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The End of Adolescence, Becoming an Adult: From *Reverie* to the Project

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ABSTRACT

From research into young adults (aged 18–25), this paper investigates the role of the capacity for reverie in psychic work that occurs until the end of adolescence. We postulate that the end of the adolescent process is identifiable through the subjective appropriation of an "adult project" developed through a capacity for reverie. The adult project is introduced here as an intermediate concept situated at the crossroads of internal and external reality, taking into account the importance of societal and environmental factors and the choices made by young adults in their late adolescence. By way of an exploratory study, we adopt a qualitative and projective methodology with a psychoanalytical frame of reference, applying a semi-structured interview and two projective tests (the Rorschach and the Thematic Apperception Test [TAT]) to a small group of participants. The results highlight a difficulty for all subjects in accessing object relations invested in the genital dimension with the other as well as instabilities in gendered identity.

KEYWORDS

End of adolescence; becoming adult; capacity for reverie; adulthood project; figurability; repression; feminine; projective tests

I can't project myself broadly . . . I can't see myself ten years from now, I don't know what I'm going to do . . . And I think that's why I can't call myself an adult yet . . . I can't project myself . . . [. . .] I'd rather not, otherwise I'll feel depressed. Clara, 24 years old

A contemporary social category of young adults has emerged, comprising people from around 18 to 25 years old. A variety of terms for this category are employed in the psychoanalytic literature, including "post-adolescence," "adulescence," "adultity," "late adolescence," "eternal teenagers," and "emerging adults" (Arnett 2000), highlighting a diversity of thought on the subject. We may be able to locate the reason for this variety in a lack of clarification as to what the "end of adolescence" and "becoming an adult" represent. Indeed, reviewing the literature on the end of adolescence is difficult because, notwithstanding the highly relevant theorizations of several authors, there is still no agreed metapsychology for the young adult period. Here, we discuss the role and impact of the *capacity for reverie* at the end of adolescence in the light of the concept of *adulthood as a project*.

The end of adolescence

From 1983, Serge Lebovici, Odile Morvan, and Anne-Marie Alléon became the leading French pioneers in the psychoanalytic development of the category of late adolescence and the beginning of adulthood. They had been confronted with an increase in depressive disorders among university students; a new clinical reality had emerged, requiring reflection.[1]

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Previously, in the United States, the first psychoanalytic paper (Adatto 1958) had been also published on the treatment of university students.[2] Reviewing the French- and English-language Freudian psychoanalytic literature published between 1958 and 2019 dealing with the end of adolescence, we found five characteristics that particularly caught our attention.

(1) *Desexualization of the parental bond*

In late adolescence, the teenager-parental bond is subject to a major shift and desexualization, which leads to an internalization. In this process, the focus is particularly on the same-sex parent bond. Guillaumin (2000, 390) defines the end of adolescence as a deep introjection of "undead parental objects" – dead because the parental objects are attacked during adolescence, on the one hand, to test the object's boundaries and on the other hand to protect the subject from their tenderness, which would be reinvested with an erotic charge by any Oedipal reviviscence. The internalization following the release of the child-parent sexual bond[3] paves the way for a gendered identity as a man or a woman, allowing the subject to identify with the parental function, become, in turn, a father or mother, and take their place in the generational line (Blos 1985; Colarusso 1995; Dahl 2004).

(2) *Ego ideal and superego*

The ego ideal and superego agency rearrangements are an important part of the identificatory dynamics with parental objects (Cahn 2002; Chagnon 2013; Donnet 2009; Ladame and Perret-Catipovic 1998). The superego agency is a representant of the external world modeled from the parents' pleasure principle – because it contains the parents' sense of reality, which is also colored by their pleasure principle – and it is continuously modified by exchanges between internal and external realities (Donnet 2009). Thus, a child's understanding of external reality is greatly shaped by their illusions and put to play in their reveries, along with their identifications with their parental objects. The child who has reached puberty must come to terms with the principle of reality and renounce infantile omnipotence. Maintaining this omnipotence becomes the equivalent of incest and risks inhibiting all action by the subject. Late adolescents aim to inscribe these agencies in the reality principle through the loss of childish omnipotence and gain in superego protective benevolence. The superego then becomes an anonymous and tutelary guarantor for the subject allowing satisfaction in object relations. However, all perception of the world is infiltrated by desire and the pleasure principle. The external world would be devoid of interest and meaning were the subject not to attribute to it their desires, fantasies, and beliefs. Reverie is then decisive in adolescence, this capacity allows the subject to "continue to invest in the object and to create new illusions in the face of the inevitable disillusionment that arises in the relationship with the other" (Diatkine 1985, 66).

These theories are called upon to explore specific infantile object loss elaboration, as required by the transformation of the superegoic agency. The process of renunciation depends on the capacity of the young adult to progressively abandon the hatred that differentiates and is primordial during adolescence and instead support ambivalence directed toward their love objects. Confidence in the existence of good internal objects allows this permanent work of balance, which is in no way a stage of development that can be overcome once and for all. The desexualization of the bond with the same-sex parent and the progressive disillusionment of the infantile ideals allow the young adult to access

secondary sexual identifications[4] from their parents and thence access an attainable ego ideal. The American school focuses more on the notion of separation, following the theories of Blos (1967, 162) on a "second process of individuation." Some authors consider even this differentiation process as a stage of development and add a third stage of separation-individuation (Colarusso 1995), including changes within the subject's new family.

(3) *Reconstruction of the protective shield*

Rearrangements within economic and topographic fields are also a significant factor at the end of adolescence. American and French Freudian psychoanalytic schools differ significantly on this point. The French school has featured many reflections on protective shields (Freud 1996 [1920]), reconstruction, intrapsychic boundaries, and the notion of trauma. As arousal becomes contained by the consolidation of intrapsychic boundaries, the genitalized body can be invested in by the subject.[5]

The issue of limits and protective shields is especially important for our research because it is due to the restoration of psychic boundaries that it is possible to contain excitement, that the subject can indulge in daydreams. Thus, the ability to daydream reveals the young adult's shows that the young adult has interiorized and has access to the protective shield at the end of adolescence. On the other hand, the young adult's "traumatic appetite" (Guillaumin 2000, 404), such as dangerous acting out (drug testing, the taste for speed, etc.), demonstrates their experimentation with boundaries and underlines the value of working on protective shields.

Many of the American authors studied the functions of the ego during this period (from the mid-1980s), including its restoration, its stability, and its autonomy even (Ritvo 1971; Settlage 1972). Blos's theorizations (1967) about regressive attraction in adolescence, together with ego and drive regressions, were also important.

