

As the EAST VILLAGE OTHER says from time to time when running articles on the possible bad effects of LSD, "If you're tripping, don't read this article till you are back down." I am continuing with a letter from Kay Anderson of Albuquerque on the horrors of LSD. (Picking up with the last sentence I quoted last week):

FIRST DRAFT #197

Vol. 33, No. 5

22 Dec 67

KAY ANDERSON ((continued)):

As a matter of fact, I recall three cases from the Journal of the AMA in which a child with congenital deformities attributed to the mother having taken LSD was presented. One was the recent one of the girl baby with the severely twisted and malformed leg. Another was an 18-month-old girl with several internal deformities and with a rare condition in which the two halves of the skull grow at different rates. Half of her face and skull, down a line between the eyes, was developing much faster than the other. The third case that I remember was of a still-born in which the embryo fails to completely close the groove that exists down the midline at one stage of development. This particular child showed a much greater failure of development: its abdomen and thorax were open and the internal organs protruded, and where its face should have been was a great hole of the open naso-pharynx, with the eyes hanging on stalks. (I commented last week on the first sentence, to the effect that I want to see something a little stronger than "attributed" to "having taken LSD," if for no other reason than that -- as I believe I said in one of the articles that prompted this letter -- there have been millions of doses of LSD taken in the last three or four years, and it strikes me that there must have been a high enough percentage of women, pregnant at that, taking LSD for thundering great herds of deformed babies to have been born to them. In the mean time, no figures that I have seen quoted have had the ring of authenticity about them -- in fact, the first guy that published preliminary results stated in his announcement that he had specifically began his testing in hopes of finding something against LSD -- hardly the scientific method. No, this one to me still seems Not Proven at the very least; there doesn't even seem to be a correlation even of the magnitude of Thalidomide, and I again remind you that Thalidomide is fine for men and for women who are not pregnant... -- dgv)

As far as the danger of broken chromosomes being ignored by men and by women on the Pill, remember several things. One is that we have two mechanisms at work here in producing deformities: broken chromosomes, and effects of LSD on an already-extant fetus of a pregnant woman. In the first case, a woman does not need to be pregnant to have her chromosomes broken, and a girl child at birth already has all the ova, hence all the chromosomes, that she will ever have, in her body. They last her entire life and all her children come from them. At any time they can be injured, whether by LSD or some other substance, and it may not become evident for many years until the damaged chromosomes happen to be in an ovum which is fertilized. A woman has millions of ova, only a few of which can ever be used, so I couldn't say what the odds of coming up with a blighted ovum are. But it's not the kind of roulette I care to play. Secondly, remember that a man contributes half of his child's chromosomes. Thirdly, it seems that LSD taken very early in pregnancy can attack the developing embryo somehow (in much the same way as other

substances can, such as the rubella antibodies, probably) and directly cause deformities. The studies I've read indicate that the danger time is very early, as I said: somewhere around twenty or twenty-five days after conception. This is often before a woman knows or even suspects that she may be pregnant. ((Your third I pointed out myself; t' first two are scientifically correct, of course, but there has been no proof that chromosomes in the ova and sperm are damaged in this matter.))

About ergot. Ergot is a fungus that afflicts grain. Its derivative, ergotamine, is a vasoconstrictor...it constricts the arteries and reduces circulation. In medieval times there were outbreaks of afflictions called "dancing manias". There were outbreaks in Germany and France in 1027, 1237, and 1374, for instance. The dancing manias are a mysterious subject and their cause is not completely known, but they were caused at least in part by the consumption of spoiled grain which was blighted by the ergot fungus. ... One aspect of the manias was that sometimes entire populations of villages were affected, and the victims had hallucinations, seizures of hysterical terror or laughter, and would sometimes dance themselves to death. Offhand, I'd say at least part of the syndrome was caused by the crude LSD in the ergot.

To go back to hippies, I don't much care what they do if they don't bother other people, notably me, while doing it. I think they are children, as they call themselves...they dislike and despise most of society; they like pretty colors, flowers, and music; they do not produce; and they have a touching faith that nasty ol' straight square society won't let them starve or die of the various diseases they pick up. There is a hippie colony at Placitas, fifteen or so miles north of here, and there was one at Taos till the weather turned cold. They aren't forming tribes and living off the land in the grand old Walden style...they're playing Indian, complete with incongruous teepees and warpaint. They no more produce their own food than I do, in my garden with a row of corn and a dozen tomato plants. They're just playing. ((The major fruit of the psychedelic movement so far seems limited to the admittedly vast gift of their music over the last year or two. Their newspapers are of considerable interest, but are very uneven. Apart from that, I'll admit I don't see much else in view that they have contributed. So far.))

Like I said, I don't care how they live or search for whatever they're looking for, but I do consider it a damn imposition if I'm going to have to dodge trippers flying out of upper-storey windows, and provide the tax money to give them emergency care and cure them of their various diseases, and care for their defective children. They make pretty paper flowers, but it's costing San Francisco an incredible amount of money (tax-payers' money, to be crass) to take care of her hippies, and there's got to be a point at which it's cheaper to make your own flowers.

Oh, well, this too shall pass, and my kids will write term papers on the hippies.

Best, Kay Anderson

☐☐ Back to Dave Van Arnam and his electric fanzine for a few last lines. The Hippie Thing seems to have been and still to be in transition. Until the mass exodus back to suburbia, and away from the psychedelics and back to booze and nicotine, I'll go along with them to the extent of watching them to see if they do come up with something. As I said, I think they have made some contributions already; personally, I expect the eventual fruits of all this to be rich indeed. Perhaps for all of us. ☐☐ Hoping you are the sane...