Journal of Humanistic Psychology
1–18
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DOI: 10.1177/00221678211029186
journals.sagepub.com/home/jhp

Unseen Women in Psychedelic History

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Abstract

The drug experiences of women in Western society have been both sensationalized for their scandalous aspects and sterilized in clinical reports, but the role of women in the investigation of psychedelics in modern Western history is obscure, and the identities and activities of early women participants are often unknown. This paper explores some of the under-reported history of women's contributions to psychedelic exploration and research in the twentieth century. Mabel Luhan and Valentina Wasson represent women whose stories have entered the canon of psychedelic history but have failed to fully represent their individual impact. Wasson's work is often subsumed under that of her more well-known husband. Luhan is considered to be a psychedelic pioneer, but her pattern of interference in the politics of peyote in the Taos Pueblo is often overlooked. The poet Mary Barnard is well-known as a translator of Sappho, but her lyrical writing on psychedelics is less celebrated. Gertrude Paltin and Kay Parley are female therapists and authors whose valuable writing on psychedelics is almost unknown in the field. There remain many women whose significant contributions to the exploration and employment of psychedelics for spiritual development, personal discovery, individual betterment or therapeutic impact have not been well recorded.

Keywords

psychedelic, women, psychedelic science, LSD, psilocybin, peyote, history, Mabel Luhan, Valentina Wasson, mushrooms

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There is plenty of writing about women and drugs, but the discourse around the exploration of psychedelics in Western society has historically been dominated by men. The drug experiences of women have been both sensationalized for their scandalous aspects and sterilized in clinical reports, but the contributions of women to the contemporary history of Western psychedelic investigations have remained obscure, and the identities of early women experimenters, theorists, explorers, and researchers are often unknown.

Discourse, in critical analytic terms, is larger, more complex and more formal than conversation. It includes complex systems of rules, roles, rituals, goals, professional credentials, customs, habits, combinations of words, and patterns of thought. These complex systems were described as “games” by Timothy Leary, and were what his famous (or infamous) slogan “Turn On, Tune In, Drop Out” urged people to leave behind in seeking new forms of consciousness. In medicine, law, teaching, and the ministry, professional language and restrictive credentialing processes continue to shape candidates into recognizable members of these elite groups, legitimating their ideas and opinions and delegitimizing those of outsiders. The professional discourse around psychedelics has historically tended to be dominated by one class, gender and race, to the detriment of equity, inclusion, and diversity. The relative paucity of information about the wisdom and accomplishments of women in psychedelic studies is one example of this asymmetry, but courageous and determined female scholars, artists, and therapists who have earned and demanded full participation in programs of research, professional forums, and educational efforts are now changing this field. There remain, however, many women whose significant contributions to the exploration and employment of psychedelics for spiritual development, personal discovery, individual betterment, or therapeutic impact has not been well recorded. This article explores some of the underreported history of women’s contributions to psychedelic exploration and research in the past century (Mangini, 2019).

Susi Ramstein

When Dr. Albert Hofmann, the discoverer of the remarkable properties of lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), was honored on the occasion of his 100th birthday on January 13-15, 2006, scholars and visionaries from around the world were invited to present their insights and outlooks at an international symposium. Media releases heralding the event announced that “more than 80 renowned experts from all over the world” had been invited to inquire into every aspect of Dr. Hofmann’s discovery. This select group, described as “the international consciousness research’s elite,” was almost entirely male, with only about 10% of the speakers being women. The symposium presented an overview of 60 years of LSD history, and many of the commentaries on pivotal events and publications mentioned the historic participation of women, but only 3 presentations of a total of 47 featured women speaking independently of a male supervisor, colleague, or partner (Gaia Media Foundation, 2006).

Women who were in attendance found this disparity unmistakable. The conference celebrated LSD's relationship to sacred substances of the Americas, and to the kykeon of Eleusis, but failed to evoke the priestesses and curanderas who prepared and dispensed these potions. At the conference, Dr. Hofmann's famous bicycle ride was recalled and celebrated, but no mention was made of his 21-year-old lab assistant, Susi Ramstein, whom he had asked to bicycle beside him on his ride home and who remained with him during the most intense part of his 250 πg trip. Ms. Ramstein, the first psychedelic guide, two months later joined the long and respected tradition of researchers trying new drugs on themselves when, with the first of three experiments with 100 πg, (a larger dose than the 60 πg that Dr. Hofmann's male senior team members had ingested) she became the first woman to take LSD (Hagenbach & Werthmüller, 2013).