Many authors, mostly from the French school, who have studied ego functions and protective shield issues associated the end of adolescence with the latency period. In fact, many authors emphasize the hypothesis of post-pubertal latency (Alléon and Morvan 1990; Delage 1999; Marty 1999). The opposite idea is supported especially by Jean Guillaumin and Carl Adatto. Referring to this period as "latency" would imply that a latency period should be inserted, when appropriate, at the end of each maturation process. According to Adatto (1966), the quest for a state of homeostasis in late adolescence recalls the period of latency, but these are indeed two distinct steps. The pre-pubertal latency period allows the subject to suppress the Oedipal conflict, to shape the superego, and to expand the functions of the ego. Above all, establishing defense mechanisms paves the way for adolescence. On the other hand, the reestablishment of ego stability at the end of adolescence is not related to defensive mechanisms but to the smooth running of a maturation process.

(4) *Object relations and receptive passivity*

The development of object relations and access to genital sexuality comprise the core issue of late adolescence. The shift from narcissistic focus to intimate relationships marks the end of adolescence (Ritvo 1971). The bodily integration of physically mature genitalia and the emergence of sexual identity with a gender preference constitute "the young adult's

developmental processes" (Miller 2017, 12). The integration of the "feminine work" (Schaeffer 2007, 262) allows the young adult to access adult sexuality by an auto-seduction process of their own sexualized body.

Gutton's (1991) "complementarity of the sexes" creates a parallel between the original narcissistic unity, between the mother and baby and the adolescent and their love object(s). This original narcissistic unity fades to make room for oedipification but does not disappear permanently. The second structuring movement comprises paternal seduction. Here, the change of object is both frightening and nourishing, with the movement of seduction allowing the child to escape from the grip of the maternal imago. This constitutes the decline of the Oedipus complex and the child's entry into the latency period. The new passivity of adolescence, ahead of these psychological and physical changes, is experienced by the subject as a real narcissistic loss. The third stage of seduction is the auto-seduction (Gutton 1991), which occurs during adolescence and is also called the "work of the feminine." In order to deal with this narcissistic wound, the adolescent becomes an active seducer, seducing themselves, their body. They thus seduce their past when sexualizing childhood memories, and it thus becomes necessary to seduce this body to make it their own. Now, the source-object is not the mother's breast but the other sex: the organ is discovered through the attraction it can provoke in the other sex. This process results in the discovery of the vagina as a receptive organ within relationships. Female genitalia are no longer perceived through a phallical logic trapped in fantasies with pregenital parental images but are rather integrated into the body and the need for gratification in a relationship with another. The achievement of gaining access to a passive-receptive position allows the subject to be affected by others' as well as by one's own affects (Chabert 1999). The transformations undergone by the body that has reached puberty and the reinforcement of impulses and regressive attraction (Blos 1967) all increase the experience of submission to an unknown force and cause the passive-receptive position to tip over into a submissive experience of passivation. From then on, the adolescent's passivity is shaken and can only be restored at the end of adolescence.

(5) *Societal impact*

Societal and environmental factors at the end of adolescence also comprise an essential aspect of this period. The role of rites of passage or their lack impact on society and the individual. Most English-speaking authors follow Erikson's (1968)"psychosocial moratorium," while French authors consider the social dimension as an elusive object, going hand-in-hand with the depiction of physical and psychic death in late adolescence. These studies are mainly oriented around the concepts of "sociological rock" (Alléon, Lebovici and Morvan 1985) and "rock of ideology" (Gutton 1995, 19), which aim to place external and social realities in the sociological rock just as femininity was once placed by Freud in the "biological rock" (2010 [1937], 55).

The outer reality has greater importance than ever in the young adult's psychic economy. This is especially true for the sexual sphere but also for professional goals. Society expects young adults to make active choices to build their adult lives, but the choices cannot be meaningful and satisfactory if one does not have access to one's reveries and childhood fantasies to nourish them. That is why we introduce the "adulthood project" into our research. The adulthood project can function as a tool that helps us to think about the connections between one's active choices and inner realities. We suggest that the *capacity for reverie* drives this work and helps the young adult to access a meaningful adulthood project.

The capacity for reverie: from Freud to Bion

> When I was in middle school, I used to build lots of little worlds in my mind. I would come home, where I had a huge stack of Lego bricks. I used to have fun imagining stuff that I would build after, out of Legos. Gaston, 23 years old

Sigmund Freud (1908) located the daydream in the context of children's games. Daydreams are wish fulfillments that originate in one's childhood experiences, like dreams in the night (i.e., while asleep); they also follow the same mechanisms (of condensation, displacement, and elaboration). Wilfred Bion (1979[1962]) pushed this close connection between daydreaming and night dreaming further when he introduced a new conceptualization of dreams in one's psychic functioning whereby the difference between the two is only quantitative. Dreams occur continuously, night and day, regardless of whether one is not aware of them or not. Bion's introduction of "alpha-function" (Bion 1979 [1962], 43), from the maternal capacity for reverie introjection, gave reverie a new function: that of transforming raw sensory impressions (not thinkable as such) into elements of emotional experience (alpha), which can be stored as unconscious memory, becoming available for binding to psychic processes, such as dreaming or thinking. Dream thoughts, transformed and filtered beforehand by the alpha-function, represent an emotional issue that individuals have to face – together with an impulse for the development of the capacity for reverie (Ogden 2008) – which makes it possible to dream in a waking state of immediate (thus raw and unthinkable) events. This daydreaming operates as a translation process that continues throughout the subject's life (Civitarese 2015). In short, the capacity for reverie makes it possible to transform a sensory impression into a meaningful emotional experience.[6]

Thus, we introduce the notion of the capacity for reverie in our research as a space in the background of the subject's psychic functioning. This space allows the containment of impulses through figurative thought and introduces wishes, phantasies, and daydreams into an internal scene, thus ensuring a lively and continuous cathexis with internal objects. Also, due to its work of representability, reverie allows a continuing process of transformation, creating meaning out of the raw, for both inner and outer experiences. In this space for reverie, daydreams and fantasies as intermediate products – or "half-breeds" (Freud 1988 [1915]) – occur, allowing the subject to access elaboration and symbolization while binding inner to outer worlds and tying conscious to unconscious processes.

Latency and reverie

The central passage of the latency period is from the pleasure principle to the reality principle. The child's search for satisfaction must be channeled and fall within the limits of the reality test. This passage, which is at the foundations of the psychic life, is possible due to the thought, representation, and symbolization processes. Identifications with parental objects and repression are also necessary for the implementation of this process.

This latency period following the decline of the Oedipus complex can be defined as "a very intense period of mental elaboration, of enrichment of fantasies, with its corollary in the enrichment of relational systems" (Denis 2001, 67). Indeed, the new defense mechanisms are accompanied by elaborative mechanisms allowing the child to develop fantasy constructions,

like daydreams, in order to overcome the narcissistic wounds that result from the renunciation of the Oedipal conflict. This space for fantasy can allow the satisfaction of desire intertwining primary and secondary processes.

