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## Coming out and beyond: press coverage of popular music artists Emmanuel Moire and Eddy de Pretto

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### Coming Out and Beyond: Press Coverage of Popular Music Artists Emmanuel Moire and Eddy de Pretto

The history of popular music in France features many examples of chansons dealing with the subject of same-sex desire, as clearly illustrated by the Wikipedia entry *Homosexualité dans la chanson française*. However, it has been relatively uncommon in France for pop musicians to disclose such desire publicly (Montet, “Emmanuel Moire gay”). Certain artists have, nonetheless, dealt with the subject at some length: for example, the singers Patrick Juvet and Dave, as well as the singer and violinist Catherine Lara, whose self-disclosure is associated with a memorable French television moment. When asked by the presenter of *Mon Zénith à moi* (Canal+ 1986) Michel Denisot, “Qu’est-ce que vous regardez en premier chez un homme?”, she responded, “sa femme !” In more recent years, certain artists have presented their self-disclosure to the media as relatively unproblematic. Héloïse Letissier (1988-) of the group Christine and the Queens, describes a family situation that did not require her to come out to her parents (see Boyer; and Mossman). Media coverage of the French singer and Youtuber Bilal Hassani (1999-), who represented France in the 2019 Eurovision Song Contest, describes his mother’s low-key reaction to his coming out, as she is reported to have responded by asking him simply to get on and wash the dishes (Belouassa). While media coverage represents coming out for particular popular music artists in France as a relatively straightforward process, the issue is represented in more complex and extensive terms particularly in the coverage of Emmanuel Moire (1979-) and Eddy de Pretto (1993-) as part of a broader and ongoing discussion of their sexuality, the focus of this article. Moire achieved mainstream success through his appearance as Louis XIV in the 2005 musical *Le Roi Soleil*, as 2012 winner of the television celebrity dance competition *Danse avec les stars*, in regular performances during the annual televised charity concert *Les Enfoirés*, and most recently in his bid, albeit unsuccessful, to represent France in the 2019 Eurovision Song Contest. De Pretto, a relative newcomer, has already built a strong public profile since the release of his first EP in 2017, receiving three nominations in the 2019 *Victoires de la Musique* awards. This article will then present de Pretto and Moire as two case studies tracing a relatively rare phenomenon of how contemporary French pop musicians negotiate specific discourses particularly around same-sex desire and self-disclosure in an analysis of French mediated celebrity discourse, which incorporates recent approaches to the analysis of the performance and negotiation of sexuality and identity.

#### French Discourses

National specificities are crucial to an understanding of same-sex desire and self-disclosure/coming out (Stambolis-Ruhstorfer and Saguy). In the French context Denis Provencher (2007) looks beyond the two established “oppositional models” “in which French gay and lesbian experience must fit,” originally proposed by Sylviane Agacinski (1998) - 1) the closet; and 2) the Anglo-American ghetto - towards “an emerging and more flexible third model that proposes a French language of citizenship that picks and chooses from global gay language (gay English) as well as both the language of non-specific difference in a French republican tradition and the ‘queer’ language of non-identitarian desire in a French tradition of Genet” (*Queer French* 11). More recently, Provencher has identified a holistic “process” of “good sexual citizenship,” which, in the French context

is less about a narrative of the closet or death of a heterosexual self [as in Anglo-American coming out stories] and more about one that involves the death of the inauthentic (existentialist) and rebirth of an authentic self, the “good sexual citizen” in relation to the larger social group (i.e., France), and living in good faith in an integrated society that does not celebrate multiculturalism. This chronology can also involve marriage and children but this linearity is difficult in France because of the political discourse focused on the “sanctity of filiation” [...] Of course, the French temporality can also include the “bad” sexual citizen who remains more subversive on the margins of society, in the tradition of Genet, in a non-identitarian stance and a refusal to say “je.” (Provencher, *Queer Maghrebi French* 38)

Academic work has also identified clear alternatives in France to self-disclosure/coming out such as male “arrival” narratives following the AIDS crisis: “the story of the protagonist’s arrival in Paris and his establishment there in the gay community in the Marais” (Schehr *Postmodern* 126) in “a teleology of ‘plugging into the city’ through its ‘neuromatrices and networks’ (i.e., the Internet and other technological means, and its culture of commercial and sexual consumption and seroconversion” (Provencher 31). The concept of “queer opacity” (de Villiers), associated with Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes and Andy Warhol - “visible, but opaque (not ‘see-through’ or easily deciphered)” - has also been identified as a “means of resisting both confession and homophobia” (de Villiers *Opacity*; de Villiers “Afterthoughts”).<sup>i</sup>

Beyond the issue of self-disclosure/coming out, discourses concerned more broadly with sexuality in contemporary France are important to our understanding of press coverage of de Pretto and Moire. Mohammed Amadeus Mack refers to France as a Sexagon (rather than a Hexagon) given “the way its borders increasingly have come to be defined through values such as gay-friendliness, secular feminism, and metrosexuality, on the one hand, and the condemnation of immigrant and working-class machismo on the other” (1-2). In particular, the minority ethnic Maghrebi other has been “virilized,” “perceived” as holding “conservative attitudes about gender and sexuality” (1-2). Evolving and contested notions of family in France are also significant. While the family unit and its “strategies of reproduction” (Provencher *Queer French/Queer Maghrebi French*, following Bourdieu) remain a cornerstone of the French Republic, recent debates in the wake of equal marriage, introduced in 2013, have, as Daniel Borrillo comments, “focused less on the question of conjugality than on that of filiation, defined as the symbolic order of sexual difference that guarantees the correct structuring of both individual and Civilization.” (303).<sup>ii</sup> Moreover, as Borrillo comments, “Conservatives may not have prevented the opening of marriage; but they still try to preserve the symbolic order of sexual difference through the biologisation of filiation.” (303). In a more constructive vein, Provencher, in his 2017 study of “Queer Maghrebi French voices”, observes transfiliation, a process of “flexible accumulation”, which “involves the creation of filial ties through subversive and transgressive artistic and cultural productions, and the transmission of those models across genres and generations of producers and consumers, and across transnational networks of communication” (*Queer Maghrebi French* 46-47).

