

appraisal, and those likely to suffer personality disruption are not screened. Crawshaw feels that the medical profession has an opportunity, if not a responsibility, to ask institutions employing 'T' groups to re-examine the ethical basis when using humans as subjects. From a more practical angle, not only psychiatrists but all those dealing with personal problems should ask questions, if only because a number of writers have pointed to the probable contribution of sensitivity training to exacerbation of emotional problems in certain individuals, who are usually not followed up after their group experiences. What other body of individuals is in a position to question the place of sensitivity training in our society and assess critically what has been hailed with almost unreserved enthusiasm and unquestioning faith?

Psychology Department,  
Downshire Hospital,  
Downpatrick, N. Ireland.

J. R. MARSHALL.

#### REFERENCES

1. GOTTSCHALK, L. A. and PATTISON, E. M. (1969). 'Psychiatric perspectives on "T" groups and the laboratory movement on overview.' *Am. J. Psychiatry*, **126**, 6, 823-39.
2. BERNE, E. (1966). *Principles of Group Treatment*. New York: Oxford University Press.
3. CRAWSHAW, R. (1969). 'How sensitive is sensitivity training?' *Am. J. Psychiatry*, **126**, 6, 868-73.

#### THE RHYTHM OF 'POP' MUSIC

SIR,

Having, while on holiday, been reluctantly compelled to listen to a considerable amount of 'pop' music, I was struck by one aspect of its rhythm to which I myself have not seen any reference in discussions of the subject, but which seems to me to be of some significance. In books and papers on pop, there are repeated comments on the physically exciting and sexually stimulating effect of the loud fast beat, the 'jungle rhythm', and descriptions of the mind-deadening quality of the sheer volume of sound produced by some groups of players, leading to a semi-hypnotic state of the dancers, who are said to appear to be seeking the equivalent of a 'trip' on drugs by means of this overwhelming sensory bombardment alone.

All this is undoubtedly true, but the aspect to which I would like to draw attention is that of the double rhythm, the slow rocking (reminiscent of the 'Hill Billy' horse-back songs), coupled with the steady fast beat, as best heard in the quieter but continuous playing of some groups, building up to no climax but persisting throughout the entire evening. This is the type to which the devotees

usually dance separately, without a partner, not moving from one spot on the floor, but simply making slow writhing movements of the arms, hands and hips, and gradually attaining to a dreamy-trance-like state. About three-quarters of the dancers were girls, on an evening which I witnessed, and I am told that this is often so.

It occurred to me that this linked double rhythm was precisely that which is heard by the unborn baby in the womb. The slow rocking component is the sound of the mother's heart-beat, transmitted from her aorta, while the continuous rapid beat is that of the child's own heart, transmitted clearly by the intrauterine fluid. If I am right, then these young people are not seeking excitement, but a return to the pre-natal state, just as I suggested in an early paper a rocking and head-banging toddler is doing. (*J. ment. Sci.* (1950), **96**, 763.)

In an article on pop and drugs in the *Sunday Times* of 14th March, the writer said, 'What is involved here is a flight from boredom', and that is undoubtedly true, but in the type of pop dancing I have just described the quest seems to me to go even deeper, to be a flight from a separate, self-responsible existence to a pre-natal Nirvana, a rejection of both 'experience and discovery of self', the penultimate abnegation of life.

JOAN FITZHERBERT.

Derwen Faur,  
Derwen Faur Road,  
Sketty, Swansea, Glam. SA2 8EB.

#### FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

##### *Third Conference on Behavioural Modification*

The Third Conference on Behavioural Modification will be held from 24-27 September 1971, in Wexford, Ireland. Topics to be covered include token economy systems, behaviour therapy with children, methods of assessing behavioural change. For further details write to: The Conference Secretary, Behavioural Engineering Association, c/o Department of Mental Health, The Queen's University of Belfast, Belfast City Hospital, Belfast, BT9 7AB.

##### *Third International Conference on Social Science and Medicine*

The Third International Conference on Social Science and Medicine will be held at Elsinore, Denmark, from 14-18 August, 1972. Further details, including the preliminary programme and registration forms, can be obtained from Dr. P. J. M. McEwan, Director, Centre for Social Research, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton, BN2 9QN.