Following the Basel conference, a group of women convened to discuss what could be done to increase the access of women scholars, artists, researchers, and visionaries to platforms such as the International Symposium. It was clear that opportunities to present and publish needed to be augmented for women in the field. As step toward this goal, journalist Ann Harrison convened a gathering of scientists, activists, ceremonialists, researchers, and artists whose work centered on nonordinary states of consciousness at the Wilbur Hot Springs in California. Considerations about privacy and confidentiality were predominant, as the conditions of social reprehension and political vulnerability that had endangered all work with psychedelics for decades were still very much in evidence. Some women voiced concerns about the potential repercussions of disclosing an interest in psychedelics in their work environments, as well as the possibility that their fitness as caregivers for their children might be questioned. Twenty women, including speakers whose work had never before been publicly presented, as well as seasoned authors, artists, and scholars, appeared in an environment of confidentiality, support, and appreciation for the voices of women. They were exhilarated by a sense of power to change reality, and enthusiastic to develop a regular forum that would present the work of visionary women. The Women's Visionary Council (WVC) was subsequently founded by Harrison, Carolyn Garcia, and Maria Mangini in 2007, and since then has been producing an annual colloquium that specifically privileges women's voices, and brings together the richness of traditional knowledge, the enthusiasm of social activism, and the empowerment of freely exchanged information.

The WVC adopted as its motto a phrase from Virgil that embodies women's leadership and courage: "*Dux femina facti.*" It means "A woman was the leader of the enterprise" or "A woman was the author of the achievement" and it concludes the narrative in Book 1 of the Aeneid (at around line 365) that describes how, through her pluck, insight, and guile, Dido founded and became queen of the city of Carthage. The use of this phrase by Virgil signaled the need to pay particular attention to an unexpected situation: A *woman* was the leader. (Gilleir & Defurne, 2019). Women's leadership and achievement were understood to be an exceptional case, a big surprise in a male hierarchical world (https://www.visionarycongress.org).

Valentina Wasson

Many stories that have entered the canon of psychedelic history fail to fully represent the contributions made by women. The well-known saga of Gordon Wasson's conversion from a mycophobe to a mycophile, for example, usually does include that his original inspiration to reconsider the usefulness and desirability of mushrooms in general came, on their honeymoon, from his wife Dr. Valentina Pavlovna Guercken Wasson. Less well-known is that Valentina Wasson was also the principal author of *Mushrooms, Russia and History*, a two-volume, 93-plate book that was 30 years in the making. This book, which had begun as a cookbook by Valentina and the Wassons' cook, Florence Ada James, was completed jointly by the Wassons, although Valentina did most of the research. She was described by her husband, a banker, as the "senior partner," as if in a business relationship (Hellmen, 1957, p. 26). Valentina on the other hand, described the book as "coming to term," with her husband's help and enthusiasm, a gestational metaphor used by a female pediatrician (V. P. Wasson & Wasson, 1957, p. xviii). These volumes are the most intricately fashioned and costly project ever released by Pantheon Books. They cover mushroom history, folk ways, diet, and culture, and were addressed to "those who love the whole rich world of wild mushrooms in the same way that many love the flowers of the field and the birds of the air" (V. P. Wasson & Wasson, 1957, p. xvii).

Like Ann and Sasha Shulgin's *TiHKAL* (1990) and *PiHKAL* (2002), *Mushrooms, Russia and History* is an erudite work based on a love story, but unlike the Shulgin's work, it is not well-known (perhaps because of its original high cost, now greatly increased by its scarcity after only 512 numbered copies were printed). In her preface, Valentina Wasson described it as "the first treatment in any language of the role played by mushrooms in the daily lives of the varied European peoples" (V. P. Wasson & Wasson, 1957, p. xvii). She reserved the last paragraphs of the preface to describing the book's illustrations. The splendid watercolor images of mushrooms in their natural size were completed as a hobby by French entomologist Jean-Henri Fabre, who, like the Wassons, was a bibliophile.