### **Methodological Approaches**

Same-sex desire and self-disclosure in press coverage of de Pretto and Moire can also be understood in terms of the existing academic literature that has developed methodological approaches to

coming out, same-sex desire, sexuality more generally, as well as the mediation of celebrity. Academic studies in a variety of disciplines have conceptualized the process of coming out: the “traditional” view of coming out as “the disclosing of one’s non-heterosexual identification” (Motschenbacher 286); “the individual process by which people who are LGBT choose to move from secrecy to openness in their sexual identity and expression,” which identifies several common components but also points to the individualized, on-going and iterative nature of the experience, and variation in how one might come or be out to particular people or in particular situations (Holtzman and Sharpe 240); the essentially complex, problematic and paradoxical nature of coming out as “a transgressive act, since it is the self-affirming of an identity that is widely perceived as non-normative,” yet with “limitations to its questioning or queer potential” (Motschenbacher 286, following Morrish and Sauntson 98; and Zimman 54); and the structuring of coming out via “regulatory frames that dictate what can(not) (easily) be publicly expressed,” and which are “not stable but historically and culturally specific and, therefore, changeable” (Motschenbacher 286, drawing on Judith Butler’s notion of “intelligibility”).

Press coverage of de Pretto and Moire may also be viewed in terms of some of the key concerns of Queer theory, as articulated by Cervulle and Julliard, particularly the role of inclusion in reifying identities and social /gender structures (in conflict with personal identities, which are viewed as multiple, shifting, and at times possibly contradictory); the conception of sexuality as a subjective property, which establishes the homo/heterosexuality binary and associated non-negotiable social structures, and conceives of heterosexuality as a form of public culture that gives substance to a hegemonic public; and a re-conception of public debate, moving from the Habermassian notion of rational-critical public towards new forms of language, communication and aesthetics of protest (Cervulle and Julliard). Moreover, as William Leap comments, “the political promise of [queer] reside[s] specifically in its broad critique of multiple social antagonisms, including race, gender, class, nationality and religion, in addition to sexuality” (562). As Provencher continues, “[...] a queer linguistic approach will attempt to account for these multiple identities and the interaction between them.” (411; see also Provencher *Queer Maghrebi French* 24, following Leap; and Eng et al.).<sup>iii</sup> Furthermore, Christopher Pullen’s concept of “new storytelling for gay and lesbian identity” (1) highlights the potential across various media forms for “a shift from ‘being’ towards ‘becoming’” (4) as part of a “post-queer-politics” (Ruffolo), emphasizing “the diverse, yet coalescent and mobile nature of individual storytellers, who [...] offer scope to the diversity of identity” (10).

The mediation of popular music artists, their same sex-desire and (self-)disclosure thereof has also received significant academic attention, which highlights the notable contribution of individual artists and their positive influence on newer generations of artists (Pullen 35-36 on K.D.Lang in relation to Melissa Etheridge and Rufus Wainright); artists’ agency and ownership of their situation (Pullen 63, on George Michael); what (and who) constitutes “transgression” and “deviancy” (Rivera Santana et al. on Tiziano Ferro and Ricky Martin); “discursive shifts in the representation of ethnicity and sexuality” (Motschenbacher 295, on Ricky Martin); discourses of homonormativity and neoliberalism (Sawyer and Benozzo on Ricky Martin and Tiziano Ferro); complicated meanings of outness in the media, for example, combining “the rhetoric of liberation” with a refusal of the “the constraints normatively deployed in the service of identity” (Brady 293, on Adam Lambert); and artists’ relative “privilege and distance from ‘everyday’ citizenship” (Pullen 36). Also evoked are the perceived “risks” of coming out, particularly ‘the potential loss of audience support’

(Motschenbacher 286-287), even in “popular culture and the pop music industry [which] have long been considered domains where more progressive explorations of gender and sexuality are common, accepted, and even desired” (Kian et al. 621–622 in Motschenbacher 287). Beyond the focus on popular music artists, academic accounts on the mediation of coming out have highlighted the importance of confession, honesty, and the coming out process as linear and as one including a final happy resolution (Hilton-Morrow and Battles); the authoritative status of the media as a conduit for coming out; the control of diversity and reinforcement of “dominant societal values and ideologies”; and the influence of media genres or formats in structuring self-disclosure (Boross and Reijnders 245). Finally, the potential of media role models to exert a positive influence on the identity development of audiences has been recognized, for example, by Gomillion and Giulliano, who advise the media to “change its portrayal of the GLB population to be more representative and less stereotyped and damaging” and move “away from the ‘sissy’ and ‘dyke’ archetypes toward new archetypes resembling positive role models” (351).

Media coverage of popular music artist’s same-sex desire and self-disclosure may also be understood according to established features of celebrity news and journalism (“information-people”), as articulated by Annik Dubied (“L’information-people”; “L’information-people, entre rhétorique”) given the personalization of contemporary media in general; the emphasis on storytelling; the possible combination of information/news/“truth” and entertainment; the distinction between and blurring of private and public spheres/lives, and the associated potential for voyeurism; the transgressive disclosure of previously hidden information; the preoccupation with private lives as symptomatic of a democratic deficit, or of society deliberating with itself (Dominique Mehl); an emphasis on domesticity and maternity/paternity; a fascination for or distrust of a certain economic elite; the ideology of moderation and the potential of celebrity journalism to subvert usual, accepted definitions of such moderation; and the location of celebrity news at the heart of social change and its negotiation. Dubied’s account also highlights the specific ways in which celebrities are represented in the media: as promoting their latest work (in interview Moire explicitly rejects using his sexuality as a way of promoting his career [laurieg]); in terms of their distinctive features (including physical and visual appearance, behaviour and lifestyle); their ordinary and/or extraordinary qualities; their personal strengths and weaknesses; their self-control (or lack thereof); the difficulties in various aspects of their social and personal lives and relationships; and the logic behind their actions. In addition, while press coverage, as Marion Leonard comments, “frames the public and artistic personas of musicians” (65), interviews, in particular, may be “understood as performances rather than moments where the ‘real’ or ‘true’ person behind the star persona is revealed” (90).

In addition to the specific features of celebrity news, the “importance of normalizing judgement to the news industry’s professional ethos” (Reynolds 5) is relevant to coverage of celebrity same-sex desire and self-disclosure. In her study of media representations of online sexuality, specifically Craigslist sex forums, Chelsea Reynolds observes, drawing particularly on Gaye Tuchman:

News ideology is produced by cultural, institutional, professional, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and linguistic norms, as well as journalistic values and newsroom routines. [...] News media reproduce the status quo because they rely on institutional sources that validate normative opinions and construct a normative frame in news stories. Newspapers

rely on normalizing institutional sources because they are reliable and self-validating, meaning they contribute to a newspaper's air of prestige [...]. Beyond sourcing practices, reporting routines contribute to news ideology because they identify deviant and pre-scheduled events as newsworthy. Journalists are embedded in institutional beats, and events within those beats typically become news. (20-21)

While sourcing practices and reporting routines are beyond the scope of this study, the normalizing judgement of the news media is certainly relevant to the coverage of popular music artists and their same sex desire. It is also important to consider, as Reynolds argues, "not only what is said, but also what is not said [...] how lack of coverage and lack of sourcing may contribute to the symbolic annihilation of marginalized voices" (Reynolds 213).

