“He’s Here, He’s There, He’s Every-Fucking-Where”:

Queering *Ted Lasso* and Speculating Revolution,

Ashlee Pilcher

ENGL 80513: Amer Lit After 1900

Dr. Joseph Darda

December 12, 2021

Abstract

This article looks critically at the AppleTV+ sensation *Ted Lasso* and puts forth a queer reading of the show. I begin by culturally and contextually situating the show and discussing relevant scholarship focusing on film and television studies, ideas of gender and masculinity, and queer theory. Working in the same vein as Judith Halberstam's *The Queer Art of Failure*, I then move to the formation of my archive, which works to point out and analyze the distinctly queer moments of the show. I conclude by exploring the revolutionary possibilities of *Ted Lasso* in regards to the power of media and societal and cultural shifts.

Garnishing both critical and audience acclaim and twenty Emmy nominations for its first season, *Ted Lasso* has quickly become a pop culture sensation. The AppleTV+ hit began as a commercial for NBC Sports' coverage of the Premier League in 2013, when Jason Sudeikis first starred as the loveable, oft-confused, Coach Lasso. Premiering in August of 2020, the sitcom rose to popularity after the finale had already aired and "became a genuine word-of-mouth phenomenon".[1] A pre-premier article discussing an interview with Sudeikis, who is also a writer for the show, stated "In the end, *Ted Lasso* is exactly what an audience needs right now. It's a story that makes you laugh and reminds you to smile at adversity. It's a lesson that's less about football management and more about unity, and the script works because it takes a hold of our differences and embraces them as one".[2] In addition to feelings of togetherness, others have attributed the show's wild success to a variety of reasons, like being "comfort food TV"[3] and its constant use of the power of positive thinking.[4] However, I think what sums up *Ted Lasso*'s popularity the best is that while "The series is a gentle comedy about soccer. . .*Ted Lasso* isn't just a show about a coach who cares about his players more than wins and losses. It's also a show about the way we wish the world would be.".[5] In this article, I forward a queer reading of *Ted Lasso*, specifically leaning on the framework of Judith Halberstam's use of low theory[6]. I work to highlight decidedly queer moments of the show through the formation of my archive and

---

[1] Mooney, Darren. "What the *Ted Lasso* Discourse Says about How We Watch Television." The Escapist. The Escapist, October 13, 2021. https://www.escapistmagazine.com/what-the-ted-lasso-discourse-says-about-how-we-watch-television/.
[2] Echegaray, Luis Miguel. "How *'Ted Lasso'* Evolved from a Viral Promo into a Series." Sports Illustrated. Sports Illustrated, August 11, 2020. https://www.si.com/soccer/2020/08/11/ted-lasso-jason-sudeikis-apple-tv-series-nbc.
[3] VanDerWerff, Emily. "Why *Ted Lasso* Became the Hit That Put AppleTV+ on the Map." Vox. Vox, February 24, 2021. https://www.vox.com/culture/22290391/ted-lasso-explained-apple-tv-plus-jason-sudeikis.
[4] Barney, Chuck. "5 Ways *'Ted Lasso*' Became a Surprise Comedy Hit." Boston Herald. Boston Herald, July 20, 2021. https://www.bostonherald.com/2021/07/21/5-ways-ted-lasso-became-a-surprise-comedy-hit/.
[5] VanDerWerff
[6] Halberstam, Judith. The Queer Art of Failure. Duke University Press, 2011. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11sn283.

conclude by discussing the effects of media and speculating about the revolutionary possibilities shows like *Ted Lasso* hold.

