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PSYCHO RHYTHMS – The Dialectics of Everyday Life

Jimi Hendrix 'Life Is Rhythm' 1970.

Psychorhythms are the processes of change between opposites in everyday life. There are major opposites in society at large and minor opposites within people and between them. In society there is an opposition between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. On a personal level there is an opposition between dependence and independence, domination and submission, activity and passivity, unity and separation. While society itself changes over time from one state to another, individuals must change too. In society the opposites in conflict create change. They cause movement. There is no change without contradiction. But this change is not a mere backwards and forwards reaction from one side to its opposite. It is not a static pattern. History never repeats itself exactly. Each time it changes back it is a little further on. Gradually the opposites or contradictions are transcended. People must change in the same way through rhythms, not through repeating patterns if they are to take part in the inevitable march of life, and the liberation of mankind.

In the new society life will be constant change and endless transformation as people strive daily to transcend the contradictions of their existence. It is only through fear that we cling to one side of an opposite all our lives. It is only through fear that we get trapped in repeating patterns all our lives. It is only through fear that those in power preserve the hierarchical structure that keeps everyone stuck on one side of the opposites of power and powerlessness, of dominance and submission. When love which is the opposite of fear is fully released people will be able to accept and live change.

But how can this theory of permanent revolution in everyday life be put into practice before the revolution of society has taken place?

Firstly it has to be consciously appreciated that every state or condition that people find themselves in has its opposite. When we are depressed it helps to know that we can also be happy and that through time we will inevitably change from one state to its opposite. If we don't, we step out of the natural rhythms of our existence. Our society does not encourage natural change. It has vested interests in keeping us stuck on one side of an opposite. We are kept passively receiving and taking from other people to whom we pay money. This is very different from giving of ourselves. The opposite of receiving is giving. We need to do both at different times. The opposite of passivity is activity. We would soon exhaust ourselves if we were active all the time.

But within ourselves or within our relationships we can see that one side of an opposite may be most pronounced. In society at large there is a far greater emphasis on bourgeois values than on proletarian ones. Where we have a lop-sided situation it is necessary to work consciously towards its opposite. We must act in that direction rather than any others. By doing this we keep in touch with the natural rhythms of social change. In our personal lives we must also act in the direction of the opposite to keep in touch with our personal rhythms. For example a very shy person could force

themselves to act in an extrovert fashion to get the rhythm between introversion and extroversion started. Often when people or societies are very deeply stuck in one side of a dialectic it requires great force to move to its opposite. Once the rhythm has started, it tends, to gather force until the person is truly integrated.

Ultimately opposites can only be transcended through action. The type of action depends on the type of opposites. Opposites that are categories of mind differ from those which are states of nature like day and night, growth and decay. Sometimes just thinking clearly about the opposites can help us transcend them.

For example a person who is caught in a pattern of dependence and independence can learn to stand outside these two opposite needs by realising that they are both necessary but at different times. Often an adolescent reacts from the dependence on parents to being completely independent and having nothing to do with them. But then the need for dependence comes along again and a new object is found, a wife. Later she too is reacted against and the desire for total independence makes him leave. This can go on and on in endless repeating patterns of behaviour until a person realises consciously that he or she IS both dependent and independent. Action must follow the realisation but a conscious working out of opposites can be a very useful method.

A person who is very frightened of social gatherings could think about the opposites involved. The fear may be of rejection which is the opposite of being wanted or loved. The desire to be loved has itself another opposite on a higher level which is the non-desire. This realisation can help a person move on from the pattern of desiring and the fearing. As the situation is unbalanced in favour of desire rather than non-desire it is necessary to concentrate on the non-desire. Not desiring to be loved is on the same side of the dialectic as fear of rejection, but it is higher up. But that too is negative and we then see that the opposite of wanting to be loved by other people is loving them instead. Changed actions will result from these realisations, as actions themselves create new consciousness.

The actions have to be carried out in real life situations by individuals in relation to other individuals. And the realisation has to be assimilated into the individuals, consciousness. No other person can do that for them. But it is often helpful to work out the opposites with friends.

As a method of self development it can work without any expert help. It is the natural state of man and nature to strive to transcend the contradictions inherent within. These are the internal conditions of change. Every person has their own personal contradictions or opposites to work through. But there are also the universal contradictions in simply being human. We must not only recognise the particular contradictions within us but also whereabouts on the longer rhythms of social changes we find ourselves at any given point in time, and which direction it is necessary to move in next. We cannot escape from the social contradictions around us to work on our personal liberation. For those very contradictions are internalised in our own psyches. Society emphasises taking in rather than giving out, separation rather than unity, male qualities rather than female ones, bourgeois values rather than proletarian values, competition rather than co-operation etc. One important contradiction is

between our need for self esteem and the feeling that we are special yet every day we are being told in various subtle ways that we are unnecessary and unimportant. Advertising tells us we are inadequate unless We have a feeling of our powerfulness contrasted with a greater or lesser degree of our actual powerlessness. These contradictions can only be fully transcended in a different social structure. But in our day to day relationships we could here and now begin to liberate ourselves and each other, strive to transcend contradictions and allow the natural movement of rhythm to flow without fearing constant change as an everyday condition of life.

No one should *always* be the leader or dominant person in a group. People should change roles constantly. We are all capable of being both dominating and submissive, active and passive, leaders and led. A particular project like organising a rent strike may require leaders FOR A TIME. But by listening to the natural rhythms of leadership the time will come for a change of leadership. A new project may need different kinds of leaders. Everyone has different talents and abilities but these do not make anyone intrinsically superior to anyone else. At different times different abilities are needed. The rhythms of change bring first one person then the next into the limelight.

We all need some privacy and some companionship. To be with people all the time is for most of us unnatural. But every society and every individual has its own rhythms of being alone and being with others.

The most important point is that *all* of us can be in all of the opposite states at different times. Our upbringing and place in a hierarchical society usually traps us on one side of an opposite for our whole lives. To realise our full potential we must learn to flow between the opposites with the rhythms rather than against them. In this way we rise above the duality of life as we perceive it now, and eventually liberate ourselves.