Because of Fabre's concern that the their colors would not reproduce well, he left more than 600 of his mushroom watercolors unpublished on a shelf in his studio. The paintings might, as Fabre mourned and Valentina agreed, have been "shifted from cupboard to cupboard and from attic to attic, to become dirtied and stained and for rats to gnaw, until finally they would fall into the hands of some little grandnephew to be cut into paper caps" (V. P. Wasson & Wasson, 1957, p. xx). Instead, Valentina recognized this lament and Fabre's passion for mushrooms in a brief autobiographical aside in his *Life of the Fly* (Fabre, 1919), where he mused about the indelicate names that mushrooms were sometimes assigned, such as the puffball called *vesse-de-loup* or wolf-fart. Valentina and Gordon Wasson located Fabre's neglected watercolors, and had them reproduced by Daniel Jacomet, of Paris, using the pochoir process, characterized by its crisp lines and brilliant colors.

Although Valentina was the principal author, and the sole author of the Preface, she noted that her husband's contributions to *Mushrooms, Russia and History* could be identified by her shift from singular to plural pronouns in the text. He was, she said, particularly interested in mushroom terminology, because "mycologists sensitive to the fitness of things are the first to admit that their nomenclature for mushrooms offers a spectacle of unscientific confusion, an accumulation of infelicity" (p. 364). Together they examined the legacy that brought mushrooms to be labeled with terms that suggest revulsion and fear, noting that they might be the residue of belief from our earliest forebears that "lingers on, fossilized and misunderstood, in our vocabulary . . . the aftermath of the emotional hold of those mushrooms on our own ancestors" (V. P. Wasson & Wasson, 1957, p. 375). The origin of this attitude toward mushrooms had been lost long ago in Europe, leaving only the taboo, and fungi named, according to the Wasson's friend Robert Graves, "for demons, hobgoblins, and succubae, for various loathsome reptiles, insects and animals, for unmentionable human organs and their disgusting by-products" (Graves, 1957, p. 22). The chapters of *Mushrooms, Russia and History* were composed in the order in which they appear, and it is not until the second volume that the Wassons, "navigating along uncharted coasts of cultural history, never knowing what fresh discovery lay just ahead," (p. xviii) describe their efforts to find the "the divine mushrooms with delphic powers" associated with the Mazatec culture (V. P. Wasson & Wasson, 1957, p. 326).

The Spanish missionary Bernardino de Sahagún (1569/2012) had written of inebriating mushrooms in the 16th century, as did other religious busybodies who wished to root out all traces of local religious cosmology and ritual practices, which they saw as idolatry and witchcraft, and they appeared to have succeeded. In his 1843 *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, W. H. Prescott's extensive descriptions of Aztec feasting did not mention mushrooms at all. In 1915, a respected ethnobotanist, W. E. Safford, asserted that the Spanish reports had mistaken peyote buttons for mushrooms, because peyote "when prepared as a drug, resembles a dried mushroom so remarkably that at first glance it will even deceive a trained mycologist" (p. 294), and declared that intoxicating mushrooms never had existed at all. A Mexican mycologist, Blas Pablo Reko, disagreed and persisted for decades in the search, and when the sacred mushrooms were located by Robert J. Weitlaner in Huautla de Jimenez, Oaxaca in 1936 he passed them on to Dr. Reko, who forwarded them to botanical authorities at Harvard for identification. Richard Evans Schultes also went to Huautla to collect additional samples for Harvard in 1938, and subsequently published two papers on the mushrooms, which he described as "Aztec narcotics" (Schultes, 1939).

On July 16, 1938, Robert Weitlaner's daughter Irmgard Weitlaner, an expert in traditional textiles; her fiancé Jean Bassett Johnson, an anthropologist and linguist who studied Mazatec healing practices and had recorded the use of "hierba Maria" or *Salvia divinorum*; Bernard Bevan, a student of Spanish architecture and a British espionage agent, and Louise Lacaud, who belonged to the Mexico City Junior League, a women's volunteer organization that engages in social, cultural, and political volunteerism; became the first nonnative persons known to have attended a Mesoamérican shamanic mushroom ceremony performed specifically for them. Their experience, which was reported to be the earliest firsthand account of White people being allowed at such an event, was described by Johnson in a conference at the Mexican Anthropological Society on August 4, 1938, and later published as "Some notes on the Mazatec." Johnson (1939) devoted more than half of this paper to linguistic analysis, his specialty, and he acknowledged that the information on shamanic curing was primarily recorded by his companions. The secret of the sacred mushroom came near to being revealed, but World War II was to interrupt this process. Jean Bassett Johnson was killed in a motor vehicle crash in Tunisia in 1944 and Richard Evans Schultes' attention was diverted to the upper Amazon in search of rubber, a needed war material.