Before discussing methodology, I want to briefly touch on my approach to this work and the theories informing it. As I previously mentioned, I am heavily inspired by Halberstam's *The Queer Art of Failure*. "Here we can think about *low theory* as a mode of accessibility, but we might also think about it as a kind of theoretical model that flies below the radar, that is assembled from eccentric texts and examples and that refuses to confirm the hierarchies of knowing that maintain the *high* in high theory".[7] As is implied by previous citations (as well as by my focus "text" for this article), I am looking at texts not traditionally academic from popular culture as well as "high theory" sources, through the lens of low theory employed by Halberstam, and with the intention "to inform [or at least speak to] political practice rather than to formulate abstract thoughts".[8]

While (re)watching seasons one and two of *Ted Lasso*, I looked for moments and recurring themes/conversations/topics that I would categorize as distinct moments of 'queering'–which I operationalize in this article as actively differing from, working against, and/or complicating heteronormative ideals and stereotypes, specifically those related to gender, masculinity, and power.[9] Some of the moments I sought after were those that illustrated the three theses –1) resist mastery, 2) privilege the naïve or nonsensical, and 3) suspect memorialization–and/or aligned with other key elements of Halberstam's archive. In *The Queer Art of Failure*, "resistance takes the form of investing in counterintuitive modes of knowing such as failure and stupidity; we might read *failure*, for example, as a refusal of mastery. . .and as a

[7] Halberstam, 16. (original emphasis)
[8] Halberstam, 16.
[9] This "definition" draws on the discussion of queer theory/studies from Sullivan (2003) and Halberstam (2011).

counterhegemonic discourse of losing. *Stupidity* could refer not simply to a lack of knowledge but to the limits of certain forms of knowing and certain ways of inhabiting structures of knowing".[10] Halberstam focuses heavily on male stupidity, specifically as a new mode of masculinity or as a way to mask gender inequality. However, forgetting and stupidity are also critically discussed through the example of Dory from *Finding Nemo* as "ephemeral loops of learning"[11] and a close reading of the film *Dude, Where's My Car?* looking specifically at stupidity as possibility for new forms of knowing. When privileging the naïve or nonsensical, we might argue "for the nonsensible or nonconceptual" and that "The naïve or the ignorant may in fact lead to a different set of knowledge practices".[12] This valuing of the "childish" is seen throughout the archive in the focus on animated films like *Chicken Run* and *Monsters, Inc*., which Halberstam argues both overtly and covertly illustrate concepts of revolt, embodiment, making and understanding meaning, and ways of living. In a return to forgetting, suspecting memorialization relies on a critical look at memory. Halberstam states that "memorialization has a tendency to tidy up disorderly histories" and discusses how memory functions as a power mechanism, choosing what to remember and how to fill in any gaps in the narrative caused by those selections.[13] This cautionary outlook on memory is the foundation for forgetting as a form of resistance and a different approach to memory itself. These three theses are exemplified in the film genre that Halberstam has dubbed the "Pixarvolt". These are "animated feature films. . .that surprisingly foreground the themes of revolution and transformation" and failure (focusing on the possibilities that come with it).[14]

---

[10] Halberstam, 11-12. (original emphasis)
[11] Halberstam, 58.
[12] Halberstam, 12.
[13] Halberstam, 15.
[14] Halberstam, 29.

Additionally, I also looked for moments in the show that were in clear opposition to the notions of masculinity discussed by Rebecca Feasey.[15] In her book, *Masculinity and Popular Television*, Feasey explores a plurality of masculinities as products of culture and environment and argues for an examination of masculinity and the representations of it be critically examined in the same way as are femininities. Looking at both British and American television programs which offer a variety of representations of men and masculinity, Feasey offers critical readings of these representations and highlights the cruciality of that work "not because such representations are an accurate reflection of reality, but rather, because they have the power and scope to foreground culturally accepted social relations, define sexual norms and provide 'common-sense' understandings about male identity for the contemporary audience."[16] For this project, I will be turning to her discussion of masculinity(ies) specifically focused on authority[17] and masculine discourse.[18]

In her chapter focused on investigating notions of male authority, Feasey discusses masculinity as portrayed in police and crime television; she states that "police and crime dramas routinely show male police constables, detectives and special branch officers ignoring the needs of their family in favour of the force, sacrificing their personal life for the good of the wider society. In short, their success in the public sphere seems to demand a sacrifice in the private realm."[19] The concept on work life consistently being privileged above home/personal/love life is complicated throughout the chapter, ultimately concluding with this prioritizing being intricately linked with notions of toxic masculinity and the refusal to emotionally engage, connect, or