The concept of the "pleasure of desire" (Diatkine 1994) shows how the mental play with representations allows the child (or adult) to tolerate the deferred satisfaction of drives. We can think of the concept of the pleasure of desire also as belonging to the Bionian capacity for reverie. The pleasure of desiring allows for the proper evolution of the psychosexual development process and reinforces the child's development of symbolization and creativity.

Another crucial point of the latency period concerns the partial work of the desexualization of the bond with the parental objects. The partial work of parental object desexualization and investment in a space for fantasies structure the latency period and allow the child to emerge from his/her infantile dependences and become autonomous. This is the first step toward autonomy. This structuring enables the establishment of the basis of the adolescence process.

From teenager reverie to adulthood project

> I've always loved to read, especially historical novels or biographies. To learn more about how it was before, to know why a king has succeeded another one, **to know where I'm coming from** is so fascinating.
>
> Jérôme, 21 years old

The *project* is not an existing psychoanalytic concept. We suggest its introduction into the psychoanalytic corpus as an intermediate thinking tool that becomes operative between the inner and outer realities of young adults. As Sigmund Freud lived it himself (Houssier 2019), we define the project as a subject's anticipatory thought about their future, based on their ideals, desires, reveries, and identifications. This project is constantly in motion and changes throughout the subject's life. Liminally engaged at the crossroads of psychic and material realities, between inside and outside, it has a double anchoring that allows it to contain a reserve of needed illusions underlying the subject's whole life and nourishing one's achievements yet limited in essence because of the reign of the reality principle, which affords it a certain concreteness.

We can locate the origins of the project even before a child's birth through the daydreams and fantasies of its parents and family environment. The first project that a child would state in its own name is the Oedipal project: "When I grow up, I will marry mom" (Aulagnier 1995 [1975], 194). Later, this statement will be completed by "I will be . . . " (a doctor, lawyer, father, etc.). During the child's psychosexual development, the project will be nurtured by various identifications with parents or extra-family figures, dynamically binding object relations to unconscious desires. These identifications are developed throughout life by daydreaming, playing, and fantasizing within a containing space for reverie. Donald Winnicott (1971), who established a direct continuity between playing and transitional areas, draws our attention to the dimension of "doing" that play allows. It is not just about thinking and desiring but also about being able to control what is outside and putting outer phenomena at the service of dreams, of what is inner or personal. This establishes an

intermediary place between hallucination and total submission to reality. The adult project, therefore, is a co-constructed place, where a game of crossed identifications takes place, in terms of an interrelation (Winnicott 1971) between the subject and one's environment.

During adolescence, because of the reviviscence of Oedipal vows, releasing oneself into daydreams without fearing the invasion of impulsive motions is not always easy. It is even more problematic for to nourish the adult project with the desire contained in their conscious and unconscious daydreams. The regression may threaten the economy of the psychic apparatus. Indeed, during the adolescent process, the greatest danger for the integrity of the ego comes not only from the force of impulses but also from regressive attraction (Blos 1967). The co-constructed nature of the project and its infantile roots may then cause a problem. Thus, because of its infantile roots, the project can become overly exciting and therefore dangerous for the adolescent since it risks proximity to primary objects as well as a regression to a stage where the ego was not yet provided with a clear boundary with the outer world. The project may therefore become inhibited or even rejected. For the adolescent to be able to access a capacity for regression "in the service of the Ego" (Kris 1936, 290), which is required for them to indulge in reverie, the ego must be reinforced by the establishment of clearer boundaries between psychic reality and the environment and within the psychic apparatus. These two principles' boundaries allow the adolescent access to the transitional spaces in the two realities, between the inner and external worlds and between conscious–preconscious and unconscious systems, where the adult project and reveries can communicate and reshape each other.[7]

During the emotional immaturity of adolescence, the adult project inevitably includes desires that cannot be satisfied. The project thus involves the subject's endurance of frustration and establishment of a projection of investments in a dreamed future as a potential source of satisfaction. Until the end of adolescence, the adult project is not yet fully in contact with the reality principle, so it cannot properly provide the object of satisfaction for the subject.[8] We can define an adolescent's adult project as unrealizable as such. Meanwhile, the adult project is seen as daydreaming about the future, set aside from conscious thought embedded in the principle of reality.[9] Despite the process of disengaging the primary objects at work, it can maintain a fantasy bind to inner objects, which is required to achieve a feeling of inner continuity. Creating a space for communication between the actions of the adolescent and their dreams as maintained by the splitting within the thought process requires a capacity for regression and access to "transitional areas" (Winnicott 1971). The reveries allow the subject to satisfy unconscious desires while disguising them from the censure of the superego. At the end of adolescence, the repression reestablishment, which constitutes the inner front of the double limit, and the transformation of superego agency allow the young adult to access daydreams more freely.

During the end of adolescence, young adults need to access a project and make active choices to build their adult life. The adult project must now be part of the principle of reality. Confronted with this principle, the potential adult project, developed through the capacity for reverie, can become a source of satisfaction, thus allowing the adolescent to settle into an active process while having access to a receptive passivity. Crucially, therefore, the success of this process depends on the subject's capacity for reverie. If the capacity to play and to daydream has been inscribed in the adolescent's area of illusion, the subject can reshape their project in the face of the disillusionment that they will encounter at the end of adolescence when they appropriate an adult project inscribed in the principle of reality. According to our hypothesis, the capacity

for reverie offers the adolescent a space where the unrepresentable and potentially traumatic part of pubertal (Gutton 1991) and infantile (Blos 1967) novelty can be treated through the figurative work that it implies.[10] The capacity for reverie also provides a space for fantasizing, staying in touch with inner objects, thinking about oneself, and unconsciously preparing to meet the other. The desires and affects contained in the space for reverie nurture the project, enabling the subject to experience it as genuine and meaningful and thus recognize it as their own. At the end of adolescence, the young adult engages with this project in its dimension of truth and belonging; they carry out a real work of appropriation, a differentiation process of elaborating what belongs and what to reject. A certain distance from the environment is thereby created, which allows for advancement along the path of psychic independence. The project can then settle in the subject's psyche as a conviction of truth, bringing a feeling of authenticity and spontaneity of thoughts, actions, and desires.

