

Dead and still grateful: Deriving mechanisms of social cohesion from deadhead culture

by

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B. A., Wichita State University, 1991

B.A., Wichita State University, 1992

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AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work
College of Arts and Sciences

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

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Abstract

Deadheads (fans of the *Grateful Dead*) created a durable culture that has lasted for over 50 years despite the death of several band members and the break-up of the band in 1995. What mechanisms account for the rise and persistence of this culture? This empirical question informs a theoretical question: what mechanisms are responsible for social cohesion? Social cohesion has been widely studied in sociology, but because these studies range from sovereign states to interpersonal interaction, the field lacks definitional consensus for the term. Instead of focusing on definitions, therefore, this study instead seeks to contribute to the understanding of underlying mechanisms that are responsible for the development and maintenance of social cohesion. This study employs a mixture of qualitative methods: I conducted seven years of face-to-face and online participant observation, conducted 22 semi-structured, informal face-to-face interviews with 39 interviewees, and collected 86 online, long-form surveys (combined n=125). This study uses both inductive and deductive approaches to analyze material gathered from a mixture of qualitative methods: ethnography, open and closed coding of interviews and surveys, and triangulation to the body of historical work on *the Grateful Dead*. The mechanisms that emerged from this study suggest that processes related to ritual, religion, and identity, all operating through emotion, are central mechanisms in the longtime cohesion evidenced in the deadhead community. Fan behavior at *Grateful Dead* shows is reminiscent of Durkheim's description of tribal behavior in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, and my research shows that fans create collective effervescence, sacred objects, and feel that they are part of something larger than themselves. Randall Collins builds on Durkheim in his theory of Interaction Ritual Chains, which informs the ways in which deadheads, through engaging collectively in intense rituals, create a long-term sense of community. Finally, I explore the structural symbolic interactionist

school of identity theory with Stryker, McCall and Simmons, and Burke. When combined, these theories describe influences on deadhead group composition, explore the complex interaction between the individual and the group, and emphasize the role that emotion plays in that identity-work. Using an inductive approach and Hedström and Swedberg's (1996) typology of mechanisms, I arrive at a number of mechanisms at work in deadhead cohesion: (1) *situational* (macro-level) mechanisms include internal and external constraint; (2) *individual action* (micro-level) mechanisms include self-transcendence, self-reinforcement, and self-talk; and (3) *transformational* (micro-level to macro-level) mechanisms include group maintenance and disruption. Future work should test these mechanisms using a group that shares characteristics with deadhead culture (such as transience, emergence, boundedness, motivation, and with little official structure) such as the grassroots political movement that emerged after the November 2017 national election, as well as hate groups that have existed for years but have recently become more active. Looking forward, more work is needed on meaning-making and the role of emotions in social cohesion. This work has implications for several sociological disciplines, such as group behavior, social movements, and culture, as well as social cohesion, religion, ritual, and identity theory.

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L. Frank Weyher

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Acknowledgements

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outsider perspective. The Sociology department at K-State has been a good place to be: faculty as a whole have been encouraging, engaged with their students, and committed to the development of future peer scholars. Finally, I want to thank Ms. Rundquist. Your encouragement and humor—and the fact that you either know the answers or can find them—makes a difference. I appreciate you all.

I have been threatened by my family (I swear, they are otherwise supportive!) to not get too sappy in this section. Conducting qualitative research means that I don't leave my work at the office at the end of the day. It has also meant a lot of traveling, and my daughter and my partner came with me on the marathon journey from Manhattan, KS, to Santa Clara, California, back to Manhattan just long enough to drop off our camping gear, and then back to Chicago, Illinois and home again. My parents, daughter, and partner probably know more about the *Grateful Dead*, deadheads, and Sociology than they ever wanted to, but they have been valuable sounding boards and companions. Many times, they have asked questions or made observations that sent me down a new path, and my work would not be what it is without you.

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*I have spent my life
Seeking all that's still unsung
Bent my ear to hear the tune
And closed my eyes to see
When there were no strings to play
You played to me*

“Attics of My Life”

(Garcia and Hunter 1970:116-17).

Dedication

For everyone who chooses hope over hate; joy over despair; action over indifference.

You are the song that the morning brings.

Prologue

God help the child who rings that bell

It may have one good ring left, you can't tell

One watch by night, one watch by day

If you get confused just listen to the music play

“Franklin’s Tower”

(Garcia and Hunter 1975:245-47)

This dissertation began with a vague notion that there was “something there” in the fact that deadheads had been a community of *Grateful Dead* fans for, at that time, over 40 years. It was a niggling feeling, knowing that *here was a puzzle*, but not being able to see the outlines to begin to tease it apart. Once I educated myself about the band and culture and began attending shows, the possibilities became overwhelming; there are so many interesting directions from which to approach this culture, and I had to choose only one. What I have left out of this dissertation is sometimes painful, but fodder for future work. In the end, I came back to my original question: what holds this culture together? What makes them cohesive? What are the invisible, subtle “ties that bind?” The community is voluntary: no one forces deadheads to go to shows. Although the band does provide support for and sparked the formation of the deadhead community, there is no official, dues-taking deadhead organization, no elaborate hierarchy or bureaucracy. And when deadheads do get together, it is an event, not just a show. Other such communities may have formed since, but the deadhead culture has existed for over 50 years. How? Why?

Writing about the *Grateful Dead* and the culture this band engendered is like trying to write systematically about a State Fair: in every direction are sights, sounds and smells that are at once unusual and familiar. Everywhere, people are at once different and the same: infants, children, and teens mix with adults and the elderly. At the fair, hundreds, perhaps thousands of people talk at once, snippets of conversation floating past, the sound mixed with buzzes, dings, sharp pops, and laughter. Where else can you walk past the warm, earthy smells of manure and emerge into the sickly-sweet smell of fresh funnel cakes, all of it mixed with the heavy aroma of diesel fumes? It is as though each booth, each building, each ride creates its own sensory zone: sights, sounds and smells morphing sometimes from one step to the next. Like the State Fair, a *Grateful Dead* show has its own bewildering sights, sounds and smells that must be interpreted in context to make sense of them.

Chapter 1 - Getting on the Bus

Come hear Uncle John's Band

by the riverside

Got some things to talk about

here beside the rising tide

“Uncle John's Band”

(Garcia and Hunter 1969:102-03)

Beginnings

This research project began with a hunch. A friend had been telling me about his youthful experiences in the late 1980's, following the jam-band *The Grateful Dead* from one venue to the next in the stereotypical VW bus, an image I found difficult to reconcile with the upstanding husband and father I knew. Jerry Garcia had died and the *Grateful Dead* disbanded over 20 years before our conversation, and with it the culture – or so I had thought. Yet my friend talked about the experience as though it were yesterday. Once he discovered that I was intrigued, he began sending me links to YouTube videos of 15-minute-long improvisational renditions of a single song, clearly recorded (often poorly) from the audience at live shows. These were “good examples” of the band's “jam” style, he told me. I could not listen for more than a few minutes before I became bored with the song's apparent lack of structure and direction. I did not know how to *hear* this music. I was not the only one: during its tenure, the band had very little mainstream success and little radio play compared to other bands of the same era (the *Rolling Stones*, for example). Yet fans flocked to live shows for years, some leaving behind “normal” life to follow them “on tour.” It was this puzzle—the touring deadhead-turned-respectable-citizen,

these incomprehensible videos, the strange fan following that I discovered had persisted for decades—that convinced me: there is *something here*.

On a cold but sunny December afternoon in 2009 I stood chatting with my friend in his front yard. I had once again been quizzing him about the *Grateful Dead* experience. He paused, sighed, hands tucked into his pockets, his eyes unfocused and staring blindly across the street. He seemed to be seeing things that were not there.

“Man, I need a show,” he said, in much the same way people say: “I need a vacation” or “I need a cigarette.”

“What’s so different about a show?” I asked. “What do you get from a show that you can’t get from listening to the recordings?”

He didn’t answer immediately, thinking, then grimaced and shook his head slightly. Then he uttered the words I would hear echoed from deadheads everywhere:

“You just have to go to a show to understand.”

And so I did.

The Study

How is it possible to attend a show in 2010 when the band officially disbanded in 1995? For now, let me simply state that *Grateful Dead* culture is still, despite the death of band members and band break-ups, a lively and enduring entity. As I write this, I have been embedded in that culture as a participant observer for the past seven years, beginning in the Spring of 2010. Over that time, I attended shows, conducted interviews, collected surveys, and explored the existing literature about the *Grateful Dead* and community (see Chapter 2 – “Inspiration, Move me Brightly: A Method for Studying the *Grateful Dead*” for more detail). Through grounded qualitative research, that *something* I originally sensed coalesced into questions about

community formation and preservation. Deadheads exist after 50 years because, quite simply, the community is cohesive. But how? What mechanisms are responsible for such enduring social cohesion in the deadhead community?

Many groups are cohesive and long-lived: religious groups and sports organizations are good examples. Yet deadheads are different and interesting for several reasons. They exist as a transient community, both stable—through a network of ties—and fleeting, coalescing briefly at concerts and then dissipating. The *Grateful Dead* has played in one iteration or another for over 50 years; a remarkable longevity for a band that has lost key band members, faltered, and regrouped. New deadheads join the culture at a sufficient rate to keep the community stable; deadheads are not in any way a dying breed. Perhaps the most intriguing characteristic of the deadhead culture/community is the fact that it exists and persists with very little structure or bureaucracy. The band and related organizations simply act as nodes in a larger network within the deadhead community. Deadhead social cohesion, therefore, is an example of a more-or-less spontaneously re-generated entity. In other words, the deadhead community simultaneously creates and sustains itself.

This study uses both inductive and deductive approaches to analyze material gathered from my direct experience, paired with the lived experience of participants, to tease out the mechanisms that account for the rise, but more importantly, the persistence of the social phenomenon known as the deadhead community. This empirical question informs a broader, theoretical question or “stubborn problem” (Merton 1987) that contributes our Sociological understanding of group behavior in general: what mechanisms are responsible for social cohesion? Although the list of mechanisms is likely long, data collected from this study suggests

that processes related to religion, ritual, and identity, all operating through emotion, are central mechanisms in the longtime cohesion evidenced in the deadhead community.

Data Gathering and the Study Population

Between 2010 – 2016, I attended 16 live shows in five locations, spending approximately 130 hours in the field as a participant observer. My social media involvement was sporadic until the 50th anniversary shows were announced in January of 2016, when multiple Facebook groups sprang into existence and gained thousands of members. Although social media participation fell off slightly after the anniversary shows in June and July of 2016, activity is still high enough that multiple *Grateful Dead*-related Facebook posts appear on my timeline daily. By its very nature, participant observation blurs the line between the personal and professional; extending participant observation to social media blurs that line even further, making it impossible to estimate the number of hours spent embedded in deadhead interactions online.

In addition to participant observation, I conducted 22 face-to-face interviews with 39 respondents, for a total of 16 hours of recorded interviews. Interview times ranged from approximately three minutes to one and one-half hours, dependent on whether interviews were preplanned (resulting in longer interviews) or on the fly at the venue (resulting, generally, in shorter interviews). Pre-arranged interviews averaged one hour. I received 86 completed surveys from an online survey request in the summer and fall months of 2016, bringing the total study sample to 125. Detailed information about methods of research and analysis can be found in Chapter 2. Demographically, respondents were white (94 percent), between the ages of 21 and 87 with an average age of 58, slightly more likely to be male (54 percent) than female (46 percent) and appeared (from observation) to be primarily middle class (which agrees with historical data). Demographic characteristics are analyzed in more detail in Chapter 7.

Social Location

Music is powerful for many people: it can lift moods, help people grieve, trigger memories, and mark time. My formative years were shaped by a remarkable evolution of popular music: old country, country gospel, bluegrass, Elvis, Waylon, Willie and Dolly, Simon and Garfunkel, the Beatles, Bowie, Queen, ABBA, KISS, and then hair bands, heavy metal, heart-shaped boxes, AIDS and suicide. It did not, to my knowledge at the time, include the *Grateful Dead*. Imagine my shock when, at the beginning of this research project, I purchased a studio album titled *The Very Best of Grateful Dead* and realized that I was familiar with the smooth, mellow tones of songs like “Touch of Grey” and “Friend of the Devil.” These crisp, defined studio recordings were vastly different from the sometimes discordant and rambling jams on YouTube my friend and others recommended as “good examples” of *Grateful Dead* music. I then surfed YouTube for examples of shows, checked to see if the *Grateful Dead* had played at Woodstock (they had), and from my computer discovered a treasure trove of concert recordings, fan art, images, video, and text: *Grateful Dead* fans are amateur historians and have documented 50+ years of music and culture to an astonishing degree. I would later come to understand that sharing is a hallmark of the culture; an important part of self-expression and identity.

Coming to the culture as an outsider provided me with the opportunity to record my own entry and conversion into deadhead culture, offering me the proverbial front-row seat to how and why one enters and remains in the culture—a central component to my research question. My demographic characteristics – namely, age and race – as well as the cultural characteristics or cultural capital earned from having similar experiences and education to my research population, allowed me to more-or-less blend in with the crowd unless I chose to reveal my identity as a

newcomer and researcher. My role as an outsider, on the other hand, made everything strange and worthy of noting and examining; an alien in an alien world.

From the Outside, In: Challenges to Entering the Field

Buying a ticket to a show and concert t-shirt—looking the part—is a start, but entering a new culture requires acting the part as well, developing a “deep familiarity” with the culture and learning to engage as an insider (Goffman 1989:130). As a newcomer with little idea of what to expect, I entered the field being open and honest about my purpose and intentions when it was necessary to explain. I was accepted, encouraged, and even informally trained. My first show was *The Further* at 1st Bank Center in Broomfield, Colorado in 2010. I had been to live music shows before, so I at least knew how to navigate security, find seats, and so on. A man and woman in their 60’s—a couple from Nebraska—held the seats next to mine, and after we got past his misunderstanding about my research purpose (he was initially quite alarmed at the thought that I might be a journalist) they both became warm and welcoming. For the rest of the night, my neighbor kept up a running explanation of what was happening during the show, providing valuable “insider” information about where we were sitting in relation to the band (the “Phil zone:” the left side of the stage, where Phil Lesh stands), the music, and the show’s structure. Through my research, I have learned that this type of mentoring is common within the culture and have witnessed it at subsequent shows.

Being simultaneously an ethnographer and participant in an unfamiliar culture presented its own challenges: maintaining a sort of dual consciousness, both researcher and participant, creates a risk of missing data and potentially making one’s outsider status visible. At first, researcher-me attempted to observe and record the mental and physical responses of participant-me in real-time. The effort dulled the experience, and when I took this approach, I felt alone in

the crowd, almost voyeuristic. The experience at times became grating and confusing. Yet when I abandoned myself fully to the music, I worried that I was missing important data. The nature of a *Grateful Dead* show is such that it captures the mind and body; truly abandoning myself to listening, singing, clapping and dancing—in short, experiencing what it is like to attend a show—my objective mind switched off. Nonetheless, it seemed surreal and even *wrong* to not fully participate in the concert experience. Once I realized that I could bring pen and paper into the venue without anyone reacting, because it is common for fans to notate the set list, I began taking notes about what I saw prior to the opening number and during set breaks. I also took photos and video to help spark my memory rather than taking notes and wrote field notes afterward, trying to re-capture the overwhelming welter of experience.

Another challenge, particularly for an outsider, is that the field of study is not limited to the concert event, but extends to the parking lot and even daily life for some. Conversation about shows and culture extends to social media and in both formal news articles and informal online posts. At the outset, I drove to the venue only when needed, close to show time, and missed the parking lot and Shakedown Street scenes completely. I learned about them through my reading and found them through a combination of trial-and-error, social media posts, and by asking other attendees. By the time the Chicago shows rolled around, I was “in the know” and a source of information for others.

This willingness to be deeply affected by my study population and the concert events became critical for the interviews and surveys. Deep experiences led to better questions and a greater understanding of the answers. On more than one occasion interviewees were reassured and made to feel more comfortable when I was able to reciprocate with my own stories: for

example, after my first interview the interviewee asked for *quid pro quo* – she had told me her story; it was then my turn to share.

The insider perspective is beneficial, but not without drawbacks. Much of what is important in this culture is relational. Going to shows is pivotal to understanding what's going on, to understanding the music, the energy, and the sense of community, and personal experience adds depth and color to my understanding, resulting in richer research. This understanding, however, is often difficult to translate from an intuitive knowing to logical, written explanation, as much of what binds this culture together defies words. For example, my respondents all struggled to explain what it means to “get it,” – often they could explain the phrase but not what is meant by “it.” As a researcher, I can observe body language, interactions, and so on, but native, embodied, emotional and experiential understanding is key. Of course, one of the risks of this type of involvement is that, to some extent, it is subjective. How do I know that my experience is similar to another individual's experience, let alone one from 30 years ago? This is where it became critical to check and re-check my own experience against my observations and interviews, what others have said and written, and against what other researchers who have studied the *Grateful Dead* have reported. As most of these researchers were themselves insiders prior to beginning their research, if my experience is similar to what they observed and reported, I can reasonably conclude that my assertions are consistent with others' experiences within the culture. If it is not, then that raises another question: have I misunderstood? Or has the culture changed, somehow? A final concern: in the process of “going native,” I have come to identify more with the culture, and it has become easier to focus on the positive and ignore the negative. I have also become more embedded within Deadhead-focused Facebook groups, and it is easy to forget that these groups are not necessarily representative of the culture at large. Thus,

throughout this work, I have tried to step back and make my experience strange, to maintain an open mind and awareness of difference.

Chapters

Ethnographic writing typically concentrates on data and then teases out relationships to theory and other empirical work (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw [1995] 2011). Although the *Grateful Dead* and deadhead culture are the focus of my research, the culture is here situated within the broader context of sociological theory. This dissertation, therefore, is structured to move back and forth between theory and data. A *Grateful Dead* show is about far more than the musical performance itself; it is a chance for the community to come together and collectively express, re-create, and re-affirm its distinctiveness. Understanding deadhead culture rests in the experiencing it. To that end, interludes describing different aspects of the *Grateful Dead* show experience punctuate the chapters at appropriate points. A typical show—barring interference from local authorities—consists minimally of the parking lot, Shakedown Street, and the show itself, each an important expression of the broader *Grateful Dead* culture. Although these vignettes are set at Red Rocks Amphitheater in Morrison, Colorado, they represent an amalgam of the shows I attended between March 2010 and July 2016. Because I can only write deeply about what I experienced, these vignettes should be taken as representative of the culture; no doubt, despite what appears to me to be remarkable consistency in the culture over the years, longtime deadheads will have had experiences that were different from mine. However, compared with what I have read and with what my respondents have told me, my experience appears to be remarkably similar.

Deadheads will no doubt notice that the combination of elements in Interlude 3 is fictitious – but there is a reason for that. The point of the interludes is to immerse the reader in

Grateful Dead culture, so I wanted to use a show I had attended, and recently, so that I could write about the show in a way that would feel more immediate to the reader. I borrowed the set list from *Dead and Company's* July 3, 2016 show at Folsom Field in Boulder, Colorado. At the same time, I did not want to break the overall tone of the interludes by focusing on *Dead and Company*, particularly since some deadheads would say that the *Grateful Dead* ended when Garcia died. Finally, since Garcia is so central to the band's history, I wanted the interlude to show Garcia on stage . . . but I never saw Garcia perform live. Therefore, to write those portions, I referred to YouTube videos of Garcia singing those songs.

Chapter 2 – “Inspiration, Move Me Brightly: A Method for Studying the *Grateful Dead*” details the choices I made in approaching this study. Studying the *Grateful Dead* is comparable to the parable of the blind men studying an elephant: one must make choices about what to pay attention to, and those choices limit data collection. Nevertheless, participant observation, paired with in-depth interviews, surveys, and extant material (both in print and in social media) provided me with rich and varied sources of data, and make me relatively confident that I know something about the elephant as a whole.

Chapter 3 – “People Who Really Like Licorice: Social Cohesion” provides an overview of the complex sociological study of social cohesion. The phenomenon has been studied at different levels and different contexts, with the result that the field is broad. Throughout the research phase, it became clear that emotions are central to the ways in which deadheads achieve cohesion; therefore, this study concentrates on social cohesion through the lens of the sociology of emotions.

Chapter 4 – “A Band Beyond Description: A Brief History of the *Grateful Dead*,” provides an overview of *Grateful Dead* history sufficient to orient a reader who may not be familiar with the band or the culture.

Chapter 5, “If My Words Did Glow: Shared Transcendence,” applies Durkheim’s concept of religion as presented in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* ([1912]1995) to the religious aspects of the deadhead culture and show experience. The show experience falls remarkably well within Durkheim’s concept of *collective effervescence*, from which, Durkheim argues, religion and society emerge.

Chapter 6 – “Not Fade Away: Ritual,” examines the ritual nature of patterned deadhead interaction and the show experience. This chapter builds on Durkheim and applies Randall Collins’ (2004) concept of *Interaction Ritual Chains* to explain both the concert experience and the high levels of deadhead activity outside of the show experience.

Chapter 7 – “Are You Kind? Deadhead Identity applies Identity Theory,” derived from the core works of the Social Interactionist school, to explore how deadheads approach the culture and the role identity plays in the durability of that culture despite the passage of time. Chapter 7 also combines identity theory across macro-, meso-, and micro-level approaches and demonstrates how these approaches can be seen to work together, using deadheads as an example.

Chapter 8 – “Were They Ever Really Here? Discussion,” draws the focus back to the central question of social cohesion and considers how each of the preceding substantive chapters contributes to identifying and understanding the mechanisms that create social cohesion for deadheads. If we accept that social cohesion functions in a similar way for other coherent groups, regardless of their focus or function, then the lessons learned from deadheads may help us to

better understand the cohesion—or the lack of it—in other groups. How, for example, can social movements build and retain a long-term membership? How can this work help us understand groups whose purpose is to cause harm?

Chapter 2 - Inspiration, Move me Brightly: Methods

The storyteller makes no choice

soon you will not hear his voice

his job is to shed light

and not to master

“Terrapin Station (Suite)”

(Garcia and Hunter 1977:261-69)

Introduction

Deadheads—and band members—are prolific and generous amateur historians. Band and “family” members have published several books, but the real wealth of material comes from the fans themselves, who recorded their experiences in audio, video, text (both print and online), and art. These materials are widely shared: in 2008 the band’s parent organization, Grateful Dead Productions, donated its archives to the University of California at Santa Cruz Library Special Collections; the University hired a dedicated archival librarian to manage the collection in 2010. Weir explained that the remaining members agreed that “making their collection available to the community was the right thing to do” (Grateful Dead Archive Online N.d.). In 2009, the library received an Institute for Museum and Library Services grant to digitize archival materials and make them available to the public. In addition to digitizing materials the band donated, the online archive also invites members of the public to submit their own content through the project website: Grateful Dead Archive Online (GDAO)¹. This combination of “official” and

¹ The Grateful Dead Archive Online can be accessed at <https://www.gdao.org/about>.

community-generated content is characteristic of *Grateful Dead* culture. “Based on the unique relationship between the band and their fans—and the tape sharing traditions,” the GDAO explained, “it was a natural progression to seek to build a socially constructed collection” (Grateful Dead Archive Online N.d., Baine 2012). Physical “historical artifacts and other materials” are also on display at Dead Central, a permanent *Grateful Dead* gallery located in the McHenry Library on the UC-Santa Cruz campus. Dead Central launched its first exhibit in 2012 and rotates exhibits annually, offering members of the public easy access to archival materials (Baine 2012).

Even before the GDAO, however, the internet was already awash with fan-generated content, beginning with USENET groups, online bulletin boards, and GOPHER connections to an online repository of *Grateful Dead*-related files hosted by berkeley.edu. Users shared information about shows, exchanged tickets, and arranged for the copying of show recordings through these online services. Approximately 70,000 “netheads” read the online electronic newsletter DEAD-FLAMES. An online community called the WELL (The Whole Earth ‘Lectronic Link), founded in 1985, allowed for online “conferences” in topic areas, and the *Grateful Dead* conference became so popular that it “kept the rest of The WELL afloat while it found its footing” (Shenk and Silberman 1994:313). David Dodd created a website in 1994 that he called “The Annotated Grateful Dead Lyrics”—the first website to publish annotated content. Fans soon began emailing comments to Dodd (2005), which he then incorporated into the annotations (with attribution), creating a project that he wrote “was not mine alone” (xxx). That website has since migrated to the GDAO, and in 2005 Dodd published *The Complete Annotated Grateful Dead Lyrics*. Academics created an online journal for interdisciplinary scholarly work concerning the *Grateful Dead*: the online content has been removed but the articles have since

been published in edited collections. Tapers took the band's request that recorded music be freely shared to the internet, and their audio-only show recordings (including soundboard recordings) are freely available for streaming (and some for downloading) through the *Grateful Dead* section of archive.org². Audience members also upload video to YouTube.com: within one to two days following any show I have attended, I have been able to access video of every song from that show. Today, *Grateful Dead*-related websites, forums, blogs, and social media groups, lists, and hashtags number in the hundreds, if not more. Deadhead community longevity, self-identification, and production of cultural material clearly establishes that, in Merton's (1987) words, a "phenomenon" exists that is worthy of study.

An argument could be made for the exclusion of all but academically produced material, but that approach would be wrong for this study. What is important for my research question is the fan experience as reported by the fans themselves—the deeply subjective, emotional, and pre-conscious experience, rather than the logically rationalized. Academic work on the *Grateful Dead* contributes to this study (see Chapters 5, 6, and 7), but because the authors of these articles were themselves first deadheads, their approach to the culture was already colored and informed by their experience. By entering the culture as an outsider, I had the opportunity to see everything as "strange" and to examine my own deeply subjective, emotional, and pre-conscious responses as I became part of the culture even as I prompted others to tell me about their own. Given the 50-year time span of the culture, with deadheads spread across the globe and inhabiting both physical and virtual spaces, paired with the fact that—although the band itself has an organizational structure—deadheads themselves have no formal organization to approach,

² The archive of crowd-sourced Grateful Dead music recorded by tapers, including soundboard recordings and audience recordings, can be accessed at <https://archive.org/details/GratefulDead>.

no membership rosters, and very little hierarchy or bureaucracy within the culture in general, studying this culture has been challenging, despite—or because of—the wealth of readily available information. What I collected represents only a slice of the culture: one that I believe to be representative of the majority of deadheads, but limited by my location in time and space.

Methods of data collection

Existing material, as described above, provided me with a grounding in deadhead culture and a point with which to triangulate and verify my own experience. For this study I employed a mixture of methods to collect data, focusing primarily on qualitative methods: participant-observation, interviews, and surveys. Qualitative research delves deeply into lived experience, the researcher actively observing and seeking out areas of tension: differences that make a difference in social life (Stinchcombe 2005). *Grateful Dead* culture is sometimes labeled deviant (see Chapter 7) and deadheads certainly engage in behavior that judged as odd by the dominant culture; it is, therefore, a fertile group to study for these areas of tension.

Ethical Concerns

Data in this study was gathered with the approval of the Kansas State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). I presented all participants with an informed consent statement approved by the IRB: the paper form was used with pre-planned interviews, the oral form with cold interviews, and an electronic version, based on the long paper form, was the opening portion of the online survey. I did not offer or provide compensation of any kind for participating, although I did ask respondents for their email addresses if they wished to receive a copy of my dissertation. I informed participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any time; no respondent has chosen to exercise that option. Interviews occasionally triggered emotionally charged memories/experiences and several respondents wept or became deeply

emotional at various points during the interviews. When this happened, I waited for respondents to indicate that they were ready to continue, and in some cases, engaged in “covering” behaviors to allow participants to regain their composure before continuing. Although illegal drug use has a long history in deadhead culture, questions about illegal activities could potentially put respondents at risk and therefore were not asked. However, many interviewees discussed drug use casually, and when the respondent volunteered that information, it was recorded. Participating in this study carried little risk. In writing this dissertation, the names and identities of my respondents were changed to protect their identity and keep the stories they shared with me confidential.

Participant Observation

Participant observation allowed me to orient myself to the culture, observe my own integration into the community, helped me to determine what questions to ask interviewees and survey respondents, and gave me the foundation from which to understand and analyze my data. As a participant observer, I occasionally told people that I was conducting research, but only as it came up in conversation. Meeting and conversing with strangers and sharing experiences is expected within the culture. Responses have been quite encouraging; most deadheads I spoke with seemed quite pleased that the culture they were part of was of interest to academic research. Some told me about previous research. Still others were curious about whether I had become a deadhead. Aside from these situations, I made every effort to embed myself seamlessly into the culture, to become part of the crowd instead of a “researcher.”

Face-to-face

Participant observation played a critical role in my research. Deadheads commonly tell outsiders that they must go to a show to “get it,” and this was certainly true for me. Although

some individuals (a minority) call themselves deadheads who have never seen a *Grateful Dead* or “family” show, for those who do attend, being physically present in the moment—as I will discuss in chapter 6—is an indispensable part of the deadhead persona. From the spring of 2010 to the summer of 2016, I attended sixteen *Grateful Dead* or “family” shows, including (listed in the order in which I first saw the band) *The Furthur*, *Phil Lesh and Friends*, the 50th anniversary gatherings of the *Grateful Dead*, and *Dead & Company*. I have spent, conservatively, an estimated 130 hours in the field as a participant-observer (excluding drive time) in or near sixteen shows at seven different venues in three states. In Colorado, the shows were held at the 1st Bank Center in Broomfield (a suburb of Denver), Red Rocks Amphitheater in Morrison, and Folsom Field in Boulder; these venues seat between 18,000-50,000 and were typically sold out, or nearly sold out. At my first show in Broomfield, a man waiting ahead of me in line to buy a recording of the show CD overheard me talking with my friend about our first show. He turned around and asked me what took me so long to “get on the bus.” As we chatted, he asked how many nights we were staying. Because of my friend’s work schedule, we were leaving immediately after the show—and he was visibly shocked, then turned back around, shaking his head slightly. I had no idea why. Now I know that fans typically attend every show at a tour stop.

Three years later, the 2013 Red Rocks shows were my first multiple-night run. Red Rocks is seen by deadheads as a “special” or “spiritual” location where the band always plays well, and it draws attendees from across the United States. Shows in Colorado in general appear to attract people from all over the United States: whether this is common in all states I cannot say. The 50th anniversary shows in California and Illinois were by nature going to draw from across the country, even internationally. Colorado may now be particularly attractive for deadheads (although the attraction to Red Rocks began years earlier), because the state is

marijuana friendly (medical marijuana had been legalized shortly before my first show in 2010, and the state has since legalized recreational marijuana), camping is readily available, and the culture and vending at the venues is generally accepted. The latter is not necessarily true in other states. Between 1965-1995, Colorado hosted over 50 *Grateful Dead* shows, so deadheads have a long history with shows in the state. Kansas, however, hosted only 10 shows between 1969-1991, all located in Kansas City, Sandstone Amphitheater in Bonner Springs (a suburb of Kansas City), and Wichita (“The Setlist Program” N.d.). Although drummer Mickey Hart has been as close to Kansas State University as Lawrence, and one cover band—*The Schwag*—comes to Manhattan, family bands and cover bands largely followed the same pattern, avoiding the Great Plains region. Although it is possible that deadhead behavior varies at different locations, fan behavior has been remarkably similar between Colorado, California and Illinois, leading me to believe that the data I gathered through participant-observation at these locations is reliable.

My fieldwork—quite by accident—occurred during a time frame in which the deadhead community experienced great change. *The Furthur* launched in December 2009 with original band members Lesh and Weir, and well-respected “family” band *Dark Star Orchestra*’s John Kadlecik standing in for Garcia on lead guitar (Young 2009). They played this first show just over three months prior to my first *Furthur* show in Broomfield in March 2010. Although I did not attend a *Meet Up at the Movies* until 2016, the annual event began in 2011. Fans gather at participating movie theaters across the United States to watch a *Grateful Dead* show or movie on the big screen, giving fans a chance to meet in their local communities (Gratefulweb.com 2016). Just days before my first set of interviews, to be conducted at the 2013 Red Rocks run of shows, Lesh and Weir announced that *The Furthur* would take a one-year hiatus from touring (jambands.com 2013), and rumors of a 50th anniversary show began almost immediately. Over

year later, Lesh and Weir announced the dissolution of *The Furthur* (jambands.com 2014), and Lesh opened Terrapin Crossroads in San Rafael, California to serve as a home base for *Phil Lesh & Friends* (Terrapincrossroads.net 2015), apparently signaling an end to his cross-country touring. Anniversary rumors continued to circulate, fans collectively holding their “virtual” breath. The 50th anniversary *Fare Thee Well* tour was announced online in January 2015, a show that would bring together all remaining original band members, the “core four:” Hart, Kreutzmann, Lesh, and Weir, along with keyboardists Hornsby and Jeff Chimenti (who performed with *The Furthur*), and *Phish* lead guitarist Trey Anastasio standing in for Garcia (dead.net N.d.). When I logged on to Facebook that morning I thought the first announcement was a hoax: wishful thinking from a fan. The news was soon verified, however, and deadhead Facebook groups—as I am sure happened elsewhere—spread the news like wildfire.

Legions of *Grateful Dead* fans traveled to Levi’s Stadium in Santa Clara, California and Soldier Field in Chicago, Illinois in 2015. The choice of venue for both the California and Chicago shows was symbolic as well as convenient for band members and attendees. The San Francisco Bay area, and specifically, the Haight-Ashbury district, was the birthplace of the *Grateful Dead*: where it all began. The choice of Soldier Field in Chicago was even more symbolic, however: Jerry Garcia played his final show at Soldier Field on July 9, 1995, and died exactly one month later (Russell 2010). Symbolically, then, the *Fare Thee Well* tour simultaneously picked up where the band was born and where it ended. The 50th anniversary shows drew crowds in the hundreds of thousands—far greater than represented by ticket sales, and far, far more than promoters initially expected. One interviewee assured me that the culture and “feel” that was seen outside of the venue in Chicago was “like it used to be” (see chapter 4 for more information on the 50th anniversary shows).

Despite the success of the anniversary shows, Lesh chose to return to Terrapin Station instead of going on tour. Instead, Chimenti, Kreutzmann, Hart, and Weir were joined by John Mayer, standing in for Garcia, and Oteil Burbridge, standing in for Lesh, in a new *Grateful Dead* iteration: *Dead & Company*. As unlikely as it seemed at first to move a pop artist into Garcia's spot, Mayer has since "shown his chops" and the band continues to fill stadiums with over 50,000 seats. The lineup also attracted the attention of Mayer fans who might not have otherwise encountered *Grateful Dead* music, since Mayer's pop music represents a very different genre.

I was fortunate, then, to enter the field at a time when band members had just begun to tour together again in a new iteration, to experience the upsurge in emotion and participation that characterized the 50th anniversary shows, and then to witness another evolution—the result of which is not yet known—with *Dead & Company*. Quite a few deadheads see *Dead & Company* as a passing of the torch to the younger generation; a way to keep the music alive.

Online

As noted above, deadheads were early adopters of the world wide web and used the internet in a way that forecast social media. Facebook, my primary virtual space for participant observation, hosted large numbers of *Grateful Dead*-oriented groups and pages prior to the announcement of the 50th anniversary shows. Many new groups formed the day of the announcement, communities of deadheads discussing various aspects of the tour. I embedded myself in those communication streams as a participant as well. Several of these groups have grown quite large: the smallest has roughly 2,000 members, and the largest has approximately 40,000 members. The public, official *Grateful Dead* Facebook page³ has nearly two million followers. Quite literally, hundreds of *Grateful Dead* related posts daily filter across my

³ The official *Grateful Dead* Facebook page can be accessed at <https://www.facebook.com/gratefuldead/>

Facebook feed unless I turn off Facebook notifications for the groups. In many of the “closed” and “secret” groups, individuals share details of their daily lives, successes, and heartbreaks, all of which are woven into the deadhead dialogue. Immersion in deadhead culture, therefore, is for me not a matter of episodic road trips to another state, but instead a daily experience; a window into deadhead-“ism” in routine, daily life. Therefore, I am unable to provide an estimate on the amount of time spent in this virtual field; the nature of my embeddedness renders the question almost meaningless.

Varying levels of access to these groups presents some difficulty in using this material for publication. Some data are “public,” available to anyone with a Facebook account, and with no expectation of privacy. Membership in Facebook itself has few restrictions and users have no guarantee of privacy except for those allowed by their personal security settings, over which they have control. Closed and secret groups, however, do imply an increasingly higher level of privacy. That said, Facebook terms of service (see Appendix A) require that researchers obtain consent from users if their “information” is used. I have, therefore, used no direct or indirect quotations from Facebook posts. Online embeddedness has served an important role in that it allowed me access to the experiences of a wider range of deadheads and helped me to evaluate which of my observations are consistent with the general culture. It serves, then, as a backdrop with which to triangulate my ethnographic experience with that of others, and a window through which to observe how others make use of culture in daily life.

Interviews and Surveys

To collect data from the deadhead community, I conducted face-to-face interviews and online surveys. The research question for this study—what creates social cohesion among deadheads?—reflects a search for the intangible. Simply asking respondents a question like

“what makes you feel like you belong to this group” would invite respondents to engage in metacognition as they think about how they feel, with the risk that they would omit details they did not see as important, consciously or unconsciously adjusting their responses to align with the socially acceptable or with what they thought I wanted to hear. For this reason, I kept my description of my research question general when presenting it to interviewees or survey responses, stating instead that I was, generically, interested in deadheads, and wanted to understand what makes the culture work. I asked for stories, prodding for sights, scents, tastes, smells and other tactile and emotional details (Terkel and Parker 2006, Katz 2001a, Weiss 1994).

Interviews

Rather than ask a series of set questions, I instead presented interviewees with six “themes,” each with broad prompts: becoming, belonging, experiencing/participating, “getting it,” sharing, and ending (see Appendix B), and asked interviewees to begin with what they were most interested in talking about (Terkel and Parker 2006, Weiss 1994). I also gathered demographic data by observation when possible and through questions worked into the flow of the interview where necessary. Most interviewees began with “becoming,” and in most interviews, we were able to address most questions. Between the summer of 2013 and summer of 2016, I conducted 22 face-to-face semi-structured, informal interviews with 39 respondents (some were group interviews) between the ages of 21 to mid-70’s, with an average age of 42. All interviewees were white, 74 percent were male, and 26 percent were female. All interviews were conducted in Colorado and Illinois. Interviews were solicited through:

- Postings on the internet and social media sites that focus on the *Grateful Dead* and deadheads,
- Snowball sampling: gaining references from previous interviewees
- Convenience and snowball sampling at concerts

Half of the 22 interviewees were pre-planned, with interviews lasting from one to one-and-a-half hours in duration. Although I originally intended to conduct more pre-planned interviews, the constraints of travel and available time to conduct interviews at or near venues interfered with that intention. I approached the remaining interviewees cold, at or in the concert venues. Most of these interviews lasted between 5 minutes to an hour, with the longer interviews occurring at the anniversary shows in Illinois. Longer, in-depth interviews provided rich material, as the longer time allowed for the development of a greater rapport between myself and the interviewee, along with the time to follow up on interesting “hints” the dropped by the interviewee (what Weiss 1994 calls “markers”). Shorter interviews tended to cover similar material, but with far less depth; they did, however, corroborate the material gathered in longer interviews. In addition to formal interviews, during which I recorded conversations (with permission), I also profited from informal conversations and encounters at venues, hotels, traveling, and so on, which helped me to develop a greater understanding of the culture.

Online Survey

The 50th anniversary shows created a new challenge for data collection: experience with the difficulty of scheduling multiple pre-planned interviews had taught me that my ability to gather data in that way would limit the number of anniversary attendees I could interview. By launching an online survey, however, I could collect data from survey respondents and conduct cold interviews. My concern was well founded: I did attempt to conduct a pre-planned interview outside of Levi’s Stadium in Santa Clara, California, but was thwarted by my inability to find a young man who texted me that he would be recognizable for wearing “a Confederate flag as a cape,” and that he was “somewhere on the grassy Shakedown Street” (there were several grassy Shakedown Streets, and a surprising number of young men wearing various flags as capes).

The survey launched (using Qualtrics) a week prior to the 50th anniversary shows in California, and ran for a month following the shows. I used a snowball sampling approach to solicit survey respondents: I shared the survey request and link with previous interview respondents, posted the same on my Facebook wall and asked friends and colleagues to share it widely (many did), and posted on a popular *Grateful Dead* message board.

I designed the survey questions based on questions that typically arose in face-to-face interviews and designed them to elicit, as much as possible, long-form written answers (see Appendix C). The long-form approach undoubtedly served as a deterrent for the survey, and of the 288 respondents who began the survey, many dropped out, but 82 respondents answered a significant portion of the survey questions. One survey was dropped from the pool because the respondent's answers indicated that the individual was not a member of the culture. Because several individuals who originally responded to my request for face-to-face interviews indicated that they would prefer an online or email interview, I also emailed a modified version of the earlier survey, eliminating references to the "upcoming show" and fixing some questions that previous responses had indicated were problematic questions. Of five additional survey responses (bringing the total to 293), all five finished the survey. Time data collected from Qualtrics suggests that respondents who finished the online survey invested a comparable amount of time to face-to-face interviewees.

The final tally of usable surveys (n=86) represents just under 30 percent of the surveys that were begun. Respondents ranged in age from 40-87, 56 percent female and 44 percent male, with 90 percent identifying as white. Because the 50th anniversary shows sparked a resurgence in interest in the culture, and because the survey link was forwarded informally (in other words, respondents did not have to specifically visit a *Grateful Dead*-themed site), the surveys allowed

me to reach respondents that I may not have found otherwise. This survey data has provided a valuable counterpoint to my interview and ethnographic data.

Methods of Analysis

I employed a combination of open coding of interviews and surveys, ethnography, and a comparison of means across studies to analyze data collected for this study. The demographic data collected in this study, paired with first-person observation and historical data, suggest that the composition of respondents in this study is representative of the culture (see Chapter 8 “The Inductive Approach,” for a wider discussion of analyzing ethnographic data). I was able to gather data from individuals identifying as women and men at similar rates (46 percent female, 54 percent male; no respondent selected the “other” option) from across a wide age range (21 – 87 with an average age of 58), living in different geographical locations, and expressing different levels of involvement with the culture. Respondents identified overwhelmingly as Caucasian (94 percent); the Hispanic and Other categories were each represented by two percent of the respondents, and Black and Native American categories were each represented by one percent of the respondents. The low percentages for First People and other minority groups reflects the composition of the culture: historically the culture has been overwhelmingly white. Shenk and Silberman (1994) wrote that although *Grateful Dead* music includes elements of music from other cultures—the drums section of drums and space borrowing from Latin and Japanese drumming traditions, for example—and blues and jazz elements that originate with black culture, the members of the culture they observed were overwhelmingly white. They interviewed “deadheads of color” who felt strange or even isolated by this disparity. In chapter 7, I revisit the demographic characteristics of deadhead culture and explore what those characteristics suggest about deadhead identity.

I imported interview transcripts, recordings, and survey responses into Atlas.ti, a qualitative data analysis software program. I began data analysis by open coding these documents to identify common themes. Unfortunately, because there is so much “going on” in deadhead culture, and so many potential viewpoints, open coding quickly became unwieldy with roughly 800 codes. Trying to reduce this large number of codes quickly became a poor use of valuable time, but I could see several general themes emerging that seemed to be related to social cohesion: (1) transcendent, almost religious episodes involving an altered state of consciousness, (2) ritual behavior (even though participants would likely not classify their behavior in this way), and (3) identity work. These three: religion, ritual, and identity, stood out like constellations in a universe of codes. These themes suggested a theoretical approach. For example, respondent descriptions of the euphoria experienced at some concerts mirror Durkheim’s ([1912]1995) concepts of collective effervescence and emotional contagion, suggesting that Durkheimian theories might offer a reasonable approach to the data. From this point I began a recursive process between data and theory. For example, Collins’ (2004) theory of Interaction Ritual Chains, which I employ when discussing ritual, consists of several parts and sub-parts. From Collins’ theory I developed a list of codes, independent of the data I collected, that one should expect to find if Collins’ theory was appropriate. Shared focus, for example, should be evident in the data if I were to argue that Collins’ theory is at work at *Grateful Dead* shows. Returning to the software, I added these codes and began sorting existing codes into these new categories. Based on Katz’ (2001a) process of analytic induction, whereby negative cases are not eliminated but rather used to narrow one’s focus and increase explanatory power, I created new codes for those negative cases. Finally, I created a diagram using the relevant codes and noted relationships between them. Collins’ theory lays out a set of preconditions that lead to a set of

outcomes. Diagramming these relationships using the data I collected, paired with my own understanding and experience as a participant-observer, revealed relationships between different structural elements of Collins' theory that add to our understanding of interaction ritual chains.

As a participant observer, I entered the field as a “real member of the setting being studied” (Berg 2009:195), and thus have incorporated my own experience and responses into both my understanding of the data and into the data itself. Describing a *Grateful Dead* show and the meanings generated by the culture is a challenge, and one that deadheads often struggle with. Much of the show experience is simultaneously physiological and ephemeral: it must be felt, but those feelings fade, leaving behind memories that are difficult to verbalize. This is no less true for me, although I consciously made notes and took photographs and video in an attempt to preserve and trigger my memory, a seven-year ethnographic record of my experience. Two problems remain: (1) how do I put into words what so many struggle to describe? (see chapter 5 for a more thorough discussion of this issue) and (2) can I reasonably conclude that my intensely personal and ephemeral experience has anything in common with what thousands of others have experienced over the last 50 years? I addressed the first problem by providing the reader with luminous descriptions—“compelling” passages that “contain leads to why social life takes the forms we observe” (Katz 2002:65), incorporating numerous vividly—and to the best of my ability—truthfully rendered scenes into the discussion but also including ethnographic description of meanings and interpretations (Berg 2009). Readers can judge for themselves whether my descriptions and interpretations seem reasonable. The answer to the second problem lies in triangulation, which involves “bringing different kinds of evidence to bear on a problem” (Esterberg 2002:172, Fetterman 2009). In addition to my own observations, fifty years of published and unpublished materials from the band and deadhead culture have provided context

for participant observation, interviews, and survey responses. Using these sources across years and media types, I have been able to test my experience and the experience of my contemporaries against other materials to answer the questions “is this so?” and, to a lesser extent, “has this always been so?”

Conclusion

In some ways, the work I have produced here feels like a pebble in the stream of deadhead culture. So much has been written and shared about the band, deadheads, and their shared culture. What I have attempted to accomplish with this study design is to carve out a small portion of deadhead culture, to deliberately narrow my focus to those things that spoke the most loudly to social cohesion. Had I approached the question from the outside, however, I might have made assumptions about deviance, the power of drug use, or concluded that the culture feels a powerful sense of alienation or disaffection from the dominant culture. As I will show in further analysis of the culture in chapters 5, 6, and 7, however, these assumptions would have been wrong. By taking the risk of allowing myself to become an object of study, and by taking the time to listen not just to interview and survey responses, but to their lived experience, I have been able to learn to see the culture not from the outside in, but from the inside, out.

Chapter 3 - People Who Really Like Licorice: Social Cohesion

“Our audience is like people who like licorice. Not everybody likes licorice, but the people who like licorice really like licorice.”

(Garcia in Paumgarten 2012:N.p.).

On May 11, 2016, I spent a beautiful Wednesday evening driving 85 miles to the closest theater showing of the 2016 “Grateful Dead Meetup at the Movies.” Beginning in 2011, the Meetup occurs at participating theaters across the US, Grateful Dead fans “meeting up” for a single viewing of a recorded Grateful Dead show (Kreps 2015). In 2016, the show – which had never been screened before – had been filmed in Foxboro, Massachusetts on July 2, 1989 (Bernstein 2016). Although my social media had been exploding with people who were on their way to local theaters, I was the only one I knew going in Kansas. The parking lot of the Regal Southwind Stadium 12 was disturbingly and sparsely populated, and the theater itself had no visible signage for the Meetup. Then I saw a couple wearing the tie-dye dancing skeleton prints sold by street vendors in Chicago and immediately felt a sense of relief. I was in the right place, and I was not alone.

I joined about a dozen others in the theater, several of whom were wearing Grateful Dead shirts from Chicago, some others wearing more nondescript clothing instead of tie-dye. The lights dimmed as usual before the movie begins, but instead of opening credits, we watched while a computer program connected the projector to a live stream; we joined the stream a few minutes late due to technical difficulties. The audience, instead of being frustrated, simply cheered when Garcia appeared, large and smiling, on the screen in front of us.

People continued to meander in as much as 15 to 20 minutes late, unconcerned, much as people tend to do at the live shows. At the beginning of the show, most of us stayed seated, although there had earlier been joking about spreading out in the seats for when “the dancing breaks out.” As the show went on, though, some audience members did stand up in front of their seats to dance. Soon those who remained seated were bobbing their heads slightly, then with more abandon.

About an hour into the show, we began clapping at the end of songs, some audience members yelling “woooo!,” and we laughed when the “boys” appeared to be having a particularly good time, smiling or making funny faces in concentration. We talked to each other, using terms and references that would have likely confused an outsider. I realized that I had a huge grin on my face, and remembered how I had smiled through the live shows and then for a couple of weeks afterward.

The movie theater was not like a live show—nowhere near. Most noticeably missing were the physical sensations: movie theater surround-sound did not produce anything like the sonic waves that hit my body at the live shows. A Grateful Dead show is somehow not loud to my ears; unlike most other popular music shows I have attended, I do not feel like I need earplugs at a Grateful Dead show. Still, vibrations from the speakers hit my body and tingle my skin at a live show. They were noticeably and oddly missing in the movie theater, like a sudden stillness on a windy day. However, if I closed my eyes and imagined the sonic vibrations, I could almost imagine that I could open my eyes and be at that show, in the same way that in a half-awake state, a dreamer hopes to open their eyes and live their dream. When the camera picked up the breeze stirring Lesh’s hair, the association my mind had made between the screen and my experience of being at a show made me feel—for just an instant—as though I could feel the cool

breeze gently threading through the warmth of thousands of dancing bodies, like a whiff of rain on the wind. It was shocking to realize that I did not, and could not, feel that breeze. Caught between reality and the sensations my memory provided for a show I never saw, together with the crowd of 20 (my social media reported that shows were sold out in other locations), we created a common experience, and perhaps more importantly, we created a sense of continuity between 1989 and 2016. We created, or re-created, cohesion.

Problems of Focus and Definition

Social cohesion has been widely studied in Sociology, but because the empirical focus ranges from sovereign states to interpersonal interactions, the concept of social cohesion has been poorly defined—or more precisely, too often defined, leading to a lack of consensus (Chan, To, and Chan 2006, Friedkin 2004, Janmaat 2011, Moody and White 2003). Definitions of social cohesion often focus on some form of *connectedness*, but beyond that are typically vague, sharing “an intuitive core that rests on how well a group is ‘held together’” (Moody and White 2003:105). Festinger, Schachter, and Back (1950) described social cohesion as a “field of forces:” pressure from outside of the group holds individuals together, whereas Gross and Martin (1952) instead focused on characteristics of the group that defy the loss of cohesion, defining social cohesion as “the resistance of a group to disruptive forces” (in Moody and White 2003:105). Like Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart’s 1964 comment on pornography (Zelinsky 2014), we may have a hard time defining social cohesion, but we “know it when [we] see it.”

