

Review of *Listening Into the Heart of Things: on MDMA and LSD* by Samuel Widmer 302p (1997) (Translation of German Edition of 1989)

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ABSTRACT

This is an early volume from a much respected psychedelic psychotherapist. He has written several other books since this one but until recently none of his books were on Amazon and still you can only find a German edition and a Spanish one (from 1993) but no English one (except a couple used copies). This is sad since these drugs have enormous therapeutic potential but afai government suppression still prevents their use. The most interesting and readable parts are the case histories of drug therapy, especially his own-e.g., on pages 114, 166 and 178. Though a very advanced therapist compared to many, he is far from finished with his intellectual growing up and clings to his psychoanalytic background even though he often mentions its extreme shortcomings. The often painfully awkward text is full of insights from his own therapeutic voyages and those of his patients interspersed with psychoanalytic nonsense. Part of the awkwardness may be due to bad translation from the German but the lack of a rational spiritual framework is a major problem (as with most therapy-or most life for that matter) that he only occasionally seems to recognize. He also sometimes veers off into the ozone-e.g., after many pages of sensible dialog he can opine that varicose veins and cancer are a result of the splitting of a psychosis (p99)! He quotes Zen and Sufi stories, Krishnamurti and Al Ghazali and even Castenada (seemingly unaware of his exposure as a fraud 20 years ago!), yet he seems oblivious to the fact that meditation is the most powerful therapy there is and to the presence around him in his own country and all over the globe of the most diverse and effective therapeutic community that has ever existed-that of the students of the great Indian mystic (ie, psychotherapist) Osho. What a great pity! He could have learned so much and advanced his therapy so far. But like most people he deliberately or unconsciously avoids anything which might wake him up too much. It's possible however that he just avoids mentioning Osho as he's radical enough to trigger the control templates in the monkey brain and enlightenment has the power to change one's whole life and not just put a bandaid on as other therapies usually do. Widmer refers repeatedly to the great LSD therapy pioneer Stanislav Grof, whose writings are one of the first that the interested reader may want to consult. Also, anyone who has a serious interest in psychedelic therapy should read Myron Stolaroff's "The Secret Chief"-an account of the most remarkable clandestine therapist of this type of all time. It tells the story of the late Leo Zeff, who helped thousands to find themselves with the skilled and varied use of a wide variety of psychedelics. As the book is hard to find you may wish to read the info on Zeff on the web. In addition the clinical chapters in the excellent *Ecstasy:the complete guide* by J. Holland(2001) and her web page [www.drholland.com](http://www.drholland.com) (and elsewhere on the net) provide a broad framework and guide to therapy that is lacking here. A lovely book to add to any drug or therapy library, if you can find it.

Those wishing a comprehensive up to date framework for human behavior from the modern two systems view may consult my article *The Logical Structure of Philosophy, Psychology, Mind and Language as Revealed in Wittgenstein and Searle* 59p(2016). For all my articles on Wittgenstein and Searle see my e-book *The Logical Structure of Philosophy, Psychology, Mind and Language in Wittgenstein and Searle* 367p (2016). Those interested in all my writings in their most recent versions may consult my e-book *Philosophy, Human Nature and the Collapse of Civilization - Articles and Reviews 2006-2016* 662p (2016).

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It is well known that since he experimented with MDMA ("ecstasy") it became a common club drug used by millions for its relatively mild distortions of reality and its strong tendency to open up emotions—quite unlike LSD, mescaline or psilocybin in these respects.

Widmer realized via these drugs, as many do via meditation, that it is the mind that is everyone's problem. For most educated moderns, psychoanalysis is totally obsolete and his insistence on doing psychedelic therapy in this context is most sad. Other therapeutic contexts, including that of any of the wide variety of meditations seem much more likely to give results.

The chapters end with poetic passages describing his lovely environment (presumably the Swiss Alps) that feel as though they are written by a different person. He also has many nice full page, full color paintings in the book. He says repeatedly that the drugs produce rapid breakthroughs that would not happen with conventional therapy, but then says other places that they would happen anyway (e.g., with Helga's therapy on pg 15)! Most experienced psychedelic therapists would agree that conventional therapies will not achieve the majority of the breakthroughs given by psychedelic therapy and there is a substantial older literature but of course governments have vigorously suppressed psychedelic research until permitting limited trials very recently. Talking therapies, and especially

psychoanalysis, are so slow and expensive that few have the time and money for them and everyone suffers (and many die) while waiting for a cure. In any event, it's clear that all conventional therapies (with some possible exceptions) only put a bandaid on the problems (though it may be a good one) and only meditation, with or without psychedelic medication, has the power to dissolve the ego and all the problems permanently. It is not an easy path, (and perhaps not possible for most) but neither is any other, and even a few steps can help alot.

He has written several other books since this one but until recently none of his books were on Amazon and still you can only find a German edition and a Spanish one (from 1993) but no English one (except a couple used copies) and they seem not to be on the 'free book' sites either. This is sad since these drugs have enormous therapeutic potential but government suppression still prevents their use so underground therapists and self therapy are the only routes.