---

[15] Feasey, Rebecca. Masculinity and Popular Television. Edinburgh University Press, 2008. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctt1r1zht.
[16] Feasey, 4.
[17] "Police and Crime Drama: Investigating Male Authority." (Feasey, 80–93).
[18] "Sports: Media Events and Masculine Discourse." (Feasey, 94–105).
[19] Feasey, 86.

express oneself for a slew of reasons, all of which can be traced back to the heteronormative ideal that only girls are allowed to feel and boys don't cry.

Another chapter examines the ever present masculine discourse of sports media. Feasey discusses "the depiction of sports coverage on the small screen", such as media coverage; considers "the relationship between the sporting arena, sportswomen and the sporting male", focusing on gender inequality regarding funding and resources for women's teams when compared to men's teams and the lack of women in sports media, management, and coaching; and suggests that although most sports coverage portrays players as cold and aggressive, male athletes like David Beckham help in "challenging stereotypical images of the sportsman as physically powerful but emotionally stunted".[20] She also discusses the pressures of protecting one's masculinity in sports–as it is constantly being threatened and reliant on athletic performance–"remind[ing] us of the fragility of hegemonic masculinity by playing on male insecurities regarding age, health and physical performance."[21] All of which makes cases like that of David Beckham, where a top athlete is actively working against heteronormative ideals and helping to change public perception, all the more impressive and important.

Leaning on Halberstam and Feasey as I have described thus far, I now move to the archive. I do my best to organize this archive around four central categories–1) gender roles/norms, 2) power dynamics, 3) masculinity, and 4) addressing controversial/uncomfortable topics–however, due to the interconnected nature of these categories, that proved to be a fairly challenging task. So, I ask you to bear with the categorization that made the most sense to me.

[20] Feasey, 94.
[21] Feasey, 100.

Gender Roles/Norms

"This woman right here is strong, confident, and powerful."
-Ted Lasso[22]

The first episode showcases Rebecca as a feminist icon, truly. Between her firing of George and being Ted's knight in shining armor and absolutely commanding the room at the press conference–both discussed later–she is far from the typically meek, unabrasive women that audiences usually see in sitcoms.

> Rebecca: (speaking to room) And in all those years under the stewardship of the previous owner, I've witnessed nothing but profound mediocrity.
> Press: *laughs/mumbles/gasps*
> Rebecca: (speaking to room) Am I wrong?
> Reporter: Well, it's a bit harsh.
> Rebecca: Am I wrong?[23]

Rebecca's position of power as the club owner and her ability to command a room are not the defining elements of her character that adds her to this archive. As can be 'seen' from this scene, she unashamedly voices her opinions and refuses to back down when questioned.[24]

Not all of the moments disrupting gender stereotypes are as overt as Rebecca. One of these covert moments comes during a conversation between Ted and Keeley Jones, a character who wears many different hats as the show progresses, when Keeley tells Ted of a new story that was supposed to run about the two of them.

> Keeley: This was gonna be on the front page of *The Sun* today. "Manager Shags Star Player's Girlfriend."

---

[22] *Ted Lasso,* season 1, episode 3, "Trent Crimm:The Independent," directed by Tom Marshall, aired August 14, 2020, on AppleTV+. (5:49-6:10)
[23] *Ted Lasso*, season 1, episode 1, "Pilot," directed by Tom Marshall, aired August 14, 2020, on AppleTV+. (3:02-3:45)
[24] It's important to note that immediately after this scene, Rebecca takes a bit of a back slide. It's revealed that she has only hired Ted with the hopes that he will fail miserably and "burn [the club] to the ground" to get back at her ex-husband. However, regardless of her motives (also undoubtedly in conjunction with the fact that she does a complete 180 during the first season), I stand by her as a character that is disrupting heteronormativity.