Given such intuitive or subjective takes on “what it is,” it is perhaps ironic that social cohesion is often studied quantitatively, in terms of observed behavior and attitudes (*see for example* Bengtson and Roberts 1991; Chan, To, and Chan 2006; Friedkin 2004; Hulse and Stone

2007; Kuwabara 2011; and Dickes and Valentova 2012). Broadly, social cohesion has been operationalized in three primary directions, by studying: (1) group behaviors: membership duration vs. turnover, participation frequencies, rates of absenteeism, actual cooperation, attitudes toward membership, and degree of adherence to norms; (2) networks: network density and the degree of influence individuals have on others; and (3) subjective measures: feelings of affection, trust, a willingness to help, a sense of common purpose, shared values, belonging, identity, and emotional responses to exchange interactions (Bengtson and Roberts 1991; Chan et. al. 2006; Friedkin 2004; Hulse and Stone 2007; Janmaat 2011; Kuwabara 2011; Lawler 2001; Lawler 2002; Lawler, Thye and Yoon 2000; Lawler, Thye and Yoon 2008; Lawler and Yoon 1996).

Social cohesion research is also hampered by the variables used to operationalize these concepts. Scholars disagree on the relationships between some variables: for example, Janmaat (2011) found that levels of trust, value consensus, and civic participation were strongly correlated with the nation-state's Gross Domestic Product, concluding that social cohesion should be related to stages of economic development. On the other hand, Chan et. al. (2006) exclude the economy from study because they view the economy as a *precondition* for social cohesion, rather than a cause. Research studies also often operationalize cohesion itself very differently, and without making a theoretical case for the validity of those concepts (Janmaat 2011). Finally, current scholars tend to conceive of social cohesion as an inherently good condition, without considering that cohesion could have negative consequences as well (Janmaat 2011). High levels of trust, for example, appear to represent a common good. Yet high levels of trust in a leader or an elected official can lead a nation into war, or small groups of people to suicide (Heaven's Gate members, for example). Can a society with high levels of inequality

nevertheless also have a shared value set? One could make that argument for slave states, which begs the question: who decides what is positive social cohesion and for whom?

What is meant by social cohesion within the body of social cohesion research as a whole, therefore, is ambiguous, given multiple levels of empirical study, variations in definition, and a proliferation of variables not clearly backed by theoretical arguments. Friedkin (2004) took a different approach, brushing aside the search for specific variables that constitute or measure social cohesion, and recommends instead seeking causal *mechanisms* that link individual behavior and social context, resulting in a “theory of social cohesion . . . [where] no single construct is labeled as *the* basis of social cohesion (410, 413; *emphasis in original*). In other words, Friedkin (2004) stepped back from studying a “desirable state of affairs” and instead defined social cohesion in a way that is neutral, and, because it is divorced from context; global across levels of study. “Groups are cohesive . . . when group-level conditions” produce positive attitudes and behaviors toward membership, Friedkin (2004:410) argued:

. . . and when group members’ interpersonal interactions are operating to maintain these group-level conditions. Thus, cohesive groups are self-maintaining with respect to the production of strong membership attractions and attachments.

Friedkin’s construction emphasizes the reciprocal nature of cohesive groups: individuals act and interact, and in doing so collectively create an environment that is favorable to those actions/interactions. Even more fundamental, however, is how the group member *feels* about their relationship to the group.

Social Cohesion and Emotion

Strong “attractions and attachments” involve strong *emotions*; therefore, to tease out the mechanisms that account for the rise and persistence of the social phenomenon known as the deadhead community in this study, I focus on the study of emotions in social cohesion research.

Theorists that study the influence of emotion on social cohesion break social cohesion into two components: (1) the *relational component*, which is easily observable, measures “observed connections among members of the collectivity,” and is often employed in network theory, and (2) the *ideational component*, which, in contrast, concerns the subjective sense of belonging within a group (Moody and White 2003:104-05)—the attractions and attachments toward the group, per Friedkin (2004). The ideational component is quickly dropped within social cohesion research, however, in favor of the relational, with its focus on observable measures that can be more easily studied. Lawler and colleagues, for example, developed the *theory of relational cohesion* over a series of several articles to explain the role emotion plays in building social cohesion (Lawler 2001; Lawler 2002; Lawler, Thye and Yoon 2000; Lawler, Thye and Yoon 2008; Lawler and Yoon 1996:89). The theory of relational cohesion “predicts how and when emotional processes generate commitment” to relationships with others and within groups (Lawler and Yoon 1996:91) by focusing on the frequency of interaction and shared focus (this approach has similarities to Collins’ work, discussed in Chapter 6). Over time individuals begin to feel, as Durkheim theorized (see Chapter 5), that they are part of something larger than themselves, a “third force” that influences their behavior and sense of belonging (Lawler and Yoon 1996:104). Lawler and Yoon (1996:90) noted that individuals can feel one of three types of commitment to a group: *instrumental*, in which individuals are committed because they need to be (college students hoping for a good career, for example); *affective*, or voluntary emotional connections with others, like dating; and *normative*, which arises from moral obligations.

The *affective theory of social exchange* (Lawler 2002:8) combines the micro-level emotional component implied by relational cohesion theory with social exchange theory in a manner that is similar to Burke’s Perceptual control model (discussed in detail in Chapter 7).

Social exchange theory speculates that individuals engage in social, interpersonal exchanges with others to receive rewards that are not available outside of interpersonal relationships (Lawler 2001:349). Exchanges between individuals are, by definition, joint actions, with the result that individuals experience these rewards as linked to the encounter rather than to their own effort in that encounter. When that result is an emotional reward (or lack of reward), as posited by relational cohesion theory, then the emotions the individual experiences are immediate, involuntary, and they appear to arise from the interaction or from the network or group to which the individual belongs. Positive emotions create stronger cohesion; negative emotions weaken cohesion. Positive emotions are more likely to result from stable, controllable situations; therefore, the individual will seek out this type of situation, where they can have greater confidence in the result (Lawler 2001).

Groups produce four types of exchange, according to Lawler, Thye, and Yoon (2008:525): (1) highly interdependent, mutually cooperative groups that jointly produce a collective good “wherein people unilaterally provide benefits to the group and receive benefit from it” engage in *productive exchange*, which nets members of the group high levels of positive emotion, strong emotional attachments, and social cohesion; (2) direct, simultaneous exchange with another group member or members over time results in *direct exchange*, or, if guaranteed by contract (like a work situation), *negotiated direct exchange*; (3) giving and receiving between individuals over time but without sequence and “explicit expectations of reciprocity”—such as inviting friends to dinner—results in *reciprocal exchange*; and (4) when a group of three or more are involved in an indirect exchange, but never exchange with each other (when exchange takes place over a distance or between departments, for example), the weakest form of exchange results: *generalized exchange* (526). Of the four, productive exchange generates the highest level

of cohesion (Lawler, Thye and Yoon 2008): notice that the group creates a collective good from which the group member benefits along with other group members. The individual's focus, therefore, would be on the collective good and group production as opposed to on another individual. Lawler, Thye, and Yoon (2008) found that individuals engaged in a gift-giving or investment activity in a productive exchange setting considered both emotional and tangible outcomes. They were more likely to share resources—work for the collective good—if they also experienced high levels of predictability and trust that they would avoid personal loss and that their efforts would be reciprocated.

Lawler (2002:4) ultimately merged relational cohesion theory and the affective exchange theory of social exchange to create what he called the *micro social order*: “a recurrent pattern of interaction among a set of actors, from which they come to perceive themselves as a unit (i.e. a group) and to develop feelings about that unit.” Lawler's micro social order is similar to Friedkin's (2004) description of cohesive groups in its attention to interaction, perception, and emotions. Borrowing from earlier definitions of social cohesion as an external field of force, micro social orders seem to the individual to be external to—larger than—then any one person. They emerge from a process, beginning with joint activities that produce involuntary, immediate, and “global” emotions (the individual feels “good” or “bad”). These emotions function as internal reinforcement, different from external, societal reinforcements like rewards and punishments, but no less effective. Once individuals recognize that interaction has produced that good or bad emotional response, they think about these emotions, trying to determine their source. As individuals undergo this thought process, global emotions undergo a fundamental shift to “specific emotions,” becoming feelings of “pride/shame in self, gratitude/anger toward the other, and affective attachment/detachment from one or more social units” Lawler (2002:9).

A more tactile example might help to illustrate Lawler's argument. Imagine that an individual is walking, barefoot, across the floor, when s/he suddenly feels a sharp pain on the sole of their foot. That immediate, global pain response registers, and the individual responds by lifting their foot and removing the tack. Now the individual will likely wonder where that tack came from, and try to attribute their physical pain to a source. If the individual dropped the tack and didn't pick it up, then the emotional response is likely to be much different than if a spouse or child left the tack where it could cause harm. The immediate feeling of pain and the feelings arising from attribution are qualitatively different, with potential consequences for attachment to a social unit if the tack was left out by someone else.

In summary, then, Lawler and his colleagues argued that (1) individuals engage in joint activities that (2) produce positive or negative global emotions, which are then (3) attributed, by the actor, to the social unit that produced the joint activity. As a result, the individual (4) feels pride toward themselves or gratitude toward the group and others in the group if the experience was positive. Activities that require a high level of joint activity, and especially where the individual feels indispensable and responsible, will create high levels of emotion and attribution toward others or the group. Cohesion will be high. Thus, social cohesion emerges from the positive emotions resulting from this process, a sense of the group as an external force, expectations of trust and cooperation, an understanding of norms, and individual attachment to the group (Lawler 2002). Social structure—the macro-level—effects cohesion only indirectly, according to Lawler (2002), and is “mediated by these emotional consequences of exchange” (11).

Re-claiming the Ideational Component

Although Lawler and colleagues situated the above theories within relational cohesion, ideational cohesion is inherent to the process of interaction, emotion, and attribution; particularly in the attribution stage, where individuals quite literally feel something about feeling a sense of belonging. Research and analysis of subjective attitudes is messy and time-consuming, but possible. If we are to understand social cohesion, we need to be willing to look beyond networks of exchange to the intangible, enigmatic rumblings of human consciousness that lie below the level of human behavior. The qualitative research approach that I employed for this study is well suited to developing an understanding of such subjective phenomena, but did not prevent me from also gathering information on relational cohesion. My research, therefore, brings together the subjective and objective components of micro-level social cohesion research, and in analysis links the micro- and meso- to social cohesion as a macro-level community phenomenon. In so doing this study aims to understand the ideational mechanisms at play that provide the emotional and perceptual glue to the relational component, resulting in a more robust understanding of social cohesion that can be applied in other contexts and across multiple levels of society.

Mechanisms

What does it mean to seek causal mechanisms, as Friedkin (2004) recommended? A mechanism, in the sciences, according to Hedström and Swedberg (1996) is—like social cohesion—another concept that is not well defined, nor is a clear definition easy to construct. What is important, they argue, is not the definition but more the “type and style of theorizing [that searching for mechanisms] encourages” (299). Research on causal, or *generative mechanisms* (Hedström and Swedberg (1996:287), lies somewhere between co-variation and causal modeling and purely descriptive sociology: it attempts to explain “the particular by the

general”—in other words, to explain underlying patterns that may function across multiple situations (Hedström and Swedberg 1996:282). For example, the authors noted, although we could determine what amount of poison is necessary to cause death, that ratio tells us nothing about the changes in bodily function that occur between the ingestion of the poison and that last breath. Identifying and understanding mechanisms is important for social science, because it is these mechanisms that “provide (or encourage) deeper, more direct, and more fine-grained explanations” that help “distinguish between genuine causality and coincidental association,” leading to a greater understanding of “why we observe what we observe” (Hedström and Swedberg 1996:287).

Hedström and Swedberg (1996) proposed a multi-part definition of a general social mechanism. First, the mechanism is only part of—albeit an important part of—a broader explanation. That explanation must address three principles: (1) direct causality – the explanation seeks to “narrow the gap between . . . cause and effect by “seek[ing] to provide a fine-grained and tight coupling between explanans and explanandum;” (2) limited scope – instead of attempting to “establish universal social laws (which are unlikely to even exist),” sociology should instead “aim at explanations specifically tailored for a limited range of phenomena;” and (3) methodological individualism – individuals behave in social situations, not variables; therefore, a “mechanism-based explanation . . . always refers directly to causes and consequences of individual action oriented to the behavior of others” (Hedström and Swedberg 1996:298-99). Finally, the explanation should be reliable, such that when the cause manifests, the effect occurs (Hedström and Swedberg 1996). In simpler terms, a causal mechanism should reliably help to explain the behavior of individuals in interaction, searching for a detailed, close

connection between the thing to be explained and the explanation, to provide, instead of a universal law, an explanation for a smaller subset of related phenomena.

Hedström and Swedberg (1996) also arrive at a typology of mechanisms based on James Coleman's (1986) model of the influence between the macro- and micro-levels. Coleman argued that conditions at the macro-level influence individuals, who interact at the micro-level and later influence the macro-level. The *situational mechanism* focuses on the ways in which the macro-level affects the individual's "beliefs, desires, and opportunities;" the *individual action mechanism* focuses on the ways in which the interaction of individuals generates "a specific action;" and the *transformational mechanism* describes how individual interactions "are transformed into a collective outcome, sometimes unintended and unexpected" (Hedström and Swedberg 1996:297-98).

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 delve deeply into their respective subjects, and, in the end, reveal commonalities that lend themselves to the type of theorizing Hedström and Swedberg (1996) recommend. Therefore, I will temporarily set aside questions of cohesion and mechanisms until Chapter 8, in the service of providing a "fine-grained and tight coupling" between deadheads and how they came to be, and what that might mean for similarly cohesive groups.

Interlude 1 - Pilgrimage

Such a long, long time to be gone

And a short time to be there

“Box of Rain”

(Hunter and Lesh 1970:137-40)

The air is still slightly chilly on this August morning in 2013 in Denver, Colorado as I lean against one of the wide, limestone-studded entrance pillars for the small hotel behind me, which is bursting with deadheads. I have just finished my first face-to-face interview. I am tired, waiting for my ride, as I watch two cars and a small mini-van pull into the parking lot within minutes of each other and park nearby. Their engines shut off at different times, exhaust visible in the cold air. A middle-aged man emerges from the car on the right; a middle-aged woman from the other car. They are wearing typical street clothes and she is well-dressed, her knee-high brown leather boots stylish.

From its sliding door, the dark blue mini-van disgorges two grade-school-aged boys wielding toy light sabers. Their parents emerge more slowly and begin pulling luggage from the sliding door, piling it on the asphalt as the boys stake out space in the parking lot, a few yards from their parents, to duel. A canvas bag slumps sideways next to a colorful child’s suitcase. The two middle-aged newcomers strike up a conversation with the young parents, somehow giving the impression—in a way that I cannot explain—of being a couple, though they are not touching or standing very close to each other.

A Harley motorcycle roars into the parking lot, passing behind the three vehicles, swinging a wide arc around the dueling boys (who ignore it entirely), and parking on the far side

of the mini-van. A man with a long, wild grey beard, dressed in blue jeans, jacket, and with a blue bandanna tied around his head, dismounts and gently leans his Harley on its kickstand. He walks around the mini-van and approaches the group casually, relaxed. The group adjusts the way they are standing to include him, and they all chat. From a distance, they have the look of a group of acquaintances: body language indicates three distinct groups, but they all orient toward one another and appear friendly – except for the boys, who are still hitting each other with plastic tubes and yelling. Given the mish-mash of people in the overflowing hotel lobby, from 60-somethings to a couple who are taking their infant to her first show, I assume that the people I am watching are deadheads as well. My observation of this group ends abruptly, however, when my ride appears.

The next afternoon, I make my way toward Red Rocks for the first of four days of shows. Driving my car slowly through the few blocks on highway 74 that constitute the small town of Morrison, Colorado, I join a long line of cars wending toward Red Rocks Amphitheater for the Grateful Dead show. A funeral procession would outpace us. It is a clear summer afternoon; the skies are blue for miles and the air is warm with a hint of Rocky Mountain breeze. Eventually, I turn right with the traffic, through Entrance 4 and toward the Upper South Lot. The cracked and patched asphalt road winds and switches back, and some drivers begin parking on the sides of the road to walk the rest of the way, cars and pedestrians turning what would under the best of circumstances be barely a two-lane road into a single lane. To my right, ancient boulders that give the park its name rise from the earth, and far ahead of me – beyond the parking lot that is my destination – a giant rock formation juts from the earth at an oblique angle, like the prow of a massive sinking ship forever frozen in the red dirt from which it erupted.

The end of our journey is marked by casually dressed parking lot attendants, sweating beneath their reflective vests. One takes my \$10 in exchange for permission to park and points deep into the dusty gravel-and-dirt parking lot, where still others wave me forward with flashlights topped with long orange cones. These cone-topped flashlights will glow when I leave tonight, giving the impression that I am being waved into position on an aircraft carrier. In the bright sun of the afternoon, however, they direct us efficiently into double lines, stacking up cars like a neat row of dominos laid side-to-side.

As I park where I am instructed, roll down my window, and turn off the car, I'm immediately confronted with the unmistakable sweet and pungent smell of marijuana smoke. A quick glance around and I see no one visibly smoking, but the scent of pot – and then patchouli – is pervasive. At the far side of the parking lot, an ancient station wagon, its woodgrain side bleached and worn, sits underneath a leafy tree along the demarcation between this dirt lot and the next paved lot. In front of the wagon's hood an awning has been erected, with colorful hangings creating a makeshift tent. I can see ice chests and sleeping bags, and a few people napping. Nearer to me, the people who have just parked are dropping their tailgates, opening their trunks, and raising the backs of their SUVs and wagons. Out come camp chairs, blankets, portable grills, and EZ-ups: a type of collapsible frame with an awning stretched over the top. Most of the people are white, middle-aged, although younger parents with children, as well as teens, young adults and much older adults are emerging from cars as well. They wear shorts, sandals, and tie-dye t-shirts, although some women wear long, flowing skirts and strappy tank-tops. It is only 74 degrees but the sun is intense, and people congregate under the awnings or the lifted gate of the larger vehicles. The smells of searing meat and beer join the marijuana and patchouli. Some of my neighbors turn on their car radios or bring out small battery-operated CD

players, and the sounds of loud Grateful Dead music join the low but excited chatter from people congregating, talking, and laughing. The parking lot has become an impromptu family reunion.

Sitting in my car with the windows down and cooled by the occasional breeze, I close my eyes in the rapidly heating car to listen and to sample conversations around me like I did at family gatherings as a child. In the distance, someone is playing guitar and singing; someone else claps along in time. Still further away is a drum circle. Nearby, a young man says something rude and his companions laugh, the insult clearly a joke. This will be the only remotely negative thing I hear all day. Next to me, a 30-something young man dozes in his truck while his five-year-old son makes nonsense vocalizations up and down the scale, playing with the sounds he can make as children do, and then says to his father: "it would be cool if me and my friends got a band together. I'd get half the money!" His father is asleep and does not answer. Dogs bark occasionally, and the swishing sound of people walking past is steady, voices growing louder and then diminishing as people pass by. I could fall asleep, here in the sunshine, amidst hundreds of strangers and with my window down. I feel safe; at home.

Instead, I open my eyes, gather my things, roll up the window, and step out into the dusty parking lot. As I walk down the open aisle strategically left by the parking lot attendants, I move through different "zones" of Grateful Dead music. Near one car, the bluegrass "TENNessee, TENNessee, ain't no place I'd rather be" blasts, but just a few cars later the sounds melt into the softer, sweet strains of "Riiiiiple in still wa-ah-ter, where there is no peb-ble tossed, nor wind to blow." A few more steps and I'm listening to the blues-funk guitar that punctuates each syllable of "Well, well, well . . . you can never tell," and at the road I hear the lively twanging "doot DOOT do do do doo!" opening of "One More Saturday Night." As I turn left toward the amphitheater and walk along the road, parallel to the parking lot, the sounds continue to change

in the distance. A row of Port-A-Potties loom to my right, near the gate, rows of men and women waiting patiently for their turn. At the top of the road, where the road curves toward another parking lot, an enterprising vendor has set up a table and EZ-up. The vendor has customers: a man and a woman, and I realize to my shock that they are the middle-aged man and woman from the hotel parking lot the day before. The man wears a red-dirt-smeared pair of ragged white painter's pants with holes in the pant legs. The wears somewhat less-abused blue jeans. Both wear hiking boots, tie-dye t-shirts, and have bandanas tied around their heads: hers holds her hair back from her face. They are recognizable, but also completely different in look and bearing. The body language from yesterday that indicated personal distance and propriety is simply gone; they move closely together as a couple, and they seem more fluid and relaxed. I struggle to explain the difference: the I just keep thinking that they look like they are wearing their own skin.

The couple finishes their transaction with the vendor, turns, and disappears into the crowd as I finish my climb up the road. A long line of concert-goers snakes up the steep stone steps to my left even though the gates will not open for another hour or more. They carry open bottles of water and cans of beer that must be finished before they enter the venue, and tuck rolled-up blankets under their arms. A black iron guard rail and sign threatening steep fines for climbing on the rocks separates the line of humanity from the red rock formations. Instead of turning left to join them, however, I veer right and head down the slope toward the Lower South Lot, where I've been told I can find Shakedown Street.

Chapter 4 - A Band Beyond Description: A Brief History of the *Grateful Dead*

Well everybody's dancin' in a ring around the sun

Nobody's finished, we ain't even begun

So take off your shoes, child,

And take off your hat

Try on your wings

And find out where it's at

“The Golden Road (To Unlimited Devotion)”

(The *Grateful Dead* 1967:35)

Introduction

Grateful Dead music is an amalgam of jazz, country, blues, gospel, rock ‘n’ roll, and other forms, paired with experimental musical bridges within and between songs (called “jams”). This mixture of musical styles and improvisational playing sets them apart from any other band of the time and created a new genre: the “jam band” (Scott and Halligan 2010). The band first played as the *Grateful Dead* in 1965 (Shenk and Silberman 1994), and beginning in 1967, the *Grateful Dead* released a total of 13 studio albums, receiving public acclaim with *American Beauty* in 1970, an album that went gold in 1974 (Richardson 2014). Yet the *Dead* enjoyed little mainstream success compared to other bands of the time (the Rolling Stones and the Beatles, for example). For the *Grateful Dead* and their fans, mainstream media success and studio recordings came second—sometimes a distant second—to the live shows and recordings. Where other musicians played a set show that was more-or-less the same at every concert, the *Grateful Dead*

instead improvised set lists, which *never* repeated, making each show unique. The live show became the band's biggest appeal, drawing millions of fans and selling out shows. Between 1965 and 1995, the band played over 2,300 live concerts (Scott and Halligan 2010), roughly 2,200 of which were faithfully recorded by fans (Richardson 2014). They played 150 original songs and covered another 350, for a total of 500 songs played live over their career. The band traveled across the United States, Greece, and England to become "the most popular touring act in rock history" (Scott and Halligan 2010:xviii). In the 1990's alone, the Grateful Dead earned \$285 million on tour, taking second place behind the Rolling Stones for income from touring (Baltin 2016). The *Grateful Dead* was the first rock 'n' roll band to inspire a mass following with a discrete culture, norms, and economy that spans decades. The British may have invaded the United States, but while the working-class boys known as The Beatles went mainstream and performed on national television for screaming fans, the *Grateful Dead* were quietly amassing a collaborative, counter-cultural following that would far outstrip Beatlemania. Fifty years after the band played its first show and twenty years after the band chose to disband following Jerry Garcia's death, hundreds of thousands of fans flocked to Chicago from across the globe for the 50th Anniversary shows, pilgrims to their own Mecca. How did this group of musical artists build not only a musical empire, but also an enduring culture?

The band known as the *Grateful Dead* is deeply tied to an era of American history marked by both political and social turbulence as well as artistic and social innovation, and both the band and the original fans are deeply tied to: the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco, California. The norms, values and expectations of deadhead culture, therefore, developed organically from shared lived experiences. A full discussion of this history is the stuff of

volumes; the following pages sketch out only a brief history of the band and the culture to contextualize the phenomenon.

1967: A Snapshot of the Summer of Love

The 1960's was a turbulent decade. The economy was booming, increasing the size of the middle class and allowing a large number of young people a freedom from work that had not been possible in previous generations. Manufacture of consumer goods was expanding rapidly, and households were encouraged to purchase more and more consumer goods (Harrison 1993). A burgeoning generation of youth went to college at an unprecedented rate: between 1946-1965 college enrollments nearly doubled, from 22% to 45%, and by 1967 there were 6 million students in college (Peterson 1968). Women were also enrolling in record numbers, although they were expected to use that education to become better wives and mothers (Echols 1989).

Many politically-minded young people were “tuned in” and active in what was collectively called “The Movement.” These activists largely came from middle-class families (Horn and Knott 1971). Student activists set out to challenge inequality through peaceful and nonviolent demonstrations learned from the Civil Rights Movement, but by late 1967 tensions in the United States were rising and areas of Newark and Detroit were—*literally*—burning (Echols 1989, Harrison 1993), women had begun organizing “consciousness-raising” groups to discuss patriarchy and what the so-called “sexual revolution” really meant for them (Shulman 1980), and political protest intensified as the Vietnam war seemed on the verge of escalation (Echols 1989).

While activists sought to change the world through protest and public action, their counterparts, the hippie movement (also predominantly middle-class and often college students or dropouts) was growing; the Haight-Ashbury district of the San Francisco Bay area in California became a preferred destination for this crowd (Young 2010). Hippies were looking for

adventure and the opportunity to change their own world through personal action. Unlike their political counterparts, hippies did not believe that “established social machinery” could be used to make change (Horn and Knott 1971:979) or that their protests could “alter the prevailing patterns” of culture (Peterson 1968:295). Social participation in an authoritarian society was seen as irrelevant, the middle-class, consumerist lifestyle rejected in search of an alternative lifestyle: a new society (Miller 2012, Young 2010). Hippies, according to scholars, were alienated school dropouts, existing on the periphery; they were “pessimistically apolitical” and thoroughly estranged from American life (Horn and Knott 1971, Peterson 1968:303).

A tourist walking through the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco, California in 1967 (the “Summer of Love” (Echols 2002)) would find the streets full of young people – some of them very young teens – who had abandoned their middle-class homes across America (Horn and Knott 1971), drawn to an alternative lifestyle that preached individualism, egalitarianism, and anti-materialism. Others living in the neighborhood were no longer teens but came because of the sense that *something* important was happening. The Haight-Ashbury district had been previously occupied by the beatniks of the 1950’s, but only a few remained by the time the hippie movement sparked into existence in the mid 1960’s (Echols 2002). Beat and hippie values were similar: a focus on Eastern mysticism, free love, and a rejection of capitalist ideas of “success” in favor of voluntary poverty (Harrison 1993, Echols 2002). They were building a new vision of a world in which the barriers of “property, prejudice, and preconception about what is moral and immoral” had been eradicated (Howard 1969:46). The future was not to be worried about: these youth were just “gonna let it all happen” (Didion 1968:92).

Communal living was common in the Haight: floating “families” of unrelated individuals shared apartments in houses that had already been subdivided due to World War II housing

shortages (Richardson 2014), but some also lived in condemned structures (Didion 1968). Monogamy was optional, and sexual relationships fluid. Men wore shaggy bears and long hair, and men and women alike dressed in odd combinations of cast-off clothing purchased from the Goodwill store or picked up at free stores. Attempting to escape the prevailing pressures of consumerism, they “live[d] on [the] leftovers” of society (Echols 2002:21). Everyone had their own “trip” in the Haight, doing what they liked without criticism. For many this trip involved drugs: d-Lysergic Acid (LSD) was legal and widely available (Didion 1968). LSD, wrote Marwick (1998), was one of the “essential ingredients” of a hippie, along with a search for nature in contrast to the “plastic” and artificial city around them.

At the same time that they created new ways of living and interacting, hippies lived on the largess of the society they sought to escape. The “Diggers,” for example, were responsible for finding and distributing much of the free food and clothing mentioned above. Also known as the “Mime Troupe,” the Diggers grew out of the anarchist Artist’s Liberation Front in San Francisco (Didion 1968). Diggers were a group of “anonymous good guys with no thought in their collective head but to lend a helping hand” and who adopted the non-hierarchical leadership style espoused in the Haight (Didion 1968:99). The Diggers supported and forwarded the hippie ideology through their actions, feeding people for free in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco and Constitution Park in Berkeley. Digger men and women begged for food (or sometimes “liberated” it) which they then prepared and served in the parks. Their purpose was to show that money wasn’t necessary to eat or meet basic needs. They also set up free stores for clothing, often supplied by local factory overstocks that, in this time of economic surplus, were simply donated. Diggers are credited with creating tie-dye, turning a donated batch of white, button-down oxford shirts into something far more interesting and unique (Howard 1969, Echols 2002).

The hippie movement would not outlast the 1960's as a cohesive whole. By the time the Summer of Love rolled around in 1967, the hippie lifestyle had become—ironically—commoditized. Howard (1969) describes people who came to the district dressed in boutique hippie clothing, essentially using the Haight as a vacation destination; residents described these people, coming to “take” an experience instead of contribute to it, as “empties” (Echols 2002). The neighborhood changed, and original hippies either left or stayed away because they didn't like the “vibe” and prevalent sense of despair as the negative side of hippie living (such as centers for bad trips) became more visible as the positive side declined (Howard 1969). While outwardly holding to the apolitical ethic, the Diggers and other residents, were, in reality, not so apolitical. By the late 1960's the Diggers reportedly disrupted many hippie gatherings with attempts to stir up anger and violence, a move which most hippies resented (Echols 2002). Eventually the Diggers would falter due to the group's anti-hierarchical structure and reliance on volunteerism. Volunteers could not be counted on to participate when needed, which made it impossible to collect, prepare, and distribute food as had been done in the past (Howard 1969). By 1968 Howard (1969) would have a hard time even finding the Diggers.

The Warlocks and the *Grateful Dead*

The band that would come to be known as the *Grateful Dead* emerged from the primordial stew of the Haight-Ashbury hippie counterculture. John Perry Barlow, Tom Constanten, Jerry Garcia, Mickey Hart, Robert Hunter, Bill Kreutzmann, Phil Lesh, Ron “Pigpen” McKernan, Bobby Peterson, and Bob Weir, all in some way part of the development of the band, were either born in the area or moved to the area in childhood, where they later became part of the local folk music scene (Shenk and Silberman 1994, Richardson 2014). Garcia and McKernan would be the first to meet and sometimes perform together in the early 1960's

(*Grateful Dead: The Illustrated Trip* 2015). Band members came to know each other through mutual friends, from school or local bands, or purchased instruments from each other; essentially, they moved in the same circles and lived together in different configurations over several years. Later, Keith and Donna Jean Godchaux, Bruce Hornsby, Brent Mydland, and Vince Welnick would join the band in the same way – through a network of connections in the same small area (Shenk and Silberman 1994, Greenfield 2009, Richardson 2014).

Garcia and other played locally in other bands and with other combinations of musicians, but the beginning of the *Grateful Dead* is commonly linked to 1964, when Weir (rhythm guitar, vocals), then only 17 years old, joined up with 22-year-old Garcia (guitar and banjo, vocals) and 19-year-old McKernan (vocals, organ, harmonica), and, along with a rotating cast of others, they became *Mother McCree's Uptown Jug Champions*, playing an acoustic mix of “country blues and urban blues, jug band tunes, R&B, novelty songs, some rock ‘n’ roll: almost anything was fair game” (*Grateful Dead: The Illustrated Trip* 2015:18, Shenk and Silberman 1994). In 1965 *Mother McCree's*, influenced by the success of the *Beatles* and intrigued by new technology, plugged in and became *The Warlocks*, adding 18-year-old Kreutzmann on drums and, eventually, 24-year-old Lesh, who taught himself to play bass to meet the band’s needs (Shenk and Silberman 1994). The core lineup was, at this point, complete. They played their first set as the *Warlocks* in Menlo Park in April 1965, at a pizza parlor named Magoo’s (Shenk and Silberman 1994, Richardson 2014). For several months they played local clubs—badly, their ambition outstripping their skills. They were driven by the promise of technology and how they might be able to push musical boundaries. For the *Warlocks*, this meant experimenting with the extended, jazz-like musical bridges within and between songs, or “jams,” that would later become a key piece of the *Grateful Dead* identity and launch a new music genre (Richardson 2014, Scott and

Halligan 2010). Band members improvised simultaneously, which required them “to listen carefully to what each of the other band members were doing musically and build on it – while simultaneously carrying on their own improvisational riffs” (Scott and Halligan 2010:37). This experimentation was not always well received, and was even shocking to some listeners. One club manager told the band that they would never succeed because they were “too weird” (Richardson 2014:54). Nevertheless, they persisted.

While the *Warlocks* were learning to jam, residents of the Haight began to host live-music dance parties in their homes. The parties drew hundreds of participants and rapidly outgrew the living rooms in which they began. The Merry Pranksters had also begun holding LSD-fueled Acid Test parties in the Haight: the parties were a psychedelic mix of sound, drugs, lights and an anything-goes philosophy. The *Warlocks*, deeply embedded in the local artistic community, played for the second Acid Test party (Richardson 2014, Sardiello 1994), where their “weirdness found its ideal audience” (Richardson 2014:54). The informality of the acid tests allowed the band the freedom to experiment musically, without repercussion (Richardson 2014). Eventually, The *Warlocks* were forced to find a new band name after another band with the same name produced a commercial recording. At a band meeting, according to band lore, Garcia opened a dictionary and found the words “grateful dead,” and a new band was born (Richardson 2014, Sardiello 1994).

The easy availability of drugs and mind-altering effects of LSD made drug use attractive to band members, except for McKernan, who preferred alcohol. The frontman and lead singer for the band, McKernan brought blues vocals, harmonica, organ and guitar to the table, but he had another role as well: keeping the rest of his young, stoned band members on track when they performed (Richardson 2014, Shenk and Silberman 1994). Weir, for example, became such a

heavy hallucinogenic drug user in the early years that the band considered removing him from the lineup (Richardson 2014). “Pigpen [McKernan] is what made the band work,” Garcia said; “he was the only guy in the band who had any talent when we were starting out” (Richardson 2014:49-50). An excellent blues singer, McKernan was capable of captivating the audience emotionally, “building to climax after climax, coming down in a release and soaring up again” (Richardson 2014:63-64). McKernan was energetic, showy, and lewd in addition to talented (Shenk and Silberman 1994), and he gave the audience something to focus on, often interacting with the audience directly through a conversational, unrhymed “rap” that merged seamlessly into musical blues vocalizations (Richardson 2014).

The music festival, which today we take for granted, also emerged from the Haight-Ashbury district at this time. The first festival was in 1966, when Bill Graham and others organized a three-day party called the *Trips Festival*, “billed as ‘a non-drug re-creation of psychedelic experience’ featuring the Trip—or electronic performance—a new medium of communication and entertainment” (Richardson 2014:60). Many *avant-garde* local artists performed at this festival, but it was dancing to the *Grateful Dead’s* music that most enthused the crowd. The event also marked the debut of the “light show,” which was paired with *Grateful Dead* music. San Francisco State College art professor Seymour Locks dropped liquid color into plastic dishes, used an overhead projector to project the colors onto the wall or ceiling, and swirled the colors in time to the music. The combination of light and music was “powerful and transporting,” but the most important part of the experience was that the audience participated. “They were energized,” Richardson (2014) writes, “by their own forms of self-display, which became an integral part of the entertainment. The *Grateful Dead* encouraged that ethic, which

blurred the line between performers and spectators, and it quickly became a hallmark of the Haight-Ashbury scene” (61).

The line between band and audience was also blurred by the fact that the band members were early fans’ neighbors, and that they dressed like them on stage and shared the same lifestyle and values (Marwick 1998). The *Grateful Dead* was formed of the same stuff as their early fans, and they looked the part (Scott and Halligan 2010), avoiding the artist/audience dichotomy present at many musical performances. On some sunny days, the *Grateful Dead* broke down this distinction even further, rehearsing in the park in what became a sort of free concert, fans dancing and drug-tripping around them (Didion 1968).

Nineteen sixty-seven was a pivotal year for the *Grateful Dead*. They played at the Monterey Pop Festival, the first large festival featuring a large number of bands, and recorded their first, eponymous album through Warner Brothers. The album did not do well (Richardson 2014). Lyricist Robert Hunter joined the band at Garcia’s invitation. The band’s lyrics had been a weak spot for the band, but with Hunter’s interest in classic literature and culture, paired with an interest in the psychedelic and experimental nature of the *Grateful Dead’s* music, Hunter wrote lyrics that brought something to the band that was very different from the love-song and beach-oriented lyrics that saturated the popular market. The Hunter-Garcia collaboration produced songs that explored sadness, suffering, and death, but in an ambiguous manner that left interpretation open to the listener. The contrast between the lyrics and the drug-fueled atmosphere of their concerts broadened, according to Richardson (2014), the band’s “repertoire and emotional range” (107). Drummer Mickey Hart joined the band and added to Kreutzmann’s steady percussion performance, bringing with him new percussion instruments and drumming patterns “far beyond where rock and roll had been” (Shenk and Silberman 1994). Garcia

described the potential he heard when Hart first played with the band as “a groove so monstrous it would eat the audience” (Shenk and Silberman 1994:138). Together, Kreutzmann and Hart spent hours playing together, working to synchronize their performance. Kreutzmann’s drumming provided a touchstone for Hart and the rest of the band; Hart described him as “naturally smooth and in time. . . . He was the center pole that allowed the rest of us to go roaming off the edges” (Shenk and Silberman 1994:170)

By 1968, McKernan’s drinking had progressed to the point that he had become unreliable, sometimes not showing up for shows. The band hired Constanten to replace McKernan on keyboards and relegated McKernan to congas (Shenk and Silberman 1994).

The band’s interest in technology would lead them to become involved in several technological advances: light shows were only the beginning. In 1969 a group of Grateful-Dead affiliated sound experts, engineers, and instrument makers joined together to create a collaboration they called Alembic, a “loose collective . . . to find ways to improve the then sub-par live sound, recording technology, and instrumentation” by “exploring unknown sonic territory,” (*Grateful Dead: The Illustrated Trip* 2015:102). Not only did Alembic improve sound quality for the Grateful Dead, they also sold equipment to other bands and are still in business today (*Grateful Dead: The Illustrated Trip* 2015).

Knowing that the band would be playing music festivals, and concerned about being able to easily sort their equipment from that of other bands, road manager and Alembic member Owsley “Bear” Stanley—also well-known in the culture for providing LSD for the Acid Tests and to the band (Shenk and Silberman 1994)—designed a symbol that could be painted on band equipment for easy recognition. As he was driving down a highway one rainy day in 1969, squinting at a road sign in the rain, he got the inspiration for a what would eventually become

perhaps one of the most pervasive and well-recognized symbols of the *Grateful Dead*: the Steal Your Face, or *stealie* (see Figure 1), after the image appeared on the cover of the band's 1976 album titled *Steal Your Face* (Shenk and Silberman 1994).



Figure 1. The Steal Your Face, or Stealie Icon

The original icon was simply the lightning bolt. With the help of two friends, Stanley created a drawing of a lightning bolt, which they then spray-painted on the side of a tool box by the simple expedient of creating a template from the drawing, then flipping it over create the second side (Stanley N.d.).

In August 1969 roughly 450,000 people attended the first Woodstock Music Festival on an upstate New York dairy farm, the attendance vastly outstripping expectations. This massive and unexpected crowd, in addition to poor planning on the part of the organizers, resulted in the Governor declaring a state of emergency (Richardson 2014). In December of the same year, organizers opened another, ill-fated free music festival at Altamont Raceway near East Bay, California, in the San Francisco area, counting on the “good vibes” of Woodstock and the experience of the peaceful *Grateful Dead* gigs in Golden Gate Park to keep the crowd of several hundred thousand in line. Organizers hired the Hell’s Angels motorcycle gang for security, paying them in beer. However, when the music started, the crowd rushed the stage, and the

Hell's Angels responded by attacking the fans with "pool cues, bottles, and fists" (Richardson 2014:141). Drug dealers in attendance attempted to calm the bikers by giving them free LSD, but the Hell's Angels continued to assault and threaten spectators and even musicians throughout the show (Richardson 2014, Marwick 1998). Garcia characterized the scene as "Dante's Inferno . . . spreading out in concentric waves," with physical violence and "psychic violence [also] happening around the edges" of the crowd (Richardson 2014:142). The *Dead* chose not to play, and after a two-hour delay, the *Rolling Stones* took the stage with documentary cameras rolling. During their performance, a scuffle erupted between a young man named Meredith Hunter and the Hell's Angels. Hunter was beaten and stabbed to death by a group of Hell's Angels while Mick Jagger sang "it's alright . . . I pray that it's alright" and cameras filmed (RollingStones50yrs3 2014). That night, there were three other deaths: one by drowning, "when a drug-bedazed hippie walked into an irrigation ditch," and two more people who died violently. Hundreds of others were injured (Marwick 1998:785). Altamont had revealed the dark side of the drugged, dancing, free-for-all culture (Richardson 2014) and for some, the festival was the beginning of the end for the hippie movement.

Despite the violence at Altamont, the *Grateful Dead* continued to play other venues. McKernan had been relegated to congos in 1968, but when Constanten left the band in 1970—he found the drug use among band members alarming, and the others felt that he just did not fit in—McKernan briefly returned to the limelight in 1971. Soon, however, drinking-related health problems left McKernan hospitalized and the band hired Keith Godchaux to replace him (Richardson 2014, Shenk and Silberman 1994). Although the band did not want him to go, Hart also left the band in 1971 (to return in 1974) when the band discovered that Hart's father, who had been working as the band's manager, had been skimming money from the band's earnings

(Shenk and Silberman 1994). It was this event that inspired Garcia and Hunter to write “He’s Gone,” which includes the lines that would eventually name the stealie: “Steal your face / right off your head” (Garcia and Hunter 1972:192-93).

Also in 1971, the *Grateful Dead* unwittingly laid the groundwork for a fan following that would come to span decades. In 1971 the liner for the *Grateful Dead’s SKULL AND ROSES* album contained an offer that read: “Dead freaks unite. Who are you? Where are you? How are you? Send us your name and address and we’ll keep you informed”; by the time the second mailing list appeared in 1972, the official term for members was “Deadhead” (Shenk and Silberman 1994: 57, 63) and the band had accumulated just over 10,000 names. That number would rise to over 60,000 names in the United States alone by 1976, with fans receiving newsletters two to three times a year (Scott and Halligan 2010). Although the definition of “deadhead” is somewhat fluid and sometimes contested, in general it refers to an individual who “loves – and draws meaning from – the music of the *Grateful Dead* and the experience of *Dead* shows, and builds community with others who feel the same way” (Shenk and Silberman 1994:60). Deadheads not only attended shows, they also discussed them, and developed their own language, norms, values, and economy. Some went “on tour,” following the *Dead* from venue to venue, often living out of their vehicle and working (vending at shows) just enough to buy gas and food and continue to the next venue (Hunt 2008).

The band opted to handle their own ticket sales instead of turn sales over to commercial ticket sale companies. To obtain tickets, fans called an information hotline and listened for information on where to send money orders and what information to put on the envelopes (Scott and Halligan 2010). Fans came to believe that if they decorated their envelopes, they would have a better chance of getting tickets, and envelope art was born (see Figures 2 and 3).

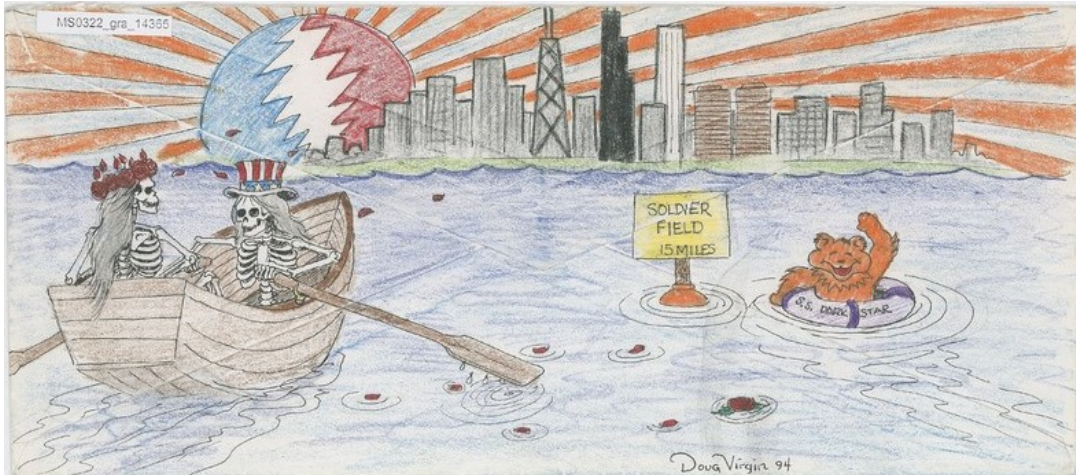


Figure 2. Grateful Dead Envelope Art, April 22, 1994 (“Brian D. Virgin” 1994).

McKernan had been able to return to the stage a few more times in the early 1970’s, but in March of 1973, at the age of 27, McKernan died, a victim of years of heavy drinking. Garcia considered disbanding upon his death but decided instead to go on, but to not replace McKernan with another lead singer. Instead, the band played music that did not rely on McKernan’s bluesy vocals (Richardson 2014, Shenk and Silberman 1994). The band would not have another lead singer, instead dividing singing duties among band members, a structure that sets them apart from many other bands. Weir became the band’s “showman” (Shenk and Silberman 1994), although his version of showmanship is radically different from McKernan’s: much quieter, smaller, and more focused on the music than on interaction with the audience.

Hart returned to the band in 1974, just as the band began to tour more extensively due to successful album releases in 1970 and 1974 (Shenk and Silberman 1994). The *Grateful Dead* often performed on college campuses (Warner Brothers estimated 75% of their fan base at this time was college educated), netting them positive college newspaper press (Richardson 2014). Their growing popularity meant that they played larger and larger venues, and poor sound quality became an issue for the band. Alembic solved this problem by creating a “Wall of

Sound” in 1974, in an attempt to “reproduce the band’s music with the utmost clarity in the largest of venues” (*Grateful Dead: The Illustrated Trip* 2015:166). The Wall of Sound consisted of 604 speakers of various types, stacked high and wide across the stage, dwarfing the artists. It took 26 crew members as much as 14 hours to assemble the Wall of Sound. Moving it from venue to venue required three to four tractor trailer trucks and a second stage, which could be set up at the next venue while the Wall of Sound was being broken down at the last. Creating it cost over a quarter of a million dollars, and maintaining it required \$100,000 each month. Although the band chose not to keep using the Wall of Sound after 1974 due to the cost and trouble of moving it (it was parted out and sold (Shenk and Silberman 1994)), the innovation worked very well: it produced “extremely fine sound up to 500 to 600 feet” before the wind began to interfere with the sound. When the band used the Wall of Sound, fans sitting in upper, distant sections of the venue had a similar listening experience to the band, on stage (*Grateful Dead: The Illustrated Trip* 2015:166).

By 1979 the band was popular enough to play the Warfield Theater in San Francisco for 15 nights running and Radio City Music Hall in New York City for 8 straight nights. Demand for the New York tickets was so high that fans lined up for tickets “three days before they went on sale, and some forty-eight thousand tickets were snatched up within hours” (Richardson 2014:257). Godchaux and his wife Donna Jean (who had been singing backup vocals) left the band. Although his playing was brilliant when he joined the band, by 1979 Godchaux was struggling with depression and alcoholism, and his playing had degenerated on stage to the point that he was in “almost a vegetative state” (Richardson 2014:257). Godchaux died in 1980 in an automobile accident after an all-night party (Richardson 2014, Shenk and Silberman 1994).

Godchaux was replaced by Brent Mydland, who energized the audience with his youth and talent (Shenk and Silberman 1994).

The band's innovation was not limited to the improvised structure of their music and shows or to the technology they produced, but also encompassed how technology was used to capture and distribute their music—particularly their live shows. Early in the life of the band, fans known as “tapers” began bringing sophisticated microphones and recording equipment into the venues with them, over time recording roughly 2,200 of their 2,300 *unique* live shows (Richardson 2014). Since music was the commodity being sold, many commercial artists would have viewed fan recording of these shows as a damaging practice. Who would come to the shows if they could simply get a recording for free? But both Garcia and Lesh held personal philosophies that opposed shutting down the tapers. Instead, they allowed taping, but with the proviso that the recordings were to be *given away* and not sold. This arrangement created another reason for deadheads to network with one another: the sharing of tapes. An elaborate distribution network emerged among deadheads and they began to amass large collections of cassette tapes (Shenk and Silberman 1994). In 1984 the band designated the section immediately behind the soundboard – the “sweet spot” for recording sound – as the taper's section, “bless[ing] a practice that had been part of the Dead Head culture for years” (Richardson 2014:261). Giving away free music created a “powerful word-of-mouth fan network” that focused on live, rather than studio music, encouraged fans to go “on tour,” and allowed fans to accumulate “deep knowledge” of *Grateful Dead* music, including song order, length, and type of improvisation. This informal network encouraged sharing and created a new, cheap way for new people to be introduced to their music. The result: the *Grateful Dead* fan base grew as tapers “became the band's curators and historians” (Scott and Halligan 2010:xix, 4, 105-06). Despite the taping – or rather, because

of it – the band played larger and larger venues, and netted gold, platinum, and multiplatinum albums (Scott and Halligan 2010).

The *Grateful Dead* and deadheads were also early adopters of the internet, allowing fans to interact online and across great distances: a precursor to social media long before Facebook came into existence. In February of 1985, the Whole Earth ‘Lectronic Link, or WELL, went live, creating a “place for Dead Heads from far and near to exchange ideas, make plans, trade tapes, discuss issues, and hang out with kindred spirits” (Richardson 2014:264-65). By the early 1990’s the paper newsletter had transitioned to email, the band had an official website, and a USENET group called “Dead-Flames” was created (Scott and Halligan 2010:89). Deadheads were primed for social media long before Facebook, Twitter, reddit, and other modern forms of electronically mediated social communication came into being (see Chapter 2 for more detail).

Like many other band members, Garcia had problems with addiction; in his case, he was addicted to heroin and cocaine. In 1985 he agreed to go to rehabilitation, but continued to use drugs and put on weight, with the result that his health and musicianship suffered. After the summer tour in 1986, Garcia fell into a diabetic coma and had to be resuscitated. The illness cost him his memory, not only of the band’s music, but also of how to play his musical instruments. He re-learned both. The next fall Garcia began to tour again, his first song “Touch of Grey” at Oakland Coliseum (Richardson 2014).