In 1952, Robert Graves, who was aware of the Wassons' interest in attitudes and beliefs about mushrooms, sent them a clipping from a Canadian pharmaceutical journal that discussed an ancient Meso-American mushroom cult (Graves, 1957). Hans Mardersteig, the artisan printer and binder who had been commissioned to prepare *Mushrooms, Russia and History* also had sent a similar message to them that arrived "in almost the same mail" as Graves' clipping. They considered that this might be the key a forgotten truth that should be included in their article. They decided to investigate in person (M. B. Wasson, 1990, p. 37).

The prewar reports of Schultes and others suggested that the mushroom samples that had thus far been obtained in Mexico warranted further study. In 1945, Dr. Reko had published *Mitobotanica Zapoteca* "in which he reiterated his belief in the mushrooms, recorded their use among the Indians of the Mazatec, Chinantec, and Zapotec tribes, and made bold to guess at their identity" but his work went largely unheeded. Schultes referred the Wassons to Reko, an "honest, diligent and enthusiastic ethnobotanist," who was unfortunately a poor linguistic interpreter of the historic texts, and whose theories seemed too fantastic to gain much acceptance (V. P. Wasson & Wasson, 1958, p. 3).

The early publications about the isolation of lysergic acid from an ergot fungus and about LSD's potential for use in the study of mental illness had not yet begun to appear (Sandison, 1954; Sandison et al., 1954), and Valentina Wasson later noted that all of the ethnomycological information about hallucinogenic mushrooms could, at that time, have been read in an hour (V. P. Wasson & Wasson, 1958, p. 3). The Wasson's correspondence with Dr. Reko was to end with his death, but not before he had suggested that they consult with Miss Eunice Victoria Pike, a linguist and Bible translator who had lived among the Mazatecs and was fluent in their language. Miss Pike, who had never herself participated in a mushroom ceremony, reported the traditional uses of mushrooms for healing, but disparaged their divinatory capacities and regretted that mushroom ceremonies had survived efforts at Christianization.

The Wassons were intrigued. Along with their 16-year-old daughter Masha, Valentina and Gordon travelled to Mexico with what Valentina Wasson described as simple objectives: to obtain specimens of the sacred mushrooms in order to identify them, to learn about beliefs and practices related to them, to attend the mushroom ceremonies and to sample the mushrooms themselves (V. P. Wasson & Wasson, 1957). In 1953, after several attempts to locate a *curandero*, the Wassons made contact with Aurelio Cardenas, referred to as *co'td'ci'ne'*—a shaman, "he who knows" (p. 252), who agreed to perform a mushroom ritual for them, provided that they would present a specific problem for him to solve. Valentina disclosed some anxiety about her 18-year-old son Peter, and asked for news of him. The curandero reported on Peter's whereabouts and state of mind, and made some observations and predictions that were regarded by the Wassons with "kindly condescension"(p. 264) until they proved to be correct in almost every particular.

It was not until 2 years later that the Wasson family was introduced to "a *curandera de primera categoria*, a curandera of the first class, Maria Sabina by name." (p. 288) and to her daughter Polonia, who was learning the art of healing from her mother. The *cuandera* and her community introduced all three Wassons to the sacred mushrooms and to the visions that they can produce: Gordon Wasson and his photographer went first, in an all-night ceremony. Several days later, Valentina and Masha took five and four pairs of mushrooms as a daylight experiment. Masha resisted her father's attempt to gather data from her during her experience, preferring the wonderful visions which she said had passed all too quickly (V. P. Wasson, 1957). Gordon Wasson later wrote that this experience was "the first occasion on which white people ate the mushrooms for purely experimental purposes" (M. B. Wasson, 1990, p. 38) and that it indicated that the mushrooms were still potent even when eaten without a ceremonial context (V. P. Wasson & Wasson, 1957, p. 303).

