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Shortly after Alex Doty's tragic passing, I asked preeminent film and queer scholar, Richard Dyer, to comment on the scope of his life and his work: "I think Alex's importance was in two areas: one, most obviously, his extension of concerns within lesbian and gay identity to notions of queer, something looser, more fluid, more embracing of diversities, sometimes perhaps too all-encompassing but never anything less than lucid and stimulating; secondly, the fact that he worked on popular film and television, where queer work has often focused on elite art of one kind or another - if others sought to 'queer the canon', Alex looked way beyond the canon to 'queer the mainstream'." In so doing, Doty's work is often lifted out of the almost relentless presentism of our field by critically interrogating decades-old texts. Through his "queer readings," he invited us to take a second look at popular texts from many generations that may have been more influential for their audiences (queer and otherwise) than what has been historicized.

These sorts of queer reading strategies – of finding or making a space for queerness in the shows they were watching (perhaps not strategies at all) – are not, as he writes, "'alternative' readings, wishful or willful misreadings, or 'reading too much into things' readings. They result from the recognition and articulation of the complex range of queerness that has been in popular culture texts and their audiences all along." This framework allows me to reconceptualize not only older texts, but the reading strategies of audiences viewing them – crucial because it changes the way I approach both audience as well as archival work. Most scholars performing queer readings in the vein of Doty's research have looked at campy or homosocial narrative programming pregnant with queer potential even while suspiciously omitting explicit references to queerness. My use of Doty's work has taken a decidedly more complicated turn particularly in the light of contemporary queer programming: What does it mean to have a queer reading of an

explicitly queer text? Are we less and less likely to consider the queer reading potential offered by such texts in lieu of problematizing the explicit queer content?

These questions become increasingly relevant as we re-enter an era of considerable queer-explicit content reminiscent of the gay '90s, including shows such as *Glee*, *The New Normal*, *Partners*, and *Modern Family* all of which have been challenged by the academy. But to open up this conversation about the state of the present, I'd again like to look at an example from our past to demonstrate the way in which, as Doty argues, such readings have always already been a central part of our culture.

In 1956, the half-hour public affairs program *The Open Mind* (1956-present) featured one of the earliest broadcasts about homosexuality in American television history and became an early model for later tabloid talk shows using sexual-otherness as a staple for episode themes. The first broadcast on homosexuality in August 1956, garnered so much attention from viewers of the show that producer Richard Heffner aired several more specials in the following year. What makes *The Open Mind* an important case study is that, although the program is largely denigrated in queer histories for focusing on the "problem" of homosexuality, my archival research has revealed that it was praised by many queer viewers and groups at that time (including pre-Stonewall gay group, the Mattachine Society) who had different experiences regarding its importance. Theoretically, the explicit nature of the queer content characterizing homosexuals as "sick" and deserving of "pity" should have been as offensive to viewers as the homonormative representations present in *Modern Family* should be to today's viewers. But the potential for queer readings of such programs exists in tandem with their queer content, paving a way toward using Doty's theories and methodologies to tackle the delicate strategies today's viewers are faced with when negotiating our own problematic queer representations.