Method

Subjects

In order to investigate issues around the late adolescent uptake of the adulthood project postulated in respect of the capacity for reverie, a qualitative and projective study was undertaken. A total of 23 young adults, 16 young women and seven young men between 18 and 25 years old, were recruited for our research. After removing those who did not meet our inclusion[11] criteria, we reduced this sample to 12 – six males and six females. Some of the initial recruits did not meet the inclusion criteria because they had either experienced grief recently or had had a specific history that could be expected to have had a significant impact on the adolescent process.[12] We excluded some female subjects who did meet the criteria for the sake of parity. For this, we proceeded randomly, taking care only to ensure that the participants' ages were well distributed so as not to bias the results. The table below gives information on the living situations of the people recruited.[13]

	Young Women	Young Men
At university	83%	83%
Working (including still at university)	33%	33%
Living with parents	67%	33%
Living alone	17%	50%
Living with a partner	17%	17%

Recruitment

Since we targeted a general population, we used flyers for the recruitment process, hanging them in places frequented by young adults, and we opened several online accounts dedicated to our research on social media since the use of these platforms is widespread among our population. Our flyers indicated how, in return for participating in our study subjects would have the opportunity to take personality tests and receive personalized feedback from a clinical psychologist. All participants had reached the age of majority and signed an informed consent form.

Psychological testing

Semi-structured interview

The research interview lasted between 45 minutes and one hour. The same introduction was used for each participant, thus:

> Our research is about late adolescence and early adulthood. Could you tell me what this means to you? How would you describe yourself in this process?

We then invited them to associate freely. In cases of strong inhibition, the psychologist could prompt with questions, such as "*Do you ever think of your future these days?*" At the end of the interview, participants are asked to tell a childhood memory and a dream. The interview was mainly used to gather information about participants' adult projects regarding their experiences of careers and intimate relationships.

The semi-directed research interview gave us varied content specific to each participant and allowed us to observe how the subject invested their speech. An adult project goes hand-in-hand with its expression in speech carried by an "I" aspiring to personal autonomy. Listening to the participants' free associations and their ability to associate alone without the intervention of the researcher-clinician in the form of questions allowed us to appreciate the flexibility and permeability of their psychic apparatus, the affective circulation within their psychic functioning, and their ability to be alone in the presence of the clinician.

The adult project is a concept that works on the linkage between the three psychic times: past, present, and future. The semi-directed interview allowed us to observe whether the subject could access these and if child memories were reinvested during the interview. We were also able to see whether the adult project was nourished by identifications with parents, by object relationships, and by the subject's desires and dreams, or, conversely, if the subject showed difficulties in locating the origins and meaning of their project.

Projective methods

The Rorschach test and the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) were administered to our participants to assess and gather information about their access to the capacity for reverie. A three-part grid was built, according to our three hypotheses (see below). To analyze the protocols, we used the (qualitative) French School psychoanalytical projective method postulated by Anzieu, Rausch de Traubenberg, and Chabert (Chabert et al. 2020). The use of these two tests as complementary afforded a complete overview of the psychic organization of the subject. The two tests refer to the double dimension of identity: the Rorschach calls more on the representations of the self and the bodily dimension of identity, while the TAT includes "a more important spatiotemporal and relational dimension" (Brelet-Foulard and Chabert 2003 [1990], 26).

Hypotheses

H1 The process of the end of adolescence is recognizable through the subjective appropriation of an adult project elaborated by the capacity for reverie.

For our first and main hypothesis, we focused our interview analysis on how the subject appropriated the space offered by the interview. How they did this gave us clues about their appropriation of their adult project. We sought to observe whether the adult project, in its double dimension, professional and relational, appeared to be nourished by the subject's desires, ideals, and identifications with parents, or, on the contrary, if the adult project was constructed from counterinvestments in parental objects that were still poorly differentiated and therefore did not make much sense. We also focused our attention on the subject's personal activities, both current and during adolescence, to see if and how far daydreams or activities that privileged the subject's connection with their internal objects (reading, video games,[14] television series, etc.) were present in their life (through the frequency of these activities).

Our grid for the projective methods had five categories for this hypothesis. This grid was created to investigate the functionality of the subject's capacity for reverie based on the capacity for (1) figuration, (2) the quality of adaptation to reality and the limits between inside and outside, (3) the thinking/fantasizing articulation, (4) the representation of the self and the psychic boundaries, and (5) the capacity for regression.[15] Since dream thought is made from a figurative way of thinking, we assessed the capacity of the subjects to access the figurability process, which is dependent on the psychic limits and envelopes. Access to the capacities of regression and figuration is only possible insofar as the subject possesses good enough narcissistic foundations to allow him/herself to regress to a stage where the ego was not yet provided with a clear boundary with the external world. The solidity of the somatopsychic limits, which constitute the boundary between the internal and external worlds (the external horizontal dimension of Green's double limit), is crucial for the subject to be able to access the capacity for reverie.

We expected to observe a concordance between the two parts of this grid; according to our hypothesis, an adult project can be subjectively appropriated by the subject if they can freely access their capacity for reverie. If, on the contrary, the subject had difficulties in accessing their capacity for reverie, it would be concluded that the adult project might be inhibited (in its professional or relational dimension).

H2 The elaboration of the adult project by the capacity for reverie at the end of adolescence depends on the functional resumption of repression at the end of adolescence.

For our second hypothesis, we focused our interview analysis on the achievability dimension of the adult project. Does the subject have access to a feasible adult project, a potential source of satisfaction, while maintaining his or her links to desires and fantasies? Or is this an unattainable project with a manic or melancholic dimension under the reign of almighty thoughts? We sought to observe whether the adult project was being driven by a desire for autonomy that testified to a process of differentiation and introjection of parental imagos or whether it was a quest for autonomy that referred to omnipotence and denial of dependence. We also worked on the answers to the last two questions we asked in the interview, on childhood memories and dreams, to appreciate the subject's

capacity to associate. This capacity reflects the presence of an affective circulation and the flexibility of the preconscious, which is also the topical localization of repression and the capacity for reverie.

Reverie, through the use of repression, constitutes a bridge between conscious and unconscious psychic processes and maintains a constant contact between past and present experience. It is not only a contact between the present and the past, that is, but a contact between past and present experience, one resonating with the other. For this double bridge to be established the permeability of the unconscious and a flexible circulation between topics are crucial. Thus, it is through the reestablishment of repression and the functional resumption of the varied coping mechanisms at the end of adolescence that a satisfactory circulation between topics can be established. In this way the subject can indulge in daydreams without this harming the repression or the balance of the psychic economy of the young adult. The adult project can be nourished by adolescent and infantile reveries, which constitute its origins.