It is with a framework that takes into account the context of dominant and normalizing discourses in contemporary France concerning same-sex desire, approaches to the self-disclosure of such desire, including possible alternative and resistant approaches, and the features of celebrity news and journalism, that this article reveals how contemporary French pop musicians negotiate specific discourses of identity, sexuality and masculinity through mediated celebrity discourse. The focus is a corpus of popular online magazine articles (celebrity and music titles; mainly French/limited Swiss and Belgian sources) retrieved via Google News (URL provided in references) and newspaper articles from the Nexis database (41 articles focusing specifically on Moire; 27 on de Pretto; 2009 - 2019). On occasion, the articles draw on other recent radio, television and press interviews with Moire and de Pretto. The above aim will be achieved via discourse analysis, which may be understood within the context of Media Studies as being "concerned with the use of language in a social context and the relationship between language use and (unequal) power relationships" (Devereux 247), as well as the question of "whether or not these discourses support or challenge dominant ideologies" or propose "counter-hegemonic ideologies" (Devereux 174).

### **Self-Disclosure: Consistent and Mixed Approaches**

Taken as a whole, coverage of Moire and de Pretto generates two distinct approaches to coming out while raising issues of consistency. Moire has, relatively speaking, received significant levels of media coverage with regards to his sexuality since his initial mediated coming out and interview in a 2009 edition of the French gay magazine *Têtu*, and continues to revisit this in ongoing coverage. Where coming out is concerned, Moire's press coverage emphasizes "honesty," to use Hilton-Morrow and Battles' term, and a desire for authenticity (Grevet "Emmanuel Moire") and to become, in essentialist terms, one's true self ("devenir soi") ("Emmanuel Moire : 'L'homosexualité fait partie de ma vie...'). His interviews reject evasiveness ("ne pas faire l'anguille"), lies ("de ne pas mentir") (Grevet "Emmanuel Moire"); vagueness ("flou") ("Emmanuel Moire : Ses confessions"), and playing an inauthentic "personnage de chanteur" ("Emmanuel Moire : 'J'ai vécu l'amour fusionnel'"), in favour of "sincérité" ("Emmanuel Moire : Ses confessions", 2015) and behavior that is "dans la vérité, sans fard" ("Emmanuel Moire : 'J'ai vécu l'amour fusionnel'"). For Moire in interview, not coming out equates to letting life pass one by: " En ne faisant pas son coming-out, on passe à côté de soi " (Patri). Such emphasis on authenticity is particularly resonant in France given the tradition of Sartrean existentialism, as articulated in Didier Eribon's *Réflexions sur la question gay* (1999),

which “juxtapos[es] such ideas as ‘bad faith,’ and ‘inauthenticity’ against ‘original choice,’ ‘free choice,’ ‘freedom’ and ‘authenticity’” (Provencher *Queer French* 91). As Provencher comments, for Eribon, “coming out relates to an individual act of freedom [...] a freedom that resists inauthenticity by accepting itself and assuming its social role [‘s’assumer’],<sup>iv</sup> that is through the actions of the individual who embodies it (freedom). This is underscored by the use of a reflexive verb that emphasizes the use of the self” (*Queer French* 91).<sup>v</sup> In addition, press coverage emphasizes coming-out-related authenticity in terms of Moire’s relationships with other individuals, as they exhibit both detachment and closeness. In seeking authenticity, Moire describes in interviews a desire for personal autonomy, seeking neither to please (“un jeu pour plaire”) nor fulfil the expectations of others (“Emmanuel Moire : Ses confessions”; “Quatre ans après la mort de son frère”). At the same time he expresses a desire to bridge an imagined gap (“fossé”) that has occurred between himself and his audience (“quelque chose qui cloche”) (Grevet “Emmanuel Moire”).

To some extent, coverage of Moire dismisses possible “risks” of coming out and “potential loss of audience support” (Motschenbacher). When questioned on his female audience, Moire notes positively no perceived change in their behavior towards him (“Les filles sont toujours là, aux premiers rangs, à vivre mes concerts à fond”) (Berliocchi), effectively recognizing and challenging ongoing popular assumptions that female fans are unlikely to be interested in gay male artists. Indeed, Moire points out that he has also reached “un autre public avec cet album, plus electro pop, qui me correspond vraiment.” (Grevet “Emmanuel Moire”). In addition, Moire describes in another interview the initial support of what might be seen as straight “gay allies” (Billings et al.) when he decided to come out. However, he also highlights cases of backtracking - those who approved of his coming out then later claimed that it was a “stupid” decision afterwards (“une connerie”) (“Emmanuel Moire: Ses Confessions”; “Quatre ans après la mort de son frère”), or those who expressed concern that it might harm his career (Minot; “Emmanuel Moire révèle”).<sup>vi</sup> At the same time, Moire effectively expresses recognition of his “privilege and distance from ‘everyday’ citizenship” (Pullen 36) given the relative openness of his profession and well as the (unnamed) city where he lives (Gonçalves “Emmanuel Moire en interview”).

Moire’s coming out is rationalized as an important and necessary rite of passage (“passer ce cap”) with various forms of personal and psychological fulfilment as well as, to use Hilton-Morrow and Battles’ terms, a “happy ending” following initial self-disclosure. The positive psychological effect on Moire is detailed: he is “en paix” (“Emmanuel Moire assume son homosexualité”; Lesdos); “en accord” (Gonçalves “Emmanuel Moire : ‘Je reviens’ ”); “épanoui” (Minot); “bien dans [ses] pompes” (Gonçalves “Emmanuel Moire : ‘Je reviens’”; Gonçalves “Emmanuel Moire : sa couverture” ) rather than “en recul” (Gonçalves “Emmanuel Moire : ‘Je reviens’”; Gonçalves “Emmanuel Moire : sa couverture”); free in word and deed (Gonçalves “Emmanuel Moire : sa couverture”); “affirmé” (“Quatre ans après la mort de son frère”), and, via his “révélation salvatrice” (Gonçalves “Emmanuel Moire : sa couverture”), has achieved “apaisement avec un coming-out salvateur” (Laurent); “équilibre” (Lesdos); “confiance” (“Emmanuel Moire assume son homosexualité”; “Quatre ans après la mort de son frère”), while overcoming fear (Gonçalves “Emmanuel Moire : ‘Je reviens’”; Gonçalves “Emmanuel Moire : sa couverture”) after lacking courage (“Je n’avais pas le courage nécessaire”), recognizing his perceived mistakes while denying regret (Calmet).

