

Review: *The Psychedelic Future of the Mind* *How Entheogens Are Enhancing Cognition, Boosting Intelligence, and Raising Values* by Thomas Roberts, PhD

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Tom Roberts, PhD

TOM ROBERTS'S NEWEST BOOK IS A tour de force in the nascent field of psychedelic studies. More than a seminal overview of psychedelic research to date, *The Psychedelic Future of the Mind* proposes bold new research directions and methodologies that intrepidly advance what psychedelic research can become. The experimental directions suggested in these pages can easily catalyze hundreds of dissertation projects and laboratory studies. A guide for researchers and the general public alike, this book promotes paths to integrate the power of psychedelic insights into both careers and daily life.

This book is primarily about the potential future of psychedelic research, as the title suggests. Roberts explains how virtually all completed and ongoing psychedelic research has occurred in a medical psychotherapeutic context, with studies addressing posttraumatic stress disorder, cluster headaches, existential anxiety, and addictions, among other topics. Roberts lauds the advances in psychedelic psychotherapy and medicine, but he argues that non-psychotherapeutic applications—including research into the cultural benefit of psychedelics—deserve far greater attention than they have yet received.

The Psychedelic Future of the Mind is organized into three main sections. Part One considers the relationship between psychedelic and classical mystical experiences, highlighting the significance of the similarities and differences between them. Roberts suggests that, on one hand, psychedelics mediate mystical experiences by emphasizing values of social responsibility and spiritual motivation; and on the other, they reveal previously unknown or unconscious aspects of mind. Making note of studies that demonstrate “persisting, positive changes” in mental wellbeing as a result of mystical experiences achieved through psychedelic use, Roberts argues for a pragmatic valuation of psychedelic-induced mystical experience based on the shift from an “I-me-mine” ego orientation towards an ecological, collective, and even cosmic orientation.

Positioning psychedelic experience within a more general “Multistate Theory,” Part Two frames psychedelics as cognitive tools with the potential to enhance cognition and push thought beyond habituated paradigms. Roberts’ proposed theoretical framework embeds mystical consciousness alongside ordinary consciousness within a larger spectrum of mind-body states, which he defines analogously to the function of programs or apps in computers. He suggests that psychedelics reveal non-ordinary mind-body states, each of which allow for new patterns of information processing and the potential for activating abilities that do not exist in ordinary states of consciousness. Psychedelics and other psychotechnologies, like meditation or yoga, can be used as “conceptual research methods to think outside the box, to reexamine theories, models,

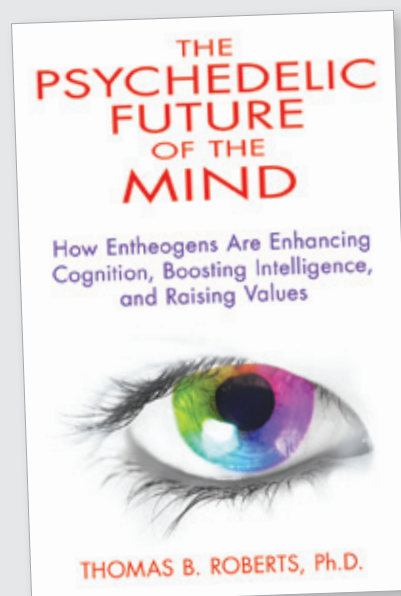
paradigms, assumptions, and even our thinking processes.”

Finally, Part Three offers multiple visions for applying psychedelic discoveries to benefit society. Roberts suggests that the most significant factors in making these benefits available are by educating the general public (influential people especially) about the possible uses of psychedelics, and by raising funds to finance the costs of research for drug testing and approval. Roberts suggests that higher education be enriched with new research questions, specialties, and course content involving psychedelics, and he sketches a blueprint for integrating mind-body awareness into a new definition of what it means to be well-educated. With the recent successes of the psychedelic renaissance, he reveals how educators can justify teaching courses in psychedelic studies to help cultivate the next generation of psychedelic researchers.

The Psychedelic Future of the Mind is one of the more timely books published this year. Now more than ever, it is important to expand the boundaries of psychedelic studies and to incorporate the wisdom of what we have learned so far into more disciplines and methodological approaches. Roberts' book will be a signpost of inspiration to current and future researchers in developing this field. 🌀

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From *The Psychedelic Future of the Mind* (page 33):

“Naturally enough, ways of triggering self-transcendence, mystical experiences, sacral, and ecstatic states attracted his attention, and the psychedelic work of Stanislav Grof provided one piece of evidence. In *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences*, Maslow (1970) mentioned Grof's psycholytic work as important in providing nadir-experiences, the opposite of peak experiences (p. xiv) and later noted that, ‘these deductions from the nature of intense peak-experiences are given some support by general experience of LSD and psilocybin’ (p. 76). Because many humanistic psychologists rejected any idea of spirituality, cosmic awareness, mystical experience, and related ideas, in 1967, Maslow, Grof, and others decided to found a new post-humanistic psychology. Together they coined the term transpersonal (Grof, 2012).”

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