From the beginning, drug use was so much a part of the *Grateful Dead* experience that the two were nearly synonymous to some. But drug and alcohol use take their toll. Two different grass-roots efforts to combat addiction formed in the mid 1980’s, coming together to form the “Wharf Rats” (see Chapter 7 for more). The group took its name from “August West (Wharf Rat),” a *Grateful Dead* song about a drunk dock worker (Garcia and Hunter in Dodd 2005:150-

51). Wharf Rat practices are based loosely off “anonymous” models of recovery, like Alcoholics Anonymous, but the group welcomes everyone. Beginning in 1986 the group became part of the tour, with a table inside the venue that is marked by a yellow balloon and staffed by volunteer Wharf Rats (*Grateful Dead: The Illustrated Trip* 2015). This area provides a haven for fans who may find the drug and alcohol use prevalent at a show difficult to resist.

Although the band had six songs on Billboard’s top 100 between 1973 – 1987, only the last—“Touch of Grey”—broke the top ten. It remained in the top 100 for 15 weeks (Billboard.com N.d.). The music television channel MTV played the music video for “Touch of Grey” frequently and the single was given significant airplay on radio stations. This exposure helped to introduce the *Grateful Dead* to a new era of young people: *Grateful Dead* insiders estimated that the average age of fans dropped from 27 prior to 1987 to 18 after “Touch of Grey” was released. The song became “an anthem” to fans who linked both “the band’s perseverance into its third decade” with “Jerry Garcia’s remarkable recovery from his nearly fatal coma” (*Grateful Dead: The Illustrated Trip* 2015:337). Fans sing “I will get by / I will get by / I will get by / I will survive” (Garcia and Hunter in Dodd 2005:313-14) in joyful defiance at shows.

The positive vibe of Garcia’s recovery was marred in 1990 by the death of yet another keyboard player, when Mydland, who struggled with drugs and alcohol, was found dead from an overdose of cocaine and morphine only one month before the band was set to begin touring (Richardson 2014). He was replaced temporarily by Bruce Hornsby while the band toured and looked for another keyboard player. Vince Welnick joined the band in that capacity in 1990, overlapping Hornsby, who stayed on while Welnick learned the music (Shenk and Silberman 1994). Years later, in 2006, Welnick committed suicide at home (Richardson 2014).

Decades of a single-minded focus on music, a poor diet, and drug use were taking a toll on Garcia, and in 1992 he collapsed at home with heart and respiratory problems, causing the band to cancel 23 shows. By the end of the year Garcia rebounded yet again, and the band returned to touring (*Grateful Dead: The Illustrated Trip* 2015). In January of 1994 the band was inducted into the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame (Richardson 2014).

A crisis emerged within the community in 1995 that had been brewing since the late 1980's. The band's upswing in popularity had brought a wave of new fans into the scene. The character of the parking lot changed, becoming more drug-fueled, less cooperative, and fans who showed less concern for cleaning up after themselves. More fans began showing up without tickets, and more tried to gate-crash. The band responded by appealing to fans through mailings, parking lot handouts, and radio station messages meant to rouse fans to pick up trash and keep violence to a minimum. They asked older deadheads to teach the younger ones how to behave. Outside the gates, police began arresting fans for drug possession. Eventually, camping was banned. The crisis point was July 2, 1995 when 20,000 fans arrived in Noblesville, Indiana without tickets. Garcia received a death threat, but the band took the stage anyway. After the show began, between 1,000-1,500 of the ticketless rushed the gates, and, with the help of those already inside, tore down the fencing to get inside. The police refused to work the concert the next night and the band canceled the show. The band released a message on an internet message board, warning fans that continuing this type of behavior would end touring. They called on fans to "listen to the rules and pressure others to do so," relying on the informal enforcement of cultural norms to bring fans back in line (Dodd and Spaulding 2000, *Grateful Dead: The Illustrated Trip* 2015, Richardson 2014).

Following the 1995 tour, Garcia, again in poor health, checked into a rehabilitation center but stayed only two weeks. His wife convinced him to try a different rehabilitation center, which he checked into on August 8. Early on the morning of August 9, Garcia was found dead of a heart attack—but with a smile on his face—on the floor of his room in the rehabilitation center (Richardson 2014). Deadheads across the nation called friends, left work, and gathered together in public places to mourn. Despite the band continuing as the *Grateful Dead* after the deaths of several other band members, at this point, surviving band members voted not to continue without Garcia, and the *Grateful Dead* officially disbanded (Richardson 2014, *Grateful Dead: The Illustrated Trip* 2015).

Surviving band members continued performing, however, in solo projects and together as the *Dead* and the *Other Ones* (*Grateful Dead: The Illustrated Trip* 2015). In 2009 Lesh and Weir, along with cover band musicians Jeff Chimenti and John Kadlecik, formed *The Furthur*. Along with a shifting cast of others, these four toured as *The Furthur* from 2009-2013 (deaddisc.com N.d.). On September 17, 2013, Lesh and Weir announced that *The Furthur* would take a hiatus from touring (Jambands.com 2013) just days before the band's September 19 – 22 four-night run at Red Rocks Amphitheater in Morrison, Colorado. Over a year later, *The Furthur* announced the official dissolution of the band (Jambands.com 2014). Phil Lesh opened Terrapin Crossroads in San Rafael, California to serve as a home base for his band, Phil Lesh & Friends (Terrapincrossroads.net 2015), apparently signaling an end to his cross-country touring.

On January 16, 2015, rumors of a 50th anniversary show were verified when Dead.net and Garcia's daughter, Trixie, announced the 50th anniversary "Fare Thee Well" shows to be held in Chicago, Illinois from July 3rd-5th, just under 20 years after the final *Grateful Dead* show prior to Garcia's death in 1995. Surviving members Hart, Kreutzmann, Lesh and Weir were to be joined

by Trey Anastasio (lead guitarist for *Phish*, a jam band) standing in for Garcia, Jeff Chimenti (who has played with several iterations of *Grateful Dead* bands) on keyboards, and Hornsby on keyboards. In an era where electronic ticket outlets are the norm, Garcia announced that between February 9-11 a limited number of tickets would be sold on a “first-come, first-served basis” via mail-order, in the “tradition of the original *Grateful Dead* Ticketing Mail Order.” From February 12-13 they would hold a local (Stinson Beach, California) presale, with online ticket sales available to the general public on February 14 (Halperin and Bloom 2015).

Fans wishing to request tickets through mail-order were given specific instructions, from the information required on the outside of the envelope to the money orders stuffed inside. Several new Facebook groups sprang into being the morning of January 16, all centered around the anniversary shows, with veteran advice on how to decorate envelopes for the best chance of getting tickets – and potentially winning the fan art contest to receive free tickets and have one’s art showcased on the tickets for one night. Within a few days, fans—some of them gifted artists—began posting their completed envelopes on social media; some were very simple and others quite complex (see Figure 3. Each portion of each mandala represents an important event in *Grateful Dead* history).



Figure 3. *Grateful Dead* Envelope Art for the 50th Anniversary Show (Shamanic Harmonics 2015).

Media coverage of the announcement of the 50th anniversary tour agreed that a three-night run for a band that had not toured in recent history was risky. Fans knew better (Halperin and Bloom, 2015). Within 24 hours of the announcement, hotel rooms near Soldier Field had doubled in price, with few rooms available. Within a few days no rooms within walking distance were available at all. Because envelopes for mail-order tickets could not be postmarked earlier than February 9, fans planned to be at the post office on that date, in some places waiting in line with many other deadheads. By the 14th of February, the *Grateful Dead* office in the small town of Stinson Beach, California—which usually receives about 30,000 pieces of mail per month for the entire town—had received 60,000 individual requests for *Grateful Dead* tickets within just a few days. In response, the band canceled the local presale in order to honor as many of the mail-order requests that they could (Vaziri 2015). Originally a 55,000 seat venue (Vaziri 2015), the “risky” shows would have sold out through mail order alone.

Over the next several weeks, concert organizers struggled to meet the unexpected demand for tickets by reorganizing seating at Soldier Field, eventually arriving at a capacity of over 71,000 seats (Waddell 2015a), adding two shows on June 26-27, 2015 at Levi’s Stadium in

Santa Clara, California (Kreps 2015), and making arrangements for pay-per-view, online, and live movie theater links (Waddell 2015b).

The first night at Soldier Field broke the venue's record for attendance, surpassing U2's 2009 attendance record of 67,936 (Waddell 2015a), and Soldier Field continued at capacity for the remaining two nights. Over those five nights, the band played to 361,933 ticket holders, "set the record for the biggest music pay-per-view events of all time, with more than 400,000 cable/satellite subscriptions and online streams," and, cumulatively, grossed in excess of 55 million dollars (Waddell 2015c, Baltin 2016). Considering that many people held private parties, watched at restaurants and bars, or went to participating movie theaters across the United States to watch the live-streams, the number of people reached by the subscriptions was, in reality, *much* higher. In comparison, The Rolling Stones performed a similar sold-out, five-night run for their 50th anniversary tour beginning in 2012; a tour that, like the *Grateful Dead*, brought all living band members back to the stage for the first time in 20 years. Venues were far smaller, however, with a capacity of approximately 20,000 (Thrills, Tonks and Flint 2012, Rollingstones.com 2012, Kirka 2012, Prucenter.com 2015), bringing the total number of ticket holders attending the Rolling Stones 50th anniversary tour to just over 96,000. Excluding the pay-per-view and online streaming audience⁴, one could say that The Rolling Stones' "impact" was less than one-third of the impact of the *Grateful Dead* tour. Yet the Stones and the *Dead* arose out of the same era and often played the same stages at the same music festivals.

Following the anniversary shows, fans regretfully accepted the "end" of the band. Yet many held out hope that the rumors floating around on the internet were true: that solo artist John

⁴ No mention of streaming for *The Rolling Stones* tour appeared in news coverage but I do not know that it was not streamed.

Mayer—as unlikely as it seemed—might take up touring with some of the band members. That hope was rewarded one month after the final “Fare Thee Well” show: a new band, *Dead and Company* (or sometimes *Dead & Co.*), would tour with Chimenti, Hart, Kreutzmann, Mayer (on guitar), and Weir, adding Oteil Burbridge (from the *Allman Brothers*) on bass (Halperin 2015). *Dead and Company* toured from October 29 – December 31, 2015 and again from May 22 – June 30, 2016, adding more shows for both seasons due to demand (Relix.com 2015, Halperin 2016, livedead.co 2016), and have dates scheduled for 2017. Looking toward the future, Mayer remarked that he will “never close the door on Dead & Company, ever. . . . I will do Dead & Company for as long as fans want it and as long as it feels like there’s something left on the table to try and explore” (Graff 2016). After over 50 years of fans flocking to take part in this musical exploration, it seems likely that *something* will be on the table to explore for many more years to come.

Band Biographies

Arranged chronologically by the date the individual became part of the *Grateful Dead*, the short biographies below sketch out material useful to the reader and not contained in the above history. Omission from this list is not intended to imply that any individual was not important to the *Grateful Dead* or the culture—the “family” is simply so large, and so complex, that this list focuses exclusively on individuals who played as members of the band.

John Jerome "Jerry" Garcia was born August 1, 1942 in San Francisco, California (Shenk and Silberman 1994). At the age of four an accident while playing with his brother cost Garcia half of his middle finger on his right hand, just below the knuckle (Greenfield 2009). Later, his handprint with missing half-digit would become an iconic symbol for deadheads. At 17, indifferent to education, Garcia dropped out of school and joined the Army, where he picked up

the acoustic guitar out of boredom. He was not a good soldier, and was discharged 9 months later, after which he met future collaborator Robert Hunter and band-mates Kreutzmann, McKernan, and Weir, taught himself to play the banjo, and became involved in the San Francisco folk music scene (Shenk and Silberman 1994). Garcia died August 9, 1995.

Phil Lesh was born March 15, 1940, in Berkeley, California. Lesh, with an interest in classical, big-band, and jazz music and music theory, began playing trumpet at the age of fourteen. Dropping out of the University of California-Berkeley's music program in frustration, Lesh began auditing graduate music theory classes at Mills College under Luciana Berio, whose emphasis was "experimental compositions and pioneering work in electronic music" (Shenk and Silberman 1994, Richardson 2014:37). Lesh was again thwarted in his musical aims when Berio left for Europe and he could not afford to follow (Shenk and Silberman 1994), but Berio's philosophies, namely that the performance was more important than the recording and that technology should be embraced and explored, would come to be central to the way that the *Grateful Dead* approached music production (Richardson 2014).

Lesh switched to bass guitar for the *Warlocks*, teaching himself to play the instrument. His self-taught bass guitar playing resulted in a unique style: he "plays bass as a co-lead instrument rather than strictly a timekeeping one," and his bass weaves "spontaneously composed melodies that can last the length of an entire song, in intimate dialogues with Garcia's lines" (Shenk and Silberman 1994:175). Hart credits Lesh with bringing orchestral techniques to the *Grateful Dead's* music, creating "dense, thunderous, sensual chords that could rattle your bones" (Shenk and Silberman 1994:178). Lesh plays the six-string bass rather than the four-string, which allows him to produce lower tones that make it feel like he is "shaking buildings" (Shenk and Silberman 1994:178). Lesh fans make a point to sit in the "Phil Zone" at shows (the

seats on the side of the stage where Lesh stands) where they can best feel the deep vibrations caused by his bass. Lesh is also known for giving the "Donor Rap" at each concert - as the recipient of liver from a young organ donor, Lesh tells his story and asks fans to "turn to the person next to you" and ask them to become donors themselves to help save the lives of others.

Ron "Pigpen" McKernan was born September 8, 1954 in San Bruno, California. He earned the nickname "Pigpen" because he regularly dressed in dirty clothes, motorcycle boots, a leather vest and a tattered cowboy hat rolled at the brim, and sported bushy facial hair. He was nicknamed after the Peanuts comic strip character who was always followed by a cloud of dust. Frontman, keyboardist, and vocalist for the band, he helped to keep the other band members focused and provided a good time for the audience. He died at age 27 from complications stemming from long-term alcoholism (Richardson 2014, Shenk and Silberman 1994).

Bob "Bobby" Weir was born October 16, 1947, grew up in the Bay area, and was the youngest member of the *Grateful Dead*. Weir joined *Mother McCree's* at the same time as McKernan, but unlike the other band members was still in high school, and a guitar student of Garcia's (Richardson 2014). He contends with a severe form of dyslexia and did not graduate from high school (Shenk and Silberman 1994). Weir's last name is often used among current fans to indicate the pervasiveness of deadhead culture and the moments of surprise in finding deadheads in unusual places: instead of "we're everywhere," fans say "Weir everywhere."

Bill Kreutzmann, born May 7, 1946 in Palo Alto, California, is one of two *Grateful Dead* drummers. He played with Garcia – after selling Garcia his first banjo – and others in a band called the *Zodiacs*, and then and then *Mother McCree's*, bringing with him a rhythm and blues style and a station wagon big enough to haul music equipment. Kreutzmann also handled management duties like interacting with club owners, before the band had a manager, even

though he was legally too young to enter the bars (Shenk and Silberman 1994, Richardson 2014). Together, Kreutzmann and Hart produce the "drums" segment of "Drums and Space," an intense, driving segment of the show during which the other band members leave the stage and the audience focuses on percussion alone for as much as 20 minutes. Kreutzmann again became the only drummer for a few years when Hart left, between 1971 and 1974 (Shenk and Silberman 1994).

Robert Hunter was born June 23, 1941 in Arroyo Grande, California, also living in San Francisco and Palo Alto in his youth. Although Hunter and Garcia met in 1960 and performed together in local coffee shops, schools, and in various bluegrass bands (Shenk and Silberman 1994), Hunter's critical contribution to the *Grateful Dead* came in the form of writing lyrics. He is responsible for the lyrics of fifteen *Grateful Dead* songs, including some of their most popular (such as "Bird Song," "Ripple," and "Sugar Magnolia" (Dodd 2005)). Hunter was deeply influenced by literary classics, which shows in his lyrics (Richardson 2014). Some speculate that the band would not have been the same without Hunter.

As a young man, Hunter was among those that participated in hallucinogenic drug trials funded by the CIA and United States military, exploring potential military uses. Hunter took LSD, mescaline, and psilocybin in a Stanford University lab, an experience that changed the way he looked at the world and how he conceptualized what the human mind was capable of (Richardson 2014). Following Garcia's death in 1995, Hunter wrote songs for musicians like Bob Dylan, Bruce Hornsby, Mickey Hart, and for bands like *The Furthur* (Richardson 2014). In 2013 Hunter received the lifetime achievement reward at the American Music Association in Nashville, Tennessee (Richardson 2014).

Mickey Hart, born Michael Steven Hartman on September 11, 1943 in Brooklyn, New York (Shenk and Silberman 1994), is the only one of the early *Grateful Dead* musicians not from the San Francisco Bay area. Hart dropped out of high school to join the Air Force. Upon his discharge in 1965, he moved to San Francisco to work in his father's music store (Shenk and Silberman 1994). During his hiatus from the band between 1971-1974, Hart built a recording studio and began a lifetime journey of exploring the roots of drumming in culture, and in seeking spirituality through drumming and rhythm. He continued to explore music, drumming and rhythm from around the globe and experimented with technological aspects as well (Shenk and Silberman 1994). Hart is also known for his research into the neurological effects of music and rhythm, and experiments with many different types of instruments, even inventing some of his own.

Tom Constanten, born March 19, 1944, in Long Branch, New Jersey, Constanten met Lesh at the University of California, Berkeley: Constanten and Lesh shared a love of classical music and interest in music theory. After he left the band, he remained in the Bay area and began teaching piano, composing, and performing with various well-known artists (Shenk and Silberman 1994).

Bobby Peterson, a poet and friend of Lesh and McKernan from the early days, contributed several songs to the *Grateful Dead* canon in the late 1960's, including "Unbroken Chain" and "New Potato Caboose" (Richardson 2014). Peterson died in 1987, fifty years old (Richardson 2014).

Keith Godchaux- born July 19, 1948, Godchaux spent his youth in Concord, California and began performing at the age of 14 in a band and solo (Shenk and Silberman 1994). He played grand piano for the *Grateful Dead* on keyboards beginning in 1971, left in 1979, and died July 21, 1980 (Shenk and Silberman 1994, Richardson 2014).

John Perry Barlow was born October 3, 1947 in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Barlow met Weir when both—high school freshmen who were constantly in trouble—were sent to Colorado for school and became close friends (Shenk and Silberman 1994). Barlow reunited with Weir for the summer of 1967, and then joined the *Grateful Dead* as a lyricist in 1971 to work with Weir, as Weir and Hunter routinely butted heads (Shenk and Silberman 1994, Richardson 2014). Barlow wrote lyrics for seven *Grateful Dead* songs (Dodd 2005).

Donna Jean Godchaux, born August 22, 1945, in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, joined the *Grateful Dead* as a backup singer in 1971 a few months after her husband, Keith, joined on keyboards, and is the only woman to tour as a member of the band (Shenk and Silberman 1994, Richardson 2014). In Alabama Godchaux was exposed to artists like Aretha Franklin, who were instrumental in combining rockabilly, blues, and spirituals into “rhythm and blues.” She began singing R&B with local groups while still a teenager and sang backup vocals for Percy Sledge, Elvis Presley, Lynyrd Skynyrd, the Rolling Stones, and Little Feat (Shenk and Silberman 1994). *Grateful Dead* fans either like Donna Jean, are indifferent, or despise her singing, the latter often referring to her contribution as “screeching.”

Brent Mydland was born on an overseas military base on October 21, 1952 but spent his youth in Concord, California. A keyboardist and singer, as well as composer, he worked with folk-rock and country rock bands prior to joining the Bob Weir band, before he replaced Godchaux as the *Grateful Dead*'s fourth keyboardist in 1979. Mydland brought the McKernan-era sound of the Hammond organ back to the *Grateful Dead*, and also added synthesizers, which gave him the ability to access a range of new sounds (Shenk and Silberman 1994, Richardson 2014). Eleven years later Mydland lost his battle with drugs and alcohol and was found dead, on July 26, 1990, from an overdose of cocaine and morphine (Richardson 2014).

Bruce Hornsby was born November 25, 1954 in Williamsburg, Virginia. A keyboardist with formal university jazz training, he was introduced to *Grateful Dead* music by his brother, who was a fan. The two brothers formed a band that covered *Grateful Dead* songs, released a single that became a hit in 1986, and were asked to open for the *Grateful Dead*. Hornsby joined the band in 1990 to bridge the gap between keyboard players and left 18 months later (Shenk and Silberman 1994). Hornsby is an established musician in his own right.

Vince Welnick was born February 2, 1951 and joined the *Grateful Dead* as the band's fifth keyboardist in September of 1990 (Shenk and Silberman 1994, Richardson 2014). Heavily influenced by jazz, blues, and rock, he performed in bands as a teenager and moved his band to San Francisco after encountering the *Grateful Dead* in concert in 1970 (Shenk and Silberman 1994). Welnick committed suicide at home in 2006 (Richardson 2014).

Interlude 2 – Shakedown Street

Nothin shakin' on Shakedown street

Used to be the heart of town

Don't tell me this town ain't got no heart

You just gotta poke around

“Shakedown Street”

(Garcia and Hunter 1978:290-91)

After walking slightly uphill from the Upper South lot at Red Rocks Amphitheater, I take a few steps on suddenly level ground before it angles downhill, sending me forward at an easy pace as I pass one of the massive reddish monoliths of fractured, weathered rock. Turning sharply right, I walk along with others toward the Trading Post, a two-story square adobe building with a patio on the back that overlooks a softly sloping green lawn and then drops off into a ravine. A young man in his late teens, wearing only a pair of blue jean shorts, sleeps on the grass in a log-fenced side yard to the Trading Post. A piece of jute twine on his wrist attaches him to a sleeping golden retriever puppy sprawled a few feet away. A few yards beyond them, another 20-something, a woman, sits on a blue cooler that is partially obscured by her long, colorfully patterned skirt. A sign, handwritten on cardboard, leans against the cooler. It reads “Brownies: \$1.00, Kind Brownies: \$1.50.” She is doing steady business, handing out foil-wrapped brownies, both “kind” (baked with marijuana) and otherwise. As I walk, I am getting closer to where Shakedown Street is rumored to be, the Lower South parking lot where, apparently, the venue has agreed to allow informal vending.

I enter the Lower South lot from the corner, at an opening in the squared-off logs that create a perimeter fence. The three rows of parking near to me resemble a combination of a campground and a flea market: EZ-ups have been set up in front of cars, station wagons, VW vans and old, battered cargo vans, the tables underneath the EZ-ups covered with items for sale. A few entrepreneurs have no EZ-ups, but instead have spread blankets on the ground. A group of four young women in dreadlocks and long corduroy patchwork skirts sit around a large pile of fabric swatches of different colors, embroidered with Grateful Dead iconography, snipping away excess thread and setting the patches out to sell. Down the middle of the rows of cars, a five-yard-wide path has been left to allow people to pass. It is more crowded here than where I parked, and the scent of marijuana and patchouli is much stronger. The crowd is a mixture of ages and clothing choices: some wear typical street clothes, others shorts and tie-dye t-shirts, still others long sundresses or skirts with tie-dye or batik patterns. Everywhere there are the symbols of the Grateful Dead: stealies in a variety of configurations, China Cat Sunflower patches spread across a blanket, Garcia's handprint, dancing skeletons, and dancing bears. The door on a battered brown cargo van is open on its sliders, revealing an interior hung with tie-dye fabric. Young people in their late teens to early 20's pass in and out: it seems to be their living space. Four or five sprawl in the dirt in front of the door. One of them will pack your pipe with marijuana for \$5, the lump of sticky, pungent, bright green and grey weed parted by dirty fingers from a mass the size of a baseball. When a customer makes a purchase, transaction is completed around the corner, shielded from the foot traffic. Several members of this crew, partially dressed, some with dreadlocks, stagger and dance happily in the vicinity of the van, stoned, drunk, or both.

As I walk down the first aisle, I pass clusters of people chatting comfortably in the middle of the passing throng; occasionally someone will cry out in glad surprise as they encounter, hug, and catch up with someone they recognize. At the end of the first aisle a group of men and women, most of them in their twenties, sit in a circle with drums between their knees. One of the men is older, perhaps 50's; he is wearing nothing but dirty cargo shorts, his lean, sinewy frame tan and taut underneath a shock of wild greying-brown hair. Nearby, a shirtless, barefoot twenty-something man in a long, flowing skirt dances to the beat. As in the parking lot, people in different locations play different Grateful Dead music, adding to the comfortable din.

On Shakedown Street one can buy a wide variety of things: glass pipes displayed in black, foam-lined cases, sold by the blowers themselves, themed jewelry set with turquoise and semi-precious stones in silver, t-shirts and sweatshirts with pirated football team logos printed inside of a stealie, and more. By the time I make my way down the last aisle, sometimes turning sideways to slip between people, show time is only an hour away. I stop at a table scattered with 10" x 12" black and white photo prints. The man behind the table, greying and stout and in his 50's, tells me that he took the photographs himself. I purchase a print of Garcia playing his guitar for \$40 and ask the man to sign his work. After I pay, he turns to a man next to him and says "I think we can go in now; I have enough to buy a ticket." They begin loading his goods into the back of his wagon. The show has been sold out for weeks, but apparently he expects to find a ticket to purchase on his way in.

I am hungry, and follow a delicious smell to an awning near the entrance of the parking lot, where a mass of vegetables sizzle in a giant wok. For \$2 I am handed a generously loaded, foil-wrapped vegetable burrito and pull a soda out of the ice water in an oversized cooler. I leave the parking lot and walk back toward the venue on the asphalt, eating my burrito, which is

hot, flavorful, and delicious. A youth – I think a young man but I can't tell, walks toward me holding plastic-wrapped lollipops low in front of their chest, fanned out for easy picking. As they walk past me they whisper, so quietly that I almost miss it: "doses."

Chapter 5 - If My Words Did Glow: Shared Transcendence

*If my words did glow
with the gold of sunshine
And my tunes were played
on the harp unstrung
Would you hear my voice
come through the music
Would you hold it near
as it were your own?*

“Ripple”

(Garcia and Hunter 1970:126-30)

Introduction

I was spinning, and I don't – I'm not a spinner. I'm not a “graceful dancer” at all. I'm usually quiet. I'll do my dancing, or whatever, but that night I was spinning, the music—spinning me. It got to a place where there was a vortex, where something shifted in me again, and. . . . Then something effusive—I was spraying energy that was loving, gold. There was this [amazing] feeling, and then it felt like sprinkling. It looked like there was something there, a physical thing that just kept landing on people, and it was soft and gentle. That's how it felt.

And then the moment was over. It was the best 10 seconds of my life.

Jennifer—a social worker in her early 50's—tells this story with a kind of vividness and intensity that suggests it happened the night before. At the time of our interview, however, this experience had happened twenty-five years in the past. In the telling, she appears to be

transported back to that moment, silver and turquoise rings flashing in the dim light as she imitates the energy falling around her, caught somewhere between the vivid memory and her desire to help me understand. Her three long-time traveling companions, although they have undoubtedly heard this story before, listen quietly, attentively: when she finishes, her long-time friend, Bonnie, says “wow. That was beautiful.”

We are sitting at a breakfast table in a small hotel lobby that does triple-duty as check-in desk, lounge, and breakfast area on a weekend morning in 2014 in Denver, Colorado. The place is absolutely packed, tables close together: people are forced to turn sideways to walk between them. Next to us, a young-ish couple in tie-dye have placed their six-month-old infant’s car seat carrier on the floor in between their table and ours: they are taking their equally tie-dye clad daughter to her first *Dead* show that night.

As Jennifer finishes her story, she leans back in her chair, a long, blue-green turquoise chip necklace swaying gently against her tie-dye dress of dark purples and browns. Her natural-finish wooden bracelet makes a soft clunk as she lowers her hands to rest them on the table. It was in 1989, she explains, when she finally “got” the experience.

“It just blew my head open,” she says. “I was clean and sober. I didn’t need anything. That just broke open, right in that moment; and there was just no turning back.”

Like a great many deadheads, Jennifer experienced what would be called a *transcendent experience* when I began coding the data from this study: a state of altered consciousness—with or without the aid of drugs or alcohol—during which the individual feels that s/he is part of or connected to something larger than/more than the self. Attempting to study something so intensely personal as a transcendent experience is a challenge and requires a deep respect for the veracity of respondent stories: although Jennifer’s story may seem strange to some, what is

important is how the experience was perceived and explained *by Jennifer*. The majority of my respondents reported experiencing some kind of transcendent experience at *Grateful Dead* shows: how they internalized, interpreted, and described those experiences varied: some, like Jennifer, described those experiences in concepts that I suspect are derived from Eastern mysticism; others used the language of Western mysticism (often calling a show “church”), and the majority had *no* ready language for those experiences (at least none that they were willing to share with a stranger), and they struggled to describe what they had felt. My friend’s insistence that I would just have to go to a show to understand reflects this lack of explanatory language. As the deadhead bumper sticker proclaims: *If I have to explain, you wouldn’t understand*. The “explanation” is, itself, experiential; embodied; emotional.

Liminality

It is the mission of social science to explain; but unfortunately, social science also struggles to find language to describe this ineffable connection that individuals sometimes experience. Victor Turner ([1969]2009), for example, analyzed ritual behavior among the Ndembu, a tribe in northwestern Zambia, and describes a *liminal* state (94) that occurs during rituals. Ritually stripped of all status (including rank, gender, and age, for example), individuals exit the tribe’s social structure to live in the wilderness, outside of society, for a period of time. Social rules do not apply during this time outside of society: they are lawless, and become moved by liminal activities to a heightened emotional state, forming a common bond based on shared humanity. Turner ([1969]2009) calls this state *communitas* and says that it “emerges where social structure is not” (126). Despite very careful, methodical argumentation based on painstaking first-person observation, Turner ([1969] 2009:127) was unable to precisely define *communitas*:

It is neither by chance nor by lack of scientific precision that, along with others who have considered the conception of *communitas*, I find myself forced to have recourse to metaphor and analogy. For *communitas* has an existential quality; it involves the whole [person] in [their] relation to other whole [persons]. Structure, on the other hand, has a cognitive quality . . . it is essentially a set of classifications, a model for thinking about culture and nature and ordering one's public life. . . .

Thus, for Turner, *communitas* is an existential relationship between two "whole" persons, outside of society, where "whole" refers to the entire individual and not to a single status or identity employed by that person (see Chapter 7 for a full discussion of identity). The nature of the existential relationship remains unknown.

Liminality is not exclusive to tribal societies, nor, I argue, to instances of formal ritual. In modern society, liminal rites of the type Turner described are not common, but liminal states can still be found when modern technology fails and leaves a group cut off from social structure. Anyone who has watched news coverage of a natural disaster has likely seen instances of *communitas*. Living as I do in a geographical region that produces extreme weather, for example, I have had the dubious "opportunity" to experience a form of *communitas* following destructive storms. In December of 2007, the State of Kansas was hit with an ice storm so intense that it made roads treacherous and built up inches of ice on tree branches and electrical lines, bringing both crashing to the ground. There is a peculiar muffled silence to a winter storm, when all but emergency traffic ceases and snow or ice deadens sound. When a tree branch cracks, the sound is sudden, sharp, and loud, and it ricochets off neighboring houses, its location masked. One stops and listens with alert dread for the "shhhhhhp" of smaller twigs sliding along a rooftop before the following "thud" betrays where the branch fell and how bad the damage might be. If one is lucky, the sound is more of a plastic-sack-of-wadded-Christmas-paper "whhhhhsh" as the branch

hits the ground and either spews frozen, broken twigs in all directions, or, if the tree branch was green enough, bounces. My neighborhood of modest 1950's and 1960's ranch houses is lovely for its mature cottonwood and oak trees, most of which tower 100-150 feet in the air . . . well above our rooves and with the potential to inflict structural damage. Equally important, in Kansas, electricity comes into homes from wires stretched between poles on the corner of the property to an inlet pipe rising five to 15 feet above the roof. A falling limb can brutally rip down powerlines like a child breaking a bead necklace, leaving a house without electricity and, in many cases, without heat in sub-zero temperatures. Downed power lines are a hazard: coming into contact with a live, downed wire is fatal. Huddled inside our homes, protected from the cold and from moist outside air that hovered somewhere between a fog and a drizzle, each household watched, helplessly, as branches cracked and fell at irregular intervals. Even where branches did not fall on the power lines, electrical transformers across the City and the State were failing, splitting the air with an explosive popping noise and leaving whole neighborhoods without electricity. My power went out in the afternoon, but was back on in four hours. Others in and near the community would go days, even weeks without electricity before the company was able to repair all the damage.

When the rain and icing stopped and the immediate danger had passed, my neighbors began emerging from their houses. Being neighbors, we already knew each other enough to say hello, but there was something qualitatively different that day. We were cut off from society: the empty roads were too icy to even consider driving, the air still and quiet. Even businesses that are usually open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week were likely to be closed because they lacked personnel, power, or both. Some of us were without electricity, cutting us off from the world-at-large. Society had, in many respects, failed, and we were isolated. We came outside

to survey the damage; to survey each others' damage, and to just . . . be. At that moment, everyone in the neighborhood shared an experience and an activity, and, to me, it seemed as though we also shared thoughts and emotions. It was a brief moment in time, standing in the road, evaluating the black scars of downed limbs lying in the white ice blanketing our world, but if I were to put down my computer and walk across the street now to strike up a conversation, this experience would still be a shared thing and something that helps to bind us together as neighbors. When a geographical area endures natural disasters far worse than an ice storm, news coverage often shows groups of people—often strangers—joining together to dig others out of the rubble, rescue stranded community members from rooftops, and so on. In those moments where social structure (and infrastructure) fail, status ceases to matter, and is replaced instead with an awareness of shared humanity and interdependence: an existential relationship between whole persons. What is missing from these modern liminal experiences, as I will show later in this chapter and again Chapter 6, is a shared symbol that has the capacity to capture attention, focus emotion, and serve as a lynchpin for the formation of a cohesive group.

Rock shows, and youth culture in general, have been considered a manifestation of frustration with the dominant society, expressed within a liminal environment—a temporary one, where the individual is cut off only briefly from society (*see for example* Halnon 2005, Martin 1979). A *Grateful Dead* show also has liminal elements: individuals leave the dominant society behind, engage in unusual behaviors, and place less emphasis on status. These liminal states, or *anti-structure*, can create the possibility for social change (Alexander 1988). No doubt some *Grateful Dead* fans originally entered the culture because of a disaffection with the dominant culture, and no doubt some of those individuals came out of the other side of a *Grateful Dead* show feeling refreshed and ready to return to everyday life. Based on my observations, this type

of fan does make up a sizeable portion of the wider fan base. But deadheads also created an entirely *new* society where one had not before existed, and one that in many ways runs counter to the dominant society instead of reinforcing it. It is its own society, with its own norms, values, language, forms of exchange, and myths. Liminality achieved at a show is not simply a relationship between whole persons who then return to an existing structure; it is also between whole persons turning away from an existing structure to create a new society formed from their interaction. This construction of what, I argue, amounts to a new belief system, and a new social structure to support that system, is a modern test of Emile Durkheim's ([1912]1995) theory of the development of religion and society as laid out in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*.

Deadhead Literature

Sutton (2000)'s approach to deadhead culture was similar to mine: she notes that deadheads regularly achieve "extraordinary states of consciousness" (111) at *Grateful Dead* shows. Sutton (2000) examined deadhead culture for elements of "community, cultus (ritual behavior), creed (beliefs about the meaning of human life), and code (rules for everyday behavior that reflect creed)" that establish a boundary between "ordinary and extraordinary reality" (2000:111). Jennifer Hartley (2000), on the other hand, wrote a partially autobiographical piece on her involvement with a religion that formed within the *Grateful Dead* community and that focused on individual and shared transcendence. Informally known as the "Spinners" (what Jennifer calls "graceful dancers") for their practice of dancing at shows by spinning in tight circles, sometimes for hours, the religious group first called themselves "The Family" and then later "The Church of Unlimited Devotion" (CUD). Although she became a member of the group and later left, Hartley's (2000) original purpose was to understand what inspired spirituality at *Dead* shows and how fans incorporated this spirituality into their own

lives. The CUD believed that a monotheistic God spoke through both the Bible and through the music of the *Grateful Dead*, and especially through Garcia. Spinning served as a “meditational vehicle to help spinners focus on the music” through which these messages would be received (Hartley 2000:131). When spinners could achieve a sense of loss of the self, they felt “totally together with everyone.” Even when the loss of self was not felt, the act of spinning together still resulted in a sense of unity and fellowship (Hartley 2000:131). Hartley (2000) noted that the modern rock concert is similar to Durkheim’s *collective effervescence* (discussed below), except that, she claims, modern concertgoers are jaded, requiring the use of drugs, an awareness of love and community, and musical exploration of the band to create spiritual experiences that are not possible with other bands.

Hartley’s (2000) claim that deadheads are too “jaded” mirrors Goodenough’s (2007) claim (discussed further in Chapter 6) that participation in *Grateful Dead* rituals expresses a sense of alienation from what she calls “primitive” religion. Both privilege the ancient over the modern, implying that modern religions lack something necessary to the human experience. Although Durkheim ([1912]1995) did believe that religions evolve, he argued that all religions contain a set of essential qualities (discussed below) that underlie all group behavior, regardless of time, place, and social complexity—not that religions lose qualities as they evolve. If they did, they would, by definition, no longer be religions.

Durkheim: The Basics

In the *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* ([1912]1995), Durkheim set out to define the essence of religion, arriving at a small set of principles that, he argued, underlie religions of all forms. These principles are the “enduring elements that constitute what is eternal and human in religion. They are the whole objective content of the idea that is expressed when *religion* in

general is spoken of” (Durkheim [1912]1995:4; emphasis in original). Because he believed that religions evolved in complexity over time, he sought out what he considered the most “simple” known religion: the religious rites of aboriginal tribes in Australia. To be “simple,” according to Durkheim ([1912]1995:1), a religion must be less complex in its organization than any other known religion, and must not have an identifiable “predecessor religion” from which it appears to be descended. In this way Durkheim ([1912]1995) hoped to study religious practices as close to the origin of religion as possible, although he cautioned that there was no “one moment” when the first religion came to be that we can possibly find. “Like every other human institution,” he wrote, “religion begins nowhere” (Durkheim [1912]1995:7).

Religion may begin nowhere . . . but it is practiced everywhere. Durkheim ([1912]1995:44) defined religion as:

A unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.

The word “church” is problematic because it immediately calls up symbolic representations of churches as buildings (a white-clad prairie church with a tall steeple, perhaps) and organizations (Catholicism, for example). Instead, what Durkheim ([1912]1995) meant to convey is what is common to all established religions: a “moral community made up of all the faithful . . . that teaches the individual what . . . gods are, what their role is, how [s/]he must enter into relations with them, and how [s/]he must honor them” (42-43). Durkheim’s definition could be revised thus:

A unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things (which are set apart and forbidden); these beliefs and practices unite all those who adhere to them into one single, self-aware moral community.

The first part of this definition concerns what is often thought to be central to religion: the specific religion's tenets, or core beliefs. For Durkheim ([1912]1995), beliefs are not enough: religion is an "eminently collective thing" (44) that expresses "collective realities," the purpose of which is to reaffirm and strengthen the group itself (9). Thus, religion consists of (1) a set of beliefs about what is considered by the group to be of prime importance, and (1) a set of what must be collective, rather than isolated, actions, resulting in collective emotions, which reaffirm these beliefs. Religion is only religion when it is felt, seen, and acted upon among many. Individual action is simply a reflection of prior group interaction (Durkheim ([1912]1995). The "beliefs and practices relative to sacred things," therefore, are built upon collective action.

What does "religion" have to do with a modern rock concert? Durkheim argued that the religious perspective could be applied to the secular experience, because humans have a religious nature in general. "Modern spheres," Alexander (1988:3) explained of Durkheim's approach:

must be studied in terms of symbolic classifications. They are structured by tensions between the fields of the sacred and profane; their central social processes are ritualistic; their most significant structural dynamics concern the construction and destruction of social solidarities.

The following sections pair a discussion of the elements of Durkheim's theory that lead to a unified system of beliefs and practices and a moral community—within a secular context.

Everybody's Dancing: Collective Effervescence

As a sociologist, the first connection I drew between deadheads and sociological theory—standing among thousands of dancing deadheads at my first show—was to Durkheim's ([1912]1995) concept of *collective effervescence*, which is similar to Turner's ([1969]2009) *communitas* and built of shared transcendence. Collective effervescence is the shared, heightened emotional state that emerges within a group of individuals who, when engaged in

group action, experience a transcendent episode that they link to that group participation. It is this group activity that Durkheim ([1912][1995]) refers to in his definition of religion (as rewritten above): as “practices [that] unite all those who adhere to them into one single, self-aware moral community.” In *Elementary Forms*, Durkheim ([1912]1995) vividly illustrated collective effervescence through description of rituals he had observed where, after driving themselves into frenzied states at a meeting of clans, the tribe became

. . . transformed in the same way at the same moment, [expressing] this feeling by . . . shouts, movements, and bearing . . . as if [they were] in reality transported into a special world entirely different from the one in which [they] ordinarily live[d], a special world inhabited by exceptionally intense forces that invade and transform. . . . (220)

During this type of intense experience, individuals feel as though they are “far outside the ordinary conditions of life” (Durkheim ([1912]1995):218) and behaviors normally prohibited or discouraged by social structure become acceptable—similar to Turner’s state of liminality. Shilling and Moller (2011) described this state as *bodily intoxication*: a combination of “delirious excess” in shared transcendence and bodily involvement that helps individuals to let go of their ego and self-interest and, when “harnessed to social and religious reproduction” through collective rites, reinforces the relationship between participants and the group (18). Individuals express these heightened emotions outwardly, shouting, and dancing, for example, and in turn, reinforce the emotions of others who are also—for example—shouting and dancing. In this way, through both seeing and doing, these heightened emotions become contagious and spread quickly throughout the crowd. A deadhead survey respondent wrote, for example: “in between dancing, singing, twirling, lifting, twisting, [and] being spirited away, you look around to see everyone in ecstasy doing the same.” Observing that others are behaving in the same manner as the observer has a powerful effect: it heightens the emotional state of the individual and the

crowd and influences others to join in the ecstasy. This mutual witnessing means that the crowd is aware of itself as a crowd—what Collins (2004) called “co-presence:” more than simply being physically in the same space, the group is aware of itself *as a group* (see Chapter 6). Like my respondent, Durkheim ([1912]1995:385) also focused on tribal participants “jumping, whirling, dancing, shouting, and singing;” the consistency in behavior between deadheads and the aboriginal tribespeople Durkheim analyzed suggests that he was correct in his assumption that one could find “enduring elements that constitute what is eternal and human” in religious rites (Durkheim [1912]1995:4).

It is not necessary for bodily movement to have purpose or meaning to accomplish a sense of one-ness with the group: what is important is that physical actions are “exuberant” and that they “satisfy the worshipper’s need to act, move, and gesticulate;” participants display themselves for the sake of displaying themselves and take “pleasure in what amounts to games” (Durkheim [1912]2005:385). An excerpt from Interlude 3 describes the type of dancing that regularly takes place at a *Grateful Dead* show:

. . . an older woman with a long grey braid is lost in what might best be described as interpretive dance: her eyes closed, she appears to be entranced, and she moves her body and arms in a sinuous, loose manner, sometimes bending at the waist and sometimes raising her knees, often reaching toward the sky and rolling her hands around each other in a way that reminds me of a belly dancer. Despite her apparent obliviousness to anything but the music, she never moves outside of the space she created for herself and she never hits her neighbors.

This type of dance is very individualized, each dancer engaged not with another dancer, but with the music and with the crowd. How deadheads dance, I find, is difficult to describe: I know from

experience that listening intently to the music, the rhythm, and moving my body results in a sort of meditative state while still feeling connected with the crowd. I can observe that others, often with their eyes closed and a peaceful or joyful facial expression, appear to be experiencing something similar. I have seen similar dancing in videos of the crowds of other jam bands and music festivals: it is not exclusive to *Grateful Dead* shows—in fact, Durkheim’s description of tribal ritual, as noted above, suggests that this form of dance is not exclusive to a *Grateful Dead* crowd. But it is different from what I have experienced at other popular music shows, and that difference, I argue, makes a difference, as illustrated in my experience at the Kicker Country Stampede country music festival in 2014.

Dancing at Kicker Country Stampede

Country Stampede is a country music festival that attracts people from across the United States. It has been held at the River Pond campground, in Tuttle Creek State Park near Manhattan, Kansas, every June since 1995 (CMNB 2016). It is a three-day outdoor festival that attracts multiple big-name country “headliners” as well as less well-known acts. In many important ways, Country Stampede is similar to a *Grateful Dead* show: in addition to music and dancing, fans camp, attend shows across multiple days, and vending is common. The results, however, are quite different.

The stage for Country Stampede is set up in a large open section of the campground on the south side of the Tuttle Creek dam. In front of the stage, a wide swatch of green lawn stretches for perhaps 100 yards, bounded by a 10-foot-wide walkway of beaten dirt that runs in a horseshoe shape from one edge of the stage to the other. On the outside of this walkway is a collection of vendors selling piles of cowboy hats made from straw, leather belts, jewelry, t-shirts, dresses, swim suits, colored plastic pump-bottles that shoot streams of ice water, and

hand-squeezed lemonade. Some vendors use EZ-ups and others, particularly those that sell food, set up large tents. Radio stations and businesses also have painted and polished semi-trailers with sides that open so passers-by can step inside and out of the sun. Directly opposite the stage, the walkway opens up into another concourse where one can buy funnel cakes, cotton candy, barbeque, and so on from carts and tents. Because all of these vendors are inside the venue, I assume that they are all licensed by the organization producing the festival, which is also the case for inside vendors at a *Grateful Dead* show. Unlike a *Grateful Dead* show, there were no vendors in the parking lots or along the paths to the venue.

Participants come for one or all days, camp nearby, drink alcohol and, I assume, some use illegal substances. They also wear clothing that they would not likely wear under “normal” conditions: for example, a man in his twenties wore a pair of denim overalls with the legs raggedly cut off and—from what I could tell—nothing else. A man in his fifties wore only cowboy boots and very short swim trunks with a United States flag print. Many women wore denim shorts and swim suit tops. The atmosphere is happy, friendly, and carnival-like. In many important ways, then, Country Stampede is like a *Grateful Dead* shows, with participants who travel great distances, attend several shows at the same venue, and dress and behave in ways that they very likely do not in other contexts. The venue offers something like a Shakedown Street along with amenities and space to listen to the band(s).

The dancing, however, is quite different. Immediately in front of the stage is a cordoned-off area filled with folding chairs for those who buy VIP tickets. Ardent, but less well-ticketed

⁵ A *Grateful Dead* show with one headliner is not the equivalent of a music festival with several artists. Dead bands do play music festivals, however, so a comparison could be drawn, but I have no direct experience to bring to bear here. However, the comparison is meant to be a general one, to illustrate the otherwise difficult-to-explain difference between styles of dance.

fans stand behind reserved seating. A catwalk extends from the middle of the stage, through reserved seating, and into the area behind: artists will walk out on this area during the show to get closer to fans while they sing, reaching down to touch the hands of fans who are reaching toward them. Behind this group, festival-goers create haphazard rows out of camp chairs and blankets they bring with them, or they simply sit on the grass. The crowd thins further from the stage. People walking the dirt paths sometimes stop at the verge, out of the way of others, listen to a song, and then move on again. Those on the path may be singing along with the music, but they are walking and not paying rapt attention to the band.

Except, perhaps, for the ardent fans near the front of the stage (and not necessarily the VIP ticket holders, many of whom sat and appeared, to me, to be bored), nowhere did I see the type of exuberance one encounters at a *Grateful Dead* show. Fans moved with the music and even danced, but differently, even when the music was upbeat and compelling. Many couples sat or stood with their arms wrapped around each other. At a *Grateful Dead* show, although deadheads do attend shows with romantic partners, it is uncommon to see fans physically wrapped up in each other. When Country Stampede participants did dance in areas away from the front of the stage, they engaged in “swing dancing” along the edges of the crowd. Swing dancing is a stylized country dance that consists of deliberate, repetitive movements and where dancers require at least four to five feet of personal space to avoid bumping into others.

Taken together, Country Stampede music was good and the atmosphere was friendly, but the differences in focus (for Collins, mutual focus (see Chapter 6)), mattered. Festival-goers concentrated on many different things: on the band, on the concourse, on their romantic partners . . . but most of the time, there was no single, mutual focus of attention for the entire crowd. The one exception may have been when Garth Brooks’ song “Friends in Low Places” was played,

during which the entire crowd sang the lyrics—which may be why every band I heard over that three-day weekend covered that song. When it played, most of the crowd sang—but importantly, they also continued whatever activity they had already been engaged in before the music started. What I and others witnessed—the “mutual witnessing” discussed above—when we looked out over the crowd was a crowd of happy people doing several different things, not Durkheim’s ([1912]1995) “exuberant” motions that result in heightened, contagious emotions. Happiness was not sufficient to create collective effervescence.

Getting It

For most respondents, collective effervescence is a sign of *getting it* (for others, getting it simply means understanding the music). For the former group, the phrase means that the individual has experienced a moment during a show where they felt at one with the crowd or the band/band member. William, a 42-year-old husband and devoted father to two young girls, explains that *getting it* comes from:

[O]pening doors for people—the doors of perception, the doors of consciousness. ‘Getting it’ is just getting on that level [where you understand that] this is a bigger thing than just liking a band: it’s an experiential-type, exploratory experience.”

A survey respondent wrote:

The jam. The feeling. When the band just gets into the music. You feel the energy. Everyone feels the energy. It’s amazing.

Another found the experience to be so powerful as to be overwhelming at times: Being at the show was

. . . like I entered a place of the unknown, that I desperately wanted to be part of. At times the energy was even [so] overwhelming that I needed to find space [for a break].

When collective effervescence emerges, shared emotions are felt as a “force,” according to Durkheim ([1912]1995). (Both Collins (see Chapter 6) and my respondents refer to this powerful shared emotional state as energy; therefore, I use “force” or “energy” interchangeably throughout my discussion.) A survey respondent supplied a vivid metaphor for how this force/energy flows among collective actors:

The energy in the coliseum turned into a rainbow river. We were all flowing around inside in that as our bodies danced on the ground, our spirits swirled around in the show and then out of the roof into the world. I felt the collective energy leaving the coliseum and blowing like wind as far as the energies could reach and slowly, the boys reigned the energy back into our bodies and we took that out into the lot to share in positive vibes and good feelings until the sunrise. Me? I took that energy into the rest of my life!

The respondent feels an energy that was (1) created by and (2) collectively felt by the people in the coliseum and that was (3) bigger than all of them: the separation of “bodies” and “spirits” within an energy that is large enough to contain them all (they are “all flowing around inside”) and that then grows even larger (expands “into the world.”) This energy is (4) tied directly to the group musical experience: “the boys [band members] reigned the energy back into our bodies.” The shared experience (5) resulted in shared positive feelings and actions between group members which translated into (6) extension of that energy, possibly construed as a sense of group membership, into daily affairs: “I took that energy into the rest of my life.”