Our projective grid had only one category for this hypothesis, which evaluated symbolization capacities, repression, displacement, and disguise mechanisms. Repression, the internal, horizontal dimension of the *double limit*, protects conscious thought from the intrusion and invasion of the unconscious content and thus structures the subject's internal world. Aiming to observe the quality of repression within the projective tests, we were looking at the subject's capacity for symbolization. In the Rorschach, we observed the to-and-fro between the repression and the return of the repressed, indicated by forgetting answers to the survey or the presence of formal answers of poor quality (F-), which might signal a momentary break-in of the return of the repressed within the subject's answers. We evaluated all the poor-quality responses (F-)[16] in order to differentiate the return of the repressed from the failure of repression as well as the sequence between the different responses in order to assess the repression mechanism. We also sought to see whether the symbolic, sexual, or aggressive dimensions of the responses managed to co-exist with the psychic censorship. For the TAT, we were again interested in the legibility of the narrative and the logical maintenance of the subject's stories, aiming to learn whether a symbolic width of the narrative, sexual, or aggressive dimensions still allowed for (did not hinder) the repression.

The more functional the repression is at the end of adolescence, the more the subject can let him/herself enter into their reveries, and the more the adult project can consequently be nourished. Indeed, if the repression is not sufficiently containing, the subject cannot let him/herself go freely in their inner world, and the project is then cut off from its roots to minimize the risks of intrusion and disorganization of the conscious system by the emergence of primary processes.

H3 The elaboration of the adult project by the capacity for reverie at the end of adolescence depends on the integration of the receptive passivity in the sense of the integration of the feminine and thus participates in the process of desexualization of the parental bond.

For our third and last hypothesis, our listening in respect of the semi-directive interview mainly focused on the affective and libidinal tone of the subject's speech. Also, we tried to evaluate the place given to the object relations, both in the construction of the adult project and in the subject's language. Our attention was focused on possible inhibitions that might hinder the subjective appropriation of an adult project or its realization. Our goal was to determine whether these inhibitions were due to difficulty in accessing the passive-receptive position, which prevented the subject from nourishing their project with their reveries, identifications, and object relations.

Our projective grid for this third hypothesis contained six categories: (1) sensorial factors, (2) resonance with the latent solicitations of the cards, (3) affects and treatment of depressive affects, (4) drive management, (5) quality of identifications and object relationships, and (6) feminine symbolism. We aimed to observe whether the young adults could access their affects and object relations with a libidinal dimension, which would attest to the integration of the feminine work and the desexualization of the parental bond. If the subject could access the passive-receptive position, they could have an adult project nourished by their affects as a young adult and by their secondary identifications with their parents.Indeed, desexualization of the parental imagos, which gives access to gendered and introjectable identifications for the young adult, requires that the latter be able to deal with loss, which, in turn, requires moderate access to a passive-receptive position. If the desexualization process is obstructed, the impact of the parental imagos dispossesses the young adult of their project. In this case, the adult project cannot be nourished by the desires contained within the subject's reveries.

Results

We will mostly focus on the results obtained by projective methods and compare them to participants' levels of appropriation of their adult projects. Based on our interviews, we have established three levels of appropriation of the adult project.

The *first level* of our classification reflects an *active process of appropriation and differentiation* of the adult project. The project is nourished by one's affects, reveries, and relations. We also expect the adult project to have access to its infantile roots and that the affective circulation along with infantile desires will not be hindered. Subjects at this level can project themselves in(to) the future with an adult project and can attribute meaning to their project with their (current and childhood) desires, relations, and environment.

Our *second level*, which characterized most of our participants, shows the presence of an adult project in the *difficulty* of elaboration by the capacity for reverie because of an *active Oedipal conflict*, accompanied by *still insufficiently desexualized parental bonds*. The adult project thus proves to be hardly nourished by the subject's affects, relationships, and reveries. However, we do not expect to find pathological obstacles for future elaboration of the adult project here. Rather, at this level, we may observe subjects with inhibitions or doubts about their future projects without major obstructions to investing in relations or career plans.

Finally, our *third level* is characterized by the *obstruction* of the work of elaboration of an adult project by the capacity for reverie because of the *presence of pathological mechanisms*, which do not allow for a good functioning of intrapsychic

boundaries and hinder the subject's access to transitional functioning. The subject has great difficulty in finding meaning in their life, with no intimate relationships and functioning under the reign of almighty thoughts and discharge of drive motions.

	Young Women	Young Men
Level 1	–	33%
Level 2	83%	33%
Level 3	17%	33%

Regarding our main hypothesis, we observed that most of our subjects had some difficulty in accessing an adult project developed by the capacity for reverie. Even in subjects at the highest level of functioning, we observed the appropriation of the adult project to be more advanced in terms of work, with the intimate dimension apparently still difficult to access for all our subjects. Young women appeared to have particular difficulties in accessing a meaningful, differentiated project. We observed two young men at the most advanced level of functioning (Level 1, see table above), but no young women. Despite the restricted sample, this is suggestive.

For young women, the confrontation with a maternal object at the end of adolescence reactivates many conflicts. A dread of archaic maternal imago retaliations expressed by destructive oral aggression and the fear of harming the maternal object and of losing her love by reaching psychosexual maturity is connected to the object of identification metabolization and destruction. Moreover, the isomorphism between the young girl's body and her mother's (Dahl 2004) results in a conflict between representations of the archaic-omnipotent and the caring mother. Young women need to confront their mother to introject gender identifications and to appropriate a female body, similar to the mother's body, while avoiding any boundary merging between the two of them. The conflict is then reactivated on two levels, on the one hand, the pre-Oedipal bond to the maternal body, a caregiver but also dangerous since it is archaic and omnipotent, and on the other hand, the Oedipal bond in its both negative and sexually exciting aspects. Thus, the isomorphy between the young woman's body and her mother's constitutes an additional difficulty for the young woman in integrating the feminine work at the end of adolescence.

We also notice that among young men there are more subjects than young women in Level 3 of our table. Among those subjects, we observed significant problems in the link with the pre-oedipal maternal imago with fixation points and great difficulty in the face of the maturation tasks of late adolescence. We also observed difficulties at the level of psychic boundaries, a confusion between the subject and the object and the impossibility to access a transitional functioning. For the rest of our table at the young men the primordial conflictuality revolved around the paternal imago, oedipal and pre-oedipal, between love and hate and between rejection and identification. We can put forward the hypothesis that for young women, the central conflict of late adolescence from a dynamic point of view crystallizes around the maternal imago, pre-, and post-oedipal, and this second wave of differentiation process with the maternal imago offers a second chance of elaboration. This explains, also, the high concentration of young women at level 2 in our table. For young men, however,

a major conflict with the maternal imago delays or obstructs the necessary elaborative work with the paternal imago. For the young men at Level 3, we found invasive and persecuting archaic maternal imagos with a paternal imago, too discrete, who cannot constitute thirdness within the psychic functioning.

The figuration capacities that we evaluated by projective tests seem to be mostly intact for our subjects. In fact, we found only two subjects testifying to the difficulties of figuration (Level 3). For instance, in Charles"[17] (18 years old, Level 3) Rorschach protocol, there is a strong boundary dilution anxiety. The excitement flows over Charles" boundaries and affects his sense of identity. The predominance of smoke responses presents poorly defined representations, while anatomical responses highlight the intrusion of intrapsychic boundaries.

