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## BOOK REVIEW

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Roberts, Thomas B. 2019. *MindApps: Multistate Theory and Tools for Mind Design*. Rochester, VT: Park Street Press. xii + 212 pp. ISBN: 978-1-62055-818-8. US\$17.99 (pbk).

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In *Mindapps*, Thomas B. Roberts proposes a new paradigm for studying non-ordinary states. Drawing an analogy with technology, Roberts posits that just as we can create apps for our electronic devices, we can also construct “mindapps” for our brain/mind. Mindapps are defined as “an underrecognized class of biotechnologies” (such as psychedelics, meditation, yoga, breathwork, hypnosis etc.) which lead to a variety of altered states of consciousness (p. 34). Roberts’s particular focus is on psychedelics—he was a founding member of MAPS and has published prolifically in the area—and hence *Mindapps* takes psychedelics as its primary example. Roberts argues that so far, in the modern West, psychedelics have been mainly seen as adjuncts to therapy and spiritual development; however, they are also “ideagens”—substances that are able to generate new and original ways of thinking (p. 19).

The book consists of a foreword (by James Fadiman, PhD), eight chapters, a conclusion and three appendixes. The first three chapters articulate Roberts’s *multistate theory*, which holds that “the ability to produce and use a variety of mindbody states is a significant human trait, and multistate phenomena deserve their place in our studies of the human mind” (p. 30). Roberts posits that the current dominant approach to knowledge assumes that all valuable thinking occurs in a single state: the state of normal waking consciousness. He refers to this assumption as the *singlestate fallacy* (p. 25). Conversely, multistate theory views multiple states of consciousness as important and productive components of the human mind. The first two chapters provide definitions of key terms, including “ideagen”, “mindapp”, “mind design” and “mindbody state”. Mindbody state is used throughout the book to replace the more common expression “state of consciousness”. Roberts argues that mindbody state is more accurate as it emphasizes the unification of mind and body and also avoids the ambiguities associated with the word “consciousness”, which has various different meanings depending on the context. Chapter 3 focuses on what Roberts believes is the future frontier of human “mind design”—*MindappAI*. This involves the amalgamation of various mindapps (for example, combining psychedelics with neurofeedback and transcranial magnetic stimulation) in order to create novel “artificial” mindbody states that have never before been experienced and that may lead to new and innovative ways of thinking and being in the world.

Chapters 4 to 8 consider the application of psychedelic mindapps to the fields of science, philosophy and the humanities. In Chapter 4, Roberts explores how psychedelics might contribute to scientific research, from investigating concepts such as consilience and emergence to improving the minds of researchers. He argues that psychedelic mindapps should be both objects of study and methodologies: “Scientists who believe in the value of experimental evidence should welcome their own minds becoming experimental variables” (p. 50). He also suggests that mindapps could be used to expand scientific theory to encompass anomalous experiences or at the very least allow researchers to “characterize unusual subjective experiences more fully and map the fascinating ambivalent gray areas where subjective reports and empirical observations overlap” (p. 49). Chapter 5 has a transpersonal perspective and focuses on the ideas of psychiatrist Stanislav Grof, in particular his four-level model of the human mind, and their contributions to religion, psychiatry and mythology. Chapter 6 (aptly titled “Save the Humanities! Psychedelics to the Rescue!”) proposes that psychedelics might help to reinvigorate the humanities, an area of study that recently has been waning due to shrinking departments and lack of funding. Roberts presents ample evidence that the humanities provide a vital perspective when considering psychedelic experience, and he argues that humanities courses should be adding psychedelic/mindapp units into their curricula. While this chapter presents a hopeful outlook, it is not entirely clear how psychedelics will be able to address the political and systematic issues that are currently contributing to the field’s decline.

The final chapter (Chapter 8, “The Entheogen Reformation”) will be of particular interest to religion studies scholars as it explicitly connects mindapps (many of which derive from religious traditions) with religion. It covers the democratization of primary religious experience, entheogenic new religious movements and legal issues regarding the sacramental use of psychedelics. Indeed, the illegality of psychedelic substances is the proverbial elephant in the room; readers of *Mindapps* will no doubt wonder how Roberts’s vision of a multistate future can be realized when psychedelic substances are, for the most part, illegal. While *Mindapps* only touches on topics such as cognitive liberty and the censorship of ideas, the concept of multistate theory and the ideas discussed within the book raise an important question: as humans, is it not our moral and ethical duty to fully explore the mind’s developmental capacities and the benefits that non-ordinary psychedelic states may occasion? Scientific research into psychedelics is already demonstrating that these substances have significant therapeutic effects, and *Mindapps* suggests that this is just the tip of the iceberg; psychedelics may also have the potential to create a wider paradigm shift that stimulates new research questions, agendas and methodologies.

While the optimistic future that Roberts imagines for psychedelics may still be a way off, other mindapps (particularly meditation) are certainly being used and studied widely now, and are already informing popular culture and academia. Hence, while Roberts is perhaps well ahead of the curve regarding psychedelics, his multistate theory could also be explored further by scholars who work with other mindbody modalities. As such, this book is highly recommended to all researchers who are engaged in the study of non-ordinary states, both psychedelic and non-psychedelic. It offers an innovative and welcome theory that moves non-ordinary states from the periphery of discourse to the centre.