As is the case with the rainbow river quote, many respondents include the band as an equal participant in this exchange of energy. The line “the music played the band” from the *Grateful Dead* song “The Music Never Stopped” (Weir and Barlow 1975) is routinely invoked by deadheads to indicate effervescence that first occurs between band members on stage, and

that then often expands to include the audience. 51-year-old Chris is traveling with a friend because his wife finds the crowds overwhelming. 51-year-old Chris is traveling with a friend because his wife finds the crowds overwhelming. For Chris, though, the crowds are important. He explains that:

There's just something about the crowd, the expectation, the band. Even the band admits, themselves, that there's an interplay between the audience and the band, and that's really what the show is all about. Some nights it just gets really—you can feel something's in the air. . . . You always hope for that. . . . the music plays the band as much as the band plays the music, and the crowd plays the band as much as the band plays for the crowd. To be part of that . . . You feel like you're one with the band.

Chris's quote sums up what respondents said about shows where effervescence is created: if it occurs, it always occurs when the band and the audience are “getting it” together, when there comes a point, Tommy, a 51-year-old husband with a long brown pony tail hanging down the back of his tie-dye t-shirt and laugh lines on his face, said, “where you just hear [that] *everybody* gels and it rises and rises and rises. Everybody explodes at the same time” (*emphasis added*). Given the band's importance in the community, as music-makers, it would be easy to assume that they would be seen as “above” the audience, even as the source of action and emotion produced by the audience. In Chapter 6, however, I show that band members and deadheads have little status difference between them. Durkheim ([1912]1995) explained that collective behavior of the type that produces effervescence also levels all statuses: all group members, regardless of rank, are equal participants when the community “gets it.”

The Sacred and the Profane

When thousands of people focus their attention on a band and then, together with the band, create collective effervescence, it is reasonable to expect that the band and things associated with it might gain in significance—perhaps even become “sacred.” Durkheim ([1912]1995:38) defined the sacred in opposition to the profane:

Sacred things are things protected and isolated by prohibitions; profane things are those things to which the prohibitions are applied and that must keep at a distance from what is sacred.

Sacred objects, therefore, are set apart from other objects. Attached to them are religious beliefs about how they became sacred, what qualities their sacredness takes, and what the sacred objects represent. Individuals behave toward sacred things through rites, which are rules for how to treat or interact with a sacred object (Durkheim [1912]1995). For example, many religions have writings that are considered sacred: along with rules for who can handle these writings, when, and how, sacred writings are also commonly accompanied by a story that explains how the writing became sacred, or how it came into existence. In many cases, that story involves a person—holy or otherwise—who had a vision and either found or wrote the sacred writings. Writings, symbols, bits of wood or cloth, special types of water—all have been made sacred, and all have forms that are also profane. Any object can be made sacred, according to Durkheim ([1912]1995); sacredness is not an inherent characteristic of an object. What makes one bit of wood sacred and another bit of wood profane? Sacredness is “superadded” to an object; it is the collective, moral force transfigured, through human interaction, into what is seen as religious force, the “ideas and feelings that the spectacle of society awakens in us” (Durkheim [1912]1995:327). The American flag inspires, but there is nothing inherently special about a piece of cloth with alternating red and white stripes broken by a blue rectangle dotted with white

stars. It is the collective energy of patriotism felt among citizens of the United States that invests the flag with a sacred quality that flag-patterned swim trunks do not possess (to the same degree). “[S]acred things are the places where [collective energy] has alighted,” Durkheim ([1912]1995) stated. “[T]hey have been invested with that honor only insofar as they possessed some of that very [energy], the fount of all that is religious” (201-02).

Once so imbued, objects fall into one of the two categories, Durkheim ([1912]1995) argues early in *Religious Forms*; an object is either sacred or profane. In practice, however, the division between the sacred and the profane is less distinct. Rites and strictures for the treatment of the U.S. flag, for example, direct individuals on how to handle, display, and store the flag. Of these expectations, the prohibition against the flag coming into contact with the ground is sacrosanct: once the flag has made contact with the ground, it is *no longer as sacred as it once was*, and it must be destroyed through burning. If the flag were either sacred or profane, then once profaned, the flag could be disposed of in any manner, or not at all. That it must be burned—and ritually so—indicates that the physical object retains some measure of sacredness, even when it is not sacred *enough* to display. Weyher (2012) noted that Durkheim created a dilemma by later acknowledging that there are “distinctions between sacred things” and that sacred objects can be profaned, which suggests different “levels” of sacredness (371-72). The resolution to this dilemma, for Weyher (2012), rests in considering the sacred object in context, under the “appropriate relational circumstances” and related emotions under which the object is considered sacred; in other words, because sacredness is a quality that is assigned to an object through group action, then this group action is essential. Once context is taken into account, we can account for objects becoming more or less sacred or being sacred or profane under different circumstances.

In the context of a *Grateful Dead* show, the energy created through collective effervescence, for many fans, “alighted” on the band, making them a sacred object. Several respondents referred to the band as a sort of “conduit” for some broader energy. “I don’t think the *Grateful Dead* invented anything,” Chris explains: “I think they tapped into what’s there and has always been there.” That thing that has always been there, according to respondents, is energy. The band, therefore, is treated as sacred in Durkheimian terms, but not wholly so. From its position on stage, the band is set apart and above, isolated from contact with the profane. Yet by their behavior, discussed in Chapters 4 and 7 and Interlude 3, represents a lowering of the band’s status to a point that is close to that of the audience. Collective effervescence, according to Durkheim ([1912]1995) requires that status is lowered; for the band and audience to together achieve collective effervescence, one cannot be significantly above the other (see my Chapter 6 discussion of boundedness and power and status rituals).

It is Garcia, however, who seems to draw the most attention, even though he has now been deceased for over 20 years. Garcia attempted to avoid being the center of attention (Barnes 2012) and rejected the idea that he was the band’s leader, calling it “bullshit” (Shenk and Silberman 1994:31), and claimed that all band members occupied that role in turn. Despite his efforts, Jerry Garcia, the (profane) person, was (and is) also Jerry Garcia, the sacred (illustrating Weyher’s (2012) point, above). Garcia was a dedicated musician, spending much of his waking time with a guitar or other instrument around his neck. He lived together with band members more than once, drove miles and stayed away from home to play gigs, and in later years had a home recording studio in his Stinson Beach, California home. Associates remember him answering the door or talking to company while playing guitar (Greenfield 2009). By all accounts, he was a gifted musician: several respondents made references to the quality of his

playing, his ability to learn new instruments, or the music he could produce on his guitar. Yet Garcia was one among many talented, self-taught musicians in the *Grateful Dead*. What made him the focus of so many fans' attention?

Many deadheads saw something special in Garcia's playing, and also in the man. The Church of Unlimited Devotion, believed that the divine spoke to them through Garcia's guitar. Several respondents told stories of making a special connection with Garcia during a show, whether they made eye contact with Garcia and felt they shared an understanding, opened their eyes from a trance state to find themselves looking directly at Garcia's, or felt that Garcia's lyrics spoke directly to the troubles they were experiencing in life. For those individuals who focused intently on Garcia while feeling the energy of collective effervescence, it must have seemed like sacred energy had not only alighted on Garcia, but was flowing through him and his music. For some respondents, Garcia came to represent the *Dead*, so much so that when Garcia died, they had no interest in the culture. "Jerry died," one survey respondent said in response to a question about how Garcia's death affected them. "I got off the bus." The loss of one man became the loss of a community. Chris explains:

Other members of the band had died. Pigpen died, and the band went on. Keith died. The band went on. Brent died, and the band went on. Vince died. You know . . . it was different with Jerry . . .

Although several respondents explained that Garcia's visibly failing health meant that they were not surprised by his death, the deadhead community was rocked by his loss. When he died in 1995 I barely knew who the *Grateful Dead* were, but on the day he died, I heard about it and knew that it was important. For most respondents, memories of where they were when they learned of Garcia's passing are vivid. A survey respondent explained:

I can remember where I was, what I was doing, what was in my hands—one of those moments. I can do that for all the great music stars. . . . So I can tell you when Elvis died, when John Lennon died, when Jerry Garcia died, when George Harrison died . . .

Another respondent heard the news on the radio while washing dishes at work, another had to pull her car off the road because she felt like she had been “punched in the gut,” and many, many others received a phone call from a friend. Fans flocked to one of many memorial services, and one survey respondent spent three days listening to music while he made a collage of *Grateful Dead* ticket stubs from shows he had seen. Another respondent expressed a sense of disorientation, an uncertainty about what would happen to the culture:

I felt kind of sick. I felt like I wanted to cry. I couldn't believe it . . . not that he's family, but he's an important person in life. I think the biggest thing I felt was: what now? I think that's what everybody felt, was: what now?

Some disasters brand themselves on the collective memory in the same way that Garcia's death affected many deadheads. My parents know where they were and what they were doing when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. I was in the school library when the space shuttle Challenger exploded; my teacher rolled out a metal cart with an oversized television strapped to the top and my class watched the news coverage. I was on my way to buy my morning donut in the Kansas State University Memorial Union when news coverage on the massive projection TV screen stopped me, literally, in my tracks. I stood in the middle of the walkway and watched the second airplane hit the twin towers in New York City. That Garcia's death affected deadheads in a similar way to the assassination of a sitting president says something profound about the meanings attached by the culture to the man.

Despite his importance as a sacred object (he is sometimes referred to as “St. Jerome”), deadheads do not consider Garcia to be a god: he is very much a human; it is this human quality that several of my respondents identified with. And yet, when a rainbow appeared over the Levi’s Stadium in Santa Clara, California shortly before set break for the first 50th anniversary show on June 27, 2015, it was widely seen as Garcia’s “blessing” on the shows—and it changed the way that fans thought about, and interacted with, the new iteration of the band. Over the months leading up to the shows, the deadhead community had been deeply divided over the guitarist that would stand in for Garcia. He would be expected to play in a similar style and level of expertise in addition to knowing the band’s catalog of songs. The proven choice appeared to be Kadlecik, who had proven himself in Garcia’s position in *Dark Star Orchestra* and *The Furthur*. Instead, *Phish* guitarist Anastasio was tapped to play in Garcia’s position . . . and many *Grateful Dead* fans do *not*, to put it mildly, like *Phish* (although many do). Fans clogged online and social media forums with discussions, complaints, and fears: would the band sound like the *Dead*, or like *Phish*? Should fans simply be grateful to have an anniversary show at all? By June 27, the first of the five shows, fans were willing to give Anastasio a chance, but they were not happy about it. During the first set, however, Anastasio played well, and after collectively holding its breath for two songs, the crowd relaxed and responded with delight. The defining moment for acceptance of Anastasio, however, came not from his musicianship, but from that rainbow. Fans across the stadium photographed it and made social media posts with captions like “It’s Jerry!!” (Mercer 2015:np). The next day, a false rumor circulated that the rainbow had been man-made, which the organization quickly denied. Peter Shapiro, who produced the reunion shows, echoed fan responses by claiming that the rainbow *was* man-made, “. . . and the man that made it was Jerry Garcia.” He added that the producers felt that they had

“the spirit of Jerry at our back” for the remaining shows (Waddell 2015c – which one??). From that point forward the complaints about the band’s choice of Anastasio over Kadlecik virtually disappeared, with fans instead championing Anastasio and demanding that the band “Let Trey Sing!”

Whether it was because his lead guitar drew attention more so than the other instruments, or because of his single-minded focus on creating music, the quality of his musicianship, or something about his personality, Garcia-the-man was assigned a sacred status. Durkheim ([1912]1995) wrote:

...we see that society never stops creating new sacred things. If society should happen to become infatuated with a man, believing it has found in him its deepest aspirations as well as the means of fulfilling them, then that man will be put in a class by himself and virtually deified. Opinion will confer on him a grandeur that is similar in every way to the grandeur that protects the gods. (215)

For his talent, however, Garcia was, after all, a man, and one who struggled with drug addiction, weight gain, and poor health. For Durkheim ([1912]1995), the fact that society would raise a flawed human to the level of sacredness is a “clear indication” that sacredness, as he argued, is superadded to everyday objects, and not (although some Garcia fans would disagree) inherent in the sacred object itself (215).

Totems, Symbols, and Contagion

Garcia became sacred because deadheads could conceive of him as being one of several receptacles, if briefly, for the energy of the group. Durkheim ([1912]1995) noted that when aboriginal tribes saw tangible things as being imbued with collective energy, these objects became “totems,” or symbols, representing not only the group but also the energy created through group activity. By attaching the nebulous communal experience to a physical object,

participants create a symbol with which to think and talk about otherwise intangible shared experiences. The symbol itself does not become a god, though it is sacred, but rather is simply a tangible representation of the group and the energy it created. Durkheim ([1912]1995:222) explained: “The soldier who dies for his flag dies for his country, but the idea of the flag is actually in the foreground of his consciousness.” The intangible idea, one which stirs up strong emotions and feelings of loyalty, rests in a tangible object. Garcia, therefore, was a tangible being and therefore a symbol for the energy created between himself, the band, and the audience.

Contagious Sacredness

Sacredness, due to its quality of being added to an object through, is extremely contagious (Durkheim [1912]1995). Water, for example, becomes sacred for Catholics when blessed by a priest, who is himself sacred; touching the water and then one’s forehead, chest, and shoulders in a ritual gesture is a sacred activity, conferring a measure of sacredness to the individual. Because this energy superadded to an object and not inherent, or bound to it, “it is not surprising,” Durkheim ([1912]1995) explained, “that [it] escape[s] from those things upon the slightest contact;” sacredness, therefore, is seen by the group as being always in danger of “escaping . . . and invading” anything that passes close by (322, 327). It is for this reason that the sacred must be kept separate from the profane, but such efforts are often unsuccessful, with the result that everyday objects routinely become sacred (Durkheim [1912]1995). Even dirt, for example, if it meets the blood of soldiers killed in battle, becomes sanctified.

Garcia, as a sacred symbol, provides an excellent example of the contagious quality of sacredness. In his biography in Chapter 4, I wrote that, due to a childhood accident, Garcia was missing the last two joints of his middle finger on his right hand. In his article about the opening of Dead Central, Baine (2012:n.p.) begins the article with the following:

The first thing that greets the curious at Dead Central, the public portion of the *Grateful Dead* Archive at UC Santa Cruz, is a bronze cast of Jerry Garcia's right hand. Garcia lost most of his right middle finger in an accident when he was a small child. Deadheads know that little factoid like the rest of us know the sky is blue. . . . Is it just weird coincidence that the most revered figure in rock 'n' roll, which you could argue is the artform of the middle finger, was missing his?

In Chapter 6 I argue that symbols, like Garcia's hand, are a form of synecdoche, a part used to indicate the whole. An ink print of Garcia's hand is also used as the same type of symbol: I have seen it on patches, artwork, and tattoos. Figure 4 shows the (officially licensed) handprint on a sticker.



Figure 4. Jerry Garcia Handprint (liquidblue.com, N.d.)

Images of Garcia's hand—representative of the whole man—"caught" sacredness from Garcia-the-symbol. The image is a visual reminder of talent and perseverance. "Captain Trips" is another Garcia symbol, one tied to attempts to make Garcia into a band leader, "father figure and guide," even though Garcia rejected the role (Shenk and Silberman 1994:31). Garcia was given the nickname Captain Trips by the Merry Pranksters, even though he insisted that he was not captain of anything (Shenk and Silberman 1994). Nevertheless, the nickname stuck. Some time

later, professional photographer Herb Greene photographed Garcia wearing an “Uncle Sam” top hat (Figure 5), as part of a band photo shoot for their first, eponymous album (Howard 2014).



Figure 5. Garcia as "Captain Trips." Photograph by Herb Greene. (Howard 2014 N.p.)

The photo was then used as part of a collage for album artwork; the album was released in 1967 (Shenk and Silberman 1994). Garcia continued to wear the hat and was photographed wearing it in public. That, along with the use of the image on band artwork, resulted in the creation of a new symbol. “That hat all of a sudden became ‘Captain Trips,’ Greene recalls. “It just sort of happened, in *Grateful Dead* style” (Howard 2014:n.p.). What “just happened” was sacred contagion. Today, Captain Trips seems less a symbol of Garcia as a leader, and more an expression of the playfulness attached to the culture, as well as a reference to drug culture. In addition to the Captain Trips image, several variations on a skull or skeleton wearing an Uncle Sam top hat appeared in the *Grateful Dead* symbolic lexicon following the emergence of Captain

Trips. Figure 6, the cover art for the Garcia-directed movie released in 1977, *The Grateful Dead*, is one such image.



Figure 6. "Uncle Sam" Skeleton on Cover of *Grateful Dead* Movie (Garcia 1977).

Like many *Grateful Dead* icons, these images are made into tattoos, patches, pins, screen printed on clothing, and so on. Far from separating the sacred from the profane, then, deadheads spread sacred objects throughout the culture. Occasionally, some fans attend shows dressed as one of these symbols. At the California 50th anniversary shows, for example, I took a photograph of a man in his 60's dressed in a red and blue shirt open to his navel, over red and black tie-dye pants, and carrying a cane made from a piece of twisted wood. Topping his bushy dark grey beard and grey hair that reached past his shoulders, sat a cartoonishly large, fabric version of the Captain Trips hat. The hat was clearly made to be oversized and silly, and was decorated with other iconic *Grateful Dead* images: a dancing bear, and a terrapin. Through clothing, jewelry, and body modification, deadheads wear their membership in deadhead culture. Durkheim

([1912]1995) wrote that tattoos among the tribes he studied served to keep the individual's membership, literally, in front of the individual's eyes. Sacredness passes through *Grateful Dead* symbols to the very skin of deadheads, reinforcing group membership but also, by contagion, making the culture itself sacred.

The Sacred as a Way of Thinking

For many deadheads, songs or specific song lyrics, through contagion, take on special, symbolic or sacred meaning. Deadhead use of songs or song lyrics to talk about their experience, or even daily life, is ubiquitous; in Chapter 6 I discuss the influence of symbols on thought. Howard, for example, called upon a song to explain what it means, to him, to “get it.” After a long, thoughtful pause, following my question, he responds, choosing his words carefully:

“Eyes of the World,” to me, embodies the whole, uh . . . the whole meaning of what it means to be a human, to care and to be a part of things. That’s what I think it really is. It’s all about sharing and caring and loving.

For him, the song simultaneously symbolizes both the culture and the culture's moral order. The Wharf Rats make use of a song title from one song and lyrics from another to represent shared behavior and beliefs (see Chapter 7). Not all symbolic usages of song titles or lyrics are so conscious, however. Titles and lyrics have been incorporated into the vocabulary of deadheads—not deadhead vocabulary, but the global vocabulary set of deadheads—in ways that respondents sometimes seemed aware of, and sometimes not. For example, when John tells me about associating “Ripple” (Garcia and Hunter 1970) with his father's death, he explains that his father “passed away really suddenly, so it's even more of like, whoop!—[he pauses significantly]—*when there is no pebble tossed.*” In addition to the pause, John gave “when there is no pebble tossed” more vocal emphasis, indicating that he was aware of using lyrics and intended to do so.

Howard suddenly and unexpectedly became overcome with emotion mid-sentence during our interview. He stopped talking, pulled off his round, wire-rimmed glasses, looked down and off to the side, and rubbed his eyes with thick fingers while I studied my notes and waited for him to compose himself. When he began talking again, he explains that his wife died only a few months prior:

I won't say I've changed my mindset about life so much as, since I've lost [my wife], I just realize that every day is precious. And, ah . . . [quietly, voice thick with emotion, barely able to speak] . . . ain't no time to waste.

Although the lyrics are actually “Ain't no time to hate / barely time to wait,” the phrasing—particularly since Howard did not use “ain't” at any other point in our conversation—appears to be an unconscious mirroring of lines from “Uncle John's Band” (Garcia and Hunter 1969:102-03). In the song, the imagery alternates between an invitation to take part in social life (“Come hear Uncle John's Band”) and a warning about the vagaries of life (“like the morning sun you come / and like the wind you go”); it is a fitting, if slightly more mournful deadhead alternative to *carpe diem*. The difference in how Howard used “ain't no time to waste” and John used “where there is no pebble tossed” were slight, but both illustrate a fluidity with song titles and song lyrics in daily conversation that is so common as to be nearly characteristic of the culture. Deadheads call upon cultural symbols, then, to make sense of daily life.

Moral Order

At the end of the last *Grateful Dead* show of the 50th anniversary tour, drummer Mickey Hart left fans worldwide with this message:

Please, this feeling we have here: remember it. Take it home, and do some good with it. Hug your husband, wife, kids. I leave you with this: Please, be kind.

His words hit home with deadheads and were repeated on social media and in article after article. In addition to expressing a hope that the energy created in the culture would continue, Hart also expressed a moral expectation for the community: Do some good. Be kind. These words did not come out of nowhere: they emerged from the moral order created within the community.

When individuals share these intensely emotional sensations of collective unity, according to Durkheim ([1912]1995), they see themselves as being literally the same: of the same flesh, as it were, even in instances where participants are not considered to be kin. Deadheads routinely refer to the community as their “family,” for example, and some even call other deadheads their “brothers” and “sisters.” A few members of the community even go so far as to tell their young children that Garcia is their “grandpa.” Along with this sense of one-ness comes responsibilities for the treatment of others: moral expectations for group behavior. Over time and with repetition of rites, these expectations evolve into standards of behavior for relationships between individuals but also toward ritual objects and society in general (Durkheim [1912]1995).

Social forces have a moral nature, Durkheim wrote, because they are the reason that people follow rites: the person “feels morally obligated so to conduct himself; he feels he is obeying a sort of imperative, fulfilling a duty” (192). That imperative was originally created from the effervescence brought about by the interaction of groups of individuals: the “hallmark of moral authority,” Durkheim ([1912]1995:210) said, “is that its psychic properties alone give it power.” The individual, however, has lost their sense of its origin and instead sees it as something far larger than themselves (Durkheim ([1912]1995). Humankind is therefore “double,” according to Durkheim ([1912]1995:15). Each person consists of two beings, an embodied individual, limited in influence by that body, and a “social being” that has internalized

the “intellectual and moral realm” of society. Because of this duality, it is not possible to explain human behavior by individual motives or experience (Durkheim [1912]1995:15-16); in other words, to understand why an individual acts as they do, one must look to the group, not the individual. “As part of society,” then, “the individual naturally transcends himself, both when [s/]he thinks and when [s/]he acts” (Durkheim [1912]1995: 16). Through these collective actions, then, groups create “beliefs and practices” that “unite all those who adhere to them into one single, moral community.”

Although their behavior may seem to outsiders to be “immoral,” given the community’s acceptance of drug use and general disregard for copyright law, deadheads have a strong sense of morality. In earlier chapters I discussed deadhead cultural values such as tolerance and acceptance, as well as a desire to keep the scene clean. If we revisit the “rainbow river” quote, above, we see hints of the origins of deadhead moral order from an effervescent experience:

. . . and slowly, the boys reigned the energy back into our bodies and we took that out into the lot to share in positive vibes and good feelings until the sunrise. Me? I took that energy into the rest of my life!

The respondent was motivated to interact positively with other deadheads (“share in positive vibes”) and then to take that positive interaction into daily life (“into the rest of my life”). Many deadheads take the concept of being “kind” to others and the environment out into the world with them. Tommy, for example, talks about the privilege of sitting with people as they die; Howard has plans to buy land for an organic farm; and Jennifer works in social services. Kindness translates into a general outlook on life as well, and when these norms are violated, it is quite stunning to the community. With the 2016 United States election cycle, the United States as a nation has become even more polarized, and much of that polarization has been localized in

whether we, as a nation, are to be “kind” to others. Divisions have erupted within the deadhead community as well. One of the Facebook groups I am involved in allowed a single day to complain about politics and then returned to its usual focus on the music. Within another group, a faction of group members negatively sanctioned posts that they believed related to politics, to the point that some members left that group and formed a new one. The new group is specifically for political deadheads, many of whom are shocked that fellow deadheads could hold views so diametrically opposed to their own. This fracturing of a portion of the deadhead community reinforces my caution to not assume that my study sample accurately represents the population as a whole, but it also—and importantly—illustrates that individuals who have participated in the same collective experiences *expect others to share similar expectations for what is moral*. Challenges to those expectations shake the individual’s sense of the society in general.

Discussion

Grateful Dead culture meets Durkheim’s ([1912]1995) definition of religion: it possesses a unified set of beliefs and practices (common stories, values, and expectations for behavior), has objects treated as sacred (the band, Garcia, songs and song lyrics, and images), and deadheads conceive of themselves as a community based on those beliefs and practices. Deadheads tend to assume that the show experience is necessary in order to understand the culture, to “get it:” the “it” is an awareness of a force larger than the members themselves, represented by sacred objects, and experienced by the community through collective effervescence.

The rites that re-created and re-affirmed sacredness for Durkheim ([1912]1995) were episodic, seasonal, and periodic—characteristics that could describe concert tours. “The rhythm that religious life obeys only expresses, and results from, the rhythm of social life,” he explains:

Society cannot revitalize the awareness it has of itself unless it assembles, but it cannot remain continuously in session. The demands of life do not permit it to

stay in congregation indefinitely, so it disperses, only to reassemble anew when it again *feels the need*.” (Durkheim [1912]1995:353; emphasis added)

Grateful Dead shows and *Grateful Dead* tours cannot “remain continuously in season,” nor can most deadheads remain constantly on tour, or go on tour at all. The practice of sharing tapes, in early years, and now of uploading and sharing recorded shows through various internet platforms, allows *Grateful Dead* fans a luxury Durkheim’s aboriginal believers did not have: the ability to re-assemble mentally, augmented by recordings and not just memory. For Durkheim ([1912]1995), individual ritual behavior, although solitary, still connects the individual to the group, although it cannot take the place of the effervescence that rises from physical co-presence. Audio and video recordings, particularly of shows individuals have personally attended, however, may further heighten the potential to cast the individual back and re-invigorate feelings of effervescence, if to a lesser degree than the show itself. Deadheads, therefore, have the ability to encounter the *Grateful Dead* sacred on a daily basis.

Durkheim ([1912]1995) argued that, because the totem served simultaneously as symbol for the clans or tribes he studied, and for the tribe’s deity, that “god and society are one and the same” (208). The rhythms of society, which only allow for tribal or deadhead gatherings when society makes room for them, would emphasize this sense of both religion and society existing outside of, and exerting force on, human behavior. Deadheads seem to be aware that they, and the band, create the effervescence they experience, yet they also commonly attribute the global feeling—the force/energy—to sources outside of themselves, based on the language available to them to discuss such things.

Interlude 3 – At the Show

They're a band beyond description

Like Jehovah's favorite choir

People joinin' hand in hand

While the music plays the band

Lord, they're setting us on fire

"The Music Never Stopped"

(Weir and Barlow 1975:249-50)

Getting into the amphitheater is something of a pilgrimage. People line up well ahead of the time the gates open, carrying bags, bottled water and beer, and blankets. General Admission seating at Red Rocks, unlike many venues, is in front of the stage. Those hoping to get choice seats arrive at the gates early, sometimes by hours. We wait on a long, black asphalt ramp occasionally interrupted by grey concrete steps and bounded by black iron railings. The path follows the natural curvature of the land, winding around boulders and trending upward as we inch toward the bowl of the amphitheater. Signs rising from the dirt proclaim a hefty fine for climbing on the rocks. Even when the gates open, the line moves slowly, a step or half-step every few minutes. The line spreads 2-3 people across, and people chat with friends and strangers. Ahead of me, a young man and woman explain that they have never seen a Grateful Dead show, but bought tickets when a deadhead friend called to tell them they should go. They are among the very few not dressed in tie dye, flowing skirts and dresses, and sporting Grateful Dead symbols. There are so many tie-dye wearing, middle-aged, slightly overweight men with grey hair and beards that it has become a joke for people trying to find each other: "I'll be the overweight man

with the long grey beard and hair and a tie-dye t-shirt, standing by the VW bus.” Nevertheless, the crowd is also full of older women, some with long grey braids, men who look like they have just changed out of business suits, twenty-somethings (with and without tie-dye), mothers or fathers with teens, and young parents with toddlers and infants.

As we near the top, we pass large trash cans in increasing numbers, and fans rid themselves of food and open containers that cannot be taken into the venue. Nearer the gate the press of people thins a bit as fans give security guards room to do their work, creating rough lines in front of each of the three security stations. Security personnel, in slacks and polo shirts embroidered with the venue’s logo, glance at tickets, run their hands down attendee’s sides, pat pockets and pant legs, and rifle through bags and backpacks. Despite Colorado’s legalization of marijuana, word has it that security is confiscating what they find, so people are being creative with hiding places. It is an odd feeling, having a stranger dig through my bag; somehow the x-ray at the airport feels less intrusive. Once I am waved through, a woman dressed in a security uniform scans the barcode on my ticket with a portable handheld scanner. I walk past the bathrooms toward the wide, open space between the stage and stairs, and I am in.

It is difficult to explain how it feels to be inside of Red Rocks Amphitheater. It is unlike any other concert venue in the world, its natural acoustics created by red sandstone monoliths that conceal 250 million years of history (including dinosaur tracks from the Jurassic period). First opened to concerts on a temporary stage in the early 1900s and in its current form in 1941, Red Rocks Amphitheater has been a national historic landmark since 2015, and the park was once one of the seven wonders of the world (Red Rocks Amphitheater “History & Geology” 2014). Interviewees talk about it reverently, telling me that it is a sacred, special place. Roughly shaped like a horseshoe, the amphitheater is bounded on either side by two monoliths that thrust

drunkenly several stories into the air (higher than Niagara Falls): Ship Rock (so named because it looks like the prow of a huge ship) on the south and Creation Rock on the north (Red Rocks Amphitheater and Park “About Red Rocks” 2014). Wide, shallow concrete stairs rise to my right along Ship Rock: hundreds of them. The previous year I learned that climbing to the upper rows is a brutal exercise in stamina and breath control. The stage stretches across the rock face at the lower end: the natural stone of a third, much smaller formation serves as the stage backdrop. Black scaffolding hung with lights and speakers looks . . . temporary; the rock: eternal. These rocks will remain even when concrete and metal have been swept away. Inside of Red Rocks Amphitheater, one simply feels . . . dwarfed. Except at the highest seating levels, where a break in the rock formations allows a wide swatch of blue sky and open landscape to be seen, the outside world is completely blocked from view. Looking up, I see a patch of deep blue sky bordered by red rock, broken only by the occasional green pine tree clinging precariously to ledges high above my head. I take photos of the massive formations as best I can, but cannot share them: cellular reception here is spotty, at best, and we are, for the most part, cut off from the outside world.

It is still several hours before show time, so the first few rows of bench seats in front of the stage are mostly empty—but they are demarcated by blankets and tarps that have been spread out to save seats for their owners. Despite the 20,000 or so people swarming into the arena, this informal arrangement is honored. I choose an unclaimed seat about five rows back, in General Admission, and on the left side of the stage: the Phil Zone, where Lesh will stand and vibrate us with his bass guitar. I tuck my bag against the concrete underneath the bench, waiting and people-watching as the seats steadily fill in around me. The atmosphere is cheerful, people excited but comfortable and accommodating. A steady murmur of voices fills the amphitheater,

punctuated from time to time by glad cries as friends meet up with each other after a long time apart. The stage is already set, large oriental rugs spread beneath microphones, guitar stands, amplifiers and assorted technological paraphernalia that the musicians will use to control the electronic sound. In the back are two sets of drums, and on my right, an organ and keyboards set in a U shape. Masses of speakers rise on poles and stretch across the stage, backed by spotlights. Although signage is often used at a Grateful Dead show, at Red Rocks there is nothing to identify who is about to take the stage. Very little interferes with our sense of connection with this natural space.

Two hours later, the seats are nearly full. Some fans have taken up positions in the various nooks and crannies around the venue so that they can dance without bothering anyone else. On my way to the bathrooms later I will have to wend my way around people dancing and twirling in the middle of the wide walkways. A few people cheer raggedly as someone moves onto stage, but stop when they realize that it is a member of the sound crew, checking equipment. Still, this means that the “boys” will be taking the stage soon. A few minutes later, and without fanfare, the musicians walk casually onto stage at their own pace (rather than entering as a group) and pick up their instruments. The sounds of testing—not tuning, but testing the sound quality—rise into the air without fanfare, and the drums make a light chhhhk chhhhk chhhhk beneath an occasional bluesy run from an electric guitar. The crowd noise changes from a steady level of chatter to a mix of talking, cheers, claps and occasional piercing whistles. In a minute or two—it is hard to tell how long it takes, because my attention, as well as the crowd’s, is focused on identifying the moment when the noodling among band members becomes an identifiable song—we hear a soft and steady tok tok tok from the drums and, without embellishment or introduction, the band moves smoothly into a bluesy, mellow jam. Eventually

the jam resolves into the opening bars of “Feel Like a Stranger,” Weir steps to the microphone, and the crowd rises as one, clapping in time to the music. We begin to dance and sing.

The next song: “Next Time You See Me” continues the laid-back, bluesy feel, but immediately afterward the band revs up the crowd with the defiantly rousing “Sampson and Delilah.” Bouncing up and down from the first notes, individuals move separately but the crowd seems to move as one. The band sings:

You can shave my head, clean as my hand

And my strength will become as natural as any old man

and the crowd responds by throwing fists into the air and joining in the refrain, more shouting than singing:

If I had my way

If I had my way

If I had my way

I would tear this whole building down!

Although the blue sky is beginning to darken, the sun has not yet set and the spotlights sweeping across the crowd are not yet noticeable. The band now moves through a lively, upbeat jam built on the bones of “Sampson and Delilah,” returning to the refrain to end the song, simply and without flourish. The audience cheers wildly. Tonight, the band is on a blues kick, their next song a rendition of “West L.A. Fadeaway” so bluesy that I can close my eyes and envision a dark, smoky dive bar with Garcia’s light tenor lilting into an ancient silver microphone. The crowd undulates like a sea creature. Despite the thorough pat-downs of security, fans are smoking marijuana joints and pipes in literally every direction; not just north and south but northeast, southwest . . . large clouds of smoke rise and hang over the crowd, trapped in the bowl of the

amphitheater. A blow-up beach ball in red, yellow and blue bounces erratically from one part of the crowd to another, hands stretching to send it rocketing upward as it approaches the level of the crowd.

As the bluesy music plays, the fellow next to me—a man in his mid-60's—bounces up and down on the balls of his feet in time to the music and will continue to do so for the entire show. On my right and two rows down an older woman with a long grey braid is lost in what might best be described as interpretive dance: her eyes closed, she appears to be entranced, and she moves her body and arms in a sinuous, loose manner, sometimes bending at the waist and sometimes raising her knees, often reaching toward the sky and rolling her hands around each other in a way that reminds me of a belly dancer. Despite her apparent obliviousness to anything but the music, she never moves outside of the space she created for herself and she never hits her neighbors. Somehow, the entire crowd manages to move and dance in different ways—although almost always solo rather than in pairs—without hurting anyone around them. There are no mosh pits here. When someone is struck, the one doing the striking will give a quick apology, which is accepted, and the dance resumes. Amidst this quiet, controlled chaos, lit joints and pipes with lighters are somehow passed safely down and across rows, strangers sharing with strangers.

*The band finishes “Fadeaway” and begins to noodle again, Weir’s guitar and Mydland’s keyboards riding lightly through the rapidly darkening evening air. The band begins to play again, after a fashion, each member doing his own thing, at points clashing and discordant. Lesh’s bass sounds out, quietly playing a recognizable lick—the opening notes of “Bird Song”:
DAH da da DAH da dah da DAH da da da DAH—and the audience collectively catches its breath, waiting to see if “Bird Song” continues . . . but the free-form jam goes on. Lesh tries*

again, his bass becoming more insistent, calling guitars and keyboards back from the inner spaces where the driving jam has taken them. He lays new musical groundwork while the drums, almost unnoticed, provide a steady beat in the background. Here and there, I hear a few identifiable combinations of notes floating up from the free-form playing, as though the band is testing out where to go next. Briefly, a guitar plays the opening notes for the television show *The Twilight Zone*: DOO doo doo doo DOO doo doo doo DOO doo doo doo. Seconds later, what was meaningless, but tantalizingly musical, abruptly takes form as every band member finally commits and dives together into “Bird Song”: DAH da da DAH da dah da DAH da da da DAH. The crowd noise swells with jubilant cries and clapping as fans savor the opening notes, yelling “wooOOOOOOooo!” above their neighbors’ heads. “Bird Song,” written for singer Janis Joplin after her death (Dodd 2005), is slow, sweet, plaintive, and meditative; Garcia’s vocals (Music Vault 2014) sound vulnerable, even fragile. This instance of “Bird Song” lasts for over 12 minutes, the band veering off into experimentation and then returning to the opening notes, repeatedly grounding the jam in the original song. “Bird Song” eventually morphs smoothly into the gritty vocals and gently rocking beat of “New Speedway Boogie,” then returns through jams back to “Bird Song” before the band leaves the stage for intermission, with “we’ll be right back” as parting words. It will be an hour, and the crowd sits, or leaves for the bathrooms, goes for food at the stands, or shops for band merchandise at several folding tables around the venue. In an open area on the side, to my left, Wharf Rats cluster around a table beneath a yellow helium balloon to fellowship and sing, holding hands in a large mass of tie-dye, and supporting each other in sobriety. They provide, as one of my interviewees explained, a “little bit of traction in an otherwise slippery environment.”

The second set, like the first, begins simply as the band takes the stage. Except for the fact that they face the audience, the boys could be playing solely for each other. There are no theatrics, no broken guitars, no costumes, no face paint. The crowd whistles and cheers as the band returns to the stage as casually as they left. The sun is much lower and the sky is shaded a deep blue, turning to purple. The first stars are beginning to show. “China Cat Sunflower,” opens the set and nearly 20 minutes later it slides through a driving, rock music jam into a rock-country rendition of “I Know You Rider.” Then a long instrumental introduction to “He’s Gone” reminds me of the steady, back-and-forth ocean rhythm of Walt Whitman’s “Out of the Cradle, Endlessly Rocking.” The crowd sings along: “he’s go-oh-one, go-ONE, and nothin’s gonna bring him back,” but then cheers loudly when the band harmonizes “Steal your face right off your head.” The cheer rises from the general crowd noise like a bubble and Garcia smiles in response (gratefuldead 2016). This scene repeats when the band sings “Nothin’ left to do but smile, smile, smile.” Both lines, “Steal your face right off your head” and “Nothin’ left to do but smile, smile, smile,” are important in deadhead culture. The iconic skull and lightning bolt in blue and red, designed by Stanley to distinguish the Grateful Dead’s musical equipment from other bands’ equipment at music festivals, first appeared commercially in 1976 on a live album titled “Steal Your Face” (Shenk and Silberman 1994). From there, the image itself became known as “Steal Your Face” or as a “stealie” (Dodd 2005), and the image and modifications of it are everywhere in deadhead culture. The second line is often used in response to troubles: when things have gone wrong and life is hard, there is “nothin’ left to do but smile, smile, smile.” It is an expression of deadhead identity, of a resolve to approach life with a positive outlook, even when it gets hard. Even though the song is melancholy, and was often played

“quite tenderly when someone close to the band dies” (Dodd 2005:192), this song reminds fans of who they are and what they believe in.

Near the end of “He’s Gone,” the band slows, playing a meditative, easygoing jam. I close my eyes, raise my face, and for a moment I can feel and hear everything distinctly, and all at once, like sitting in one place in the parking lot but switching my attention between conversations. When I focus on Jerry’s guitar the crowd noise, still present, recedes and the guitar’s tones slice through the air. The feeling is not unlike covering one’s ear with a shell to “hear the ocean”: the external world is still there but it recedes as you focus on a single point in your hearing. Quietly, the boys return to the chorus: “Ooooooh, nothin’s gonna bring him back” and Weir interjects “Gone! Gone! Well he’s gone, gone!” in counterpoint to the band’s smooth harmony. They repeat the line, more quietly, and then again and again as instruments begin to drop out, so that by the end all we hear is a quiet, delicate a cappella chant. When they stop singing, silence hangs over the entire arena for a fragile moment. Then a slow, heavy blues funk beat moves the band into “Smokestack Lightning,” through a rock jam that makes my neighbor laugh in delight, and then resolves into the upbeat, lilting country style of “Let It Grow.”

As “Let It Grow” ends, the drums play a final shhhhhhh on the high hat, but we know that they are not done; the drummers will continue to play even though the rest of the band is setting down their instruments and walking away into the dark of back stage. Other bands commonly give over segments of songs to showcase specific band members: the “drum solo” or “guitar solo,” with the artist generally introduced by the lead singer (“Put it together for Bob Weir, folks!”). Not the Grateful Dead. Their focus is the music, and words with the audience are kept to a minimum – perhaps to announce technical difficulties or a lost child. The “drums and space” section of the show, then, is not simply a showcase for Kreutzmann and Hart, even

though the rest of the band members have left the stage. Instead, drums and space is a rhythmic extension of and exploration of the “jam.” Drums from cultures around the world, a steel I-beam strung with piano wire, and even bicycle horns and a Theremin combine to form a driving segment that pounds the audience with sound waves, making the drums section of the show, especially, a visceral experience.

The sun has fully set and it is dark now, stars above us and cool breezes blowing across sweaty bodies as we move with the percussion. The breezes swirl eddies of marijuana smoke above the crowd. Spotlights rake the audience, the sky, and the red rock backdrop in response to the rhythms from the stage. In a stadium with monitors, we would watch psychedelic shapes and bright colors twisting and morphing in response to the rhythm as well, but here, in this place, we make do with nature and effervescence instead of monitors. Although some fans use drums and space as a time to go to the bathroom or get food, I stand with my neighbors, our bodies moving instinctually to the demands of the beat, the vibrations flowing through and around me, making me one with everything.

About five minutes later – although it feels like 20 or 30 – Other band members begin returning to the stage as though called, the drums dropping out and only Hart’s “beam” thrumming its extraordinarily deep hum throughout the stadium. He strikes this note again and again. I feel the sound in my bones and gut more than I hear it; it is a sound from the dawn of time. A guitar begins to play, jamming, jazz-like, the bass guitar joining to provide a stable driving beat underneath it. Other strange sounds appear through the driving experimentation, sounding like crickets, or whistles, or high pitched things I can’t name. The audience either gives itself over to the experience, mentally bouncing along the top of the music, or withdraws to focus on the mundane. This is the “space” portion of the show: the artists join to create something that

could perhaps be described as a jazz session on a freight train . . . until it slows and calms but does not stop, nine minutes later, when the rhythm guitar picks up the opening notes—DAH . . . dah dah dah dat da da dahhhh—of “Dark Star” and the crowd goes absolutely mad with excitement, cheering and yelling all I can hear. The song is slow and strangely mournful, and I am one of many to raise one or both hands in the air, palms toward the stage, waving them slightly back and forth as blue, yellow, and purple spotlights sweep across the crowd, illuminating our movement. I am reminded of seaweed waving with the current in the ocean. We sing along with the band:

Shall we go, you and I while we can?

Through the transitive nightfall of diamonds

The lyrics for “Dark Star” are brief, yet it is a favorite of fans, and usually used to launch into extended jam sessions that often return briefly to the song as though it is a touchstone in the midst of the free-form play that is a Grateful Dead jam. A “Dark Star” (in deadhead parlance, one talks about “a” version of a song) can begin and end a jam session with other songs in between—or not—or be played in portions at various points during the show. At this show, “Dark Star” fades out, to be replaced by the distinct, heavy country chords of “Morning Dew.” Unlike many of the other songs during the show, “Morning Dew” ends with finality, coming to a distinct close. The band leaves the stage while the audience cheers, claps and whistles. Although several minutes pass, we continue to cheer and whistle at the same volume, watching the stage. We know that they will return.

And they do return, a few minutes later, once again without fanfare and without acknowledging the crowd. They launch into “Brokedown Palace,” a slow, melancholy song

about loss, belonging, and peace. Once again with our hands in the air, we sway and sing a love song together, band to audience and audience to band:

Fare you well, fare you well

I love you more than words can tell

Listen to the river sing sweet songs

To rock my soul

But tonight, it is July 3, the day before Independence Day. Instead of leaving the stage after a single encore, the band launches into the raucous “U.S. Blues,” singing:

Wave that flag

wave it wide and high!

The audience almost yells these lines: this song is an expression of American pride and at the same time of the deadhead identity – at once a celebration of patriotism and of difference, of acceptance and belonging. The song ends with a flourish and the first few notes of the National Anthem before the band leaves the stage for the final time.

*At some point the anticipatory mood I felt when I arrived at the parking lot, and the easy good humor from being among deadheads, changed into a smile that stretches broadly across my face. I feel good. Happy. Satisfied. Everywhere I look, people are smiling as we pick our way through the dark toward the mass growing by the exit. We walk slowly, going down each stair-step one at a time, depositing our trash into large barrels as we walk past. Near the steps to exit the venue someone is holding what looks like a handmade sign advertising an upcoming show for another jam-band, called *The String Cheese Incident*; from my position the crowd is so dense I can see the sign but not the person holding it. The noises around me are happy; no one shoves their way through the throng. We move slowly: one step, pause, another step, another pause.*

Here and there a visibly drunk or stoned fan stumbles, confused, and is helped up by strangers and moved along with the crowd. This crowd laughs easily. As we leave the venue and arrive at the asphalt road that leads to the various parking lots, I stop to buy a glow-in-the dark psychedelic art print from the artist, paying him \$20. A few yards later I stop to look at jewelry, tie-dye wall hangings, and Grateful Dead patches and pins at a few tables: Shakedown Street come to the venue gates. With their portable lights and canopies the vendors are an oasis of light in the darkness. I stop to talk to the man selling patches – they are original designs (but based on and using Grateful Dead iconography), made for him in Nepal. I buy a small patch; a string of tiny Grateful Dead dancing bears, for \$5, and move on toward my car and the slow drive back through Morrison and toward my hotel. I don't stop smiling for the next two weeks, and frequently find myself dancing to the music in my head. At home, I download recordings of the show from tapers sharing their recordings and, if I choose, can watch videos on YouTube of that show and any other I have attended. The show experience does not end when I leave the parking lot; I can revisit it at any time.

Chapter 6 - Not Fade Away: Ritual

I wanna tell you how it's gonna be

You're gonna give your love to me

I wanna love you night and day

You know our lovin' not fade away

“Not Fade Away”

(Holly and Petty 1957:65)

Chicago, 2015

It is mid-morning on July 3, 2015, and the subway cars on this green line train to Roosevelt Station in downtown Chicago are unusually full. People crowd the aisles and the vestibule. There are no empty seats: I am holding on to a pole while others cling to overhead straps, rocking easily with the motion of the train. With each stop more people get on and very few leave, so that soon we are packed tightly together. When the doors open at stops, people waiting to board stare into the car, eyes widening in shock as riders blocking the doors brush past them, briefly disembarking and then wedging themselves back into the car after the newcomers have boarded. Looking around I can pick out the locals: a woman wearing tan slacks and a cream-colored sweater sitting a few rows from me looks around nervously, her eyes wide. She is one of only a few. Excitement and joy pervade the train compartment and even the wide-eyed locals appear more bemused than annoyed. Strangers chat amicably with each other, sometimes sharing names and where they are from. No pretense of polite, reserved distance is necessary; this is less a gathering of strangers and more a family reunion.

The majority of riders on this and other subway cars are headed to Soldier Field, to the first of three days of the Grateful Dead 50th anniversary reunion shows in Chicago. Men and women of all ages – deadheads – are dressed in a variety of Grateful Dead t-shirts and other jam-band themed clothing, much of it tie-dyed, with shorts, jeans, sandals – summer casual and comfortable. This day is the culmination of six months of anticipation, nail-biting waits for tickets, and speculation about whether the experience will be “like it used to be.”

As the train finally slows to a halt at Roosevelt Station, our bodies press together from the loss of momentum. Seconds after we regain our footing, the doors break open and a loud cheer erupts from the tie-dyed passengers, vibrating the air in the train compartment. We have arrived. A violently colored, jubilant army of Grateful Dead fans bursts onto the cavernous, echoing concrete subway platform from doors opening along the length of the train, a scene that will be repeated for several hours today. Hundreds of people flow as one onto the platform, immediately turning toward the exit on the right. Locals, buskers and square concrete support beams are mere boulders parting the stream of deadheads. The masses follow the river of color and enthusiasm. As we walk, someone a few feet behind me belts out a melodic shout, his voice lifting above the crowd so that his words seem to hang in the stale subway air, at once both powerful and vulnerable:

“You KNOW our love will not FADE a-way!”

A few people throughout the crowd clap rhythmically in response:

CLAP *CLAP *CLAP* ... *CLAP CLAP

More people join in, voices no longer vulnerable.

“You KNOW our love will not FADE a-way!”

CLAP *CLAP *CLAP* ... *CLAP CLAP

The refrain catches fire in seconds—hundreds, perhaps a thousand voices—reverberating in the concrete subway tunnel. Joyful, singing and clapping, Grateful Dead fans walk together toward the concrete steps that would take us up into the sunlight:

“YOU KNOW OUR LOVE WILL NOT FADE AWAY!”

CLAP *CLAP *CLAP* ... *CLAP CLAP

It is impossible to describe the feeling of fierce joy, excitement, and determination, as I walk, sing, and clap from the moving center of this large, singing crowd. The sound dominates the huge space and fills my mind, flowing through and around me. As one we walk, we sing, we clap; we share a common purpose. At the stairs, our movement slows as the flow reaches a bottleneck, and then the singing and chanting slowly dwindle away as we emerge into the sunlight and join even larger numbers of kin moving en masse toward Soldier Field.

Introduction

A single deadhead leaving the subway, singing and clapping, would have been odd. Hundreds or thousands of people leaving the subway, singing and clapping, may have still been odd, but through sheer number and exuberance it became something more. Something powerful. During our interview following the final 50th anniversary show in Chicago, Matthew, a 53-year-old technician, father, and divorcee, becomes quite emotional when he describes the feeling he gets from:

. . . invading a city with a bunch of, you know, a million other people. And just turning it upside down, and having a good time, and leaving . . .

He stops speaking suddenly, visibly surprised by a surge of emotions that cause his eyes to fill with tears. He stares over my shoulder and his mouth trembles slightly in an attempt to

control the sudden emotion. When he finishes his sentence, his voice is thick and the words come slowly:

. . . no footprints [pauses, clearing his throat] . . . so to speak.

Matthew is overcome with emotion as his words unexpectedly tapped a sense of belonging, and a set of values, that for him have intense emotional ties. Being one of many, in the same place, for the same reason, sharing the same values, is important to him. Special. The opening vignette—and Matthew’s feelings toward his experience of “invading” a town with other deadheads—illustrate the powerful influence of ritual on cohesion.