> Mmm, it's a mouth with a tongue and then teeth, I think. There's the hole in the throat and then [leans in] . . . **you get lost in it**, it's quite disturbing [laughs and looks at me]. (PII)

> This is a **smoke** monster. (PIV)

> The **smoke** that enters and consumes the leaf. (PVI)

> An absinthe glass. [. . .] there's a monster that spits out green absinthe **smoke** [. . .] (PIX)

However, these difficulties were not continuous, and the figurative capacities seemed to be affected especially because of the great excitement that overcame the protective shield capacity. The rest of our participants did not seem to show any difficulties in this respect.

While the figurative abilities of our participants were mostly functional, the same cannot be said for the solidity of their intrapsychic boundaries and the articulation between fantasy and thinking processes. Indeed, in only a quarter of our subjects did we find, within their responses to the projective tests, a restoration of functional limits allowing them to access a transitional space. These subjects were those who had access to the most advanced adult project among our participants. Their responses to the projective tests were in a good in-between situation, between the fantasy dimension and the taking into account of external reality, with symbolic and fantasy layers. A response given by Jerome (21 years old, Level 1) illustrates well how he managed to play between a fantasy space and a more symbolical space:

> This way I see a dragon head-up and a raccoon head-down. Presented like that, it reminds me of an animal's skin, in fact. Maybe even a coat of arms with heads on the sides, Elk's heads, with . . . animals that would represent someone's home, the emblem of a family. (Rorschach, IV)

For the other participants, we noticed a loss of distance between the subject and test object, between the oscillations in the limits between inside and outside and between the articulation of fantasy and thought. This was assessed as due to the weight of Oedipal desire (8%), the rise of excitement (33%), and the presence of more archaic fantasies (25%). The loss of distance was visible from projective and phobic movements (33%) and from the presence of massive and raw fantasies concerning the fields of sexuality (8%) or the themes of murder and persecution (17%). A response made by Clara (24 years old, Level 2) may be an example:

> That's [. . .] they live [. . .] they had sex. The man is crying, the woman is dead. He realizes that he killed her while they were making love. They were doing S&M stuff, and it went very bad. He's trying to think what he's going to do with the body. He's a little desperate about killing her. Anyway, that's it. (TAT, Card 13MF)

The next point that caught our attention relates to our participants' regressive abilities and restoration of intrapsychic boundaries. In fact, in order to indulge in regressive movements without jeopardizing ego integrity, one would have to ensure the functionality of one's ego boundaries. Only a quarter of our participants (the same as mentioned above) could access regressive capacities without experiencing any major intrusion in return. Other participants mostly struggled with the regressive appeal, as regressive solicitation from projective tests produced a surge of overwhelming excitement in their psychic boundaries. For Charles (18 years old, Level 3), the regressive appeal of the Rorschach pastel cards reactivated archaic anxieties and resulted in a confusion between the inside and the outside *(Rorschach* PIX):

> It is an absinthe glass. In this glass, there's a monster that spits green smoke into the absinthe. Uh, well, it's as **if he's got the drug**. He's going to devour us. That's it, that's it. It's like we're dying, **we're consuming ourselves**, it's giving it energy. He throws them out of his nostrils.

Regarding our second hypothesis, we did not observe any complete functional restoration of the repression that allowed the deployment of sexual fantasy without hindering the protective shield. Indeed, most of our participants (58%) expressed the functionality of repression within the projective test responses as proposed. However, the repression was not sufficiently restrained in the face of certain solicitations and thus did allow some very heated fantasies to emerge, which give rise to impulsive discharge. A response given by Gaston (23 years old, Level 2) illustrates well the symbolization process, which allowed him to deploy a sexual representation without disturbing the censor process:

> It reminds me of a flower that would be opened with a huge pistil in the middle.

But very quickly, the excitement overflowed his protective field capacities, and the sexual part of his answer lost his symbolical dimension:

> It reminds me of the vagina/uterus cutting we saw in high school. (Rorschach, PVIII)

For some of our participants, insufficiently repressed pregenital bisexual fantasies disturbed the thought processes, thus giving rise to hybrid responses (responses that combine human and animal attributes) (33%). For others, it was the Oedipal bond with the same-sex parent, in its positive or negative dimension, that made the repression insufficient to prevent the overflow of excitement and required more rigid mechanisms, which sometimes inhibited emotional circulation within the psychic functioning (50%). For the remainder, we observed either a fragility of repression that gave rise to the expression of a sexual or murderous fantasy (25%) or else a heterogeneity of functioning expressed in the non-continuous presence of the repression mechanisms, which finally disappeared.

As for the associative resonance that we aimed to observe through the memories and dreams evoked at the end of the research interview, two-thirds of the subjects proposed elements reflecting the associative weave of the interview. This demonstrated the increased flexibility of their psychic functioning, which allowed them to explore their childhood memories for situations that resonated emotionally at the time. The various themes that we found were disappointment (25%), a bond of rivalry or tenderness with the homoparental object (25%), a support bond (8%), and oscillation between regressive temptations and the desire for autonomy (8%). In the remaining third of participants, this associative resonance was hindered, which was related to obsessive/rigid defense mechanisms (8%) or narcissistic

problems linked to differentiation difficulties (25%). Since accessing childhood memories and dreams requires regressive abilities, it is not surprising that this quarter comprised the three subjects assessed as at Level 3.

Regarding our third and final hypothesis, none of our participants had a tempered access to passivity that would allow them to establish relational representations in their genitalized dimension, nourished by emotions, with another perceived in its complementarity. Nevertheless, there were some subtle differences: a quarter of our subjects had access to affective movements and object relationships but which quickly became frightening and so immediately canceled in the responses. Chloé (23 years old, Level 2) gave this response:

> This one looks like two people slapping hands. The red spot on the top is the head, I don't know. Either they're dancing, or they're clapping their hands. Or **someone is facing his reflection in the mirror**. (Rorschach, PII)

Here, we can see that as soon as a relationship is mentioned, even if it is between non-gendered subjects, a specular mirror and reflection follows to cancel the relational dimension. For 58% of our subjects, we found a more significant inhibition of the affective and relational spheres. However, for some of them (17%), the support relationship established with the psychologist provided better access to affects and allowed the inhibition to momentarily dissipate. There was also a third type, in which access to affect remained possible as long as it was not deployed within relationships (17%).

