

**Play, End of the Play...**  
From rapture to rupture

Abstract

I approach the concept of *illusion* by following its semantic reverberations which evoke playing, and ground it to its etymological origins: the compound Latin *in+ludere* becomes one word by assimilation, but it is useful to recover in the preposition *in* the reference to an elected locus of the possibility of playing. Winnicott theorizes that the subject exists and plays in space, where boundaries are guarded by a (m)other who is paradoxically inside and outside the playing field, functioning as its symbolic guarantor. Her presence frames and anchors the infant's illusion of creating the world, knowing that s/he needs the experience of creation, to find it. Assimilated by *illusion* are the spatio-temporal *in* and a state of mind precarious and easily threatened: when the illusion is shattered, this leads to (fear of) madness. The players' *complicité* instituted by the implicit 'let's pretend that...' extends to the domain of the arts and psychoanalysis, where illusion recurs in the sophisticated creations of transitionality. What happens when the frame does not hold or self-consciously attracts attention onto itself, because it breaks? This is illustrated by a child patient's chaotic sessions, analogous to the first staging of Pirandello's *Six characters in search of an author*.