Ritual is difficult to study within deadhead culture: one has the senses that ritual is involved, yet respondents do not talk about ritual as such and there are few deadhead activities that appear to be as obvious as formal rituals. Ritual is often understood as formal—a church service, graduation ceremony, or an Oscar award ceremony. This type of ritual addresses a societal need for order and hierarchy. Rituals in this sense are the “way in which the social order is embedded and enacted inside the daily lives and self identities [sic] of the people” (Johnson 2009:67). This view of ritual aligns with Turner’s ([1912]2009) view of ritual as reinforcing the social order, as discussed in Chapter 5. Popular music, like that of the *Grateful Dead*, *Rolling Stones*, and *The Beatles*, among others, has been read by scholars as creating limited-duration liminal episodes that function as a release valve for youthful tensions, ultimately upholding the social order (Martin 1979, Weinstein 1994). Popular music, however—as deadheads effectively illustrate—is no longer simply the sole domain of youth (Kotarba 2005, Weinstein 1991). Although deadheads can and do exist in everyday society, holding jobs, getting married, raising children, and (more-or-less) upholding the law, the degree to which deadheads “blend in” with the dominant culture varies considerably from one deadhead to another. To be plain: the

deadhead identity is not, as the previous chapter shows, left at the threshold where liminality meets order. The ritual does not end when the show is over. This chapter applies Randall Collins' (2004:3) Interaction Ritual Chain theory to the ways in deadheads build cohesion by bringing elements of deadhead culture with them into the dominant culture, through ritual.

Deadhead Literature

Turner's ([1969]2009) concept of liminality is invoked by both Sardiello (1994) and Sutton (2000). Sardiello (1994) described participants who ritually separate from everyday life when they attend a concert, putting on a symbolic uniform of tie-dye and entering a state where social distinctions such as age and social class cease to be important. As highly structured events charged with hallucinogenic drug use, dancing, and improvisational music, shows have the potential to create liminal states, resulting in a strong feeling of unity among participants (as discussed in Chapter 5). When this group consciousness was achieved, the participants felt a shared identity within a mythic system providing a sense of community, spirituality, and a set of sacred symbols or totems. As the show ended and fans dispersed, participants were reincorporated into the dominant culture but took with them the effects of the ritual experience, thus reinforcing their community affiliation despite resuming roles within the dominant culture (Sutton 2000, Sardiello 1994).

The need for ritual can also be conceptualized as an expression of alienation caused by the modern nature of the dominant culture, with *Grateful Dead* shows a sort of replacement for lost, primitive rites of initiation. Mary Goodenough (2007) used the works of Eliade and Campbell to explore what she saw as a "loss of soul" through "modern society's estrangement from religious experience" (173). In Eliade's model, initiation rites have several stages that move participants through the profane to a sacred sense of separation and transcendence. Fans

not only watched, but also participated in the show, augmented by drugs and otherwise altered states of consciousness, becoming unified as “living myth” and thus together, encountered the sacred (Goodenough 2007:159-67). *Grateful Dead* shows, seen through this lens, become “the ritual performance of the tribe’s sacred history,” a “modern mythology” that staved off the feeling of alienation and “served as an introduction to the world of spiritual values for several generations of concert-goers” (Goodenough 2007:158, 168).

Goodenough’s (2007) premise that *Grateful Dead* shows address a sense of alienation from primitive religion seems to elevate primitive forms of religion over modern in a way that may not be warranted: for Durkheim ([1912]1995) a primitive religion and a modern religion share the same core characteristics (see Chapter 5). Nevertheless, *Grateful Dead* shows do exhibit consistent structural patterns as Goodenough (2007) noted, as fans move from the parking lot, to the show, and back again. Although patterned, however, this going-to-a-show ritual is very informal at most stages, with the notable exception of passing through security. This combination of informal ritual and tension between the dominant culture and deadhead culture raises a question: how does the deadhead culture create solidarity within the culture itself, when that culture is often at odds with the dominant society? The answer lies in the emotionally charged nature of *Grateful Dead* shows.

Interaction Ritual Chain Theory

Interaction ritual chain theory, developed by Randall Collins (1981, 1988, 1990, 1993, 2004, 2010), examines the ways in which the informal, everyday interactions of individuals combine to create solidarity at the macro level (Brown 2010). Collins combined Durkheim, for whom ritual produces a “strongly integrated society [through] mechanisms that produce moral solidarity,” and Goffman, for whom everyday life consists of small-scale interaction rituals, such

as two acquaintances shaking hands, that “enact social relationships of varying degrees of intimacy and status” (Collins 1990:27, Collins 1993, Collins 2010:2). For Goffman, these small interactions were the focus of the ritual; Collins, on the other hand, viewed such interactions as part of a larger ritual (Turner and Stets 2005). Collins also posited that individuals are driven to seek out what he calls *Emotional Energy* (EE) (Robbins 2009), which keeps individuals returning to rituals again and again in ritual chains; collections of interaction ritual chains are what form society (Turner and Stets 2005). It is Interaction Ritual Chains that form the link between the micro and macro: “strictly speaking,” Collins (1981:987-88) argued that “there is no such thing as a ‘state,’ an ‘economy,’ a ‘culture,’ a ‘social class.’ There are only collections of individuals acting in particular kinds of microsituations.”

Collins’ model for Interaction Ritual Chains is at once straightforward and complex: straightforward because none of the concepts are difficult to grasp, but complex because there is a high level of interaction between the elements, with the result that presenting the material in a linear format is challenging. For this reason, I provide a brief overview of the model, along with a visual representation (see Figure 7), and elaborate on each element below.

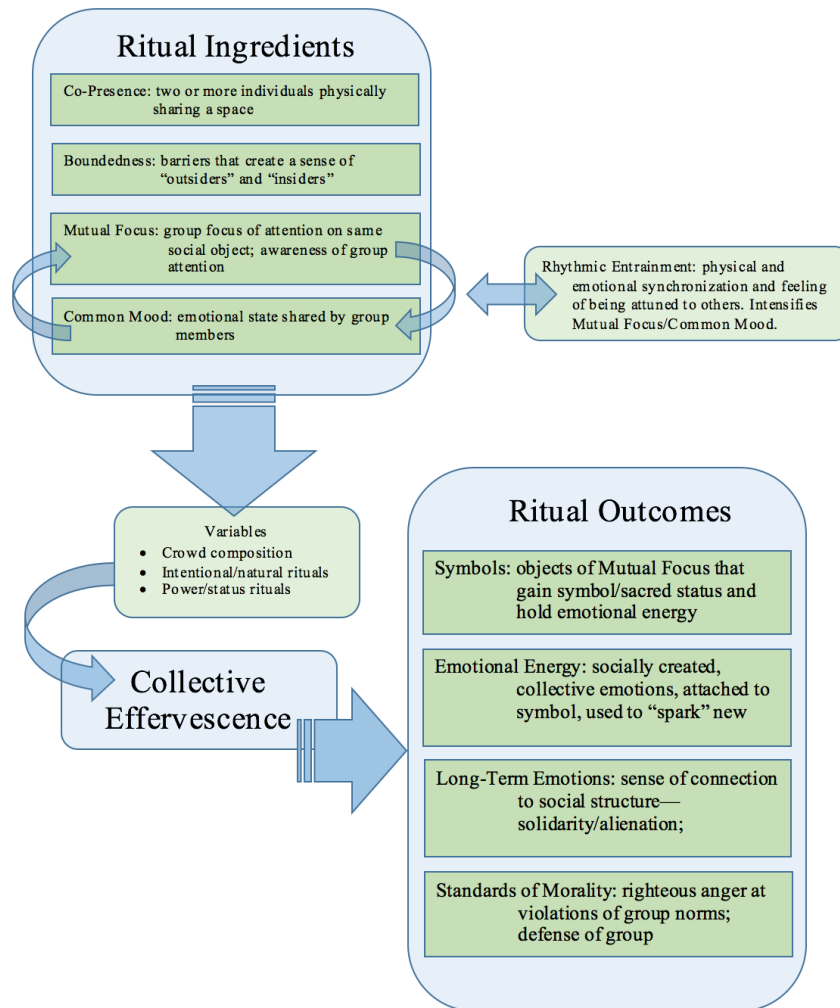


Figure 7. Interaction Ritual Chain Theory Diagram

Briefly, interaction rituals consist of ritual ingredients and ritual outcomes. Ritual ingredients (Collins 2004:48) consist of (1) *co-presence*, where two or more individuals are physically present in the same space for a meaningful amount of time; where (2) group members are aware of *boundedness*: a difference between themselves as a member of the group and others as non-members; where group members are co-present long enough to achieve *mutual focus*, or shared attention to the same object; and where (4) participants share an emotional state, or *common mood*. Mutual focus and common mood are mutually reinforcing: as the group narrows

its focus on one object, individuals' moods become more aligned; as common mood becomes stronger, mutual focus is easier to maintain. Certain outcomes are present when an interaction ritual is successful: (1) mutual focus on a specific object results in that object becoming a *ritual symbol*, which is imbued with (2) the emotions—*emotional energy*—generated by the group. Individuals also receive a store of emotional energy from participating in the ritual. Emotional energy is not, for Collins, a set of transient emotions, but rather (3) *long-term emotions* such as solidarity and alienation, along with which (4) the individual develops *standards of morality* for group membership and behavior, which, if violated, result in righteous anger. Symbols, as repositories of emotional energy, have the potential to spark new rituals; the cycle then repeats and has the potential to reinforce group solidarity. Symbols and emotional energy, therefore, mutually reinforce each other: emotional energy, along with shared focus and common mood, are involved in the origin of the symbol. The symbol is then used, along with co-presence and emotional energy, as a “battery” to provide energy for a new interaction ritual. In this way, groups form “chains” of interaction rituals, where symbols and emotional energy provide the link between individual rituals on the chain.

Ritual Ingredients

Co-presence

Co-presence refers to the physical sharing of space by two or more people, and it is a crucial ritual ingredient for interaction rituals (Collins 1988, Collins 1990, Collins 2004). When individuals come face-to-face with others, Collins (1988) explained, society becomes “emotionally real;” an awareness that cannot be accomplished in to the same degree when the individual is alone (193). Since Collins published *Interaction Ritual Chains* in 2004, technology has advanced to the point that online programs allow for a sense of society when physical co-

presence is not possible; however, these methods are typically seen as a substitute for being physically present. Physical co-presence creates a higher level of emotional energy among participants (Collins 1988); video chats may create some energy but not as much (Turner and Stets 2005). The number of people involved in the interaction matters: as the size of the group increases, so does the potential for stronger ritual effects. It is not enough, however, for individuals to be co-present for a moment in time; at minimum, people must be together for long enough to achieve other ritual ingredients, discussed below: shared focus and a common mood (Collins 1988, Collins 1993).

Deadheads appear to enter the culture through various paths: some are “born” into it, with deadhead parents; others encounter the music, the culture, or both through existing networks; still others become fans of the music prior to going to shows. By far the more common means of becoming a deadhead is the second, and perhaps the most common phrase I heard repeated, by respondents that struggled to explain the draw of the culture, was “you’ve just got to go. You’ve got to experience this” to understand it—just as my friend told me at the beginning of this research study. “The first show was when I went from being a marginal fan,” another survey respondent wrote, “to an ‘Oh my God! When’s the next show?’ fan.” Physically attending a show is considered vitally important to understanding the deadhead experience, or “getting it.”

The music itself is important, but the *Grateful Dead* experience begins as soon as the venue parking lots open and ends only after deadheads are leaving the lot and driving away (and even then, shows are uploaded to archive.org and YouTube.com and discussed online). Going to a *Grateful Dead* show is an event: “. . . it’s almost like at a wedding, where you feel it’s something that’s important. . . . A concert, to me, has the same kind of feel. . . . It feels like you’re part of something larger than yourself,” wrote a survey respondent. Another said that

compared to other music shows, a *Grateful Dead* show had a different “feel” from other rock concerts, because there was “more connection between people, [the] concourse around the arena (indoors) was active [and] vibrant with much interaction between fans . . .” Chris tells me that his wife “gets it,” but “doesn’t have to live it” and so doesn’t go to the shows. But then he continues: “I have to live it . . . it just feels right. It’s the right thing to do.”

Dancing at the show with others creates a sense of belonging and generates energy. A survey respondent wrote that they became a deadhead—got “hooked”—as soon as the crowd started dancing to the opening bars of the first night’s song: once they start, *Grateful Dead* dance from the opening number to the encore. When the crowd behaves the same way, the effect is powerful and encourages others to participate. A female survey respondent went to her first show with her boyfriend, but felt very uncomfortable in the unfamiliar environment. She explained:

I recall sitting on the left side of the stage, and when the music played, so many people were up and dancing. I wasn’t sure of myself. I felt uncomfortable. By song number three I was out of my seat and didn’t sit again—truly dancing and feeling like no one was watching.

Clearly, according to other respondents, people are watching—but the result is not embarrassment; in fact, quite the opposite: being co-present and sharing bodily movement led to a sense of belonging.

Boundedness

Interaction rituals are more likely to occur when group members have reason to feel that they are somehow different from others who are not a part of their group; when there are group boundaries and a sense of “insiders” and “outsiders” (Collins 2004). Strong barriers and frequent meetings are more likely to result in a culture that frowns on interaction with outsiders (Collins

1993). Although *boundedness* can create a strong sense of otherness with the potential for conflict between insiders and outsiders (Brown 2010), conflict is neither a given nor a requirement. Although there is some conflict within the culture about who constitutes a “real” deadhead—some argue, for example, that a fan who has not seen Garcia is not a deadhead, or that a “true” deadhead will have seen a certain number of shows—for the most part those differences are not important. Deadheads welcome everyone who (1) appreciates the music and (2) adheres to cultural values of tolerance, acceptance, and care for others. Therefore, with infrequent meetings and low barriers to outsiders, deadhead boundedness is subtle and non-confrontational.

Boundaries to membership are minimal, so that at first glance, it may appear that the deadhead culture does not have boundaries. However, there *are* significant boundaries between individuals who are aware of, or care about, the *Grateful Dead* and deadhead culture and those who do not. In Chapter 4, I noted that the *Grateful Dead* sold nearly three times as many tickets to their 50th Anniversary shows than did *The Rolling Stones*, even though the shows were otherwise similar. I compared the bands because they formed in the same era, played the same music festivals (Woodstock and Altamont, for example), and today *The Stones* are still very much in the public consciousness—unlike some of the other bands from the same era. Unlike the *Stones*, the *Dead* are not as publicly recognized. Consider this comparison of Google search trends from 2014, the year prior to the *Grateful Dead* anniversary shows (Figure 8):

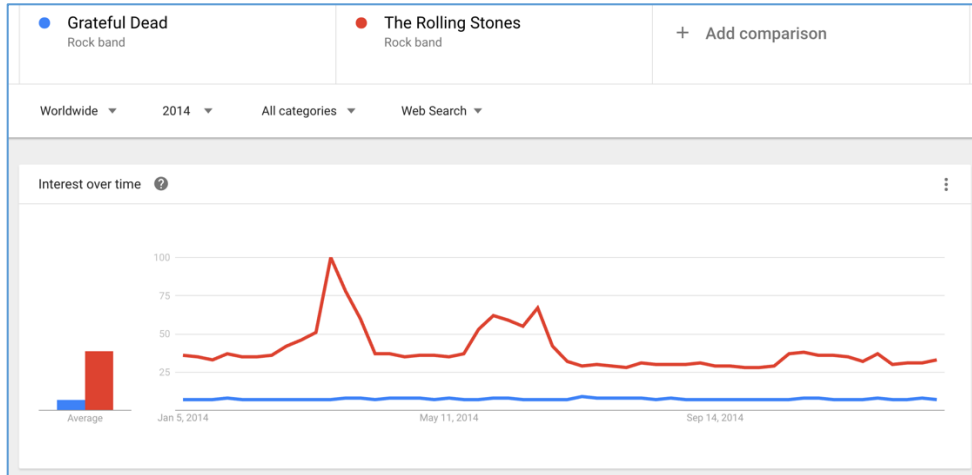


Figure 8. Google Searches of *The Rolling Stones* vs. *The Grateful Dead* in 2014. (Google Trends 2017a)

The general public is far more aware of, or interested in, *The Rolling Stones*. One would assume that upon the announcement of the *Grateful Dead*'s 50th Anniversary tour, however, that the public would become more aware of the band and therefore seek out more information about them. Figure 9 shows Google search trends for 2015:

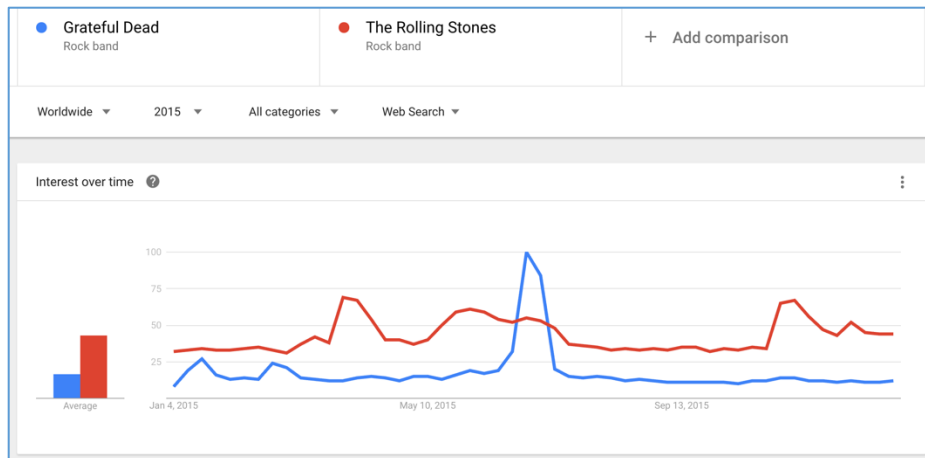


Figure 9. Google Searches of *The Rolling Stones* vs. *The Grateful Dead* in 2015 (Google Trends 2017b).

Clearly the 50th Anniversary *Grateful Dead* shows did trigger an uptick in searches for the band; the general trend line is higher in 2015 than it was in 2014. The first spike in January comes two days after the public announcement of the shows; enough time for the announcements to have achieved national coverage. Despite the enthusiastic excitement within the deadhead community, however, interest in the *Rolling Stones* remained higher for the general public. The only time interest in the *Dead* surpassed the *Stones* was in late June to early July – during the shows (it is possible that some of those searches were looking for free live streams from those inside the venues). That this event created such a stir within the community and little response outside of the culture—paired with the fact that producers were taken off guard by the level of response from the deadhead community—suggests that although the deadhead culture itself is welcoming, boundedness is very much a factor in membership in deadhead culture. That boundedness is very likely not coming from the deadhead culture itself, but from the dominant culture: recall the labeling of deadheads as deviant in Chapter 5. In my experience, large portions of the dominant culture are not aware of the existence of deadheads; some mistake them for “heavier” forms of music like metal, and many of the rest write them off as strange.

Paradoxically, a relative lack of boundedness, on the other hand, is one of the defining characteristics of the *Grateful Dead* community. Band members, although typically physically separated from fans physically by the mechanics of the performance, also make appearances in the parking lots before the shows and pose for photographs, and sometimes chat with fans they meet in public. In and of itself, this does not make the band distinctive; they are by far not the only famous persons who interact with fans. What is markedly different about the band’s behavior happens on stage (*see for example* Shank and Simon 2000). When band members take the stage, there is no fanfare; and there are few or no announcements. They do not take the stage

as a group, but rather stroll unhurriedly to their positions from different wings of the stage. They pick up their instruments and begin warming up, noodling, sometimes fiddling with cords, and in general ignoring the audience. This stage may go on for quite a while, or no time at all before the band launches full-scale into its first song, bringing abrupt order from chaos, and often at full speed and full volume. During the show, Weir might make an announcement and prior to the encore, Lesh will come to the stage, alone, to ask fans to sign their driver's licenses to become organ donors. But beyond that, there is no choreographed dancing, no smashing of guitars or kicking of amps, no guitar or drum solos designed to call attention to a single musician. "There's no arrogance," a respondent explained; "they just come out and play." In other words, the band does not rely on spectacle to stir up emotional energy in the crowd. The crowd may as well be backstage, watching the band rehearse (and, in fact, the *Dead* have performed many impromptu "performances" that began as practice sessions). Although I do not use "backstage" in a Goffmanian sense here (Goffman 1959), the comparison is accurate: we have the sense, at the show, that we are seeing the band members' "real" selves. "The band members are endearing and real humans," one respondent wrote. "Unlike most rock stars, they're real people, relatable people."

The *Dead* stage presence is in stark contrast to many other performers, and that difference makes a difference in the connection between the band and fans. Non jam-bands often play the same setlist every night of every tour. John recalls going to a *Pink Floyd* show, where he expected the show to be "almost note for note the same thing except for a little bit of variation in guitar solo. You see them once, that's all you need to see." He laughs, and recalls that a band member "threw" his microphone offstage in a gesture or mock anger so choreographed that John saw the a stage crew hand pop up to catch it. William offers: "A lot of concerts you go and you

see how everything is so staged. They [the *Grateful Dead*] didn't care. It wasn't about a stage production. It was all about the music, and the dancing, and the whole nine yards." William's comment moves quickly from the stage to the audience, then ties the band and audience together into the "whole nine yards." This comment acknowledges a difference between the band and audience while at the same time implies a level of same-ness.

Another characteristic of the jam-band style that the *Grateful Dead* pioneered is the variation in quality of the performance. Dead shows are "just raw, it's right there," John explains. "It's not some slicked up production, you know? It's there with all the bumps and bruises and warts. You're there seeing what it takes to make that music. You're there making, I think, an emotional connection with that artist." Because of the informality and improvisation, some shows succeeded where others did not, but that variability also lowered boundaries between the band and fans. A survey respondent wrote:

"it's more endearing and more human to hear the Dead bomb on one night but absolutely rock the next. Deadheads discuss those nuances, criticize, laugh, shake their heads. Some people want the cookie cutter band that plays the same song the same, consistent way night after night. The Dead failed more than other bands because they were trying harder. They pushed boundaries. So when they succeeded, they excelled far beyond the capabilities of any other band."

"I don't think the members of the *Dead* brought egos to the table," another respondent wrote.

"There may have been times when they let some other things affect their playing. Maybe they were too high to listen to each other, or whatever. But I don't think ego was ever an issue."

Together, the absence of stage theatrics and a willingness to sound bad led to a shared focus on the music itself and on the shared experience of participating in that music. The band may have

been playing the music, but several respondents have made it clear that the energy shared between the band and audience had a great deal to do with the quality of any show, a phenomenon I will explore later in this chapter in the discussion of emotional energy. *Grateful Dead* shows, therefore, leveled the field, and while band members and fans are not quite on the same level, the gap is small. Cultural boundedness due to this leveling can be represented as a set of concentric circles, as Figure 10 shows.

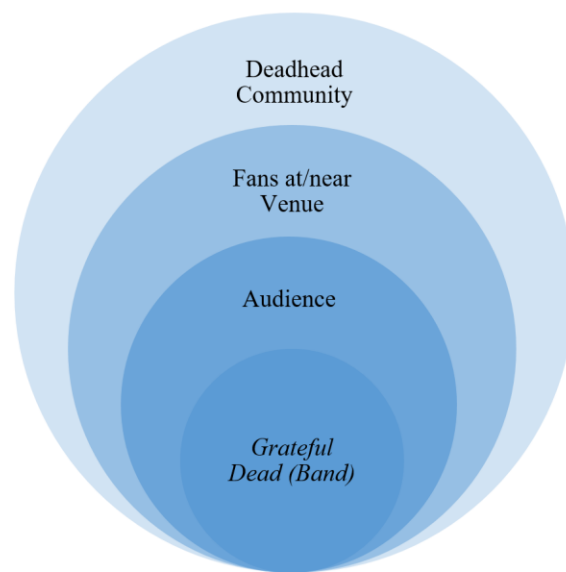


Figure 10. The Leveling of Boundaries Within *Grateful Dead* Culture

The *Grateful Dead* (the band) is part of a wider bounded community that includes the fans that are physically present at the show. Both the band and those fans are part of a larger community present at or near the venue, which includes people who came to the venue without tickets and were unable to get in to the show, or who came to hang out in the parking lot without the intention of going to the show. All of those groups are part of a larger deadhead community, inside of which the music and/or culture is important to the individual, and outside of which the *Grateful Dead* is either unimportant or unknown. Boundaries at all demarcations are permeable,

including between the band and fans (Bill Walton, for example, is a famous deadhead who has also become close with the band itself), but the fact remains that those boundaries exist, and they serve the function of creating a sense of “insider” and “outsider” identity.

The experience of moving between the temporary carnival of a *Grateful Dead* show and “normal” life creates its own type of boundary. One survey respondent described the scene outside of a *Grateful Dead* show as “so many smells . . . filled the air, so many different ages and types of people wearing any outfit you could think of. . . . It’s like walking into a room you never knew was there.” This difference is more than the mixed smells of patchouli and marijuana smoke paired with the sights of tie-dye; this temporary community exists in stark contrast to the everyday grind of corporate capitalism. Exiting “normal” life and living as a deadhead, even for just a weekend, means getting relief from these pressures. John—who was going on a month-long *Furthur* tour after receiving a healthy severance check, which meant he did not have to go back to work any time soon—expresses this situation well:

Y’know, the world starts beating you down, and beating you down; and you just kind of go, stop, stop. [He throws his hands in the air] Fuck you all. I’m leaving. I’m going to the mountains. I’m going to listen and dance and play and walk and sing and hike and play. You can all go to hell. I’ll see you whenever I get back, if I come back. [Pauses] Then you’ve got to back, obviously, and rejoin the world, as it were [laughs loudly].

Like John, others told me that attending shows left them feeling rejuvenated after being “stuck” in corporate America. One survey respondent wrote: “It transported me to a place that was unlike my real life, where pressures and stress were ever present. The *Dead* created a world that was idyllic and addicting.”

Despite the relative lack of boundedness within the culture, then, boundedness still functions to create, at the very least, a sense of difference between deadheads and the dominant society. For much of the dominant society, the *Grateful Dead* barely enters their consciousness. For many who do know about the culture, many believe it to be populated by deviants (see Chapter 7), which means that they “other” deadheads whether that label is warranted or not. The show structure itself lowers boundaries that might have been present between other rock bands and their fans, helping to create a strong sense of in-group identity, which is sharpened by the stark contrast between the deadhead concert experience and everyday life.

Mutual focus

Co-presence and boundedness raise the emotional energy level, but that energy requires *mutual focus* before it becomes meaningful for the group (Collins 1988). The difference between a group of strangers passing each other in the mall and a group of strangers collectively cheering on a college football team in the home stadium is a mutual awareness of common focus and a sense of belonging to—and behaving as—a group. The activity itself is not important to mutual focus (although it will be important to emotional energy as discussed later in this chapter): it could be a formal ceremony, such as a high school graduation, or spontaneous, such as witnessing a disaster and rushing in to help survivors. “What is crucial,” Collins (1944:193) explained, “is only that it [the shared focus] is shared and mutually self-conscious.” What does it mean to be “mutually self-conscious”? For Collins (1993, Collins 2004), mutual focus occurs when individuals who are *aware* of themselves as a group that is attending to the same stimulus – the object of mutual focus. When the group is aware of itself as a group, then the group becomes part of that focus of attention (Collins 1990). In symbolic interactionist terms, the group becomes an object that can be acted upon—judged or given affection, for example. Mutual focus

is very much on display at a *Grateful Dead* show and, as I described in Chapter 2, as an audience member I found it disturbing to remove myself from that mutual focus to study the crowd.

The nature of a music concert—or nearly any exhibition of artwork, for that matter—is to call attention either to the art or to the person producing that art. Stage shows use various types of lighting to signal to the audience where they should focus; in some cases, audiences can be persuaded to ignore visible parts of the stage and focus on a specific actor through the use of spotlights. A popular music concert is no different and may, in fact, encourage attention to the band members in ways that other forms of staged art do not. A typical *Grateful Dead* show, for example, consists of an elevated stage surrounded by seating that faces the stage. Backdrops and signage further indicate where audience focus should be directed. This expectation is so ingrained that the tickets I bought for the Santa Clara 50th anniversary shows, where seats had been added to accommodate more fans, came with the warning “view may be obstructed.” The tickets were for seats behind the stage and came with an explanation for breaking conventions by seating us behind the stage. The front view of the band was projected on a large screen at either end of the stadium so that no matter where one was sitting, a fan could have a similar viewing experience. Speakers had been aligned to deliver the sound in all directions. I walked around the concourse during the show and stopped at various entries to listen; the sound quality was the same regardless of where I stood in relation to the band. In other words, although the purpose of the show was to listen to the music produced by the band, and that concern was addressed through speaker position, the promoters still went to the trouble to make sure that fans behind the stage were still able to focus visually on the band—and not just on the band (which we could see from behind), but the *front* view of the band—along with the rest of the stadium.

In an indoor venue or when the sun sets in an outdoor venue, stage lights and banks of moving spotlights, above and around the stage, call attention alternately to the crowd and then to the band. Figure 11 shows the stage at Soldier Field after sunset during the 50th anniversary shows in Chicago, Illinois.

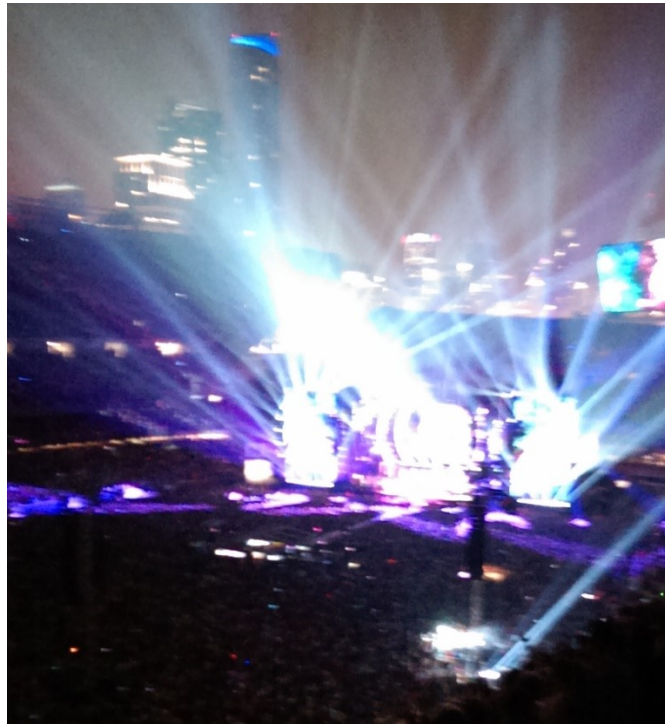


Figure 11. The *Grateful Dead*, July 4, 2015, Soldier Field, Chicago, Illinois.

Even though the spotlights are aimed at the sky at different angles, the effect is to create a wash of light on stage that demands attention. The massive skyscrapers in the background and the large projection screen in the upper right of the frame are barely noticeable. Although the band cannot be seen from the distance at which I took the photograph, that seems almost to not matter: the audience knows exactly where they are supposed to focus, and they are doing so.

A stage—even the flashiest of stages—is not enough to sustain mutual focus if the audience is not interested in what is coming from that stage. Personal experience attests to this:

in 1991, I attended a rock ‘n’ roll show at Kansas Coliseum in Wichita, Kansas. *Bad Company*—the headliner—was composed of veteran musicians, as was their warm-up band, *Damn Yankees*. The first of the three bands, however—*Tattoo Rodeo*—was young and relatively unknown . . . and they did not play well that night, even though they danced and ran across the stage as though they were transported. It was spectacle, but not good music. The audience quickly gave up on them, and began talking and ignoring the stage. This angered the band, who played louder and their antics became even more showy and ridiculous. The audience ignored them and continued talking. Eventually the band stopped playing and the lead singer ranted angrily at the audience. Mutual focus regained, the audience quite literally booed *Tattoo Rodeo* off the stage. The other two acts were met with enthusiasm and easily held the audience’s attention.

Music quality at a *Grateful Dead* show varies, which should put the band at risk for losing mutual focus. The 2013 Red Rocks shows, for example, in my opinion were not as good as I had hoped; the band members seemed tired. After several years of intensive traveling as the *Furthur*, they may well have been—it was shortly before those shows that they announced a year-long hiatus. Tired as they may have been, however, they were most certainly not booed. Likewise, audiences are not always receptive to mutual focus, according to several of my respondents, and although I did not see much of this at the shows I attended, deadheads often complain about people who come to the show to chat and not to listen. In fact, when I asked survey respondents what advice they would give to people going to their first show, a common response was to “shut up and listen!” Variations in the crowd and among band members may result in shows that inspire effervescence, and other shows that do not. The improvisational nature of *Grateful Dead* shows also opens the music quality up to variations in quality. “The band will improvise,” a respondent explained, “and any night it can be magical or disastrous.”

For many fans, the moment when a jam becomes a recognizable song is an important one. Whether sitting quietly or dancing, fans focus on the music, listening for cues as to where the band is going with their improvisation: one might hear opening chords of Dark Star during a jam, or Bird Song, for example. “I just loved the pause,” a respondent wrote, “when they’re getting a little more ethereal with the song and you start listening for the notes of the next song to come in. That’s the moment I really like in it [the music].” Songs are “always different and shows are moments in time,” another respondent explained: “Every time you see them or hear a recording of a show, it is a different experience.” The improvisation and lack of a set list combine to create a sense of variety, spontaneity and surprise at every show that encourages listeners to focus carefully on the music. Not listening carefully means missing something; it means hearing the rest of the arena roar in pleasure around you and not knowing what happened to elicit that response. It is a missed opportunity.

Many of the songs the *Grateful Dead* play are also musically complex; Woody compares them to the great classical composers, and many of my musician-respondents made similar comments. In my experience, the combination of mutual focus and improvisational playing—paired with brief moments of recognition when I hear notes from a specific song—has the potential to result in an altered state of consciousness that has nothing to do with LSD or mushrooms. Several Wharf Rats, for example, told me that they were relieved to discover that the experiences they felt at shows were not drug-induced, but rather music-induced. In fact, one survey respondent wrote that “it got to the point that I stopped drinking and doing drugs, so I could listen [to the music] more closely.” Another explained: “it’s almost inexplicable. The music allows your mind to think in dimensions [that] . . . have complexity to it, because the music is complex. It stimulates thought. . . . stimulates your mind.” This experience is likely why

deadheads consistently tell outsiders that one just has to “go to a show to understand”; the music itself is only part of the experience: one’s response to the live music, amplified by co-presence, results in mutual focus that is required—according to many deadheads—to “get” deadhead culture. As discussed in Chapter 5, being able to see other fans responding to the music is important. Something about the live experience, according to respondents, allows them to hear the music differently, to make sense of it—which, as I described in Chapter 1, was the case for me. As John explains: “It’s like you get issued a totally different set of ears.”

Common mood

Common mood refers to emotions that appear to be shared between the co-present, bounded participants who share a mutual focus. Collins argued that, because participants bring expectations with them, a common mood is shared from the beginning of the encounter. For deadheads, common mood can begin long before the show: just the act of traveling to a show and knowing that others are doing the same raised the common mood among respondents and was palpable among Facebook group members heading to Chicago for the 50th anniversary shows. Some deadheads are easy to find on the highway because they affix Dead bumper stickers to their cars. “When you see another *Dead* sticker on another car [you] get excited, because you are going to see family,” a survey respondent explained. Common mood continues to build as deadheads come together in the parking lot, on Shakedown Street, and as they enter the venue and wait for the band to take the stage. “The build-up to the music is equally important to the music,” a survey respondent wrote. “Hanging around, talking to people, having meals together, dancing, singing, shopping. It’s all a huge build-up to the moment the music starts to play, that brings everyone together in the exact same spot in the exact same moment.” Being “together in the exact same spot in the exact same moment” emphasizes the result of common mood:

participants become “caught up in each other’s emotions” in an emotional contagion that strengthens the group’s mood and simultaneously weakens individuals’ emotional ties to out-group others (Collins 1990:32, Collins 1993). “The ‘*Grateful Dead*’ isn’t exactly specific people,” another respondent wrote, “but rather the feeling that comes when things are just right. But it takes special people to make that happen, a certain kind of bond.” That bond is common mood.

Whether the common mood is positive or negative is not important to the creation of an interaction ritual. The group could feel positive emotions such as joy and humor, or negative emotions such as sorrow and anger: any “emotion is shared by the entire group,” Collins (1988:194) explained, “can be an ingredient in the building up of a strong state of ritual intensity.” The common mood at a *Grateful Dead* show is overwhelmingly positive: respondents described it as happy, relaxed, caring, “almost unbearably polite and positive,” friendly, exciting, with no judgement but instead populated by people who were smiling, helpful, and loving. It sounds absurd to assert, as I did in Interlude 1, that negativity is not part of this culture. Yet two respondents echoed my observation that negativity is rare: “I never experienced anything negative the four days I was there,” one wrote; the other reported feeling “100 percent positive vibes from 100 percent of the folks participating. I never overheard one negative spoken word nor saw one negative act from anyone.” This positive common mood also tends to follow deadheads back into the “real world” after they leave a show. A survey respondent who had stopped going to *Grateful Dead* shows following Garcia’s death wrote that the 50th anniversary shows left her feeling “blissed out. I re-found a piece of me that has been missing for 20 years.” From the first shows I attended, and increasing as I became more acclimated to the culture, I noticed that I returned from *Grateful Dead* shows feeling tremendously happy. During the course

of a normal day, I would suddenly realize that I had a broad smile on my face, for no apparent reason. This phenomenon occurred for approximately two weeks following my return from a show, and reappeared easily if someone asked me to talk about my experience or if I watched or listened to a recorded show. A survey respondent provided a term for this smile: the “permi-grin.” “The feeling you get,” the respondent wrote, “pure happiness; permi-grin . . . it’s indescribable. But once you ‘get it,’ you know; you know.” The emotions the crowd brings to a *Grateful Dead* show (excitement) and then take home with them (the permi-grin) are important, but it is what happens during the show when the band plays that provides the final ingredient for an interaction ritual.

Common mood and mutual focus reinforce each other (Collins 2004). Deadheads became more excited about the 50th anniversary shows in stages: as the date approached, when they knew that they were traveling at the same time, when they began to see the bumper stickers of other deadheads, and then, finally, once they were co-present at the venue. Throughout each of those stages, mutual focus narrows; one is less likely to be thinking about finding a gas station when walking around Shakedown Street. Once in the venue and mutual focus narrows to the band and each other, common mood rises even higher, which in turn sharpens the audience’s focus to the “here and now” of the concert. Once the music starts, the crowd becomes what one biology-major deadhead respondent described as “throbbing, intense, undulating . . . it made me think of one big pulsing, living, organism.” When a bounded, co-present group of people with mutual focus and common mood achieve this level of unified action—not necessarily acting in identical ways, but acting in ways that seem predictable and comprehensible to others involved in the action—then they have achieved what Collins (2004:52) refers to as *rhythmic synchronization*, leading to *emotional entrainment* 124. Put simply, when in a group, individuals attend to the

body language, facial expressions, and vocal exchanges of others to both understand and predict behavior. As interactions continue, individuals become more and more attuned to one another: turn-taking in conversations works smoothly, for example, and Collins (1990, 1993, 2004) claimed that individuals' biological responses even come into synchronization with each other. This is rhythmic synchronization. The result of rhythmic synchronization is subjective and emotional: participants feel as though they understand exactly what is happening in the encounter, and they can behave appropriately—and predict the responses of others—without forethought. They are emotionally entrained. Once entrainment sets in, participants' "actions flow into each other, heightening the shared mood and the sense of effervescence and excitement in the interaction," which in turn heightens focus and mood. The system is thus self-reinforcing and pushes entrainment and emotional response even higher (Turner and Stets 2005). Rhythmic synchronization and emotional entrainment are what, Collins (2004) contended, Durkheim meant by collective effervescence (as discussed in Chapter 5).

Entrainment at a *Grateful Dead* show is complex: it occurs among audience members, between band members, and between the audience and the band. Although emotional entrainment is a subjective state, its effects can be seen. Respondent after respondent talked about dancing: often about everyone in the stadium dancing at the same time. At the shows I attended, some fans began the show sitting down . . . but that did not last for long. When on their feet, some stand without moving much, and others find a clear five-foot-wide space where they can dance back and forth. Still others stand in the aisles, if security will allow, to dance and spin. Dancing is also a solitary affair: individuals may wave their arms in sinewy patterns, reach for the sky, wave their hands in the air, or—as one fellow did for the entirety of a show at Red Rocks—simply bounce up and down on the balls of his feet. Audience entrainment at a *Grateful*

Dead show is something of an oxymoron: individuals are intently focused on their own experience with the music and dancers often move as they are subjectively moved by the music; a sort of interpretive dance. And yet, this individual work is undertaken as a group. The effect of so many people moving at once is powerful. In addition to the sea of movement periodically lit by sweeping yellow and purple spotlights, the stadium vibrates with the simultaneous movement of thousands of people. During a song, I felt the music waves hit my body, feel the low notes vibrate my chest, and also feel the stadium respond beneath my feet. A *Grateful Dead* show is not only seen and heard; it is also felt; embodied. Respondents described this feeling as “powerful” and “intense.” Although entrainment does not emerge at every show for every person—even though fan behaviors remain the same—respondents report that when it does happen, it is memorable, meaningful. “There’s nothing like that moment,” a survey respondent explained, “and you feel utterly connected to the music, to the people, to the environment you’re in. . . . It couldn’t be more right.” Another described this experience as “the way you can hug and dance with the stranger next to you, both of you feeling the same emotion when the band breaks into a special song;” yet another said that she felt like she had been “transported to a different reality. A reality where everyone was accepted and loved for who they are. Such a feeling of community.”

Entrainment begins with the band: without the music, there would be no mutual focus. A band that plays improvisationally has to be able to read the playing and body language of other band members in order to predict where the music might go. Some deadheads are adept at recognizing this communication between band members; (Shank and Simon 2010) wrote about the types of non-verbal communication that take place among band members as they play. Likewise, when entrainment happens on stage, it is visible to the fans. “When the band is ‘on,’” a

respondent explained, “something special happens. The music takes over;” another respondent wrote that when “the band . . . gets into the music, you feel the energy. Everyone feels the energy. It’s amazing.” When “everyone” feels the energy, the band and the audience become entrained with each other. A survey respondent described how different that entrainment feels from other experiences he has had in response to a question about what it means to “get it”:

For me "it" is the . . . awareness of the . . . spiritual connection between the band and the audience which is most evidenced by the crowd roaring feedback during particularly smoking jams. I feel a connection to the band when the music makes me dance. . . . I love Neil Diamond, have seen him ten times in concert and regularly karaoke his music. At times, his music lifts me, makes my bones shake and I feel as if I'm in a Southern Baptist church on a hot Sunday morning mass and the gospel choir is roaring and on fire. But the connection is not the same. It's not "it." For me, "it" is about how I feel about the band and its music, the connection I perceive between the audience and the band feeding off each other during concerts and how I take the parking lot spirit with me in my daily life.

The respondent produces powerful imagery in this quote that vividly illustrates entrainment, particularly the invocation of the “Southern Baptist church on a hot Sunday morning mass . . . the gospel choir . . . roaring and on fire.” Yet *that* image is not as powerful as what the respondent feels at a *Grateful Dead* show. Both the band and fans acknowledge that a symbiotic exchange of what they describe as energy passes back and forth between the two, heightening and building as the show progresses and energy continues to be shared. Deadheads and band members alike say that “the band plays the music, and the music plays the band,” a reference to the *Grateful Dead* song “The Music Never Stopped” (Barlow and Weir 1975:249-50), which includes the lines

*People joining hand in hand
while the music plays the band
Lord, they're settin' us on fire*

Deadheads regularly use the phrase “the music plays the band” and not “settin’ us on fire,” but the latter is implied: it is this shared energy between the two that creates the spark of entrainment at a *Grateful Dead* show.

Shows do not always go so well, as mentioned above. At times, the improvisation runs away with the band and they do not read each other well; at those times what they play sounds chaotic rather than musical. One such time occurred at the February 2012 *Phil Lesh and Friends* show at the 1st Bank Center, with jazz guitarist John Scofield on guitar. I had just read portions of Lesh’s book, *Searching for the Sound* (Lesh 2006) and learned that Lesh played his bass in unusual ways. I was determined to focus on Lesh’s guitar throughout the show. Improvisational playing is usually more prominent during the second set, and as I closed my eyes to shut out other stimuli and listened intently for Lesh’s bass during this improvisation, I realized that my body movements were following his rhythmic bass line. I was rocking slightly forward and back from one foot to the other, just shifting my weight, arms hanging loose. Several times I realized what I was doing, recognized that my muscles would hurt the next day if I did not change my movements, and “shook it out,” only to discover myself making the same, small, rocking motions again a few minutes later. In retrospect, I had entered a trance-like state, and it was in this state of intense focus that the jam fell apart. At the time, it sounded like a train wreck. My mind, which had been following a logical, if free-form sequence of notes, was suddenly without that support. This is the point where “if you get confused, just listen to the music play” (Garcia and Hunter in Dodd 2005:245-47) gained true meaning for me. Then I heard Lesh playing a

chromatic scale, beginning at the lowest note and moving upward in half-steps for eight or so. The first time it was quiet, obscured by the rest of the instruments, but then he played it again, louder, and again and again, more loudly and insistently each time. The notes sounded like a demand, but also offered a firm foundation. Somewhere in that confusion and chaos, Scofield began doing the opposite: dropping notes in a chromatic scale downward, repeating as Lesh had. They were “talking to” each other from across the stage. After what seemed like 15 minutes, but was probably more like three or less, the chaos resolved suddenly and satisfyingly into a song, and I physically rocked backward on my heels, knocked awake and blinking at the abrupt reality of the audience. I felt lighter, refreshed. Years later, a respondent explained that Lesh and Scofield had been, musically, communicating with each other, looking for common ground in order to get the band’s playing back on track. Even when the band lost its way, musically, so to speak, entrainment still occurred—in this case, between the band and myself—and entrainment was restored when the band returned its mutual focus to sharing coherent music production. Although this example is inherently personal, several respondents reported having similar experiences and later, in talking with other people who had been at that show, discovering that others had responded in a similar way, thus making what was intensely personal, shared. This type of experience also lends itself to the elevation of the band to sacred as discussed in Chapter 5.

For entrainment to occur, participants need to be receptive to it; it is not a given. Most respondents acknowledged that the band does not always play well; in the past, band members’ drug use interfered with their playing, and during the 1990’s several shows were reportedly quite poor because Garcia was in failing health and his playing and stage demeanor suffered. Band members are aging: Lesh is in his mid-70’s. Howard notes that the band members:

. . . spend a lot of time on the road. It takes a lot of energy to get out there and perform at that kind of level night after night. Very seldom have I been to a show where they play poorly, hitting the wrong notes. . . . But I've been to plenty of shows where the energy level just wasn't the same. Some nights you walk in, and they start playing, and it's like, "Oh my God, it's just crackling." You can almost, you can almost feel the sparks flying. Other nights it's just not there. I think that's just, to a large degree, that's just the frailties of human beings.

Other times, the “chemistry” of the crowd is not conducive to entrainment. Sometimes, a survey respondent noted, “the crowd is full of obnoxious jerks” (see “shut up and listen!,” above). At other times, it is the individual who does not achieve entrainment with an otherwise functional crowd. When my traveling party reached Santa Clara for the first of five 50th anniversary shows, for example, we had traveled over 1,700 miles in five days, camping in a tent at two stops. I was exhausted. As excited as I was for a show I had been anticipating for months, as the show progressed I simply sat with my eyes closed; I remember feeling as though I was half-asleep. This half-aware state produced an experience that was far different from the intense connection with the band I felt in the episode I described above. This time, I could feel the energy around me but could not muster enough personal energy to join it. The music and crowd noise seemed somehow distant, as though it did not touch me, and the jam sessions were irritating when I did not have the mental energy to follow them. We left early. What did *not* happen here is as important as what did, however: I did not assume that because I did not enjoy the show, that I would not enjoy future shows. Instead, I left knowing that the next day's show had the potential to be more meaningful for me—and it was. Several respondents made the same type of claim: a single “bad” show does not mute their enthusiasm for *Grateful Dead* shows, because they have

confidence that another show will produce that emotional outcome that they value. The energy provided by past encounters, as described in Chapter 5, provided a buffer or reservoir (see Chapter 7) that carried me over from one show to the next.

Variables in Rituals

When co-presence, boundedness, mutual focus, and shared mood result in emotional entrainment and collective effervescence, a feedback loop emerges that reinforces the interaction ritual. Although he does not include them in his model (as I have), Collins (1990, 1993) identifies several influences that can affect the success of an interaction ritual: what I have labeled *variables*: crowd composition, ritual origin, and ritual purpose.

Crowd composition

Variations in group size, frequency of meetings, the level of motivation of participants, and availability of symbols for mutual focus affect the success of the ritual. Larger groups with greater physical density—and especially groups composed of members who meet frequently and are interested in participating—are more likely to generate rhythmic entrainment (Collins 1990, Collins 1993). Rhythmic entrainment raises energy which, as described below, can be “stored” in the object of mutual focus. Lack of such a symbol means that this energy would dissipate instead of being captured (like the ice storm described in Chapter 5) (Collins 1990). Variance in these elements results in a hierarchy of interactions, with some interaction rituals becoming more important than others (Collins 1990). Deadheads comprise a large group overall, filling venues of 20,000 (like Red Rocks) and up to just over 70,000 (like Soldier Field); attending a show with thousands of active, engaged participants is profoundly moving. Deadheads vary in how often they participate, but those who go “on tour,” even for a “weekend tour” appear to be more

committed to the experience and would therefore be more likely to participate in a successful interaction ritual. Interest in and success of the interaction become self-reinforcing.

Ritual origin: Intentional and natural rituals

Collins (2004:49) distinguished between *formal* and *natural* rituals. Formal (or intentional) rituals are institutionalized, often regularly scheduled, and tied to social events: examples include graduation ceremonies and weddings, where individuals are aware that they are taking part in a ritual, and they are aware of the symbol as a sacred object (Collins 1988). Natural rituals, however, are not ceremonial and participants may not consider the event to be ritualized—particularly if the gathering is spontaneous. The pattern of creating and intensifying emotional energy is different between the two types of ritual. Formal rituals begin with a purpose, and thus with low levels of emotional energy that the ceremony itself attempts to enhance. Natural rituals, on the other hand, begin with emotional energy at the moment it sparks into life, and the ritual builds from there (Collins 1988). “Spontaneous political gatherings,” Collins (1988) pointed out, for example, “would not happen in the first place unless there were some dramatic or emergency that drew people together” (199). Natural rituals need not be spontaneous, but when repeated, natural rituals tend to become intentional rituals—such has been the case in the history of religion, Collins (1988) asserts.

Grateful Dead shows seem to connect both types of ritual. Although practice sessions have at times become impromptu shows, most *Grateful Dead* shows are, of necessity, scheduled, planned, and are therefore at least marginally formal/intentional. Getting inside the stadium requires that fans go through a ritual of buying tickets, traveling to the show, going through security, and finding seats; once inside they are usually greeted with a stage that uses some combination of symbols associated with the band. At the same time, there is a spontaneous

feeling to these shows, perhaps brought about by the informal structure of the show and jam-band music; fans are not aware of themselves as ritual participants, as would be the case at a wedding or graduation ceremony. They also tend to enter the venue with high levels of emotional energy. Collins (1988) noted that a transition from natural to intentional ritual often happens in the realm of “popular entertainment” (199). It is possible that this transition is what fans are noting when they complain that a musician has “sold out” to industry and lost their “authenticity:” the fans’ relationship with the star becomes more formal, more planned, and less spontaneous. For a variety of reasons and through various means, the *Grateful Dead* avoided this type of commercial success, and perhaps in the process inadvertently also preserved a more natural ritual and, by extension, more energetic, effective interaction rituals.