For a third of our participants, the affects were overly exciting and reactivated the castration anxiety. These subjects were observed to use repressive mechanisms, with intellectualization and also narcissistic defenses. For another third, affective movements were even more difficult to elaborate because of helplessness anxieties. The response of Charles (18 years old, Level 3) exemplifies this, highlighting his abandonment anxieties without being able to name any emotions:

> It's a child waiting at the door of the house for the return of his parents. It's a poor family, so they have a wooden house with a lot of holes. But I have the impression that the child has been waiting a long time for his parents. I have the impression that they'll never come back. And I feel like he's going to die because he can't survive on his own. (T.A.T, Card 13B)

On the other hand, a quarter of our participants showed more flexible access to affect, testifying to a certain level of access to passivity-receptivity. Even then, however, none were able to deploy affect easily within relationships. Thus, despite some inhibition mechanisms, these participants displayed greater access to affective movements than did the others.

Similarly, drive motions seemed also to be frightening and overly exciting for our participants. Half of them took refuge in narcissistic centration or specular relationships.[18] For the remainder, even if the conflict could be perceived within their responses, it was not deployed until after a compromise was reached. We thus found either avoidance of conflict, accompanied by inhibitory movements (17%) or the erotic over-dramatization of bonds that became overly exciting and resulted in a search for punishment that to relieve the excitement (8%) or else momentary oscillations in thought processes (8%). For some of our subjects, this difficulty gave rise to persecutory and sadomasochistic scenarios (42%) accompanied by mechanisms of splitting, denial, and projection. For others, we found some drive motion containment allowing them to take charge of the Oedipal conflict, albeit at the price of inhibiting the affective sphere (8%).

This was the case for Ashley (19 years old, Level 2), who was able to deploy a conflicted situation only when she could repress a representation of affect. On the other hand, she could evoke affective motions only if the conflict remained unclear:

> The man would be the main actor. I see a bit of a hero Cowboy; the lady, I don't know what she would be for him. I don't think it's his wife. I have the impression that the woman is trying to convince the man [. . .] I think in the end, the guy, the gentleman, he goes and there he is, he looks like a cowboy; he's going to go and keep fighting the bad guys. (TAT, 4BM).

The difficulty of containing drive motions for our participants seems to have been strongly linked to sexual identification instability.[19] In fact, none of them showed continuous access to sexual identification. This instability prevented them from investing in themselves as a man or as a woman capable of seducing the complementary other sex. We mostly observed the persistence of pregenital bisexuality fantasies (83%), in the form of either phallic female representations or extreme lability between female and male roles resulting in confusion. We also found difficulties related to generational differences (25%).

This identificatory instability seems to originate in difficulty with confronting the parent of the same sex on the positive and negative Oedipal dimensions. For the young men, we found issues with desexualization of the bond with the paternal imago; this blocked their ability to deploy the conflict within the relations between men, which then very quickly became overly exciting and persecutory. For young women, the confrontation with the maternal imago, the Oedipal rival, and the omnipotent pregenital mother seems very difficult and dangerous. We also find persecutory traits within female relationships, as well as many sadistic and devaluing attacks that target female images, making it more difficult to access sexual identifications. A story told by Manon (18 years old, Level 2) illustrates these difficulties:

> I'm not very inspired by this one. One day, she wakes up very late at night and notices that the husband is not there. She goes to see if he's working. She sees her husband hanging. Once her children are independent, she decides to commit suicide to join him. That's it. (TAT, 5)

Discussion

The most significant result of our research seems to be our subjects' difficulty in accessing genital investment – the adolescent novelty – in object relations. This process, the core of adolescence, goes hand-in-hand with the symbolic parricide (Houssier 2012), which allows an adolescent to elaborate murder fantasies around the Oedipal rival. Once these fantasies have been worked out, introjection of secondary identifications consolidates adult identity from both parents' gendered identifications. However, we have noticed a difficulty at the first step of this process regarding how to deal with drive motions. Almost all our subjects showed great difficulties in deploying aggressive and sexual motions within relation representations. The bond with parental imagos was overly exciting, and the aggressive dimension of the bond was never easy.

By choosing the adult project as an indicator of late adolescence, we have used a flexible and dynamic notion to think about the transition between adolescence and adulthood. Had we only considered the two main processes that prepare the end of adolescence – the work of the feminine and the desexualization of same-sex parent bond – we would have labeled all our

participants as teenagers or eternal teenagers. However, their psychic functioning is not entirely adolescent. Working with the notion of an adult project and considering the capacity for reverie as a power source for growth has allowed us to study the end of adolescence through other lenses, such as the capacities of figuration, Green's (1982) double limit, and the capacities for regression. Moreover, specifically on the subject of boundaries and regression, we have found significant differences between subjects who could access, through the capacity for reverie, the mentalization of their adult project and those who stumbled in the process. Reestablishment of the double limit and regressive capacity is an essential prerequisite for reverie to function properly and allow, in our opinion, the establishment of a creative balance between inner and outer realities together with a flow of affects within the subjects' psyche. Due to the reestablishment of the capacity for reverie, hampered by the adolescent process, a young adult can access a containing space for reverie, protected by the double limit, where the adult project can be developed. We have observed a reestablishment of boundaries and a capacity for indulging in regressive movements in our subjects with access through their capacity for reverie to a meaningful adult project in progress. In our opinion, this confirms the great value of the capacity for reverie in late adolescence.

Several questions remain regarding the meaning of becoming an adult for our subjects and in the context of our research. From our hypotheses, which go through the repression mechanism, access to symbolization, intrapsychic boundaries, passivity, identifications, and object-relation functionalities, this study seems to show that only moderately neurotic or normal subjects can access the process of becoming an adult, which is questionable. We have worked with these notions to assess the extent to which they allow the subject access to the capacity for reverie as the key to a meaningful adult project appropriation. In our view, the capacity for reverie enables young adults to deal with their late adolescence conflicts by playing out those conflicts in a space for reverie, even though the repression capacities and the passive position are not completely achieved. In addition, the adult project is an ideal notion, and the dynamics of a subject nurturing one's own project with one's own desires, reveries, affects, identifications, and relationships matter most. The subject needs to get in touch with their true desires, drive motions, and identifications for the adult project to escape the grip of the environment. The adult project, therefore, depends on the differentiation and personalization work, which is the core of the adolescent process and lasts throughout life.

This inner differentiation work does not depend on outer elements. In fact, we did not observe any difference, in terms of the differentiation process, between subjects who still live with their parents and those who live alone or with their partner. Age does not seem to be significant either. We do not consider the end of adolescence as a developmental process built on successive stages. From our point of view, this period is part of the adolescent process, a moment when the adult project is developed through the capacity for reverie, including major conflicts specific to this process.

Studying our results in the light of the late adolescence literature has allowed us to understand why there are so many works on interminable adolescence yet also so much debate on whether or not there even is an end of adolescence. Identity conflicts, access to a gendered identity, and binding with the other in a complementary way are the core of the adolescent process, are still in progress at the end of adolescence, and probably last well beyond, throughout life. It thus seems more important to think of the end of adolescence not as a utopian and definitive resolution of these conflicts but rather as the young adult's achievement of access to a containing space where these conflicts can emerge and develop dynamically and continuously – namely, that space designated by the capacity for reverie.