> Ted: Well, I think a more accurate headline would be, "Manager Innocently Feeds Young Woman Whose Relationship Does Not Define Her."
> Keeley: Ted, this is really bad!
>
> . . .
>
> Keeley: My friend who works at the paper said he can hold this story for one day as a favor.[25]

In addition to the un-objectification of Keeley, this scene shows her as the one with all the knowledge and all the power. A clear difference in how women like Keeley are often portrayed in the media, as can be seen in the aforementioned headline. Keeley is an influencer and has dated multiple professional athletes; women in shows are rarely if ever portrayed as the ones with the knowledge and the power.

Power Dynamics

"I wanna bench Jamie. But I didn't wanna do it without checking with you first."
-Ted Lasso[26]

Ted Lasso starts off with a bang, opening the pilot with Hannah Waddingham's character Rebecca–the new club owner of AFC Richmond as a result of her recent divorce settlement–firing the team's manager, George Cartrick.

> Rebecca: You're fired.
> George: Yeah, right.
> Rebecca: And I'll be buying out the remainder of your contract. So…wish you the best of luck.

As the club owner, the character Rebecca would have been of interest to this archive because of how she disrupts heteronormative gender roles. However, it is her response to George's pushback in this scene that causes me to categorize it here.

> George: Fired? What the fuck for?

---

[25] *Ted Lasso,*"Trent Crimm:The Independent," (5:49-6:10)
[26] *Ted Lasso*, season 1, episode 5, "Tan Lines," directed by Elliot Hegarty, aired on August 28, 2020 on AppleTV+.

> Rebecca: *sigh* I suppose I could go for any number of reasons, really. Your casual misogyny, for one.
>
> George: What?
>
> Rebecca: I know, it's a big word. Ask one of your daughters what it means. Or perhaps it's your performance, having led this team through yet another remarkably average season. Or maybe it's because you insist on wearing those tiny shorts that force me to see one of your testicles. . .Still, if I'm being completely honest, George, you're fired because I'm the owner now, and I don't like you.[27]

Although similar to the pushback she received during the press conference discussed in the previous section, this moment is distinctly different. Unlike the reporter, George is (assumably) respected at Richmond, and as the manager has had power there. Rebecca's "I'm the owner now" is a clear display of the power that she now holds and that she won't shy away from wielding it.

A great example of the queering of power dynamics is seen in Ted giving credit where credit is due. When asked about a play that worked well, Ted didn't hesitate to give all the credit to Nate. This beautifully illustrates Ted's coaching style and who he is as a character; he isn't interested in all the power or the glory. He's interested in giving it to others, particularly those that need a little bit.[28]

Masculinity

"Fellas, we're broken. We need to change."
-Ted Lasso

As discussed by Feasey, masculinity is tied to authority, especially in the workplace. She examined masculinity, and the authority that accompanies it, in regards to men putting work over their families/spouses/personal lives.[29] Having seen a brief glimpse of a woman and young boy on his phone screen, the audience can assume that Ted left his family back in Kansas to move to

---

[27] *Ted Lasso*, "Pilot," (3:02-3:45)
[28] *Ted Lasso*, "Trent Crimm"
[29] I am well aware that in this instance Feasey was referring to masculinity in a very specific genre of television; however, I do think it worthwhile to examine *Ted Lasso* through/in contrast to the notions of masculinity that she discusses.

another county for his new job at AFC Richmond. For Ted, the sacrifices he made for work when it comes to family, don't give him anymore authority at his job. Rather than being branded heroic or praised for this decision, he is absolutely slaughtered by the media during his first press conference[30] until Rebecca comes to his rescue–a scene undoubtedly emasculating. And the spit-take at the end due to "the bubble" of the sparkling water, definitely doesn't do anything for him.

