinner. Throughout the conversation she's expressing support of Ragnar's ideas.	**Camera:** zooms in on her face when she Informs Lagertha that she only paid and did not cook the food. Then camera switches between zoom in on Auslag's face and Ragnars when they are convincing Lagertha of Polygamy. **Dialogue 1:** Auslag: I hope you will accept what I have chosen and prepared for you. Lagertha: I did not expect you to go to so much trouble. Auslag: It is no trouble if it is pleasing to you. Lagertha: To tell you the truth, I did not imagine you could cook. Auslag: I can't. My women cooked, I just bought the ingredients.	Class
Ragnar	Bearded Scandinavian man, shaved sides and long hair tied at the back. Dressed	**Dialogue 2:** Ragnar: Looking at both of you here, in my home, I see no reason why you two should not get on together. You two are	Polygamy

	in a black shirt. Hesitantly smiling and stressfully animated when talking.	very different, yet both strong. I have heard that similar arrangements exist all over this country. Lagertha (close up, visibly upset): What arrangements? Ragnar: That an earl can live with more than one woman. In fact, it is not unusual. It works to the benefit of everyone, especially the children… Of both marriages, of course. Auslag: It's true. I know of many such instances. Ragnar: Yes. Lagertha (staring ahead): Is that what you're suggesting? Ragnar: If I were, what would you say? Lagertha with her eyes tearing up is staring determined straight ahead without giving him an answer.	
Scene 3	Inside the dining hall of Earl Sigvard's house	Dim lighting from candles around the room.	
Lagertha	Braided hair up, yellow simple long dress, beaten, swollen eye. Frozen neutral expression looking into the distance. When her husband attempts to undress her, she grabs a table knife and stabs him in the eye.	No dialogue. When Sigvard tries to open her dress the camera does a close up on her face, that turns in a furious grimace. The camera closes up on her hand grabbing a table knife and follows it as she stabs it into his eye. Then camera distances itself from Lagertha temporarily. Once Sigvard's head is cut off, side shot of her face shows her proudly looking up as the new Earl.	Feminism

Sigvard		Dialogue:	
	Dressed in ornated shirts, wearing a large necklace. Abuses his wife, aggressively grabs Lagertha's head.	Sigvard: What's the matter with you, my love? You don't talk, you don't smile… (He touches the wounds on her face, then grabs her by the back of her neck and aggressively pulls her in to kiss her on the bruised cheek.) Sigvard: My love you must do better than this. (Turns to the guests.) You know something, my wife has got the most beautiful breasts. I keep telling her, but she doesn't believe me. (Getting up and raising his voice) She has the most beautiful breasts in the world. They're like Freya's breasts, the breasts of a goddess. Let me show you! Sigvard attempts to open her dress.	Patriarchy
Guard	Dressed in thick cloth outfit and equipped with a sword. Does not react when Earl abuses his wife. Gets up from the table hastily after Lagertha strikes the Earl. Cuts off Sigvard's head.	The camera turns to him once Sigvard is stabbed. A mid shot shows him unsheathing his sword and moving towards Lagertha. Then cuts to his sword decapitating Sigvard.	Dominant ideology

8. Appendix 2

Faculty of Humanities

Version September 2014

PLAGIARISM RULES AWARENESS STATEMENT

Fraud and Plagiarism

Scientific integrity is the foundation of academic life. Utrecht University considers any form of scientific deception to be an extremely serious infraction. Utrecht University therefore expects every student to be aware of, and to abide by, the norms and values regarding scientific integrity.

The most important forms of deception that affect this integrity are fraud and plagiarism. Plagiarism is the copying of another person's work without proper acknowledgement, and it is a form of fraud. The following is a detailed explanation of what is considered to be fraud and plagiarism, with a few concrete examples. Please note that this is not a comprehensive list!

If fraud or plagiarism is detected, the study programme's Examination Committee may decide to impose sanctions. The most serious sanction that the committee can impose is to submit a request to the Executive Board of the University to expel the student from the study programme.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the copying of another person's documents, ideas or lines of thought and presenting it as one's own work. You must always accurately indicate from whom you obtained ideas and insights, and you must constantly be aware of the difference between citing, paraphrasing and plagiarising. Students and staff must be very careful in citing sources; this concerns not only printed sources, but also information obtained from the Internet.

The following issues will always be considered to be plagiarism:

- cutting and pasting text from digital sources, such as an encyclopaedia or digital periodicals, without quotation marks and footnotes;
- cutting and pasting text from the Internet without quotation marks and footnotes;
- copying printed materials, such as books, magazines or encyclopaedias, without quotation marks or footnotes;
- including a translation of one of the sources named above without quotation marks or footnotes;
- paraphrasing (parts of) the texts listed above without proper references: paraphrasing must be marked as such, by expressly mentioning the original author in the text or in a footnote, so that you do not give the impression that it is your own idea;

- copying sound, video or test materials from others without references, and presenting it as one's own work;

- submitting work done previously by the student without reference to the original paper, and presenting it as original work done in the context of the course, without the express permission of the course lecturer;

- copying the work of another student and presenting it as one's own work. If this is done with the consent of the other student, then he or she is also complicit in the plagiarism;

- when one of the authors of a group paper commits plagiarism, then the other co-authors are also complicit in plagiarism if they could or should have known that the person was committing plagiarism;

- submitting papers acquired from a commercial institution, such as an Internet site with

  summaries or papers, that were written by another person, whether or not that other person received payment for the work.

The rules for plagiarism also apply to rough drafts of papers or (parts of) theses sent to a lecturer for feedback, to the extent that submitting rough drafts for feedback is mentioned in the course handbook or the thesis regulations.

The Education and Examination Regulations (Article 5.15) describe the formal procedure in case of suspicion of fraud and/or plagiarism, and the sanctions that can be imposed.

Ignorance of these rules is not an excuse. Each individual is responsible for their own behaviour. Utrecht University assumes that each student or staff member knows whati fraud and plagiarism entail. For its part, Utrecht University works to ensure that students are informed of the principles of scientific practice, which are taught as early as possible in the curriculum, and that students are informed of the institution's criteria for fraud and plagiarism, so that every student knows which norms they must abide by.

I hereby declare that I have read and understood the above.
Name: Barbara Maj Student number: 6393152
Date and signature: 17.06.2021

Submit this form to your supervisor when you begin writing your Bachelor's final paper or your Master's thesis.

Failure to submit or sign this form does not mean that no sanctions can be imposed if it appears that plagiarism has been committed in the paper.