It follows, therefore, that the continuance of these differentiation and subjectivation processes does *not* imply an interminable adolescence. Adolescence is a new and inescapable process for the subject's psychic functioning, and the end of adolescence does not mean the end of this process, which remains forever inscribed within the subject's functioning and can be reactivated at the various moments of identification change that life brings. Nevertheless, in our opinion, the period of adolescence does come to an end. In case of severe pathology, developmental breakdown can appear (Laufer 1983), which is by no means a matter of interminable adolescence; pathology may just make it impossible for the subject to appropriate the adolescent novelty. We locate the end of adolescence when the subject has gained access and acquired the ability to build an adult project in a space for reverie. The level of differentiation of the project from the subject's environment as well as the subject's access to some capacities for reverie enables entrance to an adult life supported by a meaningful, promising adult project. Adulthood is by no means the equivalent of the culmination and resolution of every adolescent conflict.

Notes

1. Three conferences on the end of adolescence were held, two in Grenoble, France (in 1983) and one in in New York (1984).
2. Note that the theories surrounding late adolescence existed previously in both major schools of psychoanalysis; here, however, we are concerned here with a movement that focused on late adolescence.
3. This internalization process, which we emphasize in this article, is a crucial step at the end of adolescence toward accessing a gendered identity. However, this cannot take place without acknowledging the previous stages of the maturation of gender identity formation.
4. The primary identification is an initial movement toward the other, which is chosen for his/her resemblance to the subject and aims at a fusion with the other's image. The mirror stage (Lacan 1966), or the mother's mirror function (Winnicott 1975), describes this identification process well. The object here is not yet differentiated. The secondary identification, meanwhile, aims at a desexualization of the link with a more highly differentiated object by transforming the object-libido into a narcissistic-libido. This transformation preserves narcissistic unity from the castration anxiety. At the end of adolescence, the identification process allows the subject to identify with the feminine or masculine qualities of that object.
5. Internalization of the genital body allows the young adult to be receptive to the other sex, and object relations then take priority over autoerotic pleasures; if the excitement cannot be contained, the subject experiences their drives and their body as a bad, as external object from which they need protection.
6. Even among post-Bionian authors, though, there are significant differences in the definition and usage of the concept (Busch 2018). Today, the concept of reverie is mainly used as a psychoanalyst's tool, beyond interpretation, enabling the transformation of a patient's experience (making it thinkable and symbolizable). The psychoanalyst's capacity for reverie is then considered as "transformative in itself" (Busch 2018, 4) by most post-Bionian authors, especially Ferro and Ogden. Some, such as Ferro, Birksted-Breen, and even (Elias and Elizabeth) da Rocha Barros, emphasize the figurative dimension of the psychoanalyst's capacity for reverie. These authors consider it an unconscious process that manifests in the (surprising) emergence of images that seem disconnected from the analyst's conscious thought and "open up a space on something new and [constitute] a first step towards a greater potential for symbolization" (Busch 2018, 4) Ogden broadens this process to a set of psychoanalyst's mental and physical states, such as ruminations, fantasies, bodily sensations, and even associations.
7. Green (1982) refers to the boundaries as a "double limit." The pressures resulting from the tension between the drive and the impact of the object cause the psyche to organize itself in two areas. The first, situated within the internal reality, is established between the unconscious and

the preconscious-conscious system. The creation of this area is the dream process; it is the intrapsychic limit linked to the work of repression that makes it possible to protect conscious activity from the irruption of unconscious fantasies. The second area is situated between the inside and the outside. It involves the creation of potential spaces (Winnicott 1971) constituted as a "playground" and "illusion" (Green 1976, 157) engendering thought process, judgmental thinking, and excitatory barriers.

8. This is due to the late integration of the sexual sphere in the reality principal. Indeed, until adolescence the sexual sphere is placed in a latency, a desexualization process that allows the subject to integrate the sexual and relational spheres in the reality principal.
9. This configuration is available due to a splitting within thought between daydream and the principle of reality, as established by Freud (1984[1911]). Through this split, the adult project can retain but contain fantasies of omnipotence, thence still feed on unconscious desires.
10. Blos (1967) characterizes adolescence in terms of a second chance for the resolution of residual infantile trauma.
11. to be between 18 and 25 years old, to have been born in France or to have attended most of their schooling in France, not to have lost a close person recently, not to be a foreign student (we think that the transition process, moving to another country, adapting to the language and the culture of the host country, adds additional parameters which may constitute a bias for our research), not to be currently engaged in a psychotherapeutic or psychiatric follow-up, not to have a decompensated psychiatric pathology.
12. E.g., one participant had had to spend all her college years in hospital following the discovery of a brain tumor and continued her schooling with aftereffects of her surgery, including facial paralysis; a 22-year-old woman had had to raise her little brother alone from the age of 12 because of their mother's suicide and the absence of their father.
13. As the high university figure indicates, the sample was not intended to be representative; that was deemed unnecessary since this was an exploratory study.
14. Letting oneself journey in the virtual world is equivalent to consuming images in order to sustain the waiting by giving a central place to the space of reverie (Houssier and Marty 2010). These two worlds of reverie and play are linked to the functioning of the preconscious and take advantage of regressive thought, particularly figurative thought. The space offered by play allows the subject to master his or her link to internal objects. The feeling of mastery and creative freedom, allows the subject to move toward the integration of the new reality principle and makes the transition tolerable. The adolescent may sometimes have difficulties in indulging in reveries because of the impulsive dangers that this represents. The video game is then an extension of daydreaming that extends the internal space of daydreaming onto a computer screen, which itself then becomes a projection screen and a medium.
15. The order of these categories as presented here does not reflect any assigned hierarchical value.
16. The quality of the formal responses was also investigated in the color and movement combined answers (FC, texture FE, M, MC, ME, m, mC, mE).
17. All names are changed to protect privacy.
18. In other words, there is a narcissistic investment of the self at the expense of the object relation. The other is not invested in the complementarity, as a being differentiated from oneself, but in a narcissistic dimension in order to deny the difference. This process situates the other as a double of oneself and prevents psychic conflict.
19. The difficulty of elaborating the oedipal impulses and desexualizing the link to the same-sex parent prevents access to secondary sexual representations. The Rorschach then reveals the persistence of all-powerful and phallic parental imagos, either the phallic and archaic maternal imago or an invasive or passivating paternal imago (represented by hybrid [human-and-animal] representations). These bisexual representations obstruct the thought process. It is not a "normal" psychic bisexuality but a difficulty in investing in oneself as a man or as a woman capable of seducing the other.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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