Episode two, aptly named "Biscuits", sees Ted bringing Rebecca a box of biscuits (AKA cookies). Throughout the rest of the episode, Rebecca is seen searching, with no luck, for where Ted buys them. At the end of the episode, we see Ted, in an apron, pulling a pan out of the oven, sprinkling the biscuits with a dusting of sugar, and boxing them up to deliver to Rebecca on Monday morning. This display of not only domesticity but also the pride in this domestic accomplishment directly works against common notions of masculinity and the gendered coding of work and home spaces.[31]

Tying directly back to Feasey is the perpetual conflict between Jamie Tartt, the new star, and Roy Kent, the old hero, and the fight to protect one's masculinity. This is clearly seen in their locker room brawl in episode four when Roy Kent tells Jamie, "Call me old, one more time".[32] Roy moves past this need to protect and prove his masculinity by being the star footballer, starting with pulling himself from the starting lineup, naming a new captain, and his retirement[33] by walk off in the last game of season 1.

Controversial Topics and Uncomfortable Conversations

---

[30] *Ted Lasso*, "Pilot", (15:04-15:56)
[31] England, Marcia R. "Visions of Gender: Codings of Televisual Space." In Public Privates: Feminist Geographies of Mediated Spaces, 81–106. University of Nebraska Press, 2018. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt22726wh.8.
[32] *Ted Lasso*, season 1, episode 4, "For the Children", directed by Tom Marshall, aired August 21, 2020, on AppleTV+.
[33] Something that is finalized in season two.

"If that's a joke, I love it. If not, I cannot wait to unpack that with you."
-Ted Lasso[34]

Ted Lasso has no problem touching on controversial or often uncomfortable topics. In the spirit of radical transparency, I want to briefly touch on how I am deciding what to include in this section of the archive. With a subheading like "Controversial Topics and Uncomfortable Conversations", this could easily turn into a pretty large and widely ranging section of the archive. As someone who experienced feelings of discomfort by second-hand embarrassment at countless moments while watching the show, I am highly aware of how skewed this section could become. For that reason, I am narrowing the notions of controversy or discomfort to focus on those moments that deal with frequently stigmatized topics[35] or conversations that would be 1) difficult to have, hear, and participate in and/or 2) frequently avoided in the workplace or public social settings.

The first of these moments comes in the second episode while celebrating the Nigerian athlete Sam Obisanya's birthday in the locker before a game. Previously shown is Ted receiving a care package from his son containing a bag of toy army men–included in the package to protect Ted while he's away from "home". After giving one of these men to Rebecca–to defend her from inappropriate and goading questions from the press about her ex-husband–Ted puts one in Sam's birthday present.

> Sam: Coach, what's this?
> Ted: Well, my little boy gave me a whole bunch of these. You know, help keep me safe while I'm away. I miss him, you know.
>
> . . .
>
> Sam: Coach, is it okay if I don't keep this? I don't really have the same fondness for the American military that you do.

[34] *Ted Lasso*, season 1, episode 2, "Biscuits," directed by Zach Braff, aired August 14, 2020, on AppleTV+.
[35] I am specifically thinking of the attention to mental health in season two.

Ted: Oh, sure. Right. Imperialism. Right. Yeah.[36]

This moment is glossed over. It's just another conversation. However, this had to be a slightly uncomfortable moment for Ted. He's coming face-to-face with the fact that something that inspires feelings of patriotism, protection, and safety for him does the complete opposite for someone else, and he meets that with an immense amount of grace and understanding.[37]

Returning to Halberstam

I want to conclude this archive with a return to Halberstam. Keeping in mind that "*The Queer Art of Failure* dismantles the logics of success and failure with which we currently live. Under certain circumstances failing, losing, forgetting, unmaking, undoing, unbecoming, not knowing may in fact offer more creative, more cooperative, more surprising ways of being in the world", I offer these moments from *Ted Lasso* doing just that.[38]

The Pixarvolt

Now, I am fully aware that *Ted Lasso* is not a Pixarvolt film, and I am not arguing a case for it to be included in that genre here. What am I doing here is connecting the show to defining features of Pixarvolt films to further build the case for *Ted Lasso* as a media text with revolutionary possibilities.

