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# ECSTASY

Everything looks wonderful when you're young and on drugs.

In the decades since LSD was synthesized, a number of scientists have tried to figure out why such minute quantities of isyergic acid could have such a profound effect on the human nervous system. Their researches have led, in the case of one pioneer "drug designer," Alexander Shulgin, to successful attempts to isolate the psychedelic experience chemically. Concentrating on the mescaline molecule, Shulgin has been able to isolate the mimetic neuro-transmitter that enhances colors, and one that enhances sounds.

Using Shulgin's research, a group of underground chemists have come up with a new drug called Ecstasy, a drug tailor-made to stimulate the message-signal of empathy in the human nervous system. Several WETheads took it recently, strictly in the interests of scientific research, and as one reported: "This girl and I sat there for about an hour and a half saying to each other 'Are you getting off? Are you really stoned?' Then finally, we said, 'Fuck it. Let's go for a walk.' And we had this incredible four or five hour walk — total joy and clarity and pleasure: We're walking down Hollywood Boulevard. People are smiling at us, flower vendors are giving us flowers. The sun is shining happily down. And she says suddenly, 'You know, I'm really in ecstasy!'"

Intrigued by the results, we went to visit the American distributor for Ecstasy, a mild-mannered, balding gentleman in his late thirties with a new wife and a tiny baby in a comfortable West Hollywood apartment, and we asked him what, precisely, was going on. This was his reply . . .

"The actual chemical is a secret, for obvious reasons. So far as I know, the government hasn't made Ecstasy illegal yet; but it's in a group of chemicals which the government would rather not see around, so there's no patent protection. All I can say is that MDM, a cousin to MDA, is the closest molecule to it.

"There's a chemical message-signal for every thought and emotion that you ever had in your life. That's how it works, that's the mechanics for the experience of what we call life. It might sound cold-blooded and mechanistic, but as far as I'm concerned, that's how God does it in the physical world. As I see it, empathy is an emotional tuning to another nervous system, and this chemical triggers it.

"The only trouble with LSD is, as far as I'm concerned, that you get blasted past things so fast that it's hard to remember what happened on your trip, to reflect on things the next day. LSD blasts you *past* the human sphere. I mean, let God take care of the meta-cosmic. I want to be a good human. That's what I'm interested in — it's perfect for people who want to develop their human relational capacity. It's a domestic psychedelic.

"Ecstasy is a powerful, pleasurable and peaceful experience; but it's also quite demanding. If you take it too often, you use up the empathy neuro-transmitter that you naturally produce and you get kind of tired and strung out. You get tired from being that open. Ecstasy once every two or three weeks is plenty. In my opinion, it's really a two-day trip. The first day is really the ecstatic empathy-sharing that you have with another person. The next day is for hanging out and relaxing, sharing with your friend some of the insights you've had. If you take it alone, and there's nobody there to empathize with, it can be a real lonely drug.

"I find it best to take Ecstasy on an empty stomach, with no other drugs in your system. If you have a lot to drink, it will make you sick to your stomach. Food will break it down and diminish the effect. I wouldn't snort it either, because it tastes awful. My wife and I like to take it on a Sunday morning when we wake up, if it's a nice day with nothing pressing. Then the next day we have a quiet, peaceful reintegration.

"Why did we call it Ecstasy rather than Empathy? Well, let's face it: ecstasy sells better than empathy. One of the best marketing concepts is to present it as a true aphrodisiac, which it is. Because a true aphrodisiacal stimulation between two people who are fond of each other is being *fond* of each other. A lot of people who've used this drug for a sort of sleazy seduction trip when they really didn't care for the other person at all have had very unpleasant experiences. They got sick to their stomachs, confused, and paranoid; because the drug shows what's there, and if what's there to begin with is *nasty*, well . . .

"We first started distributing Ecstasy five years ago, but three years ago a couple of chemists who were making it got strung out on it and they got frightened and changed the formula, which completely ruined the business. It cost us probably a quarter of a million dollars in profits and screwed up everything for a year and a half. But for the last year they've manufactured the original chemical and refined it even more, so that in some respects it's even better than the original. But it's taken a long time to build up the distribution network again. Money has gotten tighter and a lot of old customers are free-basing and doing more coke. Right now more people are interested in egoism than in empathy, and coke is the ideal neuro-transmitter for that. People are a lot more selfish than they were five years ago. It's become a tougher world, so people have gotten a lot tougher too.

"There's been a drug culture for fifteen years and people are very blasé, and they're used to doing lots of drugs all the time. Unfortunately, they lose the perspective, the significance of these experiences — the value that these experiences can actually have in their lives. In the world today, it seems like you have to be hit by a Mack Truck to say ahhhhh . . . ." ●