Ritual purpose: Power and status rituals

Status and power are at work in every interaction, according to Collins (1990:34), but emphasis varies; some rituals are *power rituals* and others are *status rituals*. Power rituals have a clear hierarchy, divided between those who give orders, and those who carry out these orders; the ritual focus lies with the order-giver(s) (Collins 1990, Collins 2004). Mutual emotional energy is not generated in this type of ritual; rather, the energy flows from the order-takers and toward the order-giver. Power within this type of ritual exists on a continuum, where the middle of the continuum consists of little order giving or taking (Collins 1990). Although the *Grateful Dead*, as a band, holds more authority and therefore power relative to deadheads, that power is rarely exercised. In a show recording, for example, Weir can be heard asking the crowd to move back several steps because the fans up front were in danger of being pressed against the stage. The band’s cancellation of a show and threat to stop touring in the 1980’s represents the most

extreme use of that authority. *Grateful Dead* shows, therefore, would fall near the middle of the power ritual continuum.

In contrast to power rituals, status rituals focus on belonging to the group rather than on a hierarchy within the group: status in this usage, therefore, refers to group membership rather than one's hierarchical status in relation to another group member. Shared emotional energy is created in this type of ritual, but how much energy an individual takes away from the experience depends on their location within the group. If the individual is central to the group and has a high level of participation, the level of available emotional energy will be higher than for the individual who hovers on the fringes, belonging but not participating heavily (Collins 1990, Collins 2004). *Grateful Dead* shows are status rituals that create shared emotional energy, and where a fan/deadhead stands in relation to the center or periphery of the group predicts the level of involvement that person feels. To a certain extent this situation appears to be self-fulfilling prophecy: an individual feels more engaged because they are more invested in the experience; however, when this concept is combined with identity as presented in Chapter 7, the processes at work here become more complex (see Chapter 8).

When power and status are paired with the frequency with which an individual participates in interaction rituals, we can begin to predict how an individual will view that ritual in relation to their everyday life. Collins (2004) called the frequency of participation social density, and it is a measure of how much time an individual spends in the company of others who are engaged in interaction rituals. Over time and with repetition, social density aggregates. If an individual has low social density—also interpreted as a high degree of “privacy or solitude,”—then episodes of “high ritual intensity” will be experienced as “sharp breaks from ordinary consciousness, either as wonderful and longed-for experiences, or as unwelcome

intrusions and threats to his or her privacy” (Collins 2004:116). In other words, some deadheads go “on tour,” attend “family” or tribute band shows, maintain deadhead friend groups, and interact online with other deadheads. For those individuals, going to a show would be important, but a not unusual event in their lives. On the other hand, fans/deadheads whose daily participation is lower or even nonexistent will experience these shows as sharp breaks from their everyday routines. It is these individuals who are more likely to feel a sense of boundedness from everyday life described above.

Not Fading Away: Combining Ritual Ingredients on July 5, 2015

I had been unable to get tickets for the last show of the 50th anniversary tour, so when the last song of the set began, I was sitting in my car, in the dark of the hotel parking lot, listening to a live stream . . . completely transfixed. The chose to end with their familiar rendition of Buddy Holly’s “Not Fade Away” (Holly and Petty 1957:65) as their last number (reproduced below in its entirety):

I'm gonna tell you how it's gonna be

You're gonna give your love to me

I wanna love you night and day

You know our lovin' will not fade away

You know our lovin' will not fade away

Not fade away

My love is bigger than a Cadillac

I try to show you but you drive me back

Your love for me has gotta be real

You're gonna know just how I feel

A love that's real not fade away

Not fade away

Each line of lyrics alternates with a short musical phrase from the guitars: “doot, doot, doot ... da doot doot,” which becomes more pronounced at the end of the song. As sung by the *Grateful Dead*, the words “You know our lovin’ will not fade away” sound instead like “You know our love will not fade away,” and “Not fade away” is sung as a sort of counterpoint to the previous two lines. This song is commonly a launching ground for improvisational play, especially when it falls at the end of a concert. The band comes back to “You know our love will not fade away” as a touchstone, a brief grounding in the familiar, before taking off again into improvisation. By the time the band returns to the song to stay, the band and audience have together gone on a musical journey that alternated between free-form and familiar music.

The band begins to repeat the last three lines again and again, and the audience and the band fall into a call-and-response: the band sings “you know our love will not fade away” and the audience responds with Lesh on the counterpoint: “not fade away.” From where I sit in my car, unable to see the audience, the exchange between the fans and the band sounds like a love song. A few repetitions later and the audience is singing “You know our love will not fade away” with the band, 70,000 voices rising, the sound almost tangible, hanging in the air above the crowd. Then the audience begins clapping in time with the guitar, a smattering at first.

Band and audience: “You know our love will not fade away”

Instruments and audience:

**Doot *Doot *Doot ... da *Doot *Doot*

**clap *clap *clap ... [pause] *clap *clap*

The clapping grows stronger and more coherent with each repetition, and then 70,000 voices are singing “you know our love will not fade away” in unison and 70,000 pairs of hands are clapping as one.

Band and audience: “You know our love will not fade away”

Instruments and audience:

**Doot *Doot *Doot ... da *Doot *Doot*

CLAP *CLAP *CLAP ... *CLAP CLAP

The keyboards drop out, but Lesh and Anastasio continue to play the bass and guitar notes, while the drummers keep the rhythm. Without the keyboards, the clapping is even louder and more distinct.

Band and audience: “You know our love will not fade away”

Bass/guitar and audience:

**Doot *Doot *Doot ... da *Doot *Doot*

CLAP **CLAP **CLAP ... **CLAP CLAP

Now Weir, Lesh and Anastasio remove their hands from the frets of their guitars. The clapping is so sharp and loud that it deafens, and echoes about the stadium.

Band and audience: “You know our love will not fade away”

Drums and audience:

****CLAP ***CLAP ***CLAP ... ***CLAP CLAP****

Weir, Anastasio and Lesh sing more and more quietly on each repetition. With the band’s amplified vocals dropping out, the sound of the crowd singing the lyrics becomes more distinct.

Audience: “You know our love will not fade away”

Drums and audience:

CLAP ***CLAP ***CLAP ... ***CLAP CLAP

After 45 seconds, all band members leave the stage except for the drummers, who continue to keep the time. Over 70,000 voices continue to sing, *a capella*, and clap.

“You know our love will not fade away”

CLAP ***CLAP ***CLAP ... ***CLAP CLAP

“You know our love will not fade away”

CLAP ***CLAP ***CLAP ... ***CLAP CLAP

“You know our love will not fade away”

CLAP ***CLAP ***CLAP ... ***CLAP CLAP

Roughly one and a half minutes later, the drummers leave the stage as well. The crowd continues singing and clapping rhythmically, although the stage is empty. Without the drummers, the crowd loses total synchronicity, but continues to alternate between “You know our love will not fade away” and clapping for roughly three more minutes before Lesh returns to the stage briefly to ask fans to become organ donors. Once Lesh leaves the stage, the ambient noise level surges again for twenty seconds as the audience cheers and whistles—and then the chant begins again. The band returns to play the encore: “Touch of Grey” (Garcia and Hunter 1982), leaves the stage, and the chant begins again. The band returns for a second encore: “Attics of My Life” (Garcia and Hunter 1970) and final bows. The clapping, without the chanting, returns again briefly, faintly, before people begin to leave the stadium.

As I wrote this section I could hear this exchange again in my mind, my memory supplying both audio and visual memories from my own experience and from audio and video recordings. The pull of that effervescence—arising from a combination of ritual elements—is powerful. Although I was unable to be co-present at the time, past memories allowed me to feel

as though I knew exactly what they were feeling, and more than that, I imagined that I was feeling exactly what they were feeling. In that moment, co-presence, boundedness, mutual focus, and shared mood coalesced spontaneously into entrainment, creating an interaction ritual that heightened energy, creating emotions and a renewed sense of community, both among those co-present in the stadium and those listening or watching at a distance.

Ritual Outcomes

Combining Ritual Ingredients results in more than entrainment: interaction rituals create the raw material for their own re-ignition, and over time have long-term effects for the culture. The creation of symbols, emotional energy, long-term emotions, and standards of morality are all Ritual Outcomes of interaction rituals (Collins 1993, Collins 2004).

Symbols

Symbols (Collins 1988:194) are perhaps the most discernable of the ritual outcomes; as they become sacred objects in the Durkheimian sense (see Chapter 5), symbols are given prominence in a culture and generally put on display in some fashion. Symbols can be a “physical object which is treated with special respect, persons, gestures, words, [or] ideas” (Collins 1988:194-95). They are formed from the object of mutual focus and as a result of the emotional energy aimed at that object during an interaction ritual. The symbol becomes imbued with the emotions associated with the encounter, positive or negative (Collins 1988, Collins 1990). The symbol becomes a “battery,” metaphorically, that stores emotional energy, and is capable of supplying energy (1) to the individual and (2) to groups. For individuals, successful rituals give the individual a sense of confidence in future encounters and extend into personal rituals and thought processes (discussed in more detail below) (Collins 1990). Symbols provide groups with a “spark” of emotional energy so that the group is not required to generate emotional

energy anew each time it meets. As the symbol becomes more and more charged, the amount of energy available for new rituals is higher. For example, Robbins (2009) found that the reason Pentecostal religions spread widely, and have gained ground internationally, is because this religion provides training and practice in ritual behavior that allows them to perform rituals “with any other church member at any time and in any place” (64). If a symbol is not recharged, on the other hand, the energy drains away—much like a real battery—over time, until it no longer functions as a symbol (Collins 2004). The more often symbols are called upon—the more frequently a group meets—the easier it is for the group to achieve mutual focus on that symbol; repetition more firmly ties emotional energy to the symbol (Collins 1993). If a group meets infrequently, or meets frequently but does not use that symbol often, then the symbol loses emotional energy and decays (Collins 1993). Likewise, a symbol may retain potency for a group, but if an individual’s participation in that group becomes sporadic, then “the individual loses moral intensity, and the symbols worshipped gradually slip back into being ordinary objects” for that person (Collins 1988:195).

Influences on symbol production

Symbol production is influenced by the type and size of the group that generates it. For Collins (1988), larger groups are more likely to become intense and produce strong emotions. Within these groups, and especially if the group produces emotions that include fear or “the implicit threat of death,” then especially sacred symbols result: “religious icons, dogmas, and political emblems such as flags,” for example (Collins 1988:194). Smaller, less intense groups—like *Grateful Dead* audiences when they first began their career playing house bands, in the park, and at small local venues—create a different type of symbol. Instead of global, over-arching symbols, these groups are more likely to create symbols from “gestures, clothing styles, and

forms of talk” (Collins 1988:194). As discussed in Chapter 5, *Grateful Dead* culture produced a number of symbols built on icons produced by the *Grateful Dead* organization, all of which are instantly recognizable to deadheads as signifying the *Grateful Dead*, and many of which, like the stealie (see Chapters 4 and 5), originated on album covers: dancing bears, the dancing skeleton, Bertha, Terrapin turtles, and more.

Any trip down Shakedown Street reveals in pins, patches, and clothing with stealies. The oversized cranium lends itself well to substituting alternate images, allowing individuals to merge symbols from different cultures. John, for example, wore a shirt that sported a stealie with the Cubs logo in it. Nearly any college football logo can be found within a stealie printed on a sweatshirt or t-shirt. On Facebook, an entire group is given over to the artistic interpretation of stealies. A common, and sometimes quite profound occurrence on Facebook is a request to have a loved one’s face photoshopped into a stealie. Sometimes the loved one is an infant, but more often I have seen this request when the loved one—a *Grateful Dead* fan—has died. The person making the request recognizes the importance of the *Grateful Dead* community and seeks to immortalize their loved one in a way that touches upon what was important to them. The stealie began as a pragmatic answer to in Durkheim’s terms, “profane” need to mark music equipment. Through group interaction it became a symbol not only for the culture, but for individual emotions attached to that culture.

Level of perceived membership in the group also affects how symbols are created and used. *Generalized symbols of mass audiences* (Collins 2004:87) form when participants have little or nothing to do with organizing a large gathering and when members are largely unknown to each other, or are even anonymous. Generalized rituals tend to focus on abstract concepts like religion and politics, creating abstract symbols: flags, for example (Collins 1981, Collins 2004).

Note the correspondence to Collins' assertion that large groups also create similar symbols: a "mass audience" ritual is, by definition, a large group. Generalized rituals build status-group membership (Collins 1981, Collins 2004). Status rituals generate a sense of belonging; therefore, generalized symbols serve to create and sustain a general sense of belonging to a large organization with anonymous members and abstract symbols, rather than a sense of identification with specific persons or small groups (Collins 1981).

In contrast, *particularized symbols of personal networks* (Collins 2004:87) form from smaller, more specific groups where participants are more involved in group activities and where the specific people, places, and things involved are important to the group. Particularized groups build relationships between known, rather than anonymous, individuals, enhance a sense of membership to the group, and may also reinforce group authority structures (Collins 1981, Collins 2004). Particularized symbols are more resistant to change (Collins 2004). Because particularized symbols emerge from smaller groups where knowing others and interacting appropriately is necessary, individuals who participate in this type of group accumulate what Collins called *particularized cultural capital*: "special knowledge, speech patterns, objects, memories, experiences, and other things that only members of the group have shared" (Turner and Stets 2005:80). Highly specific particularized capital—that is, meanings that refer narrowly or even exclusively to a particular group—serve to increase the salience of the group and maintain a higher level of emotional energy at the individual level (Turner and Stets 2005) (see Chapter 7 for a discussion of salience in individual identity). Being known to others in the group—called by name, or sharing stories about group membership (whether they are autobiographical or about third persons)—can function as a form of particularized cultural capital (Collins 2004). This interactive group talk, or sharing of "personal narratives and

identities,” is itself a conversational ritual and links people closely with group symbols (Collins 2004:87). Symbols can be metaphorically “dusted off” for use in a ritual, or may be used on a regular basis within “self-reinforcing networks so as to permeate their participants’ sense of reality” (Collins 2004:87).

Although deadheads are often strangers to one another, and although I have identified the deadhead ritual as a status ritual, the deadhead community creates the particularized symbols of personal networks. Deadheads use strategies to make up for the fact that they often do not know one another: they assume kinship, for example, often calling each other “family,” and they refer to other members of the culture as “sisters” and “brothers.” Emotional entrainment plays a part as well: it is difficult to see oneself as “anonymous” when one feels strongly that the crowd is sharing the same emotion. Deadheads also exhibit particularized cultural capital on a regular basis. Most of my respondents, for example, could easily describe band member biographies or allude to/repeat cultural stories. Dollar (2007) noted that in order to understand community-related discussions between two deadheads, one had to be able to hear what was being said like a deadhead would understand it: outsiders could not make sense of the written dialogue she provided. Presented with the following:

Help > Slip > Franklin’s

a deadhead knows that “>” indicates a band jam session, and that I am referring to a live band performance of “Help is on the Way,” that extends without stopping into “Slipknot!” before extending into “Franklin’s Tower,” where the jam concludes with “Franklin’s Tower.”

Particularized culture also includes knowing that Help > Slip > Franklin’s is a common combination for the *Dead*, and some deeply involved deadheads would know when that combination was first played, how often, and whether it is more commonly played in the first or

second set. Other deadheads do not care about such knowledge, but they still understand the notation used above. Deadheads typically build up this knowledge through sheer repetition: attending shows and listening to recordings. I made no special effort to learn song progressions, for example, and did not make listening to *Grateful Dead* music a daily part of my routine, but this knowledge still worked its way into my subconscious. After five years of attending shows, when *Dead and Company* played the first few notes of “Help is on the Way” at the 1st Bank Center on November 24, 2015, I knew in a flash what the next sounds coming from the stage would be. Quite literally, the words sprang unbidden into my mind as a response to the opening notes: *Help, Slip, Franklin’s*. I suspect that this experience is similar to that of others.

How deadheads create and use symbols: Static and dynamic symbols

Deadhead culture is complex and varied, and understanding how symbols are used within the culture is complicated even further by the fact that deadheads make use of symbols in different ways. I divide these applications into (1) static symbols, which refer to the culture as a whole, and (2) dynamic symbols, which deadheads employ to make sense and meaning of everyday occurrences in daily life.

Static symbols could be thought of as a synecdoche—a figure of speech that uses the part to represent the whole. Ways of talking about the show experience, for example, and sharing stories with others to establish a rapport—although personal—are relatively static repetitions that establish membership in the culture as a whole and break down the walls of anonymity. Dressing in tie-dye and wearing *Grateful Dead* icons on patches similarly represent static symbols that indicate membership in the whole. Some of the more “hardcore” deadheads debate the merits of individual songs or entire shows, such that particular shows become iconic representations of the *Grateful Dead’s* music. Specific shows or songs are sometimes tied to community lore; for

example, fan stories say that a particularly “hot” rendition of “Fire on the Mountain” caused the Mount St. Helens eruption in 1980, with fans leaving the stadium amidst falling ash. In reality, the band played nearly a month after the eruption, and played the song in response to the eruption, not as its cause (Carr 1999). Fans more commonly tell stories about particular shows where the band played a weather-related song and rain began to fall. Such show-stories are symbols, bearers of emotional energy attached to the real events of the shows, and represent what deadheads are otherwise often unable to articulate—the mystical elements of collective effervescence.

Jerry Garcia is an interesting example of a static symbol. As discussed previously, the band, as well as individual band members, are of course the object of mutual focus and they become symbols for the entire culture. Garcia attracted special attention from the community, as discussed in Chapter 5. Individuals may become a symbol, according to Collins (2004), through (1) direct and (2) indirect observation. Individuals who have directly observed the person during a ritual encounter where that person was the object of mutual focus have engaged in direct observation (Collins 2004). The recipient of these high levels of emotional energy may be able to channel that energy back to the group at high levels, intensifying shared energy (Collins 1988). That person then becomes a symbol and a battery; “one of the key resources” (Collins 1988:195) that allows an individual to spark a new interaction ritual. When that energy is powerful enough, Collins (1993) writes, they become charismatic leaders, capable of generating joy and enthusiasm from their own stores of emotional energy (Collins 1990). Charisma is self-reinforcing: as charismatic leaders are successful at creating successful interaction rituals, others begin to have confidence and expectations that their performance will be good, which creates a common mood leading into the interaction ritual (Collins 1988).

Indirect observation occurs when members of the group share stories about the symbolic person; whether that person is present or not. Such stories need not be accurate: what matters is that the individual is an important figure in a successful ritual. The more a story is told, and the further away from the actual person the listener is, the less accuracy matters (Collins 2004). Garcia is both a direct and an indirect symbol: as a charismatic individual that served as a “battery” to spark new rituals, he was a direct symbol: fans noticed when Garcia’s personal energy was low, and felt it as a disappointing show. The man also had a myth, and nearly everyone I spoke with had a Garcia story, whether it was theirs or told and re-told throughout the community. The stories serve to reinforce the legend.

The legend of Garcia is powerful. “He was the heart and soul and the glue” of the band, one survey respondent wrote. Large numbers of people argue that the *Grateful Dead* died when Garcia died: “The shows have been over for 20 years now,” a respondent explained. “The band that played in Chicago is just a ghost band.” Others told me that the band was different without him, but that the music went on—similar, but not as lively. “Nothing topped Jerry magic. . . . He just seemed like a great guy, twinkling, and then when he died . . . it was tough,” another respondent explained. In the years before his death, Garcia was ill, and his behavior off-stage (coming back from a coma, for example) and on-stage became both a worry and a symbol for the resilience of the community. A survey respondent shared a meaningful “Jerry” story that she and her husband experienced:

. . . we were getting pretty spun [high] and in the second set, Jerry broke into the most emotional Morning Dew I’ve ever heard. It literally brought me to my knees. My husband and I were overcome—we both started to cry—it was very emotional. The icing on the cake was that Jerry had been pretty lifeless on stage for most of the show—hardly moved, just

played and stood there like a statue. At the end of this “Dew” he bounced offstage with such enthusiasm . . . he was so alive! We both felt physically and emotionally wiped out and so did the rest of the crowd. Everyone was just shaking their heads in amazement at the emotional experience we had all just shared.

This respondent shared a story (indirect observation) about something she experienced (direct observation) about a symbol/person whose behavior generated meaning, emotional energy, and reinforced the audience’s sense of belonging within the culture.

Static symbols link the individual to the culture, reminding them of their place within the community. Dynamic symbols, on the other hand, bring the culture into the individual’s everyday life and help them to make sense of it. Collins referred to this usage as having private rituals, where symbols from collective rituals are used privately. Private rituals are secondary to, and thus less powerful than, public rituals (Collins 1988); however, used privately they “arouse emotions that . . . make the symbols even more sacred or special” (Turner and Stets 2005:80). Private use of symbols can include stress relief, as described earlier, or may speak to an important event in a deadhead’s life. John, for example, explains that several songs are important to him, but “Ripple” has special meaning. “[W]hen my dad passed away a few years ago,” he explains, his voice getting thicker and the tempo of his words slowing, “I went home after the funeral; and, ah . . . ‘Ripple’ was the first song that came on. I just lost it. I lose it every time. . . [I hear the song, now]. It doesn’t matter where or when. I’ll be driving down the road, and if it comes on . . . [I have to] pull over, cry, [then] keep going.”

Because symbols are ever-present in our lives, Collins (2004) argued that how we think is shaped by ritual, especially when we use symbols that have been charged with emotional energy as a result of ritual use. Using such symbols in our thought process has the effect of reinforcing

subjective feelings of group membership—even when the individual is alone; not in the group—and underscoring the emotions associated with social solidarity (Collins 1988, Collins 1990, Turner and Stets 2005). Even when a person is alone, then, that individual is still influenced by the group through the energy associated with symbols (Collins 1993). Johnson (2009) found, for example, that spouses conveyed to their partners their own personal meaning for gender roles. They did so through in interaction rituals regarding their production of domestic labor: the ways in which they performed this labor were seen as a “ritualized conversation through which they exchange emotional messages regarding themselves as men and women as well as their expectations of their spouse as a man or woman” (69). Differences in social realities, for Johnson (2009), resulted in varying levels of effectiveness for interaction rituals, because not every symbol would be equally effective for both partners. The deadhead community is responding to different variations in its membership than gender roles and marital status, but, like Johnson’s (2009) respondents, deadheads make use of symbols to make sense of their lives and express identity. In Chapter 7, for example, I described how recovering deadhead addicts used a song title, “Wharf Rat” (Garcia and Hunter 1971) to create an identity for themselves that included *Grateful Dead* show attendance. Perhaps unconsciously, deadhead symbols slip into everyday conversation—at least at shows and when talking about the *Grateful Dead*. At the conclusion of my interview with Chris, for example, he asked if I had become a deadhead. I told him that I did not know, that I felt that I did not quite understand the culture yet. But then I said: “But . . . [shrugging my shoulders] when you get confused, just listen to the music play,” a line from Franklin’s Tower (Garcia and Hunter 1975:245-47). Chris was immediately vastly pleased: I had given a deadhead answer. Several respondents referred to the song “Saint of Circumstance” (Weir and Barlow 1979) when discussing strange coincidences: meeting up with someone by

chance at a show, or finding what they needed when they needed it. Facebook comments in response to a death are filled with condolences created out of lyrics. Not only do deadheads use symbols to reinforce a sense of membership to the deadhead culture; they also clearly use symbols from deadhead culture to make sense and meaning of their everyday lives.

Symbols are everywhere, according to Collins (1993): “one should regard all items of culture as lying somewhere on this continuum of symbolic arousal; they are loaded in varying degrees with membership significance, ranging from low to high, in relation to particular groups” (211). Symbols, when reinforced with emotional energy on a regular basis, become a powerful force for cohesion.

Emotional Energy and Long-Term Emotions

For Durkheim, the mechanisms for producing moral solidarity included “focusing, intensifying, and transforming emotions,” which is precisely what interaction rituals accomplish (Collins 2004:102). The result is *emotional energy* (Collins 2004:105), a concept that has recurred regularly throughout this chapter. Emotional energy, or EE, is both the product of ritual ingredients, and an ingredient that itself feeds back into the interaction ritual system to sharpen focus, heighten common mood, intensify entrainment, and fuel symbols, with the result that emotional energy spreads like a contagion throughout the crowd (Collins 1988). Although transient emotions such as joy, anger and shame have a role in interaction rituals, short-term emotions are not sufficient to create long-term energy: those short-term emotions can only occur against a backdrop of long-term emotional energy, according to Collins (Collins 1990, Collins 2004). Emotional energy, then, is a long-term emotion that emerges from the cumulative effect of participating in repeated and successful interaction rituals over time (1988, 1990, 1993, 2004, Turner and Stets 2005). High emotional energy is characterized by a “feeling of confidence and

enthusiasm for social interaction” and is comparable to what Durkheim meant by collective effervescence (Collins 1990:32) and what Victor Turner meant by *communitas* (Brown 2010) (see Chapter 5). High emotional energy includes feelings of confidence, enthusiasm, and good self-image, resulting in a strong feeling of moral solidarity and group membership (Collins 1990, Collins 2004).

John describes, in general terms, an encounter had with high emotional energy at a show:

Oh my God. It's . . . [long pause] . . . you can feel the universe coursing through you. That's a good way to say it. You just . . . feel it [he shakes his shoulders, shivers]. You're part of it. I mean, there have been times when you're [the audience] screaming out the song with them [the band], and you can feel the arena shake; and you can see security scared, [laughs loudly] . . . because there's so much energy. And they're [security] like, [imitates frightened security personnel] uh, oh. [Chuckles delightedly.]

[The band sings] "If I had my way, I would tear this whole building down," and you've got 30,000 people screaming it, going, [imitates the voice of an awed, incredulous security guard] "They could. They could overpower us."

That magic is just. . . Like I said, electric . . . where you just feel it, just through you; your whole body. It's like, whoa.

John feels the energy—literally, through the shaking stadium—of 30,000 fans who are rhythmically and emotionally entrained, and the energy level is so high that security is nervous. Levels of emotional energy are apparent in the body in the ways that people carry themselves, where they orient their eyes and bodies toward a mutual focus, and how individual bodies within a group are synchronized with others (Collins 1988, Collins 1993, Collins 2004), as was the case

with John's experience. Individuals with high emotional energy will maintain a confident posture with mutual focus and will verbally express "enthusiasm, confidence, and initiative" (Collins 2004:136). Low emotional energy is a stark contrast, and represents a lack of solidarity, resulting in feelings of alienation, avoidance, depletion, and depression (Collins 1990, Collins 2004). Low emotional energy individuals do not mutually orient toward a shared symbol, and instead look away; they fail to make eye contact, and express "apathy, withdrawal, and depression" (Collins 2004:136). Power and status factor into outcomes as well: higher power or a more central status results in positive emotions, whereas lower power or more peripheral status results in negative emotions (Collins 2004). Since people are "motivated to maximize the amount of solidarity they can receive, relative to the cost of producing it," then individuals will participate wholly in an interaction ritual—unless that participation comes with too high of a cost (Collins 2004:148).

Emotional energy functions at both the group level, to create and maintain group cohesion and symbols, and also at the individual level. Collins (2004) argues that individuals seek out interaction rituals to gain emotional energy. Every social encounter generates or depletes emotional energy, based on the "emotional and cultural resources" (Collins 1990:4) of the individual. As a result, individuals are motivated to participate in some group activities and avoid others, depending on the level of emotional energy that can be personally gained by the individual from each encounter (Collins 1990). Fans are drawn to a *Grateful Dead* show because of these positive experiences. "Nothing in the world makes me feel like these shows do," a survey respondent wrote: "Happy and blissful, and surrounded by wonderful people." The emotional energy of an encounter peaks during the ritual itself, but then begins to decay over time. Individuals must then engage in new ritual encounters to regain this lost "charge" of emotional energy (Collins 1993, Collins 2004). My friend in Chapter 1, who "needed a show,"

was hoping for a charge of that emotional energy. Fans that return to show after show, often for consecutive nights, indicates that individuals felt they were engaging in successful encounters. When rituals are successful, high emotional energy results. This energy functions as a type of confidence for the future: the individual “brings a possible future into the present” with a “sense of certainty” for the outcome that is otherwise “essentially unknowable.” in other words, emotional energy helps the individual to have confidence that their actions will net a positive outcome, which allows them to take action in the first place (Barbalet 2001:88). As described earlier in this chapter, shows do not always go well, or various reasons. Yet fans keep coming back. The reason they return after a bad show is that they have a form of confidence that the next show will be better, and if not that one, then the one after that. They are willing to continue spending time, money and emotional energy because they have a hope of positive outcomes in the future, based on past experiences.

The band and the audience engage in the mutual creation of emotional energy as discussed earlier in this chapter: one survey respondent calling it a “symbiotic relationship between the crowd and the band. The band feeds off the energy of the crowd and vice versa.” Although shows do not always create an extremely high level of energy, “part of the charm” [of the *Grateful Dead*], Ryan, a 44-year-old man who happily became my first impromptu interview explains, “is that they always go for it.” This willingness to continually attempt to make that connection, and the successes of the past, keep fans coming back to shows again and again. A survey respondent described going to shows as going “to a party. You open the door and the party is just happening. You leave for a little while and whenever you return, whenever you open that door, the party is still happening.” High levels of emotional energy thus produce high levels of confidence for shows in the future, such that participants believe that they will get their need

for emotional energy met at any time they choose to return to the culture. Far from being a transient emotion, this confidence is long-term and leads to a sense of solidarity with the culture.

Standards of Morality and Righteous Anger

Like Durkheim, for Collins, emotional energy has a moral component as well: when emotional energy is high, people feel good, righteous, and morally superior; they are willing to defend the group's symbols and sacred objects against any form of perceived attack. Group members view challenges to group symbols as an attack against *standards of group morality*, the attack representing a form of evil that disrupts "the cognitive symbols that hold the group together" (Collins 1981:999, Collins 1990, Collins 2004, Turner and Stets 2005). As a form of emotional energy, standards of morality are "recharged" from participation in interaction rituals; if group symbols are not recharged periodically through interaction rituals, then the individual can lose their "moral intensity" as the energy stored in symbolic items wanes over time (Collins 1988:195). Participation in ongoing interaction rituals thus becomes essential to the maintenance of a moral self.

When symbols are disrespected, the group reads this as disrespect of the culture, with the effect that the "violator" is seen as an outsider rather than an in-group dissident. The disrespect evokes *righteous anger* against the violator (Collins 1988:196). The use of the word *righteous* is deliberate, because group members feel that punishing violations is a "moral right and even duty" (Collins 1988:196). The symbol is the "vehicle by means of which the group is able to unify itself" and thus must be defended; punishment is therefore meted out based on the strength of the moral sentiment toward the violated symbol, and not on the amount of actual harm that was caused (Collins 1988:999). As a ritual battery, the symbol "not only gives positive energy to its faithful members, but it also discharges violently" against outsiders to violate those symbols

(Collins 1988:196). This type of violent response is more likely to occur within localized groups with little diversity, where the barrier between insiders and outsiders is strong and results in “solidarity, distrust, and concrete interpretations of symbols” (Collins 2004:117).

In contrast, where the network of ties between group members is loose, the group is more likely to welcome individualism. These groups are characterized, according to Collins (2004), by “relativistic attitudes toward symbols, abstract rather than concrete thinking, . . . weak feelings of conformity to group symbols; emotional coolness of tone; and generalized trust in a wide range of interactions” (117). Deadhead culture, with its emphasis on tolerance and acceptance, in addition to a wide range of symbols for individuals to adhere to, falls within this latter group. When violations occur within this group, Collins (1988, 2004) explained, they are usually violations of acceptable social tone and demeanor: essentially, what is considered polite behavior. Such lapses will be met with humor, embarrassment, or potentially the ostracizing of the offending individual if the behavior is bad enough (Collins 1988, Collins 2004)—but not the moral outrage of righteous anger paired with potential violence. This type of response is evident in closed and secret Facebook discussion groups, where membership is controlled: direct attacks are met with administrative techniques: deleting the offending post, talking to the member who made the post, or expelling the member from the group. Less severe violations of acceptable tone and content are often dealt with by the community: early responses to a post might joke or otherwise create an opportunity for the offending member to alter or explain their post to save face. These posts create an escape route, so to speak, toward acceptable behavior. Another possible first, or secondary, response might be a blunt statement that the offending member was inappropriate. If these approaches fail to alter the offending member’s behavior, responses will become increasingly stern until a general clamor of negative sanctioning appears. An

administrator may step in at this point, potentially expelling the member from the group for a short time or permanently. The common thread running through all of these responses, and in particular the administrator response, is the protection of the character and harmony of the group.

Violations of polite behavior in at *Grateful Dead* shows are met with similar levels of response from the community. A few respondents, in the course of telling other stories, briefly mentioned addressing situations in the parking lot in ways that reflect Collins' descriptions of responses to impolite behavior. For example, William tells me about a confrontation he had with a young man on Shakedown Street:

My friend and I were just walking around, looking however we're looking here [not caring about how they are dressed]. This kid . . . he's working on his laid back, stoner affectations. Like, [imitates a drawling, drawn-out way of speaking] "hey dude, what's up?" He [had gone] through some effort to get the right pants and the right shirt.

He was like, "Oh man, I love that beer. Will you share it with me, brother?"

We were just like, "No, we're drinking from it, but [pauses with a short chuckle] . . . hi."

Then he started calling us out in front of people. "That's not the way things are done in the Dead." Blah blah blah!

I was just like, "Dude, you're going to make me 'go Republican' if you do not get out of my face"

William leans back in his chair and makes a dismissive gesture with his hands.

"This free spirit that's completely financially dependent on [his] parents." He laughs.

As William tells his story, he describes the "kid" as a newcomer to the culture, someone who thinks that putting on the clothes (which were not necessary) and [mis]understanding the norms

makes him part of the culture to the point that he verbally dresses-down William, the older man. William, who is irritated by the young man's behavior, combines a joke with an implicit threat: "you're going to make me 'go Republican' if you do not get out of my face." The encounter ended there. The band called on a similar type of one-on-one interaction between older, more experienced deadheads and newcomers when fans began tearing down fences in the 1980's, as described in Chapter 4. This behavior threatened the band's ability to continue to perform. The band did impose sanctions—shows were canceled—but paired this ultimate threat with a request that the older deadheads teach the younger ones how to behave at shows. In both instances—William's interaction with the young kid, and the band's handling of the gate-crashers—the problem was addressed with, if not "humor," then good humor; an effort was made to include fans so they could remain part of the in-group, rather than harshly punish violators seen as the out-group.

Ritual Chains

After leaving the July 4th 50th anniversary show at Soldier Field, the crowd strolls through the semi-darkness, exhausted ebullient. Thousands walk wide, wandering concrete paths toward hotel buses and Chicago's subway system. I am both myself and a part of all the people around me. My entire body is buzzing with energy, my voice is hoarse, and my hands tingle from clapping all evening, but my smile will probably last for days and I am light on my feet.

The "Not Fade Away" chant had broken out from the floor at set break, part of a Facebook campaign to let the boys know how the fans felt. I do not remember when it started again on the sidewalk, but by the time the crowd reaches the concrete tunnels that serve as an exit to the park area, it has started again:

"You know our love will not fade away!"

Clap *Clap *Clap* ... *Clap Clap

The sidewalk and ceiling of the tunnel we enter are smooth concrete, but the walls are reminiscent of Art Deco, with raised bas relief panels. I suspect that the shapes are there for acoustic purposes, to help break up echoes. Earlier in the day as I arrived at the park, I passed men in the tunnels who had upturned 5-gallon plastic buckets on the ground in the middle of the concourse, their improvised drums booming and echoing in the open space. Now the tunnel is packed with bodies, singing and clapping:

“You know our love will not fade away!”

Clap *Clap *Clap* ... *Clap Clap

“You know our love will not fade away!”

Clap *Clap *Clap* ... *Clap Clap

“You know our love will not fade away!”

Clap *Clap *Clap* ... *Clap Clap

As far as I can see, forward and back, people are singing and clapping. It takes a minute and a half to fully pass through this tunnel, not because the tunnel is that long, but because thousands of people walk slowly when packed so closely together. As we pass out into the open air on the other end, the sound of the clapping behind us sounds more like the drums I heard earlier, the tunnel amplifying the sound of our synchronized hands.

“YOU KNOW OUR LOVE WILL NOT FADE AWAY!”

CLAP *CLAP *CLAP* ... *CLAP CLAP

Just as I do not recall when it began, I also do not recall when the chant trailed off. As we leave the grounds of the park, though, people begin to drift in different directions, so that by the time we are on the streets of Chicago and headed toward the subway station, the crowd has

spread out into small groups, quiet – but still happy and ebullient, and most definitely not fading away.

A critical element of Collins' theory is that energy is stored in symbols—like the lyrics, notes and patterns of “Not Fade Away”— that can be called upon to start another interaction ritual. The energy stored in a symbol wanes with time, however, and must be re-created at a new ritual in order to re-charge the symbol/battery. Likewise, the boost of individual energy that a person takes with them from an interaction ritual also wanes over time. Individuals return to ritual encounters to gain more energy, and end the encounter when they are emotionally satisfied. In this way, individuals develop a “taste” for a ritual encounter and will seek it again (Collins 1993). Because individuals attempt to maximize emotional energy without expending too much of their own, behavior can be predicted (Collins 2004). This taste for a satisfying ritual encounter explains why deadheads return to *Grateful Dead* shows again and again, spending hours in the parking lot in addition to time spent inside the venue. A survey respondent explained: “When I found myself seeking out people who liked the *Dead* and continued to get the same positive feelings from the music consistently for years, I knew I was not just a phase . . . I know I will be a fan for life!” Another wrote: “After that first show, I started thinking about how to see them again.” Even William, who told me that “for me, it begins and ends at the shows,” keeps returning.

Membership symbols simultaneously provide the group with a stored energy reserve and an object of mutual focus that re-focuses previously dispersed shared activity (Collins 1990, Collins 2004). “That,” Collins explained, “is how a single IR [interaction ritual] becomes an IR chain” (2004:146). When group interaction results in the creation of “sacred objects and emotional energies,” people are motivated to create new rituals, renew emotional energy, and

imbue associated symbols with that energy in a dialectic between “assembly and dispersion of the group” (Collins 1988:196, Collins 2004). This energy is less likely to be found in everyday life: although one’s workplace may involve interaction rituals, “social and ceremonial encounters are more likely to generate emotional energy and cultural capital” (Turner and Stets 2005:83). Respondent after respondent indicated a longing for shows as a break from the grind of “real life” (see Chapter 7). Work does, however, play an important role in interaction rituals, because individuals need material resources to participate (Collins 2004). Shakedown Street—where vendors sell enough goods to pay for tickets, gas, food, and other necessities while on tour (Sheptoski 2000)—is a direct response to this material need. The symbol, then, provides a link between one interaction ritual and another, forming a chain over time.

Interaction ritual chains can exist at the individual level as well, as individuals use symbols as a cognitive link to previously felt emotions. Collins (2004) explained that humans, because we deliberately seek out emotional energy, “use *internal* IRs to get through difficulties and entrain themselves in a flow” (218; *emphasis added*). Because humans think and talk through symbols that have attached emotional energy, entrainment can occur at the individual level through thinking and self-talk. The result is self-entrainment, self-focus, and raising emotional energy through a “brief private ritual” (Collins 2004:207). Group-level interaction rituals and individual-level interaction rituals exist in a symbiotic relationship: Collins (2004) explains that “we live in a world of symbols loaded with membership significance [and emotional energy]. . . . Woven into the interstices between the external IRs that one goes through with other people, are the inner IRs that constitute chains of thought” (219). Interaction ritual chains can also be used to reconnect individuals who have become disconnected from society in some way. Rossner (2011) conducted a conversation analysis of a couple and offender using

restorative justice—a conversation between the violator and the violated—which works through helping the offender understand how the crime affected the victims, with the aim of reconnecting him with law-abiding society. Deadheads—even if they have left the culture, as many had prior to the 50th anniversary shows—can also return to the culture through reconnecting with other deadheads at shows. Internal interaction ritual chains, then can connect or re-connect the individual to the group.

Entrainment through thinking and self-talk is evident in the ways individual deadheads make use of cultural symbols. In Chapter 5 I explained how song titles and lyrics become symbols used by deadheads to make sense of everyday life. Several respondents also indicated that listening to recordings of the music affected their thought patterns and stress levels. A full-professor survey respondent wrote that he works with the *Grateful Dead* in the background to stay “grounded,” for example. Another wrote: “my brainwaves just work with [the music]. I fall asleep to it. I relax when I hear it.” The music induces a feeling of peacefulness and release from stress for many. Woody links the complexities of *Grateful Dead* music to classical music composers like Tchaikovsky; many people find classical music to be soothing background music that encourages productivity. To my surprise, although I am generally distracted by popular music if I try to play it when I write, *Grateful Dead* music does not have the same effect: some of my most fruitful writing sessions have happened with recorded shows in the background. I have also found that a recorded *Grateful Dead* show can provide stress relief, within a song or two, when I am stressed and unable to focus. The effect is not unlike arriving home and shutting out the world after a long, stressful day. The songs and the musical style call up memories of being at a show, feeling relaxed and happy, and with a group of other people who are also relaxed, happy, and accepting. When I listen to a show that I physically attended—where I was

co-present—I find that the music easily triggers memories of being at that specific show. In that way, I am able to call upon the emotional “charge” of the show but at a distance of time and space. Group-level interaction ritual chains provide the materials needed for internal interaction ritual chains, which then in turn support group-level involvement. Interaction ritual chains thus function to link together groups, but also to link individuals to the group.

Discussion

The vignettes in this chapter collectively represent a chain of interaction rituals. Co-presence in the subway, in the venue, and after the show, paired with common mood and shared focus and a sense of boundedness, combined to create a stunning example of rhythmic and emotional entrainment with a clear use of symbols (the song and lyrics) and the generation of emotional energy. Collections of interaction ritual chains, according to Collins (2004), ultimately merge to create social structure, linking together individuals and groups to ultimately form society at the macro-level. Although deadheads are a meso-level entity, the behavior illustrated in these vignettes reveals continuity in the culture. “Not Fade Away,” or as abbreviated online, “NFA:” conveys a sense of durability, a promise that deadhead culture—and a love of *Grateful Dead* music—will continue, as it has for over 50 years. *Most* respondents told me that the culture would go on in some way, whether that meant that the music would continue to be played, that the *Grateful Dead* had launched a genre, or that the band would live on in the technological and social advancements in which it has been involved. Clearly, the lyrics serve as a symbol, imbued with meaning and emotional energy.

Although research can examine a group’s symbols and grasp, in a generic way, what those symbols mean, according to Collins (2004), truly *understanding* a culture’s interaction ritual chains requires experiencing how those symbols are created. Instead of looking at the

result (the symbol), research should instead begin “with interaction rituals and move forward, witnessing [first hand and over a long period of time] how the intensity and focus of the interaction generates the symbols to be used in subsequent interactions” (97). Such research is rare, he said, because it requires “[a]cquiring symbols from other people [in] a process that builds up over time, as one comes to *feel the membership resonances more deeply*” (Collins 2004:153; emphasis added). In other words, Collins (2004) advocated for emotional and bodily experience; in short, the sort of long-term, fully engaged participation in the culture that is characteristic of the participant observation conducted in this study. Understanding comes from experience. As one survey respondent advised: “If you haven’t been ‘down the rabbit hole’ with the music and the ‘heads, then you don’t know what you don’t know.”

Interlude 4 – Early Spring Shakedown

Built to last till time itself

Falls tumbling from the wall

Built to last till sunshine fails

And darkness moves on all

Build to last while years roll past

Like cloudscapes in the sky

Show me something built to last

Or something built to try

“Built to Last”

(Garcia and Hunter 1989:348-49)

It is late February 2013, a few hours before a Furthur concert at the 1st Bank Center in Broomfield, Colorado. The weather forecast warns of eight to twelve inches of snow, with winds up to 50 miles per hour. Despite the warm comfort of my hotel room, there is no question about heading to Shakedown Street: I will simply dress for it. I have a thermal undershirt tucked into the waistband of my heavy blue jeans, and I add a lime green wool sweater, pulling hiking boots over wool socks. I complete my “look” for the evening with a green alpaca “dancing bears” hooded jacket—purchased from a Shakedown Street vendor a year earlier—topped with a grey argyle earflap hat and colorful scarf.

A short car ride and drive across a muddy, half-empty parking lot later, I step out into 34-degree weather and a slight breeze that makes the air feel even colder. The gravel under my feet makes sharp crunching noises as I walk past rows of cars, toward Shakedown Street. Around

me, most people are dressed warmly, wearing jeans, jackets, hoods. Several people are wearing one of many in variations of my jacket, but in different colors and woven with different Grateful Dead symbols. This crowd is mostly populated by forty-ish men dressed in concert or tie-dye t-shirts, but the teenagers and young adults, and especially women, are wearing the type of clothing that can be purchased at fair trade stores: long skirts, natural material – and not very warm. A very tall—over 6 foot—A twenty-something young man who must be over six feet tall walks past me on the left, hands shoved in his pockets and hunched over into the wind. His long, black skirt has large, Grateful Dead-symbol patches sewn all over it, and it makes a heavy flapping sound that I associate with canvas snapping in the wind. His ball cap is turned backwards, the bill sitting over long, black dreadlocks that hang over his blue jean jacket. Heavy black shoes and blue jeans underneath his skirt show that he, like me, is prepared for the cold. On the back of his blue jean jacket is a modified stealie: the top of the skull is larger than usual and the lightning bolt inside of it is surrounded by flames. Whoever created this stealie used a popular photograph of Garcia looking over a pair of sunglasses that have slid down his nose: this stealie, therefore, has Garcia's eyes and sunglasses over skeletal teeth stretched into a wide grin. The image is at once disturbing and funny.

This weekend, as usual at this venue, Shakedown Street consists of a line of blue and white awnings stretched over EZ-ups running north and south on the east end of the parking lot. I can hear some vendors calling out to attract customers, and from nearby I catch a whiff of chicken cooking on a brazier. Otherwise, the air is frigid and without scent. An ancient wood-grain station wagon sits at the south end of the EZ-ups, its blue-grey paint old and powdery. On the cold ground alongside the wagon is a large blanket, or maybe two, in an area about six feet across and nine feet long. The blankets are piled with tie-dye t-shirts, patches, and other goods,

with no vendor is nowhere in sight. No one bothers the merchandise. Nearby, but in the walking path, sits a blue, overflowing 18 gallon Sterlite container. The lid leans against the side of the plastic box, propping up a piece of corrugated cardboard with hand lettering in black marker:

*THERE ARE TIMES WHEN
YOU GET HIT UPON
TRY HARD BUT YOU CANNOT GIVE
OTHER TIMES YOU'D GLADLY PART
WITH WHAT YOU NEED TO LIVE*

Below this quote from "Built to Last" (Garcia and Hunter 1989:348-49), and in smaller, green capital letters, the sign reads FREE ITEMS. People walk past as I stop to read the sign, and in the cold and frozen dirt the box looks forlorn. At the top of the pile and blocking my view of the rest of the contents is a threadbare cream-colored throw pillow that desperately needs washed and has a black smudge on one corner.

On my left a man and woman push an umbrella stroller with a young child that looks no more than a year old. Behind them a woman in a long skirt and lightweight jacket carries a slightly younger child on her hip; the child is wearing a tightly zipped pink hooded coat. Several people have dogs on leashes: I see a heavyset boxer and a Great Pyrenes. I have no idea where the dogs go when their owners go in to the show—if they go in, to the show. The Great Pyrenes, at least, is built for this cold.

Despite the cold and impending storm, Shakedown Street is bigger than the year before and retains its carnival-like atmosphere. People mill about, mingling and laughing in the cold. Many of the vendors have set up their tables or tents in front of their cars, often with cardboard boxes of goods stashed in them. In this cold, the alpaca jackets, as well as Himalayan hats,

scarves, and mittens are popular. The crowd is not as dense as the year before, but there are enough slow-moving people in this small area surrounded by vendors that the crowd creates some warmth. Nearby, a bundled-up vendor lifts the hanging at the back of the EZ-up to retrieve merchandise, revealing a van with its doors open. The insubstantial-looking canvas hanging had been blocking the wind, if only slightly, and but the burst of cold air allowed through when it is lifted is noticeable. The next vendor doesn't have a tent: just a mini-van with its back end open, and a table in front of the open doors. There are two adults and a toddler in the back of the mini-van, all bundled up in coats. I feel as though I am looking into someone's living room: the woman is pulling a bright yellow stocking cap onto the head of the struggling child. A Coleman propane stove with the flimsy aluminum windbreak up sits near the open mini-van gate, heating a large pot with steam wafting out of the top. I consider stopping to see if they would sell me a bowl of whatever is warm inside that pot, but the scene behind the table is homey and private, despite the public view.

Next to them a vendor is selling a five-inch-diameter patch that I like: a stealie with a brightly colored mandala in its forehead. Another is a multicolored skeleton with jagged, lightning-like hair and a wide mouth that appears to be either laughing or screaming. It is wearing a red, white, and blue top hat. As I dig through patches, a brown coat and blue jeans enter my peripheral vision and, glancing up, I ask the vendor "how much?" He tells me that the large patches are \$25, and then taps piles of increasingly smaller patches that decrease in price until they are \$5 and \$1 each. I nod, thank him, and move on. Twenty-five dollars is a little steep for one patch. A few yards and several vendors down Shakedown Street, at a double canopy (two EZ-ups side by side), another vendor has the same patches, mixed in with water bong, jewelry,

and other things Grateful Dead. I ask the middle-aged man in a blue zip-up hoodie the price for the mandala stealie, but he doesn't know.

"I just jumped on the bus—I'm helping out a friend here," he explains, and then hesitates. "I think they're five bucks."

He rushes off to help someone else as I consider. I could give him \$5, but then again, taking advantage of vendors is hardly "kind." When he finishes talking to the other customer and comes back to me, I ask:

"Are you sure these are \$5?" I jerk my thumb toward the distant vendor. "'Cause they were \$25 down the way."

He looks startled and freezes, uncertain.

"Maybe should ask your friend," I suggest.

The owner ducks under the canvas side hanging, returning from his car, as I speak. My new friend yells across the space to get the price and is told that the patches are \$20. The owner pauses, then, friendly: smiling, but busy.

"But use your judgement," he tells his friend. "You can give people a deal."

My new friend turns back to me and repeats that the patch is \$20. I had picked up another interesting patch while I waited and have been holding them side-by-side, considering which one I want to buy.

". . . or two for \$35," he finishes, smiling. My response is immediate.

"Sold." As my numb fingers dig for money in my pocket, the owner comes to stand next to his helpful friend.

"Well, she's honest, isn't she?" the vendor says to his new salesperson.

He really doesn't sound surprised.

Chapter 7 - Are You Kind? Deadhead Identity

Think this through with me

Let me know your mind

Wo-oah, what I want to know

Is are you kind?