In the Pixarvolt films, "More often than not the individual character actually serves as a gateway to intricate stories of collective action, anticapitalist critique, group bonding, and alternative imaginings of community, space, embodiment, and responsibility".[39] I can't think of a more fitting description of how the character of Ted Lasso functions in the show. It's not about an, or even the, individual; a sentiment thoroughly expressed in Ted's conversation with Jamie in

---

[36] Ted Lasso, "Biscuits," (21:04-21:36)
[37] Another moment that, I think, could be included when discussing pushing back against common notions of masculinity–specifically, toxic American (nationalist) ideas of masculinity.
[38] Halberstam, 2-3.
[39] Halberstam, 43-44.

episode two. He says, “I think that you might be so sure that you’re one in a million, that sometimes you forget that out there, you’re just one of eleven,”[40] driving home the essentiality of collective action in an effort to build community and make Jamie a team player. “The Pixarvolt films connect individualism to selfishness, to untrammeled consumption, and they oppose it with a collective mentality,”[41] a position echoed by Ted throughout the series.

Additionally, “The Pixarvolt films offer an animated world of triumph for the little guys”.[42] *Ted Lasso* is a true underdog story; that is without question, and even more prevalent in season two when the underdog in question is no longer just Ted, but all of AFC Richmond as they work to be promoted back to the premier league after being relegated at the end of season one. A key feature of this is in the complication of the notion of triumph. While we do see lots of victories in the show–all of which are intricately tied to the personal disruption of heteronormative ideals or resulting from the community building of Ted–the big ‘triumphs’ often come as a result or in the form of failure; something that I will build on later.

On Stupidity

Halberstam states that “when a white male character in a film or novel is characterized as stupid or unknowning, this is quickly folded back into his general appeal as a winning form of vulnerability”.[43] A key feature of Ted’s character, aside from his never-ending supply of optimism and puns, is his lack of knowledge and overall ditsiness.

> Rebecca: Do you believe in ghosts, Ted?
> Ted: I do. But more importantly, I think they need to believe in themselves. You know?
>
> . . .
>
> Ted: Heck, you could fill two Internets with what I don’t know about football. [44]

[40] *Ted Lasso*, “Biscuits”
[41] Halberstam, 47.
[42] Halberstam, 47
[43] Halberstam, 55.
[44] *Ted Lasso*, “Pilot”, (11:55-11:59)

As with some of the examples of male stupidity used by Halberstam, Ted's stupidity makes him charming and comforting.[45] What he doesn't know about England or soccer, he makes up for by the other things he does know, by opening doors to new kinds of knowledge and new kinds of being and new kinds of relationships.

On Forgetting:

Working hand-in-hand with stupidity, forgetting, as exemplified in Halberstam's example of Dory, also reveals new ways for understanding and making meaning and interacting in/with the world. "Forgetting allows for a release from the weight of the past and the menace of the future. . .memory can be painful, for it actively and passively keeps alive the experience of events that one may do better to blot out."[46]

> Ted: Do you know what the happiest animal on earth is? It's a goldfish. You know why?
> Sam: No.
> Ted: Got a ten-second memory. Be a goldfish, Sam.[47]

After being berated by Jamie, Sam has this interaction with Ted where he offers these words of advice. The concept of being a goldfish, of forgetting easily and often, of releasing everything and truly living in the present, is not only the epitome of the Pixarvolt's emphasis on forgetting, but becomes a theme throughout the series.

On Failure

Failure is one of the most prevalent features in the series. Ted takes the job in an effort to give his wife the space she needs to try and save his marriage; in fact, he's only offered the job because Rebecca is absolutely sure that he can and will fail. Again and again throughout the show, audiences see moments of failure. However, in *Ted Lasso* failures are (almost) always the foundation for something wonderful.

---

[45] Halberstam, 57.
[46] Halberstam, 83.
[47] *Ted Lasso*, "Biscuits"

After the ugly loss to Crystal Palace in Ted's first game as manager, rather than wallowing in self pity (mixed with a bit of rage), as seen from Jamie while talking to the reporter Trent Crimm, Coach Lasso turns the locker room into a place of comradery, community building/bonding and joy, while celebrating Sam's birthday. This is the first time where Ted really has the chance to connect with the Richmond players and begins their journey of becoming a real team, a "chosen" family. Had they won, there obviously would have been some celebrating; however, coming on the heels of a big failure is what gives this moment it's power. Had they won, Ted wouldn't have been in the position to help them "be goldfishes" or to ignite the change that Richmond really needed.