During the week of May 1957 that *Mushrooms Russia and History* was released, Gordon Wasson also recounted his experiences in a well-known story in *Life Magazine.* He was also interviewed for a piece in *The New Yorker* (Helman, 1957), and Dr. Valentina Wasson published an account of her and Masha's experience in *This Week*, a syndicated magazine that was distributed nationally as a supplement to Sunday newspapers, reaching more than 14 million households. The husband and wife writing team of Jhan and June Robbins, whose stories about family and health issues appeared in *Readers' Digest*, *McCall's*, *Redbook*, and *Good Housekeeping* as well as *This Week*, provided a brief commentary on Valentina's article for the magazine's "Story Behind the Story" feature. Dr. Wasson had confined her predictions to the mushrooms' potential as a tool for the study of the psyche, but the commentators, claiming that "'Psychic' Mushrooms Open New Research Horizons," elaborated on their conversation with her to suggest that study of the mushroom would someday reveal its usefulness for the treatments of addiction, for pain at the end of life, or for psychiatric illness, a surprisingly accurate assessment (Robbins & Robbins, 1957). Valentina Wasson died of cancer in 1958. While Gordon Wasson is something of a household name among those with an interest in sacred plants and fungi, Dr. Valentina Wasson's work and expertise are far less well known.

Mary Barnard

In its online forum, WVC has profiled some of the notable woman in the history of psychedelic science, culture, and literature. An example is the story of the poet Mary Barnard (1909-2001), the author of an elegantly written and perceptive essay about magical and sacred plants which appeared in *The American Scholar*, the magazine of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, in 1963.

Barnard was a student of the origins of myth. In 1958, she published a “clear and elegant” translation of the poems of Sappho that has never been out of print, and permanently changed the way that scholars approached the poetic forms of Sappho’s verse. Her research on Sappho sparked an interest in folklore and mythology, and in 1963 Barnard published “The God in the Flowerpot” in *The American Scholar*. In 1966, this essay was reprinted in a collection of essays about the origins of myth titled *The Mythmakers*. In it, Barnard discusses the relationship between folklore and sacred mind-changing plants including peyote, varieties of Datura, Texas mountain laurel “mescal beans,” South American lianas, kava, soma, haoma, coca, opium poppies, mushrooms, marijuana, and hashish, the Delphic oracle’s chewing of laurel leaves, bufotenine, and Taoist hermits’ use of the “divine fungus” *lingchih*.

According to Barnard (1966):

> Half a dozen important mythological themes—the shaman’s journey, the food of immortal life, the food of occult knowledge, the fate of the disembodied soul, the communication with the dead, plant-deities—all converge on this point: on some actual food (usually a drug plant), ritually consumed, not symbolically, but for the experience it confers. (p. 16)

Barnard believed that the magic plants in many myths are not imaginary, and that the food of occult knowledge is not a fiction. She pointed out that the characteristic descriptions of the disembodied soul in may shamanic narratives are not just a cultural or psychological phenomenon. In many of these narratives, and in first hand descriptions of shamanic performances, we are told that the shaman “takes something” to encourage or facilitate healing, divination or prophecy, but we are not told not what it is that they take. Barnard suggests that this gap in understanding is due to a mixture of the shaman’s reluctance to reveal sacred and secret knowledge; and to early observers’ tendencies to see shamanic practice as satanic if they were religious people, and as theatrical hokum if they were skeptics. On the contrary, she says the mythological golden apples and other elixirs, barks, roots, fruits, leaves, and ambrosias have their origins in real plants, and that “talking” plants really do impart occult knowledge.

Barnard was prescient and accurate. When she published her essay about peyote, she imagined the development of a field which she called “theo-botany,” which would be the study of magic plants as “vehicles for a special kind of experience adaptable to the use of most religions that acknowledge an otherworld and permit its exploration.” At the end of her essay, Barnard makes a prophecy: “that theo-botanists working for fifty years would make the then-current theories of the origins of mythology and religion as out of date as pre-Copernican astronomy" (p. 24). That was 1963. Mary Barnard, like Valentina Wasson, had made remarkable prediction about the potential of psychedelics (Mangini, 2019).