The outward signs of Moire's contentment are detailed: his smile and sparkling eyes ("VIDEO. Emmanuel Moire sur son coming out"); his confidence to play a demanding "rôle flamboyant et périlleux" ("Emmanuel Moire dit non") in the French version of the musical *Cabaret*; his ability to relax, "let go" and enjoy share humor on the subject of his sexual orientation with his fellow contestant the singer Amel Bent during production of the television show *Danse avec les stars* (Grevet "Emmanuel Moire"; Grevet "Amel Bent"). Moire's sense of inner peace as "le roi apaisé" is also emphasized in coverage of his 2019 album release *Odyssée* and the single "La Promesse" (Pirrot), which he describes as a "chanson bourrée d'espoir" (Billé), a decade following his first public disclosure. At the same time, while underlining the lengthy, difficult process through which he came to accept his own sexuality and the ability and courage to disclose it to others, the benefit of hindsight and the positive effects on his own life, Moire expresses unease at forcing others to come out publicly, wary of possible violent repercussions, instead preferring that they disclose the sexuality in their own time ("Emmanuel Moire en interview").

Coverage of Moire's coming out highlights the importance of individual close family members, key life events and wake-up calls. Interviews describe the impact of his twin brother's sudden death, which is said to have speeded up the process of self-disclosure: "J'ai pris conscience que la vie ne tient qu'à un fil. Qu'il faut être ouvert, dire les choses et cesser de vivre uniquement pour soi!" ("Emmanuel Moire : 'L'homosexualité fait partie de ma vie...'" ; "Emmanuel Moire : les Dessous"). Such a statement is an expression of the "freedom that resists inauthenticity by accepting itself and assuming its social role" ["s'assumer"] (Provencher *Queer French* 91), given the "universalistic approach of the French Republic where the social body overtakes any individual expressions of identity" (Provencher 121). In coverage of Moire, coming out to his mother is identified as a particular difficulty, while her exemplary reaction is noted (Montet, "Emmanuel Moire gay : 'Il a fallu du temps pour que je sois bien dans mes pompes'." ; "Emmanuel Moire dévoile la réaction de sa mère"). The emphasis on Moire's mother rather than on his father in coverage of coming out suggests the relative importance attached to the mother-son bond.

In contrast, coverage of de Pretto displays a more problematic stance towards the desirability of coming out. While de Pretto is identified as one of the rare hip-hop artists to have come out (Clara Carlesimo), in interview he plays down such an idea ("Je n'ai pas eu de coming-out immense à faire") (Aïnouz), or even issues a flat denial: "Souvent, on en parle comme d'un coming-out, alors que pas du tout" (Potdevin). In an interview in the Swiss daily *Le Temps*, de Pretto regards the "injonction du coming out" as "stigmatisante" (Kiner). In another interview, de Pretto resists coming out, so as to assert the equal status of different- and same-sex desire: "Pour moi, faire son coming out, c'est un problème: on ne doit pas annoncer sa sexualité, ça ne doit pas être un événement qu'on met en exergue, comme si on n'était pas normal. On n'imagine pas un hétéro le faire..." (Tournier). He also prefers to express his same-sex desire through his song lyrics rather than announcements or interviews/discussions, comparing his approach own to the normalization/positive trivialization of his orientation with that of the US singer-songwriter Frank Ocean:

Très discret sur son cas personnel, le jeune homme à la boucle d'oreille n'a pourtant aucune honte à parler de son homosexualité. "Frank Ocean n'en parle pas, il est juste clair dans ses textes. Il n'est pas là avec un drapeau arc-en-ciel à crier 'Je suis gay!' Moi c'est pareil, je pense que ne pas en parler haut et fort aide à le banaliser", précise-t-il. (Margueritte)

De Pretto also cites as reasons for his opposition to the concept of coming out a greater openness in society towards matters of sexuality; greater levels of indifference (rather than curiosity) towards the sexual orientation of others; and his own mundane view of same-sex desire and self-disclosure:

Pour le Huffington Post, il remarquait “que les générations du moment sont beaucoup plus ouvertes en ce qui concerne la sexualité, les suspicions laissent progressivement place à des 'on s'en fout'”. Eddy est out comme il respire : “Je n'ai jamais eu à cacher mon homosexualité, poursuit-il dans 20 minutes. Pour moi, c'est la banalité. (“Eddy de Pretto : “Pour Doc Gynéco c'est Vanessa”).

For de Pretto, his personal experiences in general are his starting point rather than same-sex desire: “Je ne parle pas de mon homosexualité, je raconte mes histoires qui, certes, sont des histoires homosexuelles.” (“Eddy de Pretto : “Pour Doc Gynéco c'est Vanessa”; “L'étoffe d'Eddy de Pretto”). For de Pretto, being gay is a “detail” (“L'étoffe d'Eddy de Pretto”). Moreover, a review of de Pretto's song “Grave” notes its emphasis on the importance of satisfying one's romantic/sexual desires over any considerations of self-disclosure/coming out: “Et que l'on assume ou pas son orientation sexuelle n'est pas le problème pour le rappeur. Placard ou non, Eddy De Pretto ne qualifie de grave qu'une seule situation : celle où l'on se refuse de vivre son attirance pour un homme. « Et ça c'est pire que rester à mentir. »” (Patri).

At the same time, de Pretto recognizes in an interview that he has potential as a well-known popular music artist to help individuals disclose their same-sex desire to others as well as parents with difficulties accepting their children's sexuality; that his own story might influence others individually or collectively; and that song, as a relatively democratized cultural form (“l'art le plus populaire, le plus transversal”) (Le Scouarnec 2018), lends itself to reflections and discussions around coming out (with its “impact social énorme”) (Le Scouarnec).

While such a range of viewpoints on self-disclosure in de Pretto's coverage, from denial of coming out through to more productive interpretations, might not necessarily constitute a form of “queer opacity” (de Villiers *Opacity*) per se - “visible, but opaque (not ‘see-through’ or easily deciphered)” - it nonetheless shares and fulfils a key “queer” aim of “opacity” - to “resist both confession and homophobia” (de Villiers “Afterthoughts”).

In sum, while articles on Moire are unequivocal in highlighting the necessity and benefits of self-disclosure, coverage of both artists features more mixed attitudes: a desire in Moire's case for autonomy and closeness in social relations, “assuming” his “social role” [“s'assumer”] (Provencher *Queer French* 91), and an uncertainty regarding the potentially inconsistent behavior and attitudes of others towards one's self-disclosure; where de Pretto is concerned, varying approaches to self-disclosure between articles, from rejection to the expression of same-sex desire in normalized, ordinary terms.