“Uncle John’s Band”

(Garcia and Hunter 1969:102-03)

Introduction

It is July 2015, and Chicago streets near Soldier Field are bustling with people wearing tie-dye concert t-shirts dating back to at least the 1980’s. I walk past hustlers selling knock-off concert shirts out of large cardboard boxes for less than half the price of the licensed shirts in the stadium; most passers-by ignore them: these men are not deadheads. I struggle to figure out how I can tell that they are not deadheads. In an overwhelmingly Caucasian crowd, each of these men—and they are selling shirts in several locations—are black. They are all wearing the t-shirts they are trying to sell, which is also unusual, though not unheard-of. And they are brazen rather than furtive: they call out, hold the t-shirts high in the air, and speak directly to passers-by. Halfway down the block I stop for lunch at a sandwich shop. I strike up a conversation with the young man making my sandwich and learn that he has never seen the streets so crowded, even on game days. He tells me that he has seen “some weird things” since the deadheads arrived and expects to see more. Outside of the sandwich shop a tie-dye clad young man tosses a blue duffel bag down in the cement-bordered patch of dirt beneath a scrawny tree, then lays out several styles of t-shirt. Unlike the men down the block, he only has for sale what he can easily

pack up and carry away if police appear. He has chosen an area that is well-traveled, but off to the side; not a bottlenecked intersection. His body language is not furtive, but he also simply spreads out his shirts rather than calling out to others. He is seen only by those who are looking. I walk up to the edge of his collection and study the different shirts, striking up a conversation with him and asking questions. I learn that he has dyed or printed the shirts himself. I settle on a shirt depicting a Tree of Life that cleverly forms a peace symbol. One by one, the crowd grows, until he is surrounded by more tie-dye-clad passers-by and then is sold out, walking away with his deflated duffel bag. It is possible that he has more shirts stashed in the trunk of a nearby car, in which case he will refill his bag and repeat the scene elsewhere, ever mobile, never weighed down by a large cardboard box.

T-shirts are important. I notice that as people come into my line of vision on the sidewalk, I scan their t-shirts before I look at their faces. Many of them are concert shirts: the Grateful Dead, The Furthur, Jerry Garcia Band, Phil Lesh and Friends, and others. Some of the older ones are well-worn and full of holes. I am not the only one: this scanning of shirts is happening everywhere, and I have seen it on the subway, in hotel lobbies, and in restaurants. Everyone is smiling and talking to strangers readily. The shirts seem to function as both a personal biography and a sign of shared values and understanding: an announcement that the person wearing that shirt is safe. As a child, I was told that if I was in trouble, I should look for a police officer as an emblem of safety. Here it is tie-dye and deadhead culture that signals the values of safety, acceptance, and a willingness to help others.

T-shirts and their warmer counterparts, sweatshirts, have become a common medium for expressing identity in American society. We wear these shirts to express school pride (sometimes signaling allegiance to a school sports team), as part of a work uniform, to celebrate a favorite

movie or quote, or as a prize for completing a competition. Sometimes t-shirts track personal history: for years, I held on to a garish yellow t-shirt I bought on vacation as a child that proclaimed: “My mom and dad went to Durango and all I got was this lousy t-shirt.” I wore holes in it. Sometimes t-shirts signal belonging; other times they mean nothing at all. Clearly the source of the t-shirts sold at the 50th anniversary shows in Chicago mattered: many, if not most passers-by ignored the men selling knock-off concert t-shirts (though I would see two of these shirts in Kansas at the *Meetup at the Movies* the following spring—and I felt judgmental). After the last show began on the third day, the knock-offs were being sold for \$5, and I later saw one of the sellers walking away from the venue with a pile of them slung over his shoulder. Yet *deadheads* selling shirts, even with pirated material, sold their merchandise quickly, usually out of duffel bags or the backs of cars: mobile and, if not furtive, at least careful. Police have been known to confiscate entire piles of t-shirts from deadheads.

I am reminded of a scene from a *Further* concert several years earlier: the section I sat in was full of families, several of them occupying 7-10 consecutive seats. Many of these fans left their seats during intermission, leaving a few people standing and chatting in place. At the end of my row, a middle-aged “dad” struck up a conversation with his counterpart in the row below him. They discussed past venues and shows, discovering that they had crossed paths in the past—a very common occurrence when two deadheads talk. Then the first man turned to a college-aged young man near him, touched him on the arm to get his attention, and then said to his conversation partner: “this is my son.” The son and the second man shook hands. The first man waved his hand at the old white concert t-shirt his son was wearing and explained, proudly: “I gave him my t-shirt.” In passing along his shirt, this father not only passed along his love of

Grateful Dead music, but also symbolically “marked” his son as being a legacy member of the culture.

As a long-time student of Kansas State University, a popular agricultural, land-grant college in an agricultural state, I know the power of branded clothing. When the K-State football team plays a home game, the town “bleeds purple” and the parking lots, streets around the stadium, and bars fill with fans pouring in from around the state. Generations of “Wildcats” come to these games, take photographs of their families in the stadiums, and then proudly post these to social media. Like deadheads, Wildcats congregate in the parking lots for hours before the game, lounging under EZ-ups, playing music, and drinking (though marijuana smoke is notably absent from Snyder Stadium). Some drive campers and RVs to the games and camp in the parking lots.

K-State football fans and deadheads are not the only large groups of people to coalesce around a distinct culture. Gardner (2004), for example, wrote about the *portable communities* that form among bluegrass music festival attendees. For 26 years, the “Parrot Heads” (Jimmy Buffett fans), have held yearly “Meeting of the Minds” events (Parrot Heads in Paradise, Inc. 2017), and “Juggalos,” fans of the band *Insane Clown Posse*, gather for an annual music festival that includes camping and socializing (juggalogathering.com N.d.). However, deadheads are particularly interesting, because the culture has shown remarkable longevity and durability despite the waning of the cultural environment in which it developed—the hippie counterculture, the death of several band members, and the break-up of the band in 1995.

Defining *deadhead* is not as straightforward as one might think. Not everyone who likes the *Grateful Dead* or associated jam-band music is a deadhead, although having an interest in the music appears to be a prerequisite for claiming the identity. Becoming a fan is colloquially

referred to as “getting on the bus,” and just as one can get on the bus, one can also get off. Some survey respondents in this study indicated that they stopped going to *Dead*-related shows after Garcia died in 1995; other fans attended every show they could manage and remained an active part of the culture. The definition of deadhead provided in Chapter 4 is vague: an individual who “loves – and draws meaning from – the music of the *Grateful Dead* and the experience of *Dead* shows, and builds community with others who feel the same way” (Schenk and Silberman 1994:60). What *does* it mean to be a deadhead? Academic *Grateful Dead* literature has approached this question by collecting demographic data, identifying behaviors specific to the community, and by considering identity in relation to the group. Demographic data, touched on in Chapters 1 and 2, will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter: what follows the next section is an overview of how previous work has dealt with deadhead behavior and group identity.

Deadhead Literature

Behaving like a deadhead

Attending shows is an important part of deadhead identity, although doing so does not necessarily imply membership in the community. Many deadheads claim, though, that an individual cannot “get it” (understand the music and the culture) without attending a show (Adams 2012, Mattison 2012, Kolker 2012). Deadheads generally engage in the following common behaviors: self-identifying as a deadhead, attending shows (especially over a long period of time), traveling long distances to attend shows, talking to others about the band, paying particular attention to song lyrics, calling the *Grateful Dead* telephone hotline to find out about show dates and tickets (prior to the internet, which replaced the phone system), and talking in particular ways about show quality, locations, dates, travel to and from venues, and people with

whom they have interacted (Adams 2012, Lehman 2000, Mattison 2012). Behaving like a deadhead means that individuals are involved in “creating, enacting, and negotiating a shared identity” or *membering* (Dollar 2007). Lehman (2000) interpreted these activities as a melding of self-concept (beliefs and feelings about one’s self) and popular music through ego-extension (extending one’s self to other people, groups, and things).

When a deadhead engages in behaviors specific to deadhead culture, according to Adams (2012), that individual shows, in deadhead parlance, *deadication*. Intentionally modifying the spelling of words—not misspelling, but altering words—to reflect deadhead culture is not unusual: in addition to *deadication*, for example, fans in online forums might praise something as *grate* instead of *great*. Changes in language use signify membership in the community. Speech acts are especially important for creating and maintaining an identity within this community and can be categorized as *pre-show* communication and *show talk*. Pre-show communication occurs outside of the show environment: deadheads use terminology and song lyrics in everyday conversation to reinforce a sense of belonging. For example, the title for this chapter includes the words “are you kind;” a line from the song “Uncle John’s Band” (Garcia and Hunter 1969:102-03). The word *kind* has a double meaning in this context: it refers both to adhering to deadhead values, which stress a concern for others, and to drug use. When marijuana has been included as ingredient in food products—also called edibles—then that food is kind. One might buy kind brownies or cookies on the lot, for example. If someone has had a bad day, they might say “nothin’ left to do but smile, smile, smile,” calling upon lyrics from “He’s Gone” (Garcia and Hunter in Dodd 1972:192-93) to imply a sense of resignation to the vagaries of life and a determination to make the best of it. Although I agree that pre-show talk constitutes a specific way of incorporating speech into the deadhead experience, Dollar’s (2007) use of the prefix

“pre-” to describe this category of talk is misleading and implies that this form of talk only occurs prior to a show. In my experience, some deadheads engage in this form of talk on a daily basis and across multiple forms of communication, including online forums (see Chapters 6 and 7 for more discussion on how deadheads use language in this way).

Show talk, on the other hand, focuses on show specifics like song order, song quality, band members, and often a comparison of songs between shows, venues, and decades. When fans speculate on what song the band will open with that evening, for example, they are *calling the opener* (Dollar 2007). For Dollar (2007), show talk occurs in the parking lot and inside the venue, and allows strangers to share common cultural experiences using a shared vocabulary. Like pre-show talk, in my experience, show talk can happen anywhere. Although fans would not “call the opener” for a past show—such a question would be moot—some members of the community do debate show quality, song order, and so on. For that segment of the community, there *is* such a thing as the best “Dark Star” or most energetic “Shakedown Street.” In this form of talk, fans employ a specialized vocabulary to share meaning. According to Dollar (2007), show talk allows participants to “tell their individualized accounts of communal myths,” thus emphasizing membership “without ignoring individuality” (182). If we say, for example, that someone “hit it out of the ball park” or “hit a home run,” we understand that the speaker is using baseball lingo to indicate a major success. When the speaker gets involved in a discussion about batting averages and comparing performances between players or ball parks, the focus is far more technical: the latter is the realm of show talk. Both pre-show and show talk reinforce a sense of belonging among members of that culture. Non-members are not able interpret the communication; thus, to fans, both pre-show and show talk are “heard as cultural, as instances of communication in which participants hear themselves and others as communicating *like*

deadheads” (Dollar 2007:178-81, *emphasis added*). Deadheads rely on insider knowledge to correctly decode conversations: Dollar (2007) concluded that deadheads call on a “code of membership” embedded within the communication they use to establish both personal and shared identity (185-88).

Deviant deadheads

Although deviance, *per se*, is not a focus of this study, the fact that deadheads are different from mainstream (dominant) culture is an important part of what makes deadhead culture what Merton (1987) called *strategic research materials* (SRMs). SRMs are fields of opportunity to study new phenomenon or, as is true in this case, a “stubborn problem” such as social cohesion (Merton 1987:10). Like the hippie movement from which the *Grateful Dead* and deadhead culture evolved, being a deadhead carries a stigma. Deviance only exists when the dominant community labels an action as deviant; therefore, understanding cohesion within a stigmatized culture also tells us something about how social cohesion between members of that culture and the dominant culture became degraded. That stigma was less in evidence at the time I conducted my research, but its echo was still present. Colleagues and friends began asking me if I had “become a deadhead yet” once I began attending shows, for example, the question always paired with a smile or laugh. The was message clear: becoming part of a deviant community was amusing, and it was seen as “other.” Most likely, no harm or derision was meant, but I doubt my colleagues realized that their questions were telling me something about the how deadhead culture is still viewed.

In the late 1980’s, when much of the research for the articles on the *Grateful Dead* cited here was conducted, the media typically depicted deadheads as “lazy, unwashed throwbacks to the 60’s who used illegal drugs, dressed unconventionally, and valued collective experiences

more than material success” (Adams 2003:n.p.). The result was overwhelmingly negative media coverage (Adams 2003) even though most deadheads did not fit that stereotype (Jennings 2000). Jennings (2000) found that the primary reason fans reported for attending shows was the music, followed closely drug use, friends, and curiosity. Although I will not pretend that drug and alcohol use do not draw people to the culture—drug use is widespread at shows and encouraged by values and availability—the culture is not as “stereotypically drug oriented” (Epstein and Sardiello 1990:246) as it is often portrayed—neither drug use nor drunkenness are required or even expected of fans.

Individuals seeking freedom in self-expression and a sense of belonging were also drawn to the culture *because* of the stigmatized nature of the deadhead identity. Since the culture values tolerance and self-expression, fans “felt free to be themselves, [and] intense bonding occurred,” Jennings (2000) explained. Because deadheads tend to be friendly, group members made “new deadheads feel they were part of a larger whole” (207-08). In contrast to the acceptance fans found within the deadhead community, in his study of newspaper coverage of *Grateful Dead* shows, Paterline (2000:185) concluded that communities that hosted shows were often quite unhappy about the deadhead presence:

. . . what many community members feared or disliked most about Deadheads was simply the lifestyle itself. Many could not understand why someone would devote a large part of his or her life to the following of a rock band. To them, Deadheads were freaks who ignored America’s values of monetary success and status. They were seen as a threat to the American middle-class way of life and to the general norms of community.

Ironically, this negative labeling and sanctioning by communities and towns had the opposite effect from what was likely intended. Instead of controlling deadhead behavior, stereotypes presented in the media made deadhead values so clear that the *deadhead identity*—not dominant

values—was instead reinforced (Jennings 2000). When parents “discredit[ed] Deadhead values while legitimizing their own,” Paterline (2000:195) wrote, their children rebelled.

Paterline (2000) vividly represented the deadhead rejection of capitalism through the stereotype of the ragged deadhead, living in a VW bus painted in bright, psychedelic patterns, traveling the country selling homemade goods (primarily food and clothing, often violating health codes as well as tax and copyright law), and earning just enough to attend a show and “beat it on down the line” (Fuller 1967:13-14). Some fans became “vendors” who went “on tour,” enduring hardship to follow the band from venue to venue, driving for hours, skipping showers and meals, and sleeping in vehicles or on the ground. Odd as it may appear to an outsider, this lifestyle created a shared experience and fostered feelings of community while simultaneously offering an escape from the materialism and alienation of “real” life. Capitalist values were abandoned in favor of deadhead values like “fairness, kindness, and general concern for one’s fellow beings.” In short, vendors were expected to “be kind” (Sheptoski 2000:175). Vendors developed a sense of community and self-expression where the goal was:

. . . making it to the next venue, enjoying the music, establishing connections with others who shared similar values, and placing themselves in a world full of rich and positive meaning. Within this subculture economic relations were modified or restructured by social relations. (Sheptoski 2000:180)

From the viewpoint of the dominant culture, then, deadheads engaged in strange behaviors, valued the irresponsible, illegal practice of using drugs, and eschewed the stability of standardized labor and interpersonal relationships in favor of an uncertain, nomadic life within a subculture that promoted the breaking of both legal and social rules. The deadhead culture appears, therefore, to be quite deviant.

Membership in the Deadhead Community

Although the preceding section on deviance builds a strong case for deadhead behavior as an expression of a distinct and deviant culture, it could also be argued that this distinctiveness, and its implied cohesiveness, is externally imposed. Perhaps, for example, going to shows, using drugs, and going on tour as a vendor are youthful responses to the frustrations with the dominant culture; activities that function as a release valve, if you will, that once spent, binds the individual more tightly to the dominant social order (Martin 1979). If deadheads only appear to have a distinct culture because their behavior seems so different from the dominant culture—if we have in fact ascribed a cultural identity because it is an easy way to categorize the phenomenon—then the apparent cohesion would be no more than an assumption about the nature of reality, or a pseudo-fact (Merton 1987). Kolker's (2012) study sprang from just such a question, when a college professor challenged him to answer whether deadheads were simply a youthful fad, or if they constituted a distinct culture. He concluded that the community does constitute a discrete culture due to (1) its ability to “withstand . . . attempts to absorb it into American culture,” (2) a sense of shared experience that one only comprehends by attending shows, and (3) a shared set of values that included tolerance for the differences of others, even when behaviors varied widely within the group (184).

Although the deadhead community functions as a cohesive community, its members are not identical. Sardiello (1998), using research conducted in the late 1980's (corresponding to the upswing in *Grateful Dead* popularity in the 1980's), identified three categories of deadhead identity. The *hardcore deadhead* (the smallest group): is an individual who employs a trans-situational deadhead identity. The hardcore deadhead, for example, might wear tie-dye to work, spend significant time with a deadhead friend group, and have their XM radio tuned to the

Grateful Dead station. The *new deadhead* is a younger person who entered the culture as a result of the band's upsurge in popularity in 1987. Finally, the *stable deadhead* (the largest group), participates in the culture consistently but occasionally; for example, attending shows when they are nearby, but not going on tour. The stable deadhead maintains a distinction between shows and professional life. Members of this last group may or may not identify themselves as being deadheads, but often find ways to reconcile personal and social identity by incorporating deadhead values into everyday life. Identity is thus "dual," according to Sardiello (1998): the deadhead maintains a personal identity that consists of *subjective* self-identification at the micro level, with a trans-situational sense of self, and a situationally dependent *social* identity that emerges from macro-level interaction and the individual's treatment of self as an object (Sardiello 1998). Thus, a tension between personal and social identity is evident—especially for stable deadheads (Sardiello 1998). Jennings (2000) noted similar differences among deadheads, but characterized them in terms of deviance and socialization: *beginners* have just attended their first show or have begun listening to the music; they often have mentors—generally a friend or family member—that orient them to the culture. *Occasional deviants* understand the scene but are not completely involved, and *regulars* see the deadhead identity as a major part of their lives, making show attendance a priority.

Throughout this research project I have attempted to shift back and forth between immersing myself in the culture and critically evaluating my findings. In comparing my experiences to those documented in the existing literature, I noticed several behavioral consistencies that appear to connect identity to social cohesion. Deadheads form a remarkably homogenous group in terms of race and class, and they possess a distinct culture with widely shared values, norms, and language, behaving in ways that seem to reinforce group membership.

Yet despite these similarities, deadheads participate in the culture in different ways, and more importantly, they vary in the degree to which they bring their deadhead behaviors into daily life. Identity-work, alone, is generally not sufficient to develop a sense of belonging to a group. Although some respondents indicated that they became *Grateful Dead* fans by listening to the music alone, prior to attending a show, by far the more common experience is the reverse: cohesion requires group experience and not a simple statement of identification. Yet the converse is also true: some fans attend shows but state that they are not deadheads. This chapter explores the contribution of identity to social cohesion.

Identity Theory: Overview

Identity theory grew out of the symbolic interactionist theoretical arm of sociology in the 1960's, a field of thought that owes its development to theorists like George Herbert Mead, Charles Horton Cooley, and Erving Goffman (Stets and Burke 2003, Stryker and Burke 2000). The symbolic interactionist perspective argues that because humans can only know reality through sense perceptions that are filtered through their own neurological activity, we have no way of knowing if another person's conception of reality is the same as our own. To function in society, then, we work together to arrive at an agreement about the nature of reality: symbolic interactionists and scholars more generally call this agreement intersubjectivity: a state in which we agree upon the nature of the world around us and act appropriately. Actors accomplish this negotiation through symbolic exchanges involving, for example, speech and body language. We learn to use and interpret these symbols through socialization, but because we can never truly know what the "other" is thinking, we rely on what we can perceive. The social self emerges through interaction, with socialization functioning as an ongoing, recurrent process that occurs throughout one's life-span. Key to this process is that it is reciprocal and often concurrent: one

person communicates and the second interprets and acts accordingly, then the first person interprets the second person's response and acts accordingly, and so on. The uncertainty inherent in this process results in actors constantly attempting to gauge how the other person judges their performance, based not just on what they perceive from others, but also how they judge themselves, so that they can alter their performance as necessary to create a successful interaction. This interaction will become more clear later in this chapter, in my discussion of Burke's Perceptual control model. This interactive process is complicated by the fact that human activity occurs within different situations, with different requirements for action and different hierarchical relationships between persons involved in the interaction. For example, a 20-year-old woman may be a daughter, a college student, an employee, and may go out drinking on Friday nights. Each role or situation has different norms and values, actors with varying degrees of authority, and requires different responses from that 20-year-old. Making the mistake of bringing bar-room behaviors into the workplace, for example, could be disastrous. Taken together, the following assumptions underlie identity theory: (1) reality is interpreted and negotiated, (2) human interaction consists of an exchange of symbols and interpreted meanings, (3) individuals work to adjust their behavior to collaborate with others, based on how they think others judge them, and (4) behavioral expectations change when the individual moves between situations or contexts. Rather than seeing identity as a stable representation of who a person "is," then, identity theory instead conceives of identity as a set of expectations attached to roles that an individual moves in and out of as they move between situations (Stets and Burke 2003).

Within Sociology, theorists have taken several approaches to identity theory. I employ a range of approaches that speak to the macro-, meso-, and micro-levels of sociological analysis and that complement each other, especially in relation to deadhead behavior. I begin with

Sheldon Stryker ([1980] 2002), who examines the ways in which social structure influences the development of society, and, by extension, individuals. Around the same time as Stryker (Stets and Burke 2003), George McCall and J. L. Simmons ([1966] 1978) focused on the reciprocal influence between the social structure and the individual. Finally, Peter Burke (Burke and Stets 2009) delved deeply into the mechanisms of symbolic interactionism at the micro-level, developing a processual model to illustrate how interaction and identity function within the human organism. Together, these varied approaches to identity explain the ways in which identity develops and maintains cohesion within the deadhead culture.

Foundations: Social Structure and Identity

One of the early identity theorists (Stets and Burke 2003), Stryker laid the theoretical groundwork for a dialectical understanding of the relationship between identity and society. Stryker ([1980] 2002) asserted that human beings have an innate need to classify the world around them to make sense of their surroundings, the roles they need to take on, and the behavior of others. In the process of classification, we develop (1) categories and (2) sets of expectations that delineate the boundaries for each category. A set of expectations includes not only behavior, but also the distribution of social resources—like money, health care, and education—based on category characteristics—like race, class, and gender. Taken together, the result is a *social structure* that consists of “patterned regularities that characterize human interaction,” which are taught through social interaction (socialization) (Stryker [1980] 2002:65). Social structure then influences the placement of individuals into categories and enforces expectations, regulating the possibilities for interaction between individuals: only certain types of people and certain types of relationships can exist within a given social structure (Stryker [1980] 2002). There may, for example, be room in the social structure for a stay-at-home *mother*, but not for a stay-at-home

father, unless social expectations change. Membership in a category affects structural realities at the individual level: military veterans, for example, because they must use Veteran's Agency medical centers for health care, are more likely to encounter other veterans (Stryker ([1980] 2002). Likewise, the availability, geography, and cost of a college education function to drive a relatively homogenous group of people together on college campuses. Social structure thus influences the creation of groups, group membership, and meaning-creation for those groups.

Groups, for Stryker ([1980]2002), are “subsets” of “patterned interactions” or “networks of interaction” where individuals are more likely to interact with each other than with outsiders, self-identify as group members, and believe that they are dependent on each other to achieve the group's goals (68). Like the social structure, groups are themselves composed of “structures of positions and roles” held by group members (Stryker [1980] 2002:66, 68). Social structure thus has a great deal of influence on the creation and membership of groups, interaction between group members, and meaning-creation for those groups. These networks of patterned interaction become not only groups, but through patterned interaction between groups, they become communities, and, ultimately constitute the social structure itself (Stryker [1980] 2002).

Deadhead Culture and the Formation of a Homogenous Group

Deadhead culture represents a strikingly homogenous group, and Stryker's theory offers insight into how the culture came to be that way. Demographically, deadheads are overwhelmingly white, from middle-class backgrounds, have at least some college education, and are somewhat more likely to be male (Sardiello 1994, Lehman 2000, Adams 2012). As noted in Chapter 2, the fact that deadheads have no central organization means that we have no reliable source for demographic deadhead data and therefore have no idea how large the community may be. Based on observations from face-to-face and online participant observation (for example, the

official *Grateful Dead* Facebook page has nearly two million followers), and assuming that a percentage of show attendees would *not* describe themselves as deadheads, I estimate that deadheads number in the hundreds of thousands. Survey data collected by Sardiello (1994), Lehman (2000), and Adams (2012) as well as my research, therefore, represent a mere drop in the bucket in terms of potential samples. Table 1 compares sample sizes from relevant research that collected demographic data.

Table 1. Comparison of Sample Sizes Among Studies Collecting Demographic Information

Study	Year(s) Demographic Data Collected	Sample Size	Location
Sardiello (1994)	1988	n=45	Shakedown Street
Lehman (2000)	1993	n=588	Shakedown Street
Adams (2012)	1998	n=6000	Inside venue: touring with and working for the band, conducted surveys for an entire Furthur tour.
Smith (2017)	2013-2016	n=125	Mixed – Shakedown Street, inside venues, interview locations

Although the collected data may represent only a small portion of the community, participant observation confirms that the culture is, indeed, overwhelmingly white, middle-class, with at least some post-secondary education, and is somewhat more likely to be male; demographic characteristics which are also in line with those reported of the hippie movement from which the *Grateful Dead* emerged (see Chapter 4). Although I did not directly collect information on class and education level, most my respondents reported occupations that would likely result in a middle-class income and require some college or trade school. Tommy, for example, is a home health and long-term care nurse who has also worked in hospice care. William is an acupuncturist and herbalist, and Jennifer is a social worker. A former information

technology specialist, Howard turned to land surveying and plans to retire, purchase land, and become an organic farmer. Melissa is a 21-year-old college student.

Education

Most of my respondents encountered the *Grateful Dead* through friendships, and college friendships were often influential in introducing respondents to the *Grateful Dead* or for reinforcing an existing connection.

I am sitting with Chris and his traveling companion on the veranda of a bar and restaurant in Morrison, Colorado. The former taper's light tenor voice is difficult to hear over the blaring music, and his brown eyes are friendly above his salt-and-pepper goatee and mustache. He first encountered the Grateful Dead in high school, he tells me, when he heard "Truckin'" on the radio, but was not impressed. A friend then introduced him to "Sugar Magnolia," which he found more interesting, but it wasn't until he got to college that he realized that his friends were deadheads.

"So over the next couple years," Chris explains, "I started listening to the Dead, and somebody would get a new tape, and we'd share it; and everybody would hear it . . ."

"So I was exposed to it by the people I hung out with, who were deadheads, and knew more deadheads, and pretty soon all the people I was hanging out with were the same kind of people. It was as much musical as it was cultural, because the type of person I was attracted to was the type of person that listened to the Grateful Dead. I didn't choose to become a deadhead; it was just the type of person I was."

Chris describes a kind of reinforcement and winnowing effect in his network of friendships. He was first drawn to people who shared values – what these were, he does not identify. Those friends were also be deadheads, who exposed him to the music over several years. By the end of

his explanation, not only does Chris say that he likes the music, he also claims that culture as being central to his sense of identity, and one that persisted long after the end of his college years.

Chris's story—of being exposed to the music by acquaintances—is common, although sometimes the setting and the players are different. Some respondents were exposed to the music in high school, and some directly by parents or indirectly by raiding their parents' record collection. College campuses, however, as discussed in Chapter 4, played a large role in the spread of *Grateful Dead* music. A friend who had been raised in a working-class family, who had not attended college, told me that she knew that the *Grateful Dead* existed but never considered being part of the culture, because she was “too busy working for a living.” We can conclude—returning to Stryker's theory—that being the “type of person” who goes to college, as defined by membership in one or more social categories, increases the likelihood of encountering *Grateful Dead* fans and subsequently becoming part of the culture.

Demographic characteristics: race/ethnicity

Race and ethnicity are inextricably tied up together in the perceptions and expectations that others have for an individual that encourage or limit opportunity. The deadhead community is overwhelmingly white: the only persons of color I encountered at my first show were event staff, a situation that held true for most of the shows I attended. More persons of color attended the California and Chicago anniversary shows, but still in extremely low numbers, and most were either with a white partner or group of friends. One of my survey respondents went out of his way to contact me directly, explaining that as a black deadhead he thought it was important for me to hear from him. His responses, however, made no mention of race and, in his survey answers, at least, he did not indicate that his experience was different. Of the past research

studies, only Sardiello (1994) thought to make note of race or ethnicity, and then he limited his comments to the fact that all his respondents were white and that this was characteristic of the community. Race and ethnicity data, therefore, is limited to my study (see Table 2).

Table 2. Respondent Race/Ethnicity, 2013-2016

Race/Ethnicity	Percent
White/Caucasian	94
Hispanic	2
Other	2
Native American	1
Black	1

One of the virtues of deadhead culture is a pervasive sense of acceptance for everyone. I will not pretend to speak authoritatively for minority populations; I can only speak to what I observed: in plain terms: what I saw looked inclusive. My observation echoes Shenk and Silbmerman’s (1994) interviews with “Deadheads of Color” for their *Grateful Dead* dictionary, *Skeleton Key*. The forces at work that make this culture so overwhelmingly white *appear* to be structural, not a matter of deadhead ideology.

When the band first formed in 1965, white median household income (adjusted to 2015 dollars) was nearly double that of black households (\$53,000 and \$28,000, respectively). Twenty-two years later, when “Touch of Grey” (recorded in 1982 (Dodd 2005)) was released as a studio recording in 1987 and the band’s popularity increased, that discrepancy remained stable, with black households earning \$25,000 less. When the 50th anniversary shows were held in 2015, that gap had increased by \$1,000 (with white household income at roughly \$63,000, compared to \$37,000 for black households) (Proctor, Semega, and Kollar 2016). On average, then, black households would have had less money available for discretionary spending on concert tickets

and travel, let alone the money to send children to college, where many white students were exposed to the culture. Household income is only one measure of racial inequality, but it serves to make my point: a difference in the distribution of resources based on membership in a racial category influenced individual chances of being a *type of person*—with respect to Stryker’s categories—with the opportunity to actively follow the *Grateful Dead*.

Not all white fans had endless supplies of money to use on tour, either; those that did were derisively labeled “Trustafarians.” Many fans, including many of my respondents, worked, sometimes, hard, to save money for tickets. Fans hitchhiked, shared rides, or drove to shows; on tour, some worked odd jobs to earn the money to go on to the next venue. Others made food or goods (like t-shirts and necklaces) to sell or barter—creating the vending scene and Shakedown Street in the process (Sheptoski 2000). Without conducting research on racial aspects of interstate travel in the late 1960’s, it seems possible that access to jobs and transportation through hitchhiking or shared car rides would, like the money to buy tickets, be affected by inequalities like race and income. Cars would be in short supply in lower-income neighborhoods, and gasoline less likely to be used frivolously, making carpooling less likely. To hitchhike, the hitchhiker must (1) feel safe relying on strangers and (2) fit the expectation of “trustworthy hitchhiker:” during the intense racial unrest in the mid-1960’s and later, racial minorities may not have fit into those categories. Deadheads often camped while on the road or in and around the venue, sometimes for days in advance of the show. These campers would have to meet the expectations for “trustworthy camper” in strange towns, to be safe and welcome. The deadhead community itself may not have sought to exclude minorities, but as a consequence of the origin and behavior of the culture, structural issues may have, in fact, limited diversity within the community.

Demographic characteristics: gender

Gender identification in my study sample was roughly equal between men (54 percent) and women (46 percent), which would seem to indicate that men and women participate in the culture at a similar rate (although I included an *other* option on the survey, no respondents chose that option). However, going to the bathroom during set break at my first show revealed that although participation *in general* may be roughly equal, *show attendance* is not. As a woman, I am accustomed to long lines at public events, but at the 1st Bank Center in Broomfield, Colorado, it was men waiting in a line 20-30 deep for the men's restroom while women had no wait at all. At the time I was not prepared to conclude that more men than women attend *Grateful Dead* shows, reasoning that the developers of the newly completed venue might have anticipated the greater need for women, or that the concert was, perhaps, for some reason unusual. At that and each subsequent show, I routinely saw more male faces, particularly among the older crowd (not teens or 20's). The notable exceptions were the 50th anniversary shows, where gender was more egalitarian but still leaned male. Historically, as Figure 12 shows, concert attendance levels between men and women have skewed heavily toward men.

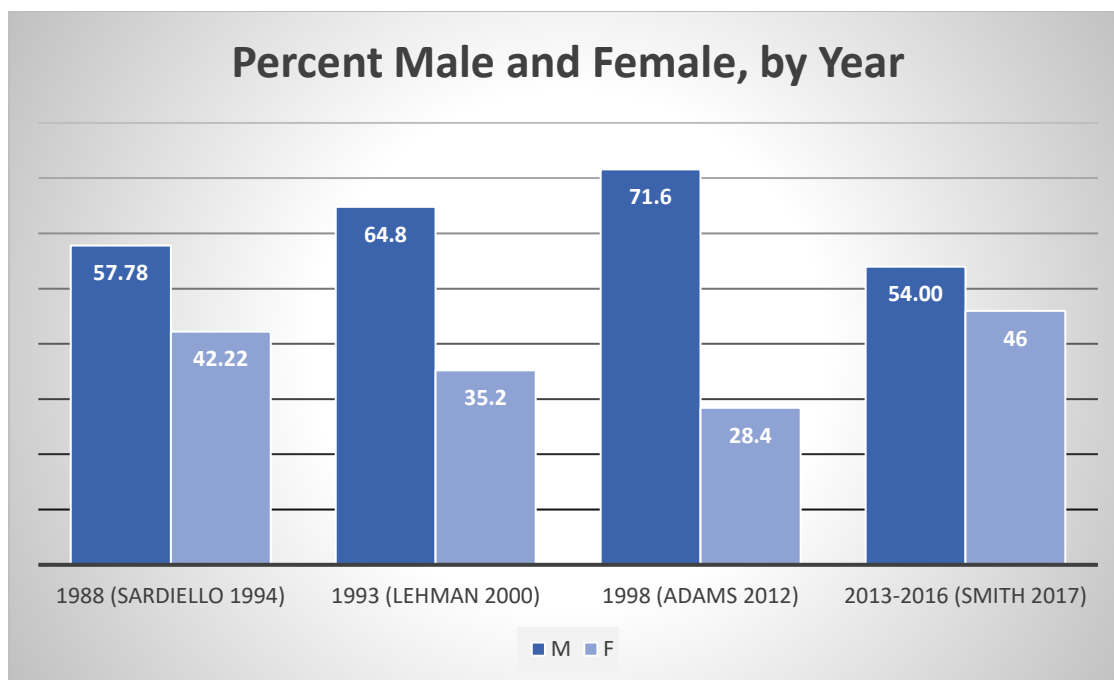


Figure 12. Comparison of Male and Female Show Attendance, by Percent

Although Figure 12 indicates that more men than women attended concerts over a 28-year period, from 1988 – 2016, the conclusions that can be drawn from this data are limited due to differences in research design. Studies conducted by Sardiello (1994), Lehman (2000), and Adams (2012) employed face-to-face paper surveys but were conducted at different locations: outside the venue (on Shakedown Street) (Sardiello and Lehman), and inside the venue as a survey commissioned by the band’s organization (Adams). As Table 1 (earlier in this chapter) shows, sample sizes varied wildly, from n=45 to n=6000. Larger sample sizes are generally considered to be more reliable, but Adams’ (2000) sample of n=6000 will have captured only individuals who were able to afford tickets to get inside the venue, eliminating fans who came to the venue without tickets, which is a common occurrence).

This gender disparity at the shows I attended had consequences for my research: more men than women were available to approach at concerts for unplanned interviews, and more men

than women agreed to meet with me for pre-planned interviews. As a result, I interviewed nearly three times as many men (74 percent) than women (26 percent). However, because my survey was deployed online, rather than face-to-face (as was the case for my interviews and in previous studies), I was not limited to individuals who attended shows, nor was I limited to collecting data over the short period of time allowed by an evening at a show. The 50th anniversary shows also rekindled interest in the *Grateful Dead*, and I made use of that interest by deploying my survey immediately before and after those shows. Thus, the three earlier surveys could be considered discrete snapshots in time, with my data a broader overview of the culture over a longer time frame (2013-2016). The combination of access and long time frame appears to have revealed a more egalitarian participation of women and men in deadhead culture.

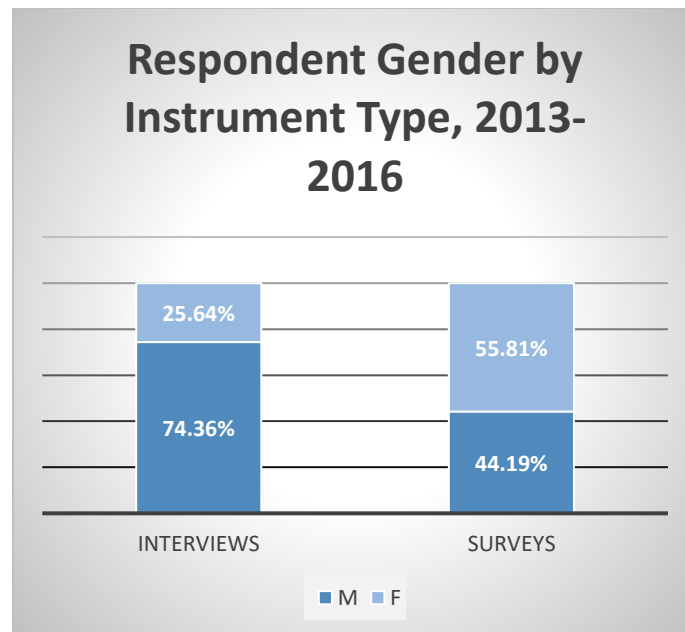


Figure 13. Respondent Gender by Instrument Type, 2013-2016

Figure 13 illustrates the difference in gender participation by instrument in my research: more men than women were available for on-site, face-to-face interviews, but approximately 10 percent more women than men completed the survey; the combination resulted in the nearly

egalitarian split in respondent gender, overall. By pairing my research with my observations and what others have reported, we could conclude that men and women appear to participate in the culture-at-large at similar rates, but that men are far more likely than women to attend shows.

Why might women attend shows in smaller numbers, if they participate in the culture at relatively similar rates? As with racial differences, I argue that membership in the “female” category influences women’s ability to attend shows. First, like racial minorities, female-ness is accompanied by economic penalty: from the mid 1960’s to present, women have consistently earned at least \$10,000 per year less than their male counterparts (Proctor, Semega, and Kollar 2016), which means that they are less likely to have money that can be spend on concert tickets and travel. Likewise, hitchhiking would be less safe for women than for men. More influential than that, however, are the expectations that accompany the category of “female,” particularly when paired with “wife” and “mother.”

Gendered responsibilities will change over the life span: younger people—particularly those in college, as many fans were in the 1980’s—are less likely to have obligations related to marriage and parenthood. Figure 14 compares the average age of respondents for the four studies.

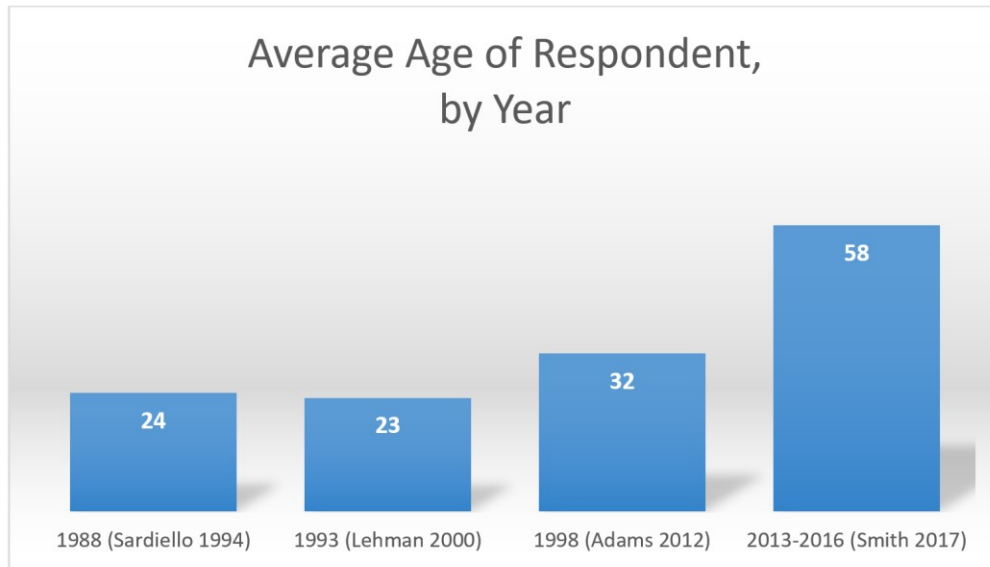


Figure 14. Average Age of Respondent, By Year

It is possible that the age differences shown in Figure 14 are an artifact of the manner in which samples were taken—perhaps, for example, Shakedown Street attracted a younger crowd, who were also more willing than older attendees to fill out a survey for Sardiello (1994) or Lehman (2000). Perhaps more older fans were able to afford tickets, and thus were more likely to be inside the venue for Adams’ (2012) survey. The online survey I deployed could be accessed by anyone, from anywhere, and at any time of day: in other words, at the respondent’s convenience. These factors undoubtedly made it easier for me to hear from older fans who might not be as likely to attend shows. However, the mean age of respondents barely changed from 1988 – 1993, with Sardiello (1994) reporting age ranges for respondents between 16 – 60 and Lehman (2000) between 14 – 49. The lower upper range of Lehman’s (2000) study likely compressed the mean, resulting in the one-year drop shown in the figure. Lehman’s (2000) 1993 survey and Adams’ (2012) 1998 bracket Garcia’s death, the earlier survey coming two years prior to his death and the latter, three years after. The rise in average age in Adams’ (2012) study, therefore, (with respondents ranging in age from 10 – 62, which both of the earlier studies), could reflect more

“committed” fans: those willing to attend after Garcia’s death, and those willing to spend the money to be inside the venue. Given the age range variations between the studies, the median may have provided a better comparison; however, the published studies did not provide that information. The median becomes even more important for the current study, which has a top age of 87 and thus the potential for skewed data. The median for this sample is 60.5, however, within just two and one-half years of the average age of 5. Although parents bring small children to shows and young people are also drawn to the culture on their own, the population, given available data, appears to be aging.

I asked survey respondents to explain why someone might “get off the bus,” or stop going on tour, participating in the culture, or both. A common theme in these responses could be summarized as “growing up and taking on adult responsibilities.” A 66-year-old male respondent wrote (edited for grammar):

Responsibilities, obligations. Getting married, having a kid, getting a good job, buying a house . . . these are all things that people identify with, and [they] are often willing to sacrifice their love for the Dead in order to have room in their lives for other things they love. If we are following our bliss, there are countless bus stops, and the door goes both ways.

Another man, a 61-year-old married father of two adult children explained that lives change, and when they change:

. . . they don't see room [for the Grateful Dead and touring]. When I was raising my kids I didn't go on the road anymore but I still listened and paid attention.

Of the female survey respondents, some pointed to Garcia’s death or a change in the culture—“too much darkness, not enough light,” one woman wrote—as reasons for people to stop touring.

A 70-year-old woman wrote “you stop listening and going to shows. I pretty much did that in my young adulthood when I had to ‘grow up’ and leave it behind.” Another echoed that people feel “pressured to ‘grow up’,” and yet another wrote that “people get serious jobs . . . jobs that drug test, [they have] kids, or [they] just get old and bitter,” and they stop going to shows.

Conflicting role identities

Two themes emerge from these statements: (1) the pressures of marriage, family, and employment may take precedence over or conflict with going to shows, and (2) a sense of moral or social obligation to leave going to shows behind in favor of exhibiting “adult” behavior. Again, we see the influence that Stryker’s categories have on human behavior. “Spouse,” “parent,” and “employee” all represent specific social locations within a structured society; each location is accompanied by equally specific expectations and meanings for that category (Stryker 1980[2002]). For Stryker ([1980]2002), that social location and attached expectations constitute a *role-identity* (60), which forms when the individual, along with others, agree on that individual’s position as a *social object*: in other words, when all important “others” agree that the individual is, temporarily at least, responsible to category expectations of a category and will be treated as such (Stryker 1980[2002]). When a woman becomes pregnant, expectations change: she is expected to maintain her health in favor of the baby, and her partner is expected to become more responsible in preparation for becoming a parent. At birth, expectations for behavior change yet again. Moving from one category (non-parent) to another (parent) requires an understanding that the categories are somehow different, and—because the social structure consists of individuals who enact interrelated categories—it requires that others agree to respond to the new parents as members of the new category. If, for example, an employer refuses to acknowledge a new mother’s status as a parent, the relationship between the employer and

mother will break down. Stryker ([1980]2002) argued that individuals are motivated to commit to particular role identities to be seen “being a particular kind of person” that fits expectations (61).

Individuals rarely occupy only a single role identity. An individual may be a “spouse” in one situation and an “employee” in another, and at some level simultaneously belong to both categories, raising the potential for those identities to come into conflict. As the individual moves from one situation to another, their role identity changes in response to environmental cues (arriving at home after work, for example) (Stryker 1980[2002]). The number of role identities someone claims is limited only by their investment in different structural relationships or categories. Thus, groups are not comprised of “whole” persons but instead “parts of persons,” (Stryker 1980[2002]:72). To grasp this concept, I imagine an individual walking through the world surrounded by shards of broken mirror of various sizes (levels of importance). The individual uses the mirror shards as needed to reflect to others what those others expect to see, rather than the complexity of roles and relationships that exist. Carrying around a “cloud” of role identities can, as noted above, create difficulties for the individual when two or more of those identities collide and conflict; for example, when an employee receives a phone call telling them that their child is sick and must be picked up from school, and must choose between the expectations of “employee” (stay at work) and “parent” (take care of child). When simultaneously active role identities come into conflict, one identity must take precedence. Stryker ([1980]2002:60) imagined these identities as ranked in a hierarchy of *salience*, where the most salient identity has the highest probability to be called upon and enacted, either “across a variety of situations, or alternatively across persons in a given situation” (Stryker and Burke

2000:286). The higher the salience of an identity, the more likely an individual is to behave in ways that meet behavioral expectations for that identity (Stryker and Burke 2000).

The salience hierarchy shows that Stryker recognized that individuals have an interior life and are not simply subject to social pressures. Humans also think about their own performances, judging their success. One's self identity, or *self*, is tied to the individual's reflection on and judgement of their own role performance. Self-reflection has "consequences for behavior" in terms of emotional responses, self-assessment, and ultimately, behavior modification (Stryker 1980[2002]:59). Identities become more salient when "role-based others"—that is, other people who interact with the individual in the performance of that identity—are "more tightly woven into an individual's social fabric" (Walker and Lynn 2013:151). In other words, the more often an individual encounters people they think of as attached to a certain role they inhabit, and the more important those people are, the higher the individual's commitment to and salience of that identity (Stryker and Burke 2000, Turner and Stets 2005). A parent, for example, likely interacts with their children multiple times per day, increasing the number of role-performances for "parent" and, according to Stryker, building up positive associations with the role-identity. Successful implementation of a highly salient identity builds feelings of acceptance and self-confidence. In a study of high school marching band members, for example, Dagaz (2012) found the salience of the marching band identity through repeated activities that required interdependent role performances, such as practicing music and marching. In fact, the marching band identity became salient to the point that it superseded school identity at competitions, where one would expect school loyalty to be at the forefront. Successful enactment of this a highly salient identity resulted in the development of a "strong support network" of interdependence that "led to feelings of trust, acceptance, and self-confidence acquired through participation"

(Dagaz 2012:458). Several students reported improved socialization skills and academic performance as a result, with the result that student behavior and engagement at school improved overall (Dagaz 2012).

For *Grateful Dead* fans, then, *deadhead* is only one of many possible identities. As an individual adds other identities, such as *spouse*, *parent*, and *employee*, those identities may become more salient and not, as a respondent noted, above, “leave room in their lives” for other identities. According to Stryker ([1980]2002), an identity may be abandoned because it is used less often, or because it comes into conflict with a more salient identity. Figure 15 depicts concert attendance over time, by gender, which provides some insight into fans’ choice to attend shows at different ages.

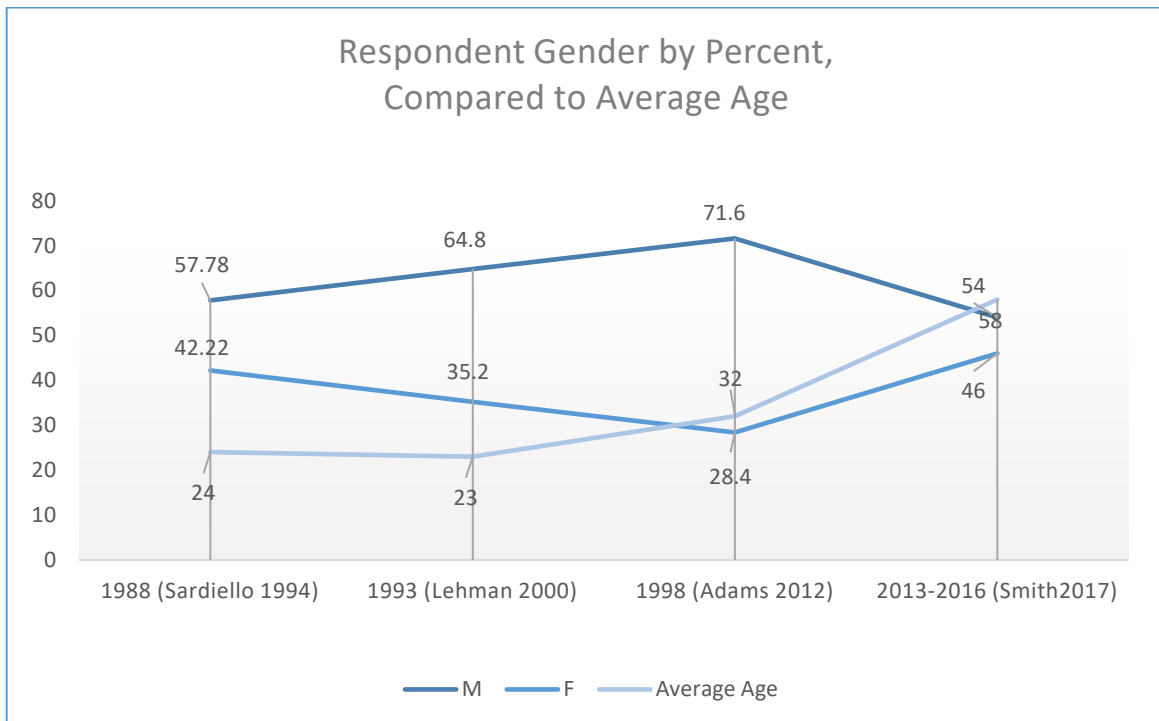


Figure 15. Respondent Gender, by Percent, Compared to Average Age

In 1988, women attended shows in lower numbers than men, with women's attendance dropping slightly in 1993 and then again to a low in 1998. Male participation rose over the same period. The average age of concert-goers remained relatively stable from 1988 to 1993, which likely reflects the number of young people—particularly college students—who flocked to the *Grateful Dead* shows from 1987-1995, after the release of “Touch of Grey” and before Garcia's death. In the 1998 study, the gap between male and female attendance is the widest, and the average age is 32. Finally, in 2013 – 2016, with an average age of 58, male and female participation levels return to a level similar to 1988.

