



Ms. Minnie Dastur

# Confusional States of Mind

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*Round like a circle in a  
spiral, like a wheel within a  
wheel;*

*Never ending or beginning  
on an ever spinning reel;*

.....

*Like a tunnel that you  
follow, to a tunnel of its  
own*

*Down a hollow to a cavern  
where the sun has never  
shone;*

*Like a door that keep  
revolving in a half-  
forgotten dream;*

*Or the ripples from a pebble  
someone tosses in a stream;*

.....

*Like the circles that you  
find in the windmills of  
your mind.*

~ 1968 song The  
Windmills of your Mind

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***I start with the 1968 song *The Windmills of your Mind*, which to me speaks so lyrically and poignantly of the painful grip of confusional states.***

Firstly we need to differentiate between a state of not knowing what to do or choose, because one is torn between two alternatives while being fully aware of both. This is a state of indecision, of being caught in a bind. However, Confusional States are disturbed states of mind, when one cannot accept hated parts of the self. These parts are then split off from our conscious minds, creating a chronic inability to differentiate between reality and phantasy. Like in the song above, it has ripple effects and extends to more and more facets of everyday life, leaving the person imprisoned and tortured by these constantly whirring sails of the internal windmill of his mind. These kinds of confusion have their base in the very first conflict between

the impulses of love and hate, towards one's earliest relationship, that have not been resolved and cannot be resolved. It may be due to historical reasons of a difficult childhood, or a propensity to dwell more on experiences of frustration rather than those of satisfaction. When there isn't faith enough in the goodness of the other, there follows that there cannot be a firm belief in the goodness of the self. Freud wrote "he who doubts his love, must doubt everything else.

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*There is a confusion between two states of mind. Between the self and the other; between what is real and what is phantasy, as the mind clings on to more and more "injuries" real and imagined, the world outside becomes more and more hostile.*

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This leads *like a spiral* ever upwards or *like a wheel within a wheel*, never ending. Confusion between what is real and what is phantasy, as the mind clings on to more and more "injuries" real and imagined, the world outside becomes more and more hostile.

In order to protect oneself from the damage that hatred can bring, hated parts of the self are projected on to other people or ideas, or objects. But in projecting and disowning parts of the self, one loses parts of one's own identity as only the "good" is allowed. A stark example is Robert Louis Stevenson's novel - The Strange story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. In the novel, there is so much denial of the angry, hating parts of the self that now it is hallucinated as another person. Any reintegration of what is felt as bad into the self is seen as a threat and more and more splitting of the awareness of the self takes place, creating a very weak, attenuated and fragile Ego or Sense of Self. With excessive denial of parts of the self, the tolerance and capacity to balance facts on a reality basis, are also weakened. This leads to Confusional States and an inability to stay in reality.

We can then have:-

Confusion of Identity, confusion between self and others, confusion between good and bad, Confusion between love and hate. Confusion and the mental pain and anguish this causes, can often be transferred to bodily symptoms, various behavioural inhibitions, problematic relations, inability to work, etc. The person is more and more confused, till he ceases to be able to reason and is also seen by others as not living in the "real" world, but in a world of his own creation, becoming more and more isolated.

Here are two paintings of Louis Wain, a British artist in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century that pictorially show the torture of a confused mind. His early paintings were of cute cats, but as his mental illness grew, his paintings became more and more splintered, confused and bizarre.

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*often the sufferer, is terrified of his mental pain and prefers to live in the delusion that the problem is with the world and not him.*

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These states can be overcome and healed with psychoanalytic therapy, which seeks to understand the genesis of this confusion and follow the track of its growth. The biggest pity is that often the sufferer, is terrified of his mental pain and prefers to live in the delusion that the problem is with the world and not him. In such cases, the close relatives can seek the help of a therapist who can help them to help the victim of confusion to seek help and get back to a productive life and good relationships. He can regain his health and take his place in the world of relationships.