## Same-Sex Desire: Negotiation and Transcendence

In addition to tackling the specific issue of coming out, coverage of same-sex desire on the part of Moire and de Pretto effectively negotiates broader, dominant French republican discourses, while developing alternative and resistant approaches. In the case of Moire, coverage reflects a combination of French republican universalism and a more particularist, communitarian approach, valorizing distinct gay identities, while expressing ambivalence regarding contributions to gay and broader LGBTQ+ social movements, activism and protest. As for de Pretto, coverage points towards a broader social critique that includes and looks beyond sexuality.

In an interview Moire expresses an aim to speak to everyone, not just a particular community (Minot; “Emmanuel Moire révèle”), effectively combining French republican universalism with hegemonic values of inclusion and gay-friendliness. Moreover, perfunctory forms of inclusion or tokenism are rejected, as Moire expresses a refusal for example, to play the “homo de service” in cinematic roles (“Emmanuel Moire dévoile la réaction”; “Emmanuel Moire au cinéma”; see also “Emmanuel Moire : Ses confessions”). Furthermore, when questioned on not requesting a male partner during the filming of the series *Dancing with the Stars*, Moire argues that “insister sur la différence” is not necessarily “le plus efficace des combats. Être homo, ce n'est pas toujours la validation de la différence.” (“Emmanuel Moire dément avoir exigé”).

However, in something of a departure from republican universalism, Moire’s coverage also suggests a more particularist approach, by underlining the psychological benefits of giving expression to one’s difference (“c’était bien de parler de quelque chose quand tu te sens différent”, in reference to the song “La Promesse”) as well as the difficulties encountered by individuals regarding their sexual difference (“ce que peut-être chacun doit affronter quand on a une orientation différente des autres”) (Gonçalves “Emmanuel Moire en interview”). Moreover, Moire argues positively, without “prétention”, for a song specifically dedicated to the LGBTQ+ cause, which would act “comme un emblème,” given the lack of gay visibility or role models (“référénts” or “modèles”) during his own adolescence (Gonçalves “Emmanuel Moire en interview”). At the same time the song is viewed more generally by Moire as conveying a message of (self-)acceptance (Ruelle). Indeed the narrator of the song resolves to be true to himself, emerge from behind his protective shell, and act upon his same-sex desire, even if he encounters external opposition along the way.

In 2013 coverage recounts how Moire has not found an appropriate song to express his gay identity (as Lara Fabian had with “Deux ils, deux elles” in favor of marriage equality (2013)) (Gonçalves “Emmanuel Moire : ‘Je reviens’”). However, by 2018 this has effectively been addressed with the release and promotion of his new album *Odyssée* and in particular the single “La Promesse.” While coverage of Moire suggests republican universalist as well as more particularist approaches to sexuality, in stark contrast, de Pretto is said by Salomé Kiner to regard the idea of separate “communities” as “anxiety-inducing” (“anxiogène”) (Kiner) - a position more clearly consonant with French republican universalism.

Coverage of Moire also effectively takes issue with established “strategies of reproduction” (Provencher *Queer French / Queer Maghrebi French* following Bourdieu), associated particularly with the traditional French republican model of the family, as he recounts in an interview having experienced, where the subject of same-sex desire is concerned, attitudes and “choses qui se

transmettent de génération en génération”. Indeed, expressing a sense of duty and responsibility (“Emmanuel Moire en interview”) as well as a desire to assist younger gay people and others more generally (“rendre service”) (“VIDEO. Emmanuel Moire sur son coming out”), Moire describes his resistance to negative, dated, albeit undefined, gay stereotypes passed down from previous generations: “bien montrer qu’être gay, aujourd’hui, ce n’est pas être un stéréotype comme ont pu l’imaginer mes parents, par exemple” (Minot; Monnier). Such transgressive resistance to traditional filiation from generation to generation effectively represents a form of what Provencher *Queer Maghrebi French* terms “transfiliation.”

To some extent coverage of Moire and de Pretto exhibits complex attitudes to gay and broader LGBTQ+ activism and protest. In another interview, Moire avoids identifying himself as an “activist” (“militant”) (Gonçalves “Emmanuel Moire : ‘Je reviens’”), is wary of combining politics with his artistic career, and resists any role as a “porte-drapeau” (standard-bearer) of gay rights, denying that he seriously requested a male partner before appearing on *Dance with the Stars* even if he had joked about the possibility previously (“Emmanuel Moire dément avoir exigé”; Taieb; Céline S.; “Danse avec les stars 3 - Emmanuel Moire: ‘J’ai parlé de former un duo’”). For Moire, exuding happiness as a gay man is a political statement in itself: “Je pense qu’aujourd’hui, être gay affirmé avec le sourire et populaire, est déjà un parti pris politique très fort. Ça me paraît déjà pas mal” (“Emmanuel Moire : Ses confessions”). At the same time, however, coverage mentions specific examples of Moire’s support for LGBTQ+ inclusion and stance against homophobia. In December 2012 Moire is associated - via his manager - with a public petition calling for equal marriage and adoption rights in France (“Les people à la rescousse”). Moire also describes how, within the context of increasing homophobic violence in France, he felt a desire to attend an anti-homophobia rally in Paris (October 2018) (“Emmanuel Moire en interview”). In December 2018 Moire is reported to have taken part in recording a single in aid of the charity Urgence Homophobie ‘De l’Amour’, raising awareness of homophobia. (“Clip ‘La promesse’”), and recounts in coverage his own experience of homophobic violence as part of a broader social media campaign #LeurHistoireMonHistoire (“Emmanuel Moire : son récit glaçant”).

De Pretto resists in interview a formalized, communitarian role in LGBTQ+ activism or as a spokesperson: “Je ne suis pas militant. J’ai n’ai pas envie d’être un porte-drapeau. J’ai juste envie de raconter ma vie, ma réalité.” (“Eddy de Pretto : cinq choses à savoir”); “Je n’irai jamais manifester dans un rassemblement LGBTQ” (Kiner). Indeed, Michel Troadec highlights de Pretto’s “homosexualité assumée sans militantisme” (Troadec). However, de Pretto expresses willingness for his work to be recuperated in the service of social and LGBTQ+ causes: “Je fais mes chansons, je raconte mes histoires, si ça peut faire bouger les lignes, répondre à des mouvements, être des hymnes pour certains, tant mieux” (“Eddy de Pretto : ‘Pour Doc Gynéco c’est Vanessa’”). Moreover, de Pretto is gratified that teachers and LGBTQ+ associations use his songs as educational resources (Mandel).

