many ways, some not unlike the F-word. Correspondingly, Fabricant uses neoliberal not only to characterize an era but also to label most everything she critiques: a president, state, government, model, identity, and agenda; in addition to legislation, development, multiculturalism, capitalism, privatization, policies, regimes, schemes, shifts, reforms, and reformers. Passages that I find especially useful reveal the situatedness of the term’s meaning: “Two understandings of neoliberalism, based on the starkly different lived experiences of two distinct classes, came into conflict in Santa Cruz that day—one of celebratory cheer, pride in the neoliberal development model… the other accusatory, voiced by indigenous communities and MST agricultural workers” (pp. 57–58).

Fabricant’s investigation of strategic uses of ayllu reveals the political power of a recurrent elision between projections of the ayllu’s utopian future and declarative statements about its putative past. In Bolivia’s lowlands, the ayllu’s communal structure has been fruitfully motivated to combat the insecurity and violence inherent in daily survival and that which is purposefully enacted. Yet settlers’ apparent belief that the historical ayllu guaranteed the very features they seek—security, democracy, autonomy, social equity, ecological sustainability, collective spirit—exposes a paradox of decolonization. European invaders indeed found many Andean communities organized in ayllus that connected people with each other and with shared land, animals, and produce. Under the Inca Empire, however, ayllu structure certainly did not protect its members from forced migration and relocation; appropriation of goods and produce; draft to mines, military, and infrastructure projects; and other forms of unwanted displacement. The astounding emergence of collective ethnoracial identities and related territorial claims across Latin America has been influenced by, and has influenced, global concerns about biological and cultural diversity and sustainability. Today, some characterize ethnoracially identified populations as barriers to modern development, while others see them as inspirations for sustainable futures. Mobilizing Bolivia’s Displaced makes a compelling case that environmentally sustainable good living in MST settlements depends on collective and autonomous territorial management, and that idioms of indigeneity facilitate movement toward this goal. It also acknowledges that this movement is not enough to transform menacing material and political–economic realities. Activists’ use of indigenous heritage to counter exploitation and expropriation has found echoes in President Morales’s public enactments of sumac kawsay and Pachamama as indigenous paths toward socioecologically sound lifeways. However ongoing conflicts, including Isiboro Sécure National Park and Indigenous Territory (TIPNIS) suggest that Bolivia’s radical new vision is insufficient against dominant political economic forces. Fabricant concludes that looming global ecological–economic crises will provoke more people and governments to activate lessons forged by Bolivia’s MST.

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Motivated by desire to characterize contemporary ways of life adopted in light of 21st-century neuroscientific knowledge, physician–anthropologist Nicolas Langlitz embarked on a series of intense engagements in field sites selected to understand the science of psychedelics. This multisited ethnography of everyday life in neuroimaging and behavioral pharmacology laboratories includes well-integrated autoethnographic vignettes concerning the author’s participation as a human subject in contemporary laboratory-based neuroscientific experiments that comprise the “revival” of research on LSD, psilocybin, and other “psychedelics.”

The long-running debate over the validity of self-administration within psychedelic research cultures is central to Neuropsychedelia, a book deeply cognizant of the changing ethical research cultures that have investigated psychedelics since the mid-20th century. The ethn- and psychopharmacological investigations of the 1950s are the historical backdrop against which Langlitz plays out his twin interests in model psychosis research and in contemporary neuromysticism. When neuropsychopharmacology and the biomolecular basis of mental illness seemed scientifically or perhaps even clinically significant, the psychedelics also played into hoary religious, theological, and cultural debates concerning the place of asceticism and mysticism in modern life. Neuropsychedelia similarly beckons readers to “be here now” in characterizing a contemporary mode of neuroscientific life salient to 21st-century philosophy and spirituality.