Kay Parley

Another woman whose insights and observations significantly prefigured the development of standards and practices that are thought of as fundamental to psychedelic-assisted research and therapies today is Kay Parley, RPN. Ms. Parley celebrated her 98th birthday on March 19, 2021. She has been a writer since childhood, and has published five books. The most recent one, *The Grass People* (Parley & Lohans, 2018), her first fantasy novel, appeared in 2018. In 2016, Ms. Parley also published *Inside The Mental: Silence, Stigma, Psychiatry and LSD*, her story of being both a patient and a psychiatric nurse at the "The Mental"—Weyburn Mental Hospital in Saskatchewan. In it Ms. Parley recounts her appreciation for the benefit that she received from her treatment for a manic episode under what she has describes as "the old psychiatric model" (Tremonti, 2016) prior to the widespread use of tranquilizers and antipsychotic drugs. During her time as a patient, Ms. Parley, whose father and grandfather were also patients at The Mental, participated in a hospital community in which the nurses actively engaged the patients with understanding and empathy, which encouraged and motivated them to contribute to an environment that was protective rather than custodial. She decided to study psychiatric nursing as a way of paying back some of the benefit that she found she had received from her treatment.

When Ms. Parley began her psychiatric nursing career, Humphry Osmond was at The Mental, experimenting with LSD in search of biochemical determinants of mental disorders and developing innovative approaches to hospital practice and design. Francis Huxley, Aldous Huxley's nephew, with whom Ms. Parley became friendly, was also there, conducting a study of the relationship between hospital layout and social interaction patterns. Many of the nurses, psychologists, interns, physicians, and social workers at The Mental were curious about the effects of LSD, and imagined that taking it would improve their insight into the world of their patients. Dr. Osmond was mentoring Ms. Parley as a writer, but anyone who had a psychiatric history was not encouraged to take LSD, and Ms. Parley had been personally advised by Osmond not to participate in LSD experiments, lest she "get into a space [she] couldn't get out of," based on her history of mania. Still, in 1958, when research at The Mental had been going on for about 5 years, her desire to compare her own breakdown with an LSD experience combined with Francis Huxley's reputation as an LSD expert led her to accept Huxley's offer to sit with her privately, away from the hospital, at Osmond's home, where Huxley was house sitting. When Ms. Parley's experience began spiraling into depression and paranoia, Huxley interrupted it with niacin, but despite this she reported that the insights gained from her LSD experience stayed with her and strengthened her many times over the years. Ms. Parley did not find that the perceptual distortions or the bout of delusional thinking she had experienced with LSD were comparable to her experience of manic psychosis, in contrast with the then-current psychotomimetic understanding of the drug's effect (Martin, 2016).

In 1958, Parley went to work as a registered psychiatric nurse in Saskatoon, where Abram Hoffer and Colin Smith were investigating the therapeutic potential of what came to be understood as the psychedelic or mind-manifesting effects of this class of drugs. She became known as an "LSD specialist" psychiatric nurse, able to focus intensely and intuitively on the patient for hours and, when needed, to provide "expert guidance from an understanding companion"(p. 80). Parley's remarkably perceptive and thoughtful 1964 article about this experience, "Supporting the Patient on LSD Day," might have been written by a contemporary LSD therapist. Her understanding reflects what have come to be established elements of psychedelic-assisted therapy: rapport-building and preparation with the subject, the sitter's focused and dedicated presence during the session, and review and integration of the day's events in its aftermath. Her article highlights the importance of preparing both the environmental setting where the experience will take place and the intentions and expectations of the subject's mental set. Parley's report provides a comprehensive look at what is required of a skillful psychedelic therapist. Despite this, her work, written more than four decades before the development of contemporary psychedelic therapy protocols, is still largely unknown in the field (Parley, 1964). Today, Ms. Parley reports that it was worth experiencing a breakdown, as it ultimately resulted in her being at the center of the "heady days" when Saskatchewan was a leader in the ground-breaking field of psychedelic research (K. Parley, personal communication, March 25, 2021).

Gertrude Paltin

The tendency to overlook the roles and contributions of women in in psychedelic research and therapy has extended to other publications by 20th-century women scholars. For example, Sharon Paltin MD brought a copy of a rare 1971 reference book, coauthored by her mother Gertrude Paltin and Oscar Janiger, to the attention of a researcher who was surprised to learn that Gertrude had been a close research associate of Janiger's. Sharon Paltin had not previously known of her mother's position in psychedelic research, although she knew that Ms. Paltin had had some kind of professional link to

Janiger. With support from the WVC, Dr. Paltin distributed the book, *A Bibliography of LSD and Mescaline: From the Earliest Researches to the Beginnings of Suppression* by Oscar Janiger, MD, and Gertrude Paltin, MS, to researchers and libraries, who discovered that it includes reference entries previously unfamiliar to most scholars (Janiger & Paltin, 1971).