While preferring to express his same-sex desire through artistic production rather than through activism, de Pretto nonetheless recognizes the necessity in the past for public figures such as the film-maker Cyril Collard and the writer Guillaume Dunstan to speak out publicly during the AIDS crisis, as well as the necessity in the current climate given, for example, the homophobia

experienced by Bilal Hassani, who represented France at the 2019 Eurovision Song Contest (“Eddy de Pretto à Rouen”).

De Pretto expresses a preference for developing ideas such as “la vulnérabilité masculine et de l’hypersensibilité”, which relate to his own life experiences and form a focus for his song-writing (Kiner), describing, for example, feeling unable during his youth to express his “code féminin” (Darbois): “Il y avait ces codes là (de la virilité) qui m’ont amené à penser – par les injonctions non-dites, inconscientes – que je devais être comme ça en tant qu’homme, et que les failles, genre pleurer ou jouer à la poupée ou simplement danser sur les Spice Girls, étaient interdites ou devaient être cachées” (Darbois). He also describes how the prevailing “modèle viril” weighed upon him (Locoge; Vincent) and how, after avoiding behavior construed as “effeminate” at school for fear of ridicule, as he grew up, he was able to be comfortable with his “part de féminité” (Locoge), referring to the song “Normal”, which describes his youthful experiences of homophobia (Glaser). De Pretto rejects the “virilité obligatoire” (Glaser) associated with his father, who is said to have ordered him to engage in stereotypical masculine, boyish pursuits: “Cours après les ballons et joue aux voitures” (Naselli). Accordingly, de Pretto refers in interview, in the lyrics of song “Kid” and its video clip to “la virilité abusive” in contemporary society (Gonçalves “‘Grave’, ‘Sensible’”; Ruelle; “Tu seras sensible, mon fils”). Moreover, de Pretto is reported to have received from AJL, the French LGBT journalists’ organization an OUT d’or award for la création artistique, in recognition of his deconstruction of ‘les modèles de masculinités oppressives’ (Montet, “Marianne James, Camille Cottin et Augustin Trapenard réunis aux 2e OUT d’or”).

In an interview de Pretto recognizes the difficulties associated with resisting dominant codes around virility: “Même si je dénonce la virilité, je rentre dans les codes aussi: j’ai fait du sport et de la salle pour me développer, pour être dans un certain moule social et être mieux dans mes baskets, pour rentrer mieux dans la société” (Darbois). Moreover, he argues that the challenge is to define oneself irrespective of established codes: ‘On s’en fout de comment dans ta tête tu te représentes l’homme et comment dans ta tête tu te représentes la femme. (...) Il faut être ouvert à s’écouter au plus profond et d’avoir envie d’être l’humain qu’on est au plus profond.’ [...] Je pense que c’est le travail d’une vie pour un homme d’accepter la féminité et la masculinité en lui (...) (Darbois).

While de Pretto’s coverage might not represent a fully fledged ‘queer linguistic approach’, or to use Leap’s terms, a “broad critique of multiple social antagonisms, including race, gender, class, nationality and religion, in addition to sexuality,” his press interviews move beyond a concern focused on (homo)sexuality, incorporating a wider critique of gender norms. De Pretto challenges in interviews the popular view that he is concerned only or primarily with same-sex desire – rather he is interested in democratizing “virilité...ou [...] son contraire” (Le Scouarnec): “Tout le monde peut accéder au droit de la virilité” (Le Scouarnec). Moreover, de Pretto challenges in an interview traditional assumptions that conflate sexual orientation and the performance of gender: “L’hétérosexualité et la virilité sont deux choses très différentes: je connais des hommes efféminés qui ne sont pas homosexuels. [The song] Kid traite surtout d’identité” (Potdevin). De Pretto looks forward to “le jour où les hommes se seront détachés de ce qu’ils sont censés représenter dans la famille, dans la société” and expresses desire for “le paradoxe entre mon corps frêle et l’attente d’un corps musclé” (Naselli). Moreover, he rejects essentialist approaches linking sexuality and music/genre that categorize him as “le ‘gay qui fait de la chanson’” (“Eddy de Pretto : “Pour Doc

Gynéco c'est Vanessa"; Renault), "le tant attendu rappeur gay made in France" (Bouton), or as "une forme d'exotisme ou d'incongruité hip-hop" (Bouton): "Les codes évoluent et aujourd'hui le rappeur n'a plus besoin de se cantonner aux muscles et aux filles : tu peux être frêle et homosexuel et chanter plus rappé, scandé qu'avant." (Darbois). More generally de Pretto is also said to resist categorization in terms of musical genre (Margueritte; Montaney) and his chronological age (Thévenot). By challenging traditional gender norms, and effectively maintaining well established, institutionalized notions of gender parity in contemporary France, coverage of de Pretto effectively suggests an indirect as well as relatively normative route to the advancement of LGBTQ+ equality.

Alison Dechandon's review of de Pretto's song and video clip "Grave" (2018), highlights how his audience is encouraged to "se désinhiber des normes sociales qui encombrant notre quotidien", particularly where same-sex desire and relationships are concerned, including clear references to masturbation and online pornography, but at the same time suggests "la difficulté d'exposer ses choix aussi différents soient-ils et même d'affirmer son moi intérieur". Indeed, the video uses a point of view shot to represent de Pretto as the object of a voyeur outside his apartment spying on him through a window in the "privacy" of his home. Indeed, towards the end of the video clip the character played by de Pretto becomes aware of being watched after he sits down on a sofa to watch what is presumed to be online pornography on his smartphone, which he holds with one hand while touching his genitals under his tracksuit bottoms with the other.

While coverage of Moire then reflects a combination of universalism and particularism as well as ambivalence towards questions of LGBTQ+ activism, that focusing on de Pretto suggests a social critique which includes but also looks beyond sexuality. Coverage thus combines a range of discursive strategies for the recognition—both explicit and implicit—of same-sex desire.