On Nonconceptual[48] Knowledge

Running parallel with notions of stupidity, is the attention to different kinds of knowledge. Without Ted's "stupidity", without the focus that brings on the introduction of new knowledges, there wouldn't be an opportunity for the show to overtly place value on knowledge that isn't typically given a second thought. This is seen in Ted and Coach Beard taking advice from Nate (and subsequently promoting him to an assistant coach), the equipment manager, on plays, and in Ted's listening to and learning from the people in his neighborhood about soccer and how to coach the team. I also think that this is covertly seen in a lot of Ted's value as a person and a coach coming from his emotional intelligence and other qualities not traditionally valued in men, especially in men in film and TV[49].

Speculating Revolution

[48] My use of the term "nonconceptual" stems from Halberstam's

[49] Things like baking biscuits for Rebecca, openly caring about other people's emotional and mental wellbeing, and working overtime to try and be the dad and husband (for some of the show) that is family wants.

I can admit that going from *Ted Lasso* to revolution is a bit of a stretch. However, given the affective power that media can have on audiences, how popular *Ted Lasso* has become, and the overt disruption of heteronormative notions that it contains, I think it's more than worthwhile to buy into it.

Marcia R. England's "Visions of Gender: Codings of Televisual Space" discusses how gender identity is formed and reinforced in society through the depictions of stereotypes, everyday life, and idealistic images of identity and gender roles in television shows. She states that "the medium of television constructs stereotypical categories of how men and women should act in space, whether the home or the workplace"[50], and that this gender coding and creation of false ideals "affects the audience. . .[and] legitimizes the patriarchal gendering of spaces and constructions of gender identity".[51] When explaining how this happens, England describes how television has cultural influence, stating that it "Television's situation within the privacy of homes establishes an intimacy that requires examination and critique. We come to feel as if we know and identify with the characters we watch on television. This relationship is at the core of how television shapes social, cultural, and historical visions of gender".[52]

Also discussing the power of media is Todd Adkins and Jeremiah J. Castle. In their article, " "Moving" Pictures? Experimental Evidence of Cinematic Influence on Political Attitudes", they discuss the influence that film can have on the political attitudes of the audience. Based on the findings of their study, "[they] suggest that popular movies are capable of influencing the attitudes of viewers precisely due to their popular nature: viewers come

[50] England, 105.
[51] England, 106.
[52] England, 106.

expecting to be entertained and are not prepared to encounter and evaluate political messages as they would during campaign advertisements or network news programs".[53]

Both England and Adkins and Castle showcase how and why *Ted Lasso* has the power to create cultural/social change. In terms of England, I think that *Ted Lasso* might have even more power than a regular television show because it's one that you exclusively stream it. Audiences don't just watch it once a week on their living room television; they can watch it on any of their personal devices anywhere they want. They could take it with them everywhere. This, combined with Adkins and Castle's assertion about popular media, positions *Ted Lasso* as a show that checks all the boxes of something that is more than capable of causing changes. As a show constantly challenging heteronormative notions of gender and masculinity, as seen in my discussion and analysis of the show, the changes that can result from *Ted Lasso* would be nothing less than revolutionary.

Ted Lasso engages audiences with some pretty intense topics and shows them a very different version of reality than what they normally see. Audiences are introduced to nuanced embodiments of power and masculinity and, through the lens of queer studies that I have utilized, are shown "not some fantasy of an else where, but existing alternatives to hegemonic systems".[54] Now, here is where the speculating begins.