Rarely has this reviewer encountered a book so erudite in both psychopharmacological and anthropological terms. Neuropsychedelia offers both a sophisticated analytic history of the epistemological and ontological concerns of both fields and a nuanced, playful contribution to the ongoing conversation between and among his field sites in Germany; Zurich, Switzerland; and San Diego, California, on philosophical as well as pharmacological topics. Chapter 3, “The Varieties of Psychedelic Lab Experience,”
is a situated, phenomenological account of the ethics and pragmatics of Franz Vollenweider’s Neuropsycho-pharmacology Brain Imaging Laboratory in Zurich. A very different situation pertained to the U.S. laboratory in which Langlitz conducted his research, which overcame a tacit but very materially enforced moratorium on hallucinogen research since the early 1970s. The hype surrounding the “Decade of the Brain” had little to do with the revival; the U.S. federal research apparatus declined to touch hallucinogen research with the proverbial 10-foot pole.

The resurrection of psychedelic research was propelled by the “neuroscientization” of drug research, a social process through which mystical or spiritual meanings were reduced through such processes as Mark Geyer’s work to standardize the prepulse inhibition (PPI) of the startle reflex. Described in chapter 5, this work included “tinkering” with instrumentation as well as forwarding experimental impairment of PPI as a conceptual model for schizophrenic to enable screening of antipsychotic drugs. Geyer’s commitment to “operationalize the doors of perception” was mobilized to make fundamental neuroscientific work feasible and fundable, not to mobilize the “neuromolecular gaze” within his University of California, San Diego, laboratory.

Psychedelic drugs emerged anew as substances to think with—a moment the author documents with depth, verve, and an earnest and keen wit. Each earlier chapter having provided a theoretical coda, the concluding chapter pulls together reflections on “Fieldwork in Perennial Philosophy.” As Langlitz guides readers through the thicket of his own psychedelic “fishing expedition,” disentangling the lines from the lures of the popular “cosmonautological” quest for “mystic materialism” or “cognitive enhancement,” he unsnarls a hypothesis-generating experimental system for studying schizophrenia and psychosis. He offers neither a simple story nor a stable set of truths extracted from his experiences and the experiments on which they were based.

As a conceptual framework, Neuropsychedelia is meant to evoke both settings within and beyond the laboratory, and to implicate both psychosis and mysticism in its recombinant vision. By contrast to the spiritual zealotry of psychedelia’s adherents in the 1960s, today’s drug-naive researchers are more drug-nonchalant—to them, LSD is “just another drug.” One cannot help but feel there is something missing in the failure to acknowledge the power of these drugs, just as there was something missing in the overdetermined cultural moment that led to the de facto moratorium. Perhaps least satisfying is chapter 6, which starts down a path that Langlitz did not take—a consideration of the proliferation of travelers along the routes that psychedelics take beyond the laboratory, in contemporary art, photography, and drug tourism—only to end up back on the stony road of “normal science” (p. 236).

The form of life that Langlitz sees appears neither “modern” nor an “epochal break” with the past. Rather, it is characterized as a contemporary, heterogeneous temporality named a “perennial” form of “mystical materialism” (p. 18). It is this form of life that Langlitz explores in the culminating chapter, connecting it with the philosophical work of John Austin, Philippe Descola, Aldous Huxley, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Ian Hacking, Bruno Latour, Barbara Herrnstein Smith, and Max Weber. “Fieldwork in Perennial Philosophy” is a mash-up that reminds readers that the “inquiry presented in this book, … started out not just as an ‘anthropology at home’ but from a personal experience of the anthropologist as a young man puzzled by the coincidence of psychotic and religious elements in his first LSD experience. Here, the clash of materialist and supernaturalist ontologies did not take place between cultures or groups of people within one culture, but inside a single person” (p. 252). This clash animates a project that reaches beyond second-order observation to embrace an ontological inquiry that leads us far from the flatness of the Latourian actor–network landscape.

Neuropsychedelia is best read as an anthropology of science that is also a history of the present. The perplexities with which Langlitz entertains his readers result from “the fact that concepts and practices have memories, which escape us” (p. 253). In retrieving and reassembling these in a conceptual collage, Neuropsychedelia “moves beyond ethnography and begins to provide philosophical tools to remediate some of the spiritual ills of late modern life” (p. 265). It repays the historically minded and the ethnographically inclined, providing far more substance than ontological caprice.