### **Celebrity News: Underpinning Values**

The coverage of de Pretto and Moire, taken as a whole, exhibits consistent and mixed approaches to coming out, and negotiates and transcends dominant discourses in France concerning sexuality. In addition, coverage of their same-sex desire is underpinned by the kind of attributes typically associated with celebrity news and journalism. In the case of both artists, storytelling, revelations, personal difficulties and the logic behind their actions are featured. As we have already seen, coverage of de Pretto mentions moments from his family and school life, draws a link between communities and anxiety, and describes his personal desires as well as the challenges of fulfilling them. As part of an ongoing, "linear" process (Hilton-Morrow and Battles 2014), Moire reviews in media appearances his progress to date (via the verb "revenir sur"), his trajectory ("parcours") and the struggles ("petits combats") that he has faced (Emmanuel Moire : "L'homosexualité fait partie de ma vie..."). In coverage of his appearance in a television talk-show *Le Grande 8* (D8, 16 September 2015), he describes questioning his own silence ("mutisme"), while moving towards "raconter" (Lesdos 2015) in what is at times a painful process ("moment douloureux") ("VIDEO. Emmanuel Moire sur son coming out"). The logic behind Moire's decision to not disclose his same-sex desire earlier is also developed: a sense of paralysis caused by imagining possible negative outcomes ("On s' imagine comment ça va se passer, on fait beaucoup de suppositions, alors qu'on se trompe

littéralement. Et c'est parfois ce qui nous empêche de nous confier et de dire les choses qui sont importantes pour nous. ") ("VIDEO. Emmanuel Moire sur son coming out"; "Emmanuel Moire dévoile la réaction"; Verdot-Balaval); assuming a false identity for fear of rejection ("Je me suis longtemps fait passer pour quelqu'un d'autre, de peur qu'on ne m'accepte pas") ("Emmanuel Moire dévoile la réaction"; Catroux; Minot; "Emmanuel Moire révèle"); and particularly during adolescence, a desire for social conformity : "Je me cherchais beaucoup quand j'étais ado. Je voulais rentrer dans les rangs, j'essayais de faire comme tout le monde et séduire les filles alors que, maintenant je le sais, ce n'était pas mon truc" (Grevet "Emmanuel Moire"). In addition, Moire's media disclosure of his sexuality also constitutes the kind of transgressive revelation typically associated with celebrity journalism as "confessional in nature" (Hilton-Morrow and Battles 168), including terms such as "s'exprimer" ("VIDEO. Emmanuel Moire sur son coming out"), "se confier" ("Emmanuel Moire dévoile la réaction"), and "confidences" ("VIDEO Emmanuel Moire se confie sur sa vie privée."). The politician and television interviewer Roselyne Bachelot is indeed said to have sought to shed light on Moire's hidden qualities ("percer le mystère") during his appearance in a television talk-show *Le Grande 8* (D8, 16 September 2015) (Lesdos). The discursive potential of celebrity journalism to reconcile "private" and "public" lives is also evident in Moire's stated desire for authenticity via coming out, mentioned earlier, as well as to "vivre comme tout le monde" (Patri).

Moire and de Pretto are also represented in terms of a further feature of celebrity journalism - self-control (and its loss or relinquishment). Coverage describes Moire managing his coming out in the mass media in 2009, justifying the choice of the LGBTQ+ publication *Têtu* as an appropriate vehicle, and expressing a wish to exercise his own agency and initiative in the public disclosure of his same-sex desire: "J'ai révélé mon homosexualité avant que la presse people ne salisse mon image et celle des gays en général" (Berliocchi). Moreover, qualitative concerns are expressed as Moire regards his choice of *Têtu* as "un magazine réputé, classe" (Berliocchi). Similar concerns are identified by de Villiers (2015) in the US context, highlighting the notion of a "classy" (and well as "understated") coming out in the media with reference to the broadcast journalist Anderson Cooper. In the cases of Moire and Cooper, such "classy" forms of media self-disclosure are imbued with glamorous connotations: the magazine *Têtu* was owned at the time by Pierre Bergé, co-founder founder of the Yves Saint Laurent couture house, while Cooper is a son of the fashion designer Gloria Vanderbilt. While press coverage of Moire views coming out as planned in advanced to some extent, the result of "deliberation" and "mûrement réfléchi" (Grevet "Emmanuel Moire"), press coverage also views his disclosure as a loss or relinquishment of self-control: an unplanned, unpremeditated, spontaneous, instinctive, natural impulse rather than as a "career to be managed" (to use Guittar and Rayburn's terms). As Moire comments, "Je n'ai pas réfléchi, rien prémédité. Je n'étais pas animé d'une volonté de révéler ce pan de ma personnalité. Mais quand le magazine [*Têtu*] m'a demandé de faire sa Une, j'ai tout de suite décidé de ne pas le cacher", poursuit-il" ("Emmanuel Moire : 'J'ai vécu l'amour fusionnel'"). At the same time, however, Moire discusses in interview seeking to regain control and end the malicious gossip and speculation of others ("Faire couper l'herbe sous le pied des mauvaises langues") ("Mon homosexualité n'a rien changé") and achieve acceptance (his own and that of others) of his same-sex desire, which, in his view, is not a choice.

While coverage of de Pretto expresses self-control, for example, regarding the self-disclosure of his same-sex desire or generic definitions of his musical output, coverage also resists self-control, along

with moderation, another feature of celebrity news. Debauchery is identified as a theme of his work (Sihem Irouche), while his album *Cure* is also said to “parle sans filtre de rencontres sur internet, de drogue, d'aventures sexuelles” (“Je m'appelle Eddy (de Pretto)”). De Pretto also expressed a desire to break taboos in his songwriting when asked why sexuality is a recurrent theme in his songs: “Parce que je parle de moi et parce que je trouve que c'est important d'avoir une voix sans tabou et sans censure sur ces sujets-là. Je n'ai pas eu la place de m'exprimer sur ça avant et vu que c'est la première fois allons-y!” (Sébastien J). Moreover, a review of de Pretto's performance at the Elysée Montmartre, published in the weekly culture and television magazine *Télérama*, actively resists any constraints placed upon his artistic expression. Valérie Lehoux cites a video sequence during the concert which shows de Pretto's teenage bedroom and discusses his same-sex desire, and which, in her view, “enferme le chanteur dans un rôle de gay révolté, alors que son propos va bien au-delà.” Indeed Lehoux insists that his lyrics “sont suffisamment éloquents et puissants pour se passer de commentaires redondants. Ils ne cachent rien de ses pratiques sexuelles, ni de la façon dont il les vit, et c'est justement ce qui fait la force de son discours” (Lehoux). While coverage of de Pretto certainly features a loss of self-control including reference to uninhibited sexuality and transgressive concepts such as taboo and debauchery, it may also be viewed in terms of the idea of “vaccination,” one of the figures of bourgeois myth in Roland Barthes' series of essays *Mythologies* (1957), whereby “On immunise l'imaginaire collectif par une petite inoculation de mal reconnu; on le défend ainsi contre le risque d'une subversion généralisée” (Barthes 225).