If television, and other popular media, does in fact have an effect on audiences' opinions and beliefs, what are people for? Why is so much time and energy and resources being wasted on another dating show or on another Fast & Furious movie (although I am a consumer of both)? Why not put that work into more things like *Ted Lasso*? If audiences tend to value/emulate/want

[53] Adkins, Todd, and Jeremiah J. Castle. " "Moving" Pictures? Experimental Evidence of Cinematic Influence on Political Attitudes." Social Science Quarterly 95, no. 5 (2014): 1230–44. http://www.jstor.org/stable/44072746.
[54] Halberstam, 89.

what they see on both big and small screens, why not make it something worth valuing/emulating/wanting. I think a Lasso Revolution is much needed in much of our media; I will take unwavering niceness and men being supportive, unproblematic, and emotionally available over a rose ceremony or exploding car any day of the week. This Lasso Revolution is a disruption, a complication, a protest against the hegemonic structures so prevalent in nearly every facet of life, seen in the constant disruption of those structures seen throughout the series. Although it is wildly optimistic to hope for social revolution informed by a sitcom, wild optimism is the Lasso way, and, in the words of Trent Crimm, "If the Lasso way is wrong, it's hard to imagine being right".[55]

[55] *Ted Lasso*, "Trent Crimm: The Independent", 29:12

Bibliography

Adkins, Todd, and Jeremiah J. Castle. " "Moving" Pictures? Experimental Evidence of Cinematic Influence on Political Attitudes." *Social Science Quarterly* 95, no. 5 (2014): 1230–44. http://www.jstor.org/stable/44072746.

Barney, Chuck. "5 Ways 'Ted Lasso' Became a Surprise Comedy Hit." Boston Herald. Boston Herald, July 20, 2021. https://www.bostonherald.com/2021/07/21/5-ways-ted-lasso-became-a-surprise-comedy-hit/.

Echegaray, Luis Miguel. "How 'Ted Lasso' Evolved from a Viral Promo into a Series." Sports Illustrated. Sports Illustrated, August 11, 2020. https://www.si.com/soccer/2020/08/11/ted-lasso-jason-sudeikis-apple-tv-series-nbc.

England, Marcia R. "Visions of Gender: Codings of Televisual Space." In *Public Privates: Feminist Geographies of Mediated Spaces*, 81–106. University of Nebraska Press, 2018. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt22726wh.8.

Feasey, Rebecca. *Masculinity and Popular Television*. Edinburgh University Press, 2008. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctt1r1zht.

——. "Police and Crime Drama: Investigating Male Authority." In *Masculinity and Popular Television*, 80–93. Edinburgh University Press, 2008.

——. "Sports: Media Events and Masculine Discourse." In *Masculinity and Popular Television*, 94–105. Edinburgh University Press, 2008.

Halberstam, Judith. *The Queer Art of Failure*. Duke University Press, 2011. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11sn283.

Mooney, Darren. “What the Ted Lasso Discourse Says about How We Watch Television.” The Escapist. The Escapist, October 13, 2021. https://www.escapistmagazine.com/what-the-ted-lasso-discourse-says-about-how-we-watch-television/.

Sullivan, Nikki. “Queer: A Question of Being or A Question of Doing?” In *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory*, 37–56. Edinburgh University Press, 2003. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctvxcrwj6.6.

Ted Lasso, season 1, episode 1, “Pilot,” directed by Tom Marshall, aired August 14, 2020, on AppleTV+.

Ted Lasso, season 1, episode 2, “Biscuits,” directed by Zach Braff, aired August 14, 2020, on AppleTV+.

Ted Lasso, season 1, episode 4, “Trent Crimm: The Independent”, directed by Tom Marshall, aired August 14, 2020, on AppleTV+.

Ted Lasso, season 1, episode 4, “For the Children”, directed by Tom Marshall, aired August 21, 2020, on AppleTV+.

Ted Lasso, season 1, episode 5, “Tan Lines,” directed by Elliot Hegarty, aired on August 28, 2020 on AppleTV+.

VanDerWerff, Emily. “Why Ted Lasso Became the Hit That Put AppleTV+ on the Map.” Vox. Vox, February 24, 2021. https://www.vox.com/culture/22290391/ted-lasso-explained-apple-tv-plus-jason-sudeikis.