Janiger is a well-known figure in early psychedelic therapy, but Gertrude Paltin, is almost completely unknown. Ms. Paltin was trained as a biochemist, and encountered Dr. Janiger when he lectured to the osteopathic college that her husband attended. She became one of his clients, and later an assistant and the coauthor of this work. This extensive annotated bibliography includes works in Italian, German, and French as well as in English, and subdivides these into 18 major areas of focus, including publications on Administration-Dosage-Tolerance, Psychological Studies, Behavioral Studies, and Popular and Creative works, among others. The bibliography also provides the first names of the cited authors, making it possible to glimpse the genders of papers' authors, which is interesting to consider for that era of research (Sylvia Thyssen, private communication, 2009). The references compiled by Ms. Paltin and Janiger, although not focused on therapeutic applications and complete only to 1963, provide recoverable links to otherwise unrecorded parts of the early body of knowledge and research which might otherwise be forgotten (Passie, 1997).

A short biography of Gertrude Paltin is found in the Vaults of Erowid (Erowid Crew, 2009). She was daughter of Jewish Russian immigrants, who received her MS in biochemistry from Temple University. Her first husband, a physician who was an early Janiger LSD subject, reports that Gertrude Paltin worked closely with Janiger as his executive secretary and participated in his early work with LSD (Samuel Paltin, private communication, 1998). Samuel Paltin's own LSD experiences with Janiger, like those of other patients, took place during a normal clinic day, with Janiger seeing patients in his office while the LSD user sat outside under an shady tree, unaccompanied except for periodic checks by Janiger, and by Gertrude Paltin. Samuel Paltin believes that the bibliography was completed some years prior its 1971 date, and the most recent reference cited is almost a decade older. Ms. Paltin, who was raising small children during the preparation of the bibliography, later died of a cerebral hemorrhage at an early age. Acknowledged in this publication as the coauthor, Ms. Paltin's contribution to Dr. Janiger's work is otherwise undocumented (Sharon Paltin, private communication, 2019). She is emblematic of the hidden history of women in psychedelic research who often supported the work of their male partners and colleagues, provided comfort to participants, were involved in psychedelic sessions and helped write up reports, but were very rarely identified as coequal participants in published work (Dyck, 2018, Mangini, 2019).

Mabel Luhan

The uneven reporting of the history of women in psychedelics extends to the story of the well-known figure Mabel Luhan. Mabel Evans Dodge Sterne Luhan, a wealthy American patron of the arts and member of the Greenwich Village *avant garde*, who became interested in peyote early in the past century. Her four volumes of memoirs describe her several marriages, her many affairs with both men and women, and her ultimate feeling of "being nobody in [her]self," despite years of psychoanalysis and a luxurious lifestyle on two continents, among the leading literary, art, political and intellectual personalities of the day (Palmer & Horowitz, 1982). In *Movers and Shakers* (Luhan, 1936), she described her life in Greenwich Village, and the many scholars, artists, and radicals who frequented her social salons, including John Reed, Walter Lippman, Isadora Duncan, Emma Goldman, and Margaret Sanger. She also gave a famous early account of a peyote experience.

Luhan persuaded a friend, the ethnographer Raymond Harrington, who had lived in Oklahoma and was familiar with the rudiments of Native American ceremonies, to help Luhan and several friends try to replicate a peyote ceremony in her apartment on West 9th Street in New York. Harrington had described the benefits of the peyote religion for his Oklahoma contacts, whom he pronounced were sober, industrious, and inspired to produce more beautiful craft work due to their recovery of inspired designs under the influence of peyote. His description, that peyote conferred the ability "to pass beyond ordinary consciousness and see things as they are in Reality," excited Mabel's adventurous spirit, and when she discovered that Harrington actually had a supply of peyote she was determined to try it (Elcock, 2018). Harrington warned her that peyote was not to be taken lightly and insisted that there was a correct procedure for its use. Mable and her friends agreed to take it according to his instructions. She and her friends fasted (for one meal) and then set up her drawing room with a light bulb covered with a red shawl as a simulated fire and a folded sheet standing in for the peyote altar. Luhan later wrote about this event (Mangini,2019).