In the case of Moire, coverage features further celebrity news values: personal lives/relationships and paternity. The importance of romantic and sexual desire and intimacy are evoked: “J'ai dû apprendre à écouter mes désirs profonds et à surmonter mes peurs, à faire abstraction des autres, de la société, de la religion” (“Emmanuel Moire : L'homosexualité fait partie de ma vie...”). In an interview Moire favors a “vie sentimentale,” identifying himself as a “grand romantique” (“Emmanuel Moire : J'ai vécu l'amour fusionnel”), over a somewhat stereotypical “image asexuée, comme un prince de Disney, ni avec un homme ni avec une femme” (“Emmanuel Moire : son nouveau clip”). After concentrating on his career (“Emmanuel Moire : Ses confessions”) and following earlier attempts to develop romantic and sexual relationships, and specifically what Moire refers to as “l'amour fusionnel,” he expresses a future desire for an “équilibre entre la fusion et l'indépendance” (“Emmanuel Moire : J'ai vécu l'amour fusionnel”). The importance of coupledness is underlined - not being in a couple is a “bémol” (Minot). Moire is described in terms of possibly being a “cœur à prendre” (Minot; Montet, “Emmanuel Moire gay : ‘Il a fallu du temps pour que je sois bien dans mes pompes.’”) and of finding his “prince” (Monnier). Heteronormative clichés feature in coverage on occasion: Moire is said to have “broken girls hearts” (“chavirer le cœur”, Grevet “Emmanuel Moire”) in the French musical *Les Roi Soleil*, and would make the ideal son-in-law (“gendre idéal” (Grevet “Emmanuel Moire”), a well-established trope in heteronormative popular French discourse, although possibly developing a wider application particularly since France introduced marriage equality in 2013. Indeed, marriage equality is supported as Moire expresses surprise at those who have opposed it, evoking the French republican values of Liberté, Égalité and Fraternité (“Emmanuel Moire : Ses confessions”). Discussion does not, however, extend to non-dyadic relationships. Indeed, the question of dating apps and chat-ups/“la drague” is dismissed as irrelevant given that Moire is currently in a dyadic relationship/“couple” (Patri).

In addition, the interest of celebrity journalism in paternity is articulated in discussion of Moire's long-term desire for parenthood (Monnier; "Emmanuel Moire : Ses confessions"; "Emmanuel Moire se confie : 'J'ai envie d'être papa' !"). Moire describes having a family of origin ("j'ai une famille"), but seeks to generate his "own" family in addition ("fonder une famille") ("Emmanuel Moire : Ses confessions") and enjoy a "vie de famille équilibrée" ("Emmanuel Moire se confie : 'J'ai envie d'être papa' !"; see also ("Emmanuel Moire : Ses confessions"). Coverage thus reinforces the French republican family unit extended to include homoparentalité, albeit in generalized terms rather specific, possible family formations (as discussed, for example, by Matthias Thibeaud).

While coverage of Moire is underpinned by the development of further established features of celebrity journalism: personal lives/relationships, and paternity, coverage of both artists is concerned with storytelling, personal difficulties, the logic behind their actions, as well as self-control (and its loss or relinquishment).

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The foregoing analysis of mediated celebrity discourse, incorporating recent approaches to the performance and negotiation of sexuality and identity, shows how de Pretto and Moire, viewed in combination, exhibit a range of shared and individual approaches to negotiating discourses particularly around same-sex desire and self-disclosure. Where the question of disclosure of same-sex desire is concerned, press coverage of Moire emphasizes established French notions of authenticity associated with fulfilling a social role, rejecting the possibility of risks to his career and pointing towards an ongoing happy ending (steeped in filiation through fatherhood). In contrast, coverage of de Pretto avoids focusing on discourses of self-disclosure, while nonetheless displaying an awareness and appreciation of the pressure to come out and its potential benefits. As for approaches to same-sex desire itself as a lived experience, coverage of Moire combines French republican universalist views with a more particularist emphasis on difference and the notion of a distinct gay identity, while moving beyond traditional filiation, but still reinforcing some aspects of it. In contrast, coverage of de Pretto develops a broader social critique beyond sexuality, targeting traditional masculinity and essentialist gender norms. Coverage of both de Pretto and Moire displays ambivalence towards LGBTQ+ activism, suggesting resistance to "communautarisme" and ghettoization, while de Pretto articulates a personal preference for artistic expression as an appropriate outlet. Coverage of de Pretto and Moire as well as their same-sex desire and self-disclosure also exhibits recognized features of mediated celebrity news discourses that emphasize, in the case of both pop music artists, storytelling, personal difficulties, logical actions and self-control (and its loss), and more specifically in the case of Moire, the importance of personal lives and relationships. While the "normalizing judgement" of the mainstream news media is very much at work, coverage of de Pretto in particular suggests an ongoing and future potential for the mass and celebrity media to develop a more transgressive vein, including a broader, more diverse range of representations of same-sex desire, identities and subcultures. Given that the current study focuses on a combination of journalists' and artists' voices, future research could also usefully focus on the role of particular media outlets in setting social, political, commercial and other agendas, as well as their interactions with audiences. The mass media in contemporary France effectively contributes towards the ongoing development of what Provencher terms a wide-ranging "flexible" model of "French language of citizenship that picks and chooses". Coverage includes normative and queer

representations of same-sex desire and associated self-disclosure, while both mobilising and interrogating established French values of republicanism, filiation, and existential authenticity, as well as Anglo-American narratives of the closet and coming out.

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<sup>i</sup> De Villiers *Opacity* describes the “critical hesitation” that Foucault, Barthes and Warhol “faced with the emergent demand to “come out” with its attendant politics of gay visibility during their ‘shared historical context’ of the 1960s and 1970s.” De Villiers also identifies more recent examples of the “paradoxical ‘public privacy’ of celebrities” such as Queen Latifah and André Leon Talley.

<sup>ii</sup> See also Provencher, *Queer Maghrebi French* (42-44) for further discussion of “filiation” and kinship, particularly in relation to the work of Daniel Borrillo, Eric Fassin and Camille Robcis.

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<sup>iii</sup> As Motschenbacher develops, “Conceptualizing identities as essentializing categories, queer linguistics questions the stability and ‘naturalness’ of identities as well as the normativities associated with identity categories. From this perspective, identities are both a blessing, because they give social actors greater recognition and political momentum, and a curse, because they tend to create exclusion, marginalization, and stigmatization” (286).

<sup>iv</sup> Provencher translates “s’assumer” as “to accept oneself”/“to take on one’s role”.

<sup>v</sup> As Provencher observes at the same time, “In much of his discussion, Eribon does not address the possibility of a unique French experience associated with the process and concealment of same-sex desire” (*Queer French* 90).

<sup>vi</sup> Indeed, the discouragement that Moire faced is cited by Vincent Manilève, who draws a contrast between Moire and the relative newcomer Bilal Hassani, who has been open about his same-sex desire from early on in his performing career, having initially come to public attention in the mid-2010s via social media.