Her trip, with nine friends, was not a pleasant experience for Luhan, who became frightened that the police would be called after one of the participants left the apartment in a frenzy (Elcock, 2018). Mabel's account of this event has been singled out as an improvement on the more common "crudely reductive" medico-scientific catalog of experimenter sensations because of her focus on the group's complex interpersonal dynamics (Jay, 2019b). Absent from this evaluation is any acknowledgment of the presumption inherent in attempting to tailor the ritual context of a peyote tipi to fit the environment of a lavishly decorated Greenwich Village brownstone (Jay, 2019a).

She was reluctant to use peyote again, but in 1917, bored with her society life and weary of the focus on military mobilization and of the propaganda related to the world war, she moved to Taos, New Mexico. Luhan found her home and her mate in Taos. She described her simple life there in *Winter in Taos* (Luhan, 1935). She married Tony Lujan, a Taos Pueblo man, who was a peyote leader in his community. He gave his wife (who changed her spelling of their name to make it easier for her Anglo friends to pronounce) peyote medicine when she was very ill, and she had a classic transformative vision (Allen, 2016). She wrote a poetic and evocative account of her experience, in which she said that the whole universe fell into place for her (Luhan, 1937). Mabel Luhan used the term "expansion of consciousness" long before it was to become idiomatic some 40 years later (Palmer & Horowitz, 1982).

Peyote, however, became a contentious issue in her marriage to Tony Lujan. Although she had directly experienced healing and deep insight under its influence, she insisted the Lujan give up the use of peyote, and opposed the inclusion of peyote leaders in the pueblo government. Along with other instances of meddling in pueblo affairs, Mabel Luhan encouraged religious persecution of peyote users, whom she described as "drug addicts," and she supported the enactment of a federal law prohibiting peyote use. A wealth of expert knowledge from both anthropologists and peyote users from Oklahoma to Montana opposed this legislation, and it was quietly dropped (Stewart, 1987).

Mabel Luhan is remembered as a pioneering "New Woman," who rejected Victorian norms and expected sexual and political independence. Financially secure and well-educated, Mabel enjoyed a more visible and less restricted role in the public arena than women of preceding generations, but one that was not accessible to women of all races, classes and communities. Her resistance to social limitations and her opinionated intrusiveness exacerbated conflicts within the Taos pueblo community, and she attempted to use her social and political connections to undermine the progressive commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in his support for freedom of religious practice for indigenous peoples (Jay, 2019a). Today it is possible to purchase $1400 hand-colored portraits of Mabel Dodge Luhan in her Taos period, wearing an enormous diamond ring and holding a bowl with dried peyote cactus, titled "*Tony introduced me to peyote . . . I introduced him to money*" (Stockhold, 2009).

The lives and impact of the remarkable women discussed here represent only a tiny fraction of the many others whose contributions to the history of psychedelics remain to be explored and revealed. The WVC has made progress in the original mission of raising awareness of these contributions and providing a forum for women to present their ideas and work in a gathering that welcomes all genders but at which the voices of women are in the majority. Recognition of the achievements of women in all aspects of psychedelic culture, research, therapy, and scholarship has been increasing, and longstanding gender imbalances are gradually resolving as a new generation of women takes an active and equitable place in this field. At a time when much of the world is coming to terms with the lasting legacy of institutional racism and cultural hegemony, this recognition needs to extend to other marginalized groups. Increasing the availability of the resources and prestige associated with the newly legitimated interest in psychedelics beyond the historic class, gender, and race that have dominated psychedelic scholarship and research, and engaging in respectful discourse with the lived experience and cultural stewardship of historic and traditional psychedelic practitioners remain significant challenges which must be addressed if the field of psychedelic studies is to be fully reflective of the diverse perspectives that have contributed to the accumulated wisdom in this area.

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Portions of this article appeared in the 2019 Special Issue on Women and Psychedelics of the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies [MAPS] Bulletin, Vol. 29, No. 1

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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Mariavittoria Mangini, PhD, FNP, has written extensively on the impact of psychedelic experiences in shaping the lives of her contemporaries, and has worked closely with many of the most distinguished investigators in this field. In 2007, she cofounded the Women's Visionary Council, a nonprofit organization that supports investigations into nonordinary forms of consciousness and organizes gatherings of researchers, healers, artists, and activists whose work explores these states. She is Professor Emerita of Nursing at Holy Names University in Oakland, where she was the Director of the Family Nurse Practitioner program for 20 years, and is a faculty mentor in the Certificate in Psychedelic-Assisted Therapies and Research at California Institute of Integral Studies. Her current project is the development of a Thanatology program for the study of death and dying.