Respondent comments, above, suggest that individuals stop going to shows when they become spouses, parents, and employees. Yet the data above suggest that this phenomenon was more true for women than it was for men. The age trend line dipping at 32 and rising at 58 rather accurately follows marriage, childbearing, and childrearing years. By age 32, many families will either have children or be preparing to have children. By age 58, often these children are adults and no longer need parental supervision. Childbearing and childrearing themselves, however, do not account for the gap between women and men. Fathers can care of children while wives attend shows. Despite decades of advancement in the United States, however, women still perform far more of the household labor and childcare than do their male counterparts (eight hours per week more in 2014) (Bridgman, Dugan, Lal, Osborne and Villones 2012; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2015). In addition to expectations for work at home, our society expects much different levels of role commitment from mothers than from fathers. It is mothers who are judged for working (and ignoring their children) or staying at home (and abandoning their careers). Women face intense social pressure to successfully fill the role of “good mother” (Hays 1996), and the mother will also actively judge her own performance and adjust her own behavior in

response to these internalized role expectations. According to Stryker ([1980]2002), when an individual is committed to a role identity, strong and immediate negative emotions result when that identity is disconfirmed (Turner and Stets 2005). Some parents respond to these conflicting roles by bringing children of all ages with them to shows. At the Chicago shows, especially, I saw several infants wearing light pink or light blue noise-canceling earphones, although there were fewer toddlers and pre-teens than I observed at other shows.

From the standpoint of a participant-observer, gender distributions at the 50th anniversary shows were radically different than at previous shows. For the first time, I saw, if not as many women as men, at least a much larger population of women than at other shows. Many women were part of a male/female couple, and sometimes of entire families in attendance. Bathroom lines were long for both male and female facilities. It seems likely that because the 50th anniversary shows were billed as the “last” shows, that a common practice of men attending shows and women staying at home was disrupted. The deadhead identity may have become, temporarily, once again more salient for those who had been absent.

By employing Stryker’s ([1980]2002) macro-level identity theory, we can begin to explain the puzzling fact of overwhelming homogeneity within deadhead culture, despite a culture of acceptance. Given a human propensity to categorize the world around us, we create expectations for people who fall into these categories: expectations that constrain behavior at the same time as they determine who will have access to resources. Since human activity requires that we move between situations—and therefore different categories with different expectations—individuals collect different identities that they don and remove in response to those situations. We carry with us, if you will, a “bag of tricks” from which we select the most appropriate identity for the situation. When identities carry over from another situation, as is

often the case for parents, those identities can come into conflict and force the individual to choose between situations and identities according to salience.

Using Stryker's ([1980]2002) approach alone, however, it could appear that an individual is made up only of identities collected from these different categories: external expectations that build up, like the Pigpen character in the *Peanuts* comic strip (from which Ron McKernan derived his nickname). This approach has its weaknesses. Although an individual can, as noted above, "choose between situations and identities according to salience," at its strictest interpretation Stryker's model limits agency: instead of being able to adjust a role identity to their needs, individuals simply put on the mantle of the appropriate role and follow the script. Sociologists understand human behavior to be more complex than this suggests. The next section introduces greater agency into this model by drawing upon McCall and Simmons' ([1966] 1978) contributions to identity theory, which focus on the individual in interaction with the social structure.

Social Structure in Interaction with the Individual

McCall and Simmons ([1966]1978) developed their strain of identity theory contemporaneously with Stryker (Stets and Burke 2003) and, like Stryker, argued that society divides the universe into categories that influence how individuals act in concert with others. At the most general level, a classification forms a *social identity* (62) that can be occupied by many different people: college professor, for example, or plumber, woman and so on. One's *personal identity* (62) is the set of classifications specific to an individual. Jane Doe, for example, the daughter of Pat and Jo Doe of Poughkeepsie, New York is not the same individual as Jane Doe, daughter of Patrick and Josephine Doe of Sacramento, California. McCall and Simmons ([1966]1978) thus emphasized that the individual does not completely shift identities as they

move from situation to situation: the personal identity makes Jane Doe recognizable regardless of the social role she currently occupies. The personal identity also serves as a “scaffolding” upon which various social identities are hung (McCall and Simmons 1966[1978]). For Stryker ([1980]2002), a social role is akin to a user’s manual for an identity—specific action required of the occupant based on membership in a defined category. In contrast, McCall and Simmons ([1966]1978) posited that each category has “general expectations held toward someone in [this] position” which the individual interprets, negotiates, and improvises through contact between the personal identity and social identity (65). This process results in variation in role performance from individual to individual. The *conventional* (68) form of role identity, then, consists of idealized, socially-agreed-upon standards that are learned through socialization. The individual, however, arrives at an *idiosyncratic* (68) form of role identity based on interpretation and negotiation (McCall and Simmons 1966[1978]).

Deadhead Role Identity

William and I are talking about his experiences with Grateful Dead over brunch in a Denver diner. He wears casual street clothes (jeans and a t-shirt with a Seattle business logo) instead of the tie-dye, and his short, professionally cut grey hair may once have been brown. About half-way through our conversation, I ask him if he is a Deadhead.

“Yes and no. I don't think anyone likes to be pigeonholed.” He laughs lightly. “I definitely ran into all the stereotypes when I first got into them, but I don't necessarily feel like...”

William trails off and stares over my shoulder, into space, for a few seconds, contemplating how to express himself. “My hippie-r tendencies are way toned down compared to my youth,” he finally concludes, laughing again and taking a bite of his omelet.

“What kind of hippie tendencies do you have?”

“I have more liberal politics. I'm an acupuncturist and herbalist. That's kind of out in the... I think for the most part I still have more of a cynical [laughs] nature.”

“But I think anyone who's gone to as many shows as I have and listened to them is a Deadhead. Like a lot of people, I'd say I'm not necessarily garden variety.”

“Is there such a thing as a garden-variety Deadhead?”

“You do see people where it's like . . . you see some cultural traits, where people start dressing in the same kind of clothes that only people who go those concerts wear. If they didn't know each other, how many of them would've had the exact same patch-quilt pants and dreadlocks with the same beads in them, or things like that?”

“There's definitely a look you can identify walking down the street.” He sits back in his chair and chuckles. “When I'm at the concert, it's like I'm almost trying my best to tune everyone else around me out. I just want to focus on the music. But as far as pure musician fan-ship, yeah, [I'm] totally [a deadhead].”

When William uses the words “garden variety deadhead,” and described the patchwork clothes and dreadlocks – the “look you can identify walking down the street,” he describes expectations regarding the *conventional* deadhead identity. The patchwork clothing appears to be more of a young-person affectation, from my observations. In general, women wear either comfortable and serviceable clothing, often tie-dyed, or long, flowing skirts and dresses that move and flare as they dance. Men generally wear some version of the deadhead “uniform.” One could argue that clothing choices are personal, and thus part of the personal or idiosyncratic identity, but that assertion does not capture the complexity of clothing choices. A man wearing a suit to a *Dead* show would likely be treated with a certain amount of suspicion, as the suit would be outside of the social expectations for the situation. Likewise, tie-dye t-shirts with dancing

skeletons do not meet the social expectations for more formal occasions, such as most job interviews.

“Garden variety” deadhead clothing signals membership, whether that membership is legitimate or not. Social media posts on concert days sometimes contain photographs of undercover “narcs,” dressed in tie-dyed t-shirts, cargo shorts, and Birkenstocks, who are in the process of leading an arrestee from the lot. Sometimes deadheads claim that you “can tell” when someone is a narc because of the creases in their too-new shirts, the way they carry themselves, or their haircuts. In that case, signaling membership through clothing choices is not sufficient for the agents to hide amongst the fans. In most cases, however, as I described in the vignette at the beginning of this chapter, deadhead clothing signals to others that the wearer is safe, helpful, and knowledgeable about the culture. At the Meetup at the Movies, for example, I was stopped by another move-goer who wanted to know what theater “we” were in. Quite literally, I looked like someone who should know.

Wearing the deadhead “uniform” can also serve to mute other role identities. Chris described typical deadhead clothing as “the best anti-suit, because you don’t know anything about anybody beyond that they’re here and they’re wearing this” (indicating his t-shirt). “That’s one of the reasons I like it,” he continues. “There’s no difference in age, background, anything, when you go to a dead show. Everybody’s there for the same reason.” Another respondent told me that you just do not know who may be a deadhead or who not: she gave the example of seeing a man “in a [business] suit, on a Harley [motorcycle] that’s covered in deadhead stuff, and . . . he takes his coat off and throws on a tie dye and walks into the crowd, and you don’t even know” from just looking at him that he’s a deadhead. The individual of course still carries with them personal identity characteristics such as age, gender, race, and so on, but when the

deadhead identity is “in use,” so to speak, these other characteristics become less important than membership in the culture. Deadheads tend to disregard hierarchy (Pearson 1987), and although this does not hold true for all members of the culture (some of whom do complain, for example, about younger concert attendees), the deadhead identity reduces barriers created by other characteristics associated with one’s personal identity.

Deadhead values and the conventional role identity

McCall and Simmons (1966[1978]) stated that the conventional role identity is accompanied by “general expectations:” nowhere are these expectations more noticeable than when asking deadheads about the culture’s values. I have been surrounded by tie-dye, shivering in the cold in line outside of the 1st Bank Center in Broomfield, Colorado, but standing next to a woman wearing a lace-overlaid white mini-dress with long, gold chains around her neck, heels, and with her hair and make-up done perfectly: nearly the antithesis of a woman at a *Grateful Dead* show. She had broken the norms attached to dress, yet no one else seemed to notice or pay any attention to how differently she was dressed. But if someone in that same line had been angry or started fighting, I have no doubt that the crowd would have acted to suppress that behavior. In general, deadheads value a non-judgmental, anti-hierarchical culture in which tolerance, friendliness, sharing, caring and responsibility to others are expected and rewarded and taught by example. One show regular, for example, wears a hat made to look like a bird sitting on top of his head to every show. Instead of ridiculing him, others identify him by the hat and seek him out. From dreadlocked teens, to Harley riders, to usually straight-laced businesspeople, and from head-to-toe dancing bear suits to near nudity, this culture demonstrates a high tolerance for different means of self-presentation. Deadheads are also tolerant of unusual behavior, if it does not impinge on others’ ability to enjoy themselves. A young person stumbling

around, visibly drunk or high, will be patted on the back, called “brother” or “sister” and gently pointed in a better direction, or if necessary taken to a medical tent. Physical accidents like bumping into another person are met with smiles and apologies, not hostility. A general atmosphere of friendliness pervades these events: in the seven years I attended shows I never saw hostility, an experience validated by my interviewees, who see the community as safe and welcoming. Community members also care for one another: if someone has no money and is hungry, they will be fed; in need of a ride, will be given a lift; in need of a place to sleep, will be offered at least space on the floor.

Drug use is pervasive in the culture and offers a good way to demonstrate deadhead values. Drugs of choice include marijuana in either edible form or dried (to be smoked), psilocybin (mushrooms), or LSD in tabs or dosed candies. Fans carry these drugs into the venues, despite pat-down and bag-searching efforts of venue security. Once inside, drugs are quite often shared. Several respondents told me about being handed LSD or mushrooms by friends and strangers. Hand-rolled marijuana cigarettes (“joints”), as well as glass pipes and cigarette lighters, are regularly passed among friends and strangers alike, but with no pressure to partake. In the weeks leading up to the 50th anniversary shows, a spontaneous discussion broke out online, encouraging older, more experienced deadheads to keep a watchful eye on younger, less experienced fans. A list of signs of LSD overdose was circulated, along with encouragement to make sure these young people—strangers—were handed bottles of water and encouraged to drink to avoid dehydration. In short: more experienced drug users were encouraging others to help keep less experienced drug users safe, and providing the tools with which to do so. That people are willing to accept these substances from strangers, that they feel comfortable engaging in illegal activity with strangers (while keeping an eye out for “narcs”), and that they feel

comfortable making themselves vulnerable by altering their state of consciousness, all without hostility, speaks volumes about the personal and interpersonal responsibility evident in the culture's expectations for behavior.

The community also enforces these values when necessary. Chapter 4 describes the unruly, disruptive crowds that began attending shows in the 1980's. Several respondents spoke, almost in passing, of talking to or correcting the behavior of others in the parking lots and show venues. John, a 44-year-old Cubs fan with a deep, smooth, gravelly voice that reminds me of John Goodman, explains that "it's very much a community, like, helping each other out, keeping the scene clean . . . having a good time, but responsibly."

Many members of the community, particularly the older crowd, do not like the nitrous oxide use that has become popular. Critics say that it is a more dangerous way to get high, and, because the nitrous is inhaled from inflated balloons, leads to littering. The sidewalks I passed over while leaving the July 4 show in Chicago were strewn with deflated balloons in a variety of colors. Leaving the "scene" clean is another cultural value, and deadheads will take it upon themselves to clean up trash if necessary. Matthew, for example, watched a young man sell slices of pizza to passers-by and then leave a dozen cardboard pizza boxes in the street, simply walking away from them. He became tearful when he told me that he would have thrown them away himself if there had been a place to put them. In California, the organizers had underestimated the need for trash cans for attendees waiting in line to enter the 50th anniversary shows. Rather than simply drop their trash on the ground, or continue to pile it on top so it overflowed, people carried their garbage with them and, upon finding the last dumpster by the entry gates equally full, neatly stacked it on the ground next to the dumpster.

Rehearsing and legitimating a role identity

At the end of my interview with William, he told me where he would be sitting that night and invited me to come sit with him. He was easy to find, because he was the only one in his section, center stage and three rows back, who was sitting down instead of dancing. I sat next to him and he acknowledged me, and after that ignored me in favor of the music. During the interview, he explains this focus:

. . . my friends are always like, 'Are you okay?' And I'm like, 'What? What? I am, I'm just trying to' And I am. I'm just trying to listen.

If I look around, I get caught up. I get annoyed by people being too loud or not being respectful to other people's space and trying to listen. I'm just doing my best to pay attention. I just feel like so many concerts happen and I feel like I missed the whole thing.

I was a dancer more when I was younger . . . I just love the way people dance, how it shapes the mosaic of the crowd around you.

It used to be like 'I just want to hear this song,' . . . but now it's just like – now I don't really care. I just want a song that has a jazzy groove – that I'm not going to get bored [with], and I'm going to be able to lose myself in it.

My friends think I'm really depressed, because I just sit there like . . .

William assumes a neutral expression and widens his eyes, imitating a spaced-out look, and then laughs.

It's just because I'm trying to listen. I'm trying not to be distracted by anything around. I'm really trying to hear the musical conversations. That's what I hear. I try to hear different conversations. I try to note the key changes or anything. My brain is just swirling, trying to hear – okay, I heard a bit of that song, I heard a bit of that song.

In the process of explaining to me that he isn't the "garden-variety deadhead," and why he acts differently at shows than the people around him, even his friends, William engages in a reconciliation of the conventional deadhead identity with the idiosyncratic, creating his own "space" within the larger identity. He has *reasons* for acting the way that he does. McCall and Simmons ([1966]1978) explain that the individualized role identity is not simply memorized and replicated, rote; instead the individual rehearses the identity mentally, merging conventional and idiosyncratic role identities while also considering audience (and potential audience) responses—in William's case, his friends. The role identity is a *performance* devised by an individual in response to being an "occupant of a particular social position" in which the individual creates an "imaginative view of himself *as he likes to think of himself being and acting* as an occupant of that position" (McCall and Simmons 1966[1978]:65, *emphasis in original*). These rehearsal sessions provide the individual with both a plan of action and a set of criteria for evaluating their performances. The audience plays a crucial, collaborative role in this process: a role identity is *legitimated* (68) (1) when the audience provides *role support* (70); that is, the audience acts in a collaborative way that appears (to the individual) to affirm the performance, and (2) through a successful internal comparison of the individual's role performance with the idealized mental rehearsal of that performance. Audience and individual both enact role performances and legitimate other actors, such that they become involved in enduring relationships of exchange for social support. In the same conversation, William comments:

"For someone who's probably not—99 percent of the time I'm not on anything—I'm probably one of the most . . . Like I said, my friends are always like, 'Are you ok?'"

When William's friends repeatedly ask "are you ok," they are really asking is if he is, sad, sick, high, having a bad trip, or otherwise in need of help. They actively engage in the deadhead value

of caring for and being responsible for others. William legitimates their role performance by acknowledging why they might be concerned and then reassuring them with an explanation of his own role performance. In completing this cycle, William and his friends create a symbiotic relationship of legitimation, providing for each other a steady supply of validation for their role performances.

McCall and Simmons ([1966]1978) identified five elements that strengthen interpersonal ties and make it likely for relationships like those between William and his friends to continue. The individual (1) risks time and energy in interaction, and therefore prefers interpersonal relationships that are dependable (consistently resulting in validation and legitimation); (2) views ascribed, or socially imposed relationships (like parent, spouse, or student) as more important; (3) chooses their level of commitment and (4) time and energy to relationships, affecting the strength of interpersonal ties; and (5) becomes attached to others when that other is incorporated into their role identity, making that person part of their role rehearsals. Like many deadheads, William returns to show after show with the same group of friends: his network is dependable, committed, and he has devoted time and energy to it. During the interview, he talked about other shows and other conversations he has had with this group of friends, by linking his friends and his own behavior, he reveals that his friends have become part of his self-concept. William and his friends have formed a group based on interpersonal relationships that can be counted on to validated and legitimate role-performances; thus, these relationships are likely to continue.

Not everyone who goes to *Grateful Dead* shows has a group of friends to travel with, however—although many of my respondents did. Within the Facebook groups I am embedded in, people arranged for meet-ups before the show, and when inside the venue, often posted information on where they were located. One of these groups created a banner to hang so that

others could easily find them in the parking lot. In fact, I saw several groups of people in the parking lot in California who had taken similar approaches: some had hung colorful banners, others flags, and another flew a string of balloons. In these instances, deadheads were actively seeking to renew old friendships and to create new ones. McCall and Simmons ([1966]1978) assert that individuals become involved in relationships in one of three ways: (1) ascription, where one is born into or inherits a role; (2) reputation or connections, where individuals meet because of a mutual acquaintance, whether that meeting is purposeful or by chance; and (3) circumstances, where one meets others due to a situation outside of their control, as when strangers come together during a natural disaster. The second, reputation, is important, according to McCall and Simmons ([1966]1978) because it is the only one of the three means of creating relationships that allows for the individual to evaluate whether the relationship will help legitimate important identities. Individuals typically will not start a relationship otherwise. “It is through reputations,” McCall and Simmons ([1966]1978) wrote, “that we typically learn of existing opportunity structures [for legitimation] and decide whether or not to take advantage of them” (179).

For many of my respondents, being at a show is going “home,” or like being at a “family reunion.” Several respondents indicated that they did not feel like they “fit in” with their family of origin, but that when they found the *Grateful Dead*, they also found a culture where they “belonged”: a family. Family is our first agent of socialization, and an institution within which the cultural norm is one of acceptance. Chris explains:

So the family that I was born into, the ones where I don't actually like everybody—because everybody has that—I've learned not to say things, because you don't want to poke the bear. There are no bears to poke in this community. I don't have to hide who I am or what

I am. I don't have to put on any artificial smile. I don't have to [say]: "well, it's only for the next couple days, just grin and bear it." There's none of that. This is truly who I am. I can be that way. I feel so comfortable. It just feels right.

When deadheads reach for the term “family” to describe the culture, then, they are calling upon a term that they expect to be understood as accepting and loving: legitimating. Several fans—Tommy, for example—have told employers that they “have to go to a family reunion” in order to get time off from work to go to a show. Howard told me, in his soft, southern drawl that the culture is a “tribe” (a concept similar to, yet, perhaps broader than, family) of “like-minded people,” emphasizing the acceptance and therefore legitimation that he receives from being part of the community. The “boost” of legitimation individuals receive at a show, however, wanes over time. Individuals will therefore continue to seek the positive effects of legitimation because they have an internal drive to feel legitimated (McCall and Simmons 1966[1978]). When the friend I wrote about in Chapter 1 longingly said that he “needed a show,” we can interpret that to mean that he needed an emotional boost of legitimation for a role identity that is only performed under specific circumstances.

Hierarchies

Like Stryker ([1980] 2002), McCall and Simmons ([1966]1978) viewed role identities as organized in some way. Because an individual's set of identities changes over time, the *ideal self* (73) represents only a snapshot in time of a person's role identity structure. The ideal self is composed of complex patterns of identities that sometimes cluster into subsets based on similarities, like shared skill sets, a time frame, or area of an individual's life (McCall and Simmons 1966[1978]). For example, six interviewees mentioned the role-identity “musician” in the context of enjoying or understanding *Grateful Dead* music. Four of them are musicians

themselves. For these respondents to pull the “musician” identity into a discussion of enjoying *Grateful Dead* music implies that the “musician” and “deadhead” identities share a subset, which may include other identities with similar shared skills or areas or life.

The prominence hierarchy

The ideal self is further organized into a trans-situational hierarchy in which the individual is more likely to call on one identity than another for *any* given situation (McCall and Simmons 1966[1978]). Because the individual has negotiated, with the social structure, the idiosyncratic identities that comprise the ideal self, they value some identities over others in ways that are, according to McCall and Simmons ([1966]1978) critically important. The ideal self is organized into a *prominence hierarchy* (80), where role prominence is affected by (1) the level of legitimation the individual has received for that role over time, (2) the resources the individual has invested in that role identity (time, sense of self, and other resources), and (3) the intrinsic rewards (positive emotions and physical feedback) received from enacting that role identity. The more self-esteem, material investment and material rewards are tied up in the identity, the more prominent it will be and the more likely it is for the individual to use that identity (McCall and Simmons 1966[1978]). An individual who has invested more time and effort into deadhead culture and sees that culture as an important part of their self-concept will be more likely to seek out shows and adjacent events, like Shakedown Street, that accompany the shows. Because the effects of positive role performances accumulate over time, a single bad experience will likely not lower the role identity’s prominence, and the identity will retain its position in the hierarchy. Over time, however, the prominence of an identity most likely will wane unless reinforced (McCall and Simmons 1966[1978]), leading the individual to seek out another show or event to get a “bump” of positive emotions through cultural legitimation.

The salience hierarchy

In addition to the prominence hierarchy, McCall and Simmons ([1966]1978) also suggested that individuals employ a *salience hierarchy* (79), where identities that are higher in salience are more likely to be employed. Stryker ([1980] 2002) also used the term salience hierarchy, but for McCall and Simmons ([1966]1978) the concept is more complex. The salience hierarchy is determined by the *situational self* (82): a kind of self that calculates not only the needs of the situation but also the needs of the individual's identities within the prominence hierarchy. Salience is first based on prominence, and then on a calculation of whether an identity would benefit from a "boost" of legitimation, memories of past gratification from deploying the identity, and a judgement of whether the identity will be useful in that situation (McCall and Simmons 1966[1978]:81).

Discriminating between the two—the salience hierarchy and the prominence hierarchy—can be confusing. When a deadhead spends time, money, and effort—resources—to attend *Grateful Dead* shows over a long period of time, and that identity is regularly validated, the deadhead identity becomes more prominent. The individual will seek out a "boost" by attending another show if the prominence of the identity begins to wane. The prominence hierarchy reflects an inward focus on the process of role performance and legitimation. That individual then becomes more likely to employ the deadhead identity in any given situation. The salience hierarchy, however, serves as a check on the impulse to deploy the deadhead identity. Employing salience, the individual evaluates the current situation and the rewards that might be gained or lost from deploying the prominent identity. If the deadhead identity is both prominent and salient, then the individual will "be" a deadhead. If, on the other hand, the deadhead identity would be harmful to the individual in that situation—say, for example a job interview—then the

individual will select another, more salient identity from lower in the prominence hierarchy: “college student,” perhaps. Prominence is—I argue—emotional; salience is situational.

Identities can fall in prominence (McCall and Simmons [1966]1978), which helps to explain why some deadheads leave the culture entirely when they gain other, resource-intensive identities like employee, spouse, or parent. Faced with conflicting role identities—fulfilling duties as a parent or going to a show, for example—then salience leads the individual to weigh costs and benefits to make their decision. The amount of choice an individual has in a given situation influences whether the individual will employ a prominent or salient identity, if the two are in conflict. When the individual has more freedom to choose a role-identity because those identities are “less obligatory and constrained,” then “there are fewer social structural constraints on entering and exiting the identity and on how an identity is enacted” (Brenner, Serpe and Stryker 2014:247). Individual choice shrinks when obligations and constraints become stronger, at which point prominence and salience hierarchies become so highly correlated that there is little difference between the two (Brenner, Serpe, and Stryker 2014). Life changes like aging, marriage, and children, for example, may influence the time an individual has available for previously important activities (White 2010). Cultural expectations for child rearing are currently much more demanding for women than for men (Hays 1996), effectively increasing obligations and constraints for mothers’ role-identities. When faced with a choice of limited options, women would be more likely to employ the “mother” identity than the “deadhead” identity, whereas their counterparts’ options are less (but still) constrained. In a study of the Irish Sinn Féin movement, White (2010) found that not only did life events (such as becoming a parent) constrain the time available for activism, but that these changes also led to the development of new social networks that resulted in “competition between the activist identity and identities

associated with new social connections” (366). This competition between identities, White (2010) explained, led individuals to leave the activist culture. Intriguingly, even when White’s (2010) study population left the activist lifestyle, they still identified with the culture. This “kept them available for potential reentry” (366). Turning away from one identity, therefore, does not preclude taking that identity up again later. Deadheads who have left the culture but retained some identification with it, therefore, may also be willing and able to enact the deadhead identity. Based on social media commentary, survey responses, and direct observation, it appears that this happened at the 50th anniversary shows: the deadhead identity was revived in individuals who had left it behind in the past.

Congruence and the Role of Emotions

McCall and Simmons ([1966]1978) argued that even with legitimation, full congruence between the role performance and the individual’s idealized, rehearsed, mental performance is impossible. In other words, even when the others around us accept our role performance, we are our own worst critic. Achieving this congruence is important to the individual, because when congruence or near congruence are achieved, the individual feels positive emotions from this success (see Burke’s Perceptual control model in the next section). Since these positive rewards build into a sort of positive energy reserve—like Collins’ “battery”—the individual can endure momentary lapses in social functioning. Lack of success results in negative emotions and a decrease in that buffer. Individuals therefore work to interpret the responses of others in positive ways that will increase their emotional stores. When role performance fails to meet audience expectations, individuals may ignore or selectively interpret audience reaction, essentially lying to themselves to convince themselves that their performance has been legitimated. If selective attention is not enough, the individual engages in a series of defense mechanisms that range from

(1) withdrawing from interaction, (2) blaming the situation or others within it, (3) rejecting the audience altogether, or (4) disavowing the performance (for example, claiming that what the person said was a joke and not mean to be taken seriously). If these defense mechanisms fail, the individual feels negative emotions (McCall and Simmons 1966[1978]).

Negotiation, legitimation, building hierarchies, and congruence all rely not only on a rational approach to social interaction, but an emotional approach as well. McCall and Simmons ([1966]1978) referred to these emotional effects throughout their theory: emotion is the engine that propels behavior. Their focus, however, is on identity structures that form as the individual finds their place in society and works within groups or networks. How, then, do we explain how emotional interaction works within and between the individuals that make up that society? For insight into the internal processes that create and maintain identity for individuals, I turn to the micro-level and to Burke's *Perceptual Control Model* (Burke and Stets 2009).

Identity Maintenance at the Individual Level

It is a beautiful, sunny July morning outside of the double glass doors of my hotel, an hour's subway ride from Chicago, Illinois. Today I am supposed to ride that subway to downtown Chicago, and I have no idea how to get to the station. To my left, as I walk toward the hotel desk, is a small seating area with two wing-back chairs facing a television that is mounted to the wall. A grey-haired, bearded man in a purple tie-dyed t-shirt that reads "Limbo Head" stands up from one of the chairs, where he has been talking to his equally grey-haired friend, and glances at my Furthur concert t-shirt. He asks, in a quiet, soft Brooklyn accent, if I know how to get to Soldier Field. His shirt identifies him as a member of the large Facebook group that formed for people who were first waiting to see if they had been chosen to buy 50th anniversary

tickets, and then trying to get tickets another way. Now, Matthew and I are comrades-in-arms with a shared mission: find out how to get to downtown Chicago.

The hotel clerk explains that the hotel shuttle will soon return to take us to the subway station, and we add our names to the list and head back toward the seating area, where Matthew's childhood friend, Micah, waits. Before we can get there, however, a man and woman round the corner, look at our shirts, and the woman—Karen—asks if we are headed to Soldier Field. Dressed in a plain t-shirt, khaki capris, and wearing a half-dozen beaded bracelets, Karen tells us in her strong, friendly New England accent that yesterday another couple—strangers—had guided her and her husband, Gary, through the hour-long trip to the stadium. She offers to do the same for us. By the time the hotel shuttle returned, we had been joined by more Grateful Dead fans, eight of us squeezed into the oversized cargo van that served as the hotel shuttle, following Karen and Gary's lead.

After Gary taught several of us how to buy a ticket from the machine at the subway station, the group of headed down the stairs to the subway tracks, and settled into the last subway car after it came squealing to a halt. The train was nearly empty: we got on at the end of the line and took seats, the car becoming more like someone's living room than public transit. The conversation quickly turned to the upcoming shows, and then, as the subway jolted through the Chicago suburbs and we rocked gently in the sun-filled subway car, I learned about the shows each member of the group had seen, Matthew's first Grateful Dead tattoo, how he and his friend Micah stumbled upon their first Grateful Dead show as teenagers; how Gary was dragged to a show by his sister's boyfriend, who had an extra ticket, and how Karen and Gary's romance had started when they met at a show, only later to discover that they were also staying at the same hotel.

In conversation after conversation, when deadheads meet, they weave between them a shared story of memory and music, coded in deadhead vernacular. Walking through the parking lot, Shakedown Street, or inside the venue, one might hear snippets of conversation like the following:

“Were you at the Gardens in '93 when Bobby . . .”

“I was at Winterland in '78, but I took a 10-strip, and all I remember is . . .”

“Have you heard the Help > Slip > Franklin’s from Winterland 1977? Best I’ve ever heard, man. Gave me chills.”

“I saved up my money over the winter and went on tour every summer. I’ve seen 235 Dead shows and another 20 JGB. Furthur, too, after 2009.”

“Pig was great, but I really prefer the Brent era . . .”

Identity-work is at play in the above vignette and conversation fragments. In these exchanges, the speakers situate themselves as an authority, exhibiting knowledge about the culture and displaying deep knowledge that also indicates a level of commitment to that identity. Once reciprocity is established in conversation—in other words, the individual’s role as an authentic deadhead is legitimated—the conversation builds rapport between conversational partners, establishing common past experiences and building new understandings. It is at this level of interpersonal exchange that Burke focused his attention. Specifically, Burke argued that individuals seek to bring their view of themselves (*self-identity* (Burke and Stets 2009:113)) into line with what they perceive others think of them (*social identity* (Burke and Stets 2009:113)). This effort is accomplished through what he calls the *Perceptual Control Model* (Burke and Stets 2009:29), which details a continuous, subconscious feedback loop of action, interpretation,

comparison, and adjustment of behavior. This process “controls” behavior through the individual’s perception of the efficacy of their actions (Burke and Stets 2009).

The Perceptual Control Model

The Perceptual Control Model consists of five main parts: the identity standard, inputs, the comparator, the error signal, and outputs (see Figure 16).

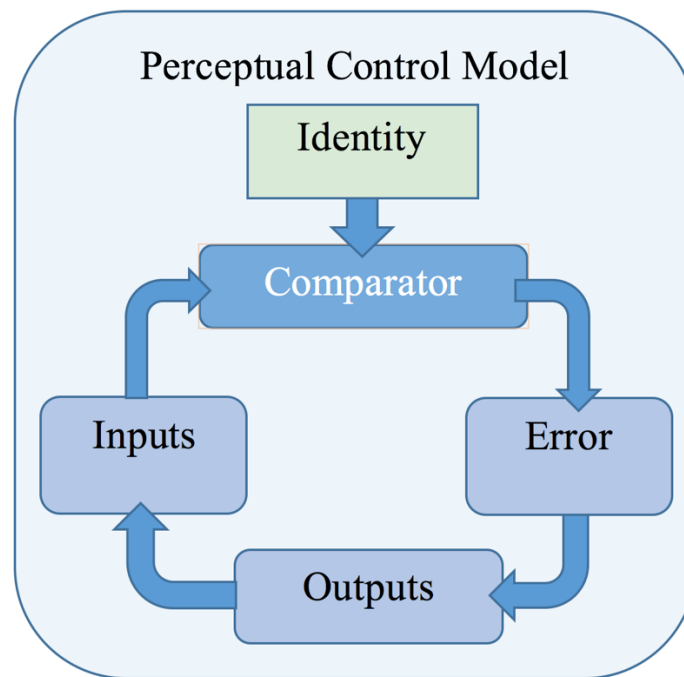


Figure 16. The Perceptual Control Model

The *identity standard* (Burke and Stets 2009:31) is a mental construct composed of a set of meanings that the individual holds for that identity. These meanings are learned through interaction and thus are deeply rooted in social structure, but with an individualized interpretation and varying “weights” assigned to the socially agreed-upon elements of that identity. The result is an idiosyncratic set of expectations for a given identity (Burke and Stets 2009). The identity standard, then, is the individual’s personalized interpretation of socially acceptable standards for an identity: it is the standard for behavior (Burke and Stets 2009), or

what McCall and Simmons called the idiosyncratic role identity. Burke argued, however, that behavior is not the focus of the Perceptual Control Model: if the goal is to achieve a successful role identity performance, then both internal expectations and external states must match. But situations include environmental factors and other actors; these other actors convey their appraisal of the individual's role performance symbolically, through overt responses and more subtle body language. The individual's assessment of performance, therefore, is limited to the *meaning* the individual attaches to both the environment and others' reactions to their performance. Bringing one's role performance into congruence with perceptions may require multiple small shifts in behavior: behavior will stop changing once the two are congruent. Thus, *behavior* does not drive the Perceptual Control Model; rather, perception of the *effect* of the behavior drives the process (Burke and Stets 2009). These perceptions function as inputs (Burke and Stets 2009:29). Inputs also need not only focus on external responses; individuals mentally judge their own performances. This self-judgement is what makes it possible to please an audience but be unhappy with ourselves (Burke and Stets 2009). Anyone who has obsessed over what they "should have said" in a past situation understands the power of self-judgement in this evaluation process.

Once perceptions are input into the process, they are compared against identity standard meanings through the *comparator* (Burke and Stets 2009:29). Although Burke does not describe the comparator this way, it could be thought of as a function of the process rather than a discrete point in the process itself (as are the identity standard and the inputs). The comparator generates an error signal proportionate to the magnitude of the difference between the identity standard and perceptual inputs. A small error signal indicates a high level of congruence between the identity standard and one's estimation of one's performance, based on feedback from others. A small

error signal results in positive emotions, and has little likelihood of resulting in modified behavior. Large discrepancies, whether positive or negative, result in negative emotions. In that case, it is likely that the individual will make an effort to change their behavior in an attempt to better approximate the identity standard (Burke and Stets 2009, Stryker and Burke 2000) (see Table 2).

Table 3. The Error Signal and Behavior Modification in the Perceptual Control Model

Error Signal Magnitude	Level of Congruence	Emotional Response	Modification of Behavior
Small Positive/Negative	High	Positive (feels good)	Minimal to none
Large Positive	Low	Negative (feels bad)	Likely
Large Negative	Low	Negative (feels bad)	Likely

For example, when a deadhead attends a *Grateful Dead* show and acts in a manner that is expected of deadheads, a small error signal is generated, the individual has a positive emotional response (feels good), and is unlikely to modify their behavior. If that same individual, as a college student answers a question in class and is wrong, violating the individual’s identity standard for themselves as a student, then a large negative emotional response occurs (the student feels bad) and the student will modify their behavior in some way (cease answering questions or study more, perhaps). Alternately, if the student studies and answers the question well, drawing effusive praise from the instructor, then the praise may also trigger a large response, this time positive—but it will also have the effect of encouraging the student to modify their behavior (stop answering questions, for example) in order to bring the student’s self-concept in line with that feedback.

When the individual receives a positive result, the identity has been *verified*, and when identities are verified, that energy fills a *reservoir* (Burke and Stets 2009:81), similar to McCall

and Simmons' "buffer" and Collins' "battery." This reservoir, according to Burke, is what we think of as self-esteem. Verification fills the reservoir and non-verification drains it; however, verification energy is not situation-specific. In other words, positive identification from any identity fills the same reservoir, so this energy is carried from situation to situation. In situations where verification has not yet occurred—whether that is because the identity is new or because the individual has not yet hit upon the right behaviors to elicit verification—that stored energy can sustain an identity for the short term. Self-esteem thus serves as a "buffer" between the identity standard and inputs (Burke and Stets 2009). When the error signal results in negative energy, the reservoir is either drained or not filled, and the individual will modify their behavior in response to that error signal. Behaviors modified in this way are what Burke refers to as *outputs* (Burke and Stets 2009:29). Modified behaviors alter the entire situation, as they are intended to do, resulting in new responses from the environment and others. New perceptions are then (subconsciously) noted by the individual, compared to the identity standard, and generate an error signal, and the cycle repeats, endlessly (Burke and Stets 2009).

Using William as an example, we know that his deadhead identity standard contains, at minimum, an interest in *Grateful Dead* music. It also contains an expectation that he will be able to enjoy the music in a way that he chooses, even though his friends worry about him. Most likely, it includes expectations for the values of deadhead society and, although he may or may not exhibit deadhead dress, he recognizes it as a common element of the deadhead identity. William's identity standard, then, represents a compromise between conventional and highly personal expectations. When William sits quietly, eyes closed, focusing intently on the music, his friends and neighbors give him feedback on his behavior, which becomes an input. It is likely that non-friend neighbors simply leave him alone, which he likely perceives as tacit acceptance

of his behavior. He perceives the inputs from his friends to be concern for his well-being, but not in a way that he interprets as judgmental. William is aware that his behavior does not meet the conventional identity standard for deadheads, and through the process of comparing (employing the comparator) how he perceives others to be interpreting his behavior to the identity standard, he recognizes that a discrepancy exists (an error signal) between his identity standard (a fan concentrating on the show) and how his behavior is perceived (being very high and in need of assistance). Although the error signal does not appear to cause William a great deal of discomfort, it is likely that he altered his behavior (changed outputs) by explaining to his friends that he was fine but concentrating. That he felt it necessary to explain to me, at all, how his behavior is different from others, shows that the error signal raised that discrepancy to a level of awareness, such that he is ready with an explanation of how his identity standard differs from that of other deadheads. In William's case, he does not alter his show behavior to match that of others; instead, he remains true to his idiosyncratic identity standard. Because an important part of deadhead identity is acceptance of difference, William can count on others not judging him harshly for being different from those around him. Because such a wide range of behavior and appearance is acceptable, the resulting error signal is likely to be small and therefore either positive ("I am accepted even though I perceive that I am seen as different") or neutral/minimally negative ("I am different but only slightly so"). This acceptance of a wide range of behavior as a key element of deadhead identity commonly results in low error signals for participants. In turn, the low error signal verifies, or legitimates, idiosyncratic deadhead identities. In other words, among deadheads, a wide range of behaviors fit within the deadhead identity, with the result that the identity is very likely to be legitimated and result in a positive emotional state.

William's behavior is mild and withdrawn; he does not disturb anyone around him when he sits and listens to the show. Some fans, on the other hand, take up quite a bit of space, dancing or even spinning with the music. Space is made for them, as well: the culture values tolerance and acceptance and therefore, even if an unusual identity is not directly verified it is at least verified through a lack of negative sanctions. As long as a fan's behavior is not disruptive, it is met by positive reinforcement: smiles, nods, physical space, and so on, even if it would be seen as bizarre outside of the context of a *Grateful Dead* show.

The late-afternoon sun has about an hour to go before it drops below the highest level of football stadium seating in Boulder, Colorado. I am seated on a metal bench at the bottom of the U-shaped stadium, with the sun full on the left side of my face, waiting for show time. I wish that I had brought my sunglasses and hat: I will be sunburned, tomorrow. I do my best to ignore it, though, and people-watch instead, as fans in all combinations and shades of tie-dye snake past on the concrete walkway below me prior to the show. Around me the sound of people chatting is palpable, steady. Behind me, people are laughing loudly; I have no idea what is happening, but someone is having fun. Whatever it is, however, catches the attention of a tie-dye-wearing thirty-something man walking past. He glances upward, past my left shoulder, and then looks again, more intently. He stops for a split-second, smiles, raises his left arm with his index and middle finger making a peace sign in the general direction of the laughter, and raises his voice to be heard over the crowd.

"Wave that flag, man!"

He laughs delightedly and walks on.

Three things happened in this brief interaction: first, the passer-by called upon the cultural value of tolerance/acceptance. Second, he verified the other fan's behavior by—although he had to

shout across the crowd noise to do it—normalizing the behavior within the context (in other words, he acknowledged whatever the fan was doing was odd, but accepted in that situation). Finally, he signaled his own membership in the culture by using a reference to a *Grateful Dead* song: “U.S. Blues.” “Wave that flag” (Garcia and Hunter 1974:218) is also tied to the hippie phrase “let your freak flag fly;” using that phrase, therefore, is a way to signal acceptance using a deadhead signifier. The thirty-something deadhead, then simultaneously verified a stranger’s identity and put his on display as well; and was apparently satisfied with whatever response he received from the person behind me before he moved on. This exchange took, at most, thirty seconds, and yet identities were put on display, inputs evaluated, error signals were low and positive, and behaviors modified very little. Both parties will have likely experienced a rise in self-esteem as a result.

Minimizing emotional costs and maximizing rewards

This ongoing monitoring of behavior and feedback in the service of legitimation requires a large investment of energy, and when situations are such that legitimation is uncertain, the individual will expend more energy on the monitoring process. We are, therefore, motivated to seek out situations in which we can be reasonably certain that we can achieve a low error signal with a close agreement between behavior and the identity standard (Burke and Stets 2009). Individuals employ three tactics to seek out or create “opportunity structures” that are likely to result in legitimation: (1) the display of “signs and symbols” that represent the deployed identity, (2) selective choice of with whom we interact, when, and how, and (3) signaling to others, through “interpersonal prompts,” so that the other will know how to “treat you in a manner consistent or congruent with your own identity” (Burke and Stets 2009:74).

The second of these tactics—selectively choosing interactions—is easily illustrated by attending concerts. A deadhead can be certain of identity verification at a *Grateful Dead* show, provided that the deadhead behaves in a manner consistent with the culture’s values. Show behavior also typically includes the display of signs and symbols of the deadhead community: wearing tie-dye clothing or, especially, concert t-shirts, and/or other clothing or jewelry that displays *Grateful Dead* iconography. Chris, for example—who has deadhead stickers on his car and *Grateful Dead* lyrics on his white board at work—tells me that he wears tie dye when he travels specifically to help him meet other deadheads:

“I always meet people, everybody from other passengers to baggage handlers. So we’re all kind of looking out for each other. We all see each other. It’s not like you have a secret handshake, but you recognize people. You just do. If you’re driving on the highway, and the lane’s merging, and the car in front of you has a deadhead sticker on it, I’ll let them in because they’re a deadhead.” He laughs and takes a sip of his beer. “It’s just the way it works.”

Chris deliberately seeks out others by wearing deadhead clothing when he is among strangers, in order to meet others with a similar interest, thus raising the likelihood that he will have his identity verified. In an uncertain situation, among strangers who may or may not verify his identity, he uses those signs and symbols to reach out to or attract those who are more likely to provide a positive response.

Signaling through interpersonal prompts is more subtle behavior. At the shows, in the parking lots outside of the venues, on subway cars, in hotel lobbies, and online, interpersonal prompts often play out like some of the scenes already mentioned: sharing of personal histories, number of shows attended, song critiques, and so on. Such sharing quickly establishes not only

membership in the culture, but also how long the speaker has been involved (and thus how knowledgeable and dedicated) and provides the listener with an idea of how the speaker hopes to interact—congruent with their own identity. A deadhead who has been to over 200 shows, for example, expects to be treated as more knowledgeable than someone who has seen 10. Not every deadhead cares about the number of shows a person has seen, but a deadhead who makes a point of talking about it clearly does. Interpersonal prompts outside of the concert situation are far trickier. John tells me that determining whether another person is a deadhead is matter of “feel[ing] people out,” but says “you just know. Y’know? It’s like: how does ‘gaydar’ work, you know what I mean? Some people have it;” he laughs, “and some people don’t.” William explains the process in more detail, telling me that he has:

feeler conversations, just the same way before you get into a political conversation . . . where you just put out leading questions of what you’re into without having to expose yourself. Then you find out they’re into it, and you’re like, “fuck yeah!”

He laughs and sits back in his seat.

When you see there’s a band [that you both like]—some kind of overlap—then you know you can put out that, “oh, I used to go see the Dead a lot, dah dah dah . . .” Yeah, just like a lot of things, I’m fishing for what they like before I just completely . . . and that’s true with music, politics, anything that can be taboo.

By testing his audience before he commits to a risky conversation, William—and John—protect the deadhead identity from disconfirmation, while at the same time testing certain interpersonal conversations to see if the deadhead identity can be verified. That both men are interested in verifying that identity outside of the show context speaks to the importance of that identity.

Discussion

Toward a Combined Theory

Although each theory detailed above provides insight into different levels of analysis of deadhead culture, combining these approaches has the potential to arrive at a more robust understanding of identity. Burke and Stets (2009) advocated for such a combination, and Stryker (2008) wrote that failing to bridge intellectual frames—which, alone, cannot fully explain social behavior—results in “intellectual chaos” (21). Stryker and Burke (2000) proposed a combination of their respective theories, but I argue that an incorporation of all three theories is helpful. Working across theories results in less focus on the social categories that create identity and more on instead seeking out the social “bases of identity” (Owns, Robinson and Smith-Lovin 2010:480). Instead of conceiving of the macro-, meso-, and micro-levels as discrete entities with vastly different units of measure, therefore, I advocate for a model in which these levels form a system of influences, in which identity moves back and forth along pathways within and between levels and in ways that strengthen or weaken discrete identities, role expectations, and—potentially—social categories. I will use a deadhead subculture known as the *Wharf Rats* to illustrate how these theories can be drawn together in order to better understand the influences at work that create social change through shifts in identity.

Wharf Rats: A Little bit of Traction in an Otherwise Slippery Environment

Matthew sits across from me in the otherwise deserted breakfast room of our hotel, a cup of coffee steaming in an insulated cup in front of him. It is the morning after the third day of anniversary shows in Chicago, and the other guests—many of whom also attended the show—are likely sleeping in. We are both exhausted, but happy and relaxed. Matthew’s blue eyes look tired, but he is earnest and forthcoming as he tells me about his childhood in New York City,

where he still lives and works. He has a soft, soothing voice and ends many of his sentences with a breathy, drawn out “yeahhhhh” and a contemplative pause as he waits for my next question. I have asked him how he first found the Grateful Dead.

Well, I had started out with the typical Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin, of course, the Who. And in my small town of – I don’t even know the population, but it was a small suburb of New York City. And of course, we were on the road to being juvenile delinquents.”

When Matthew says “we,” he means he and his childhood friend, Micah, who came to the anniversary shows with him.

And for me, the hippies in town were an attraction to me, you know. They just hung around the corner and pretty much did whatever they wanted to, you know. I don’t know . . . there was an attraction there for me, something that appealed to me. And of course, it was, you know, all part of being cool. From there, there was a town park where everybody congregated and slowly migrated. You know, they used to yell at us and chase us away and stuff.

The hippies did?

Yeah. We slowly migrated into the park, and in this park is where everybody was already tuned . . . “on the bus,” so to speak. Yeah. And gradually our taste just somehow . . .” He trails off.

When was that? How old were you?

I know we wanted to go to Englishtown in ’77. That made me 15. And I don’t know if it originally was the music. It might have been the marijuana or just the fact that they didn’t answer to anybody, so to speak.

Attracted to the culture because of the drugs and the party scene, things “got dark” fast for Matthew, and by 18 years of age his priest had introduced him to Alcoholics Anonymous . . .

but it didn't take, and he "bounced in and out" for 20 years. It was a chance encounter with a deadhead that finally put Matthew in touch with the Wharf Rats, which—eventually—gave him what he needed to have been sober for eight years at the time we talked:

I ran into this girl, Laura, at a concert in the Meadowlands. And she gave me a hug, and I was wasted out of my mind, you know. I saw an AA-related bumper sticker on her car and something made me stop and talk to her. Yeah [sighing].

And then I got a hug and then that was – I was infatuated. But what I've come to know now, [the hug was]. . . . Compassion. You know, a welcoming type of thing. But I gave her my number and, of course, I didn't – recovery wasn't on my mind at the time, needless to say.

But she went home and . . . gave my number to a male gentleman in the [Wharf Rat] fellowship and he called me. It turns out I knew the guy . . . because he was in the Dead circles as well. And I had partied [with him]. I had bought LSD off this guy and he was clean now. And that was my start, you know. And from there I did a lot of shows sober back in the '80s and '90s.

Was there a difference? Was it different going to a show altered versus . . .

Oh God. It's more of a natural high. It's not a chemically induced high. The sense of belonging was probably what I was looking for most of the time. Camaraderie was still there. You know, it was just great. It was really great . . . it was just what I needed – the Grateful Dead and recovery. And these people, like, offered support so I can still do what I loved to do, and still not drive my life into the ground, so to speak. Yeah, I could lift myself up above the [addiction].

For some deadheads, music is what drew them to the *Grateful Dead*. Others came to the culture through the extended community, through friends and family. Still others, like Matthew and his friend Micah, were attracted by the permissiveness of the culture; in particular, they were attracted to the ready availability and acceptance of illegal drugs. Drug use—marijuana, mushrooms, and LSD—have been part of deadhead culture from the beginning of the band, so drug use was pervasive. During the late 1980’s, however, when the band experienced that upswing in popularity and more college students began attending shows, a new element entered the culture. To “old” heads, their culture had been invaded by people who were just interested in the drug scene, and who brought with them a harsher, less tolerant energy and behavior that did not fit in with the culture. The gate-crashing described in Chapter 4 was a product of that dynamic, and the general dislike of nitrous oxide use discussed in online forums reflects an ongoing concern with how drug use affects deadheads. The culture favors drugs that do not result in lasting physical harm; cocaine and heroin, for example, are not common to the scene. The deadhead community addressed the problems created by this influx of fans in two ways. The first solution came from the top, down, when the band appealed directly to fans and threatened to cancel shows. The second solution appears to have developed spontaneously out of the culture itself, from the bottom, up. A community that accepted, even valued drug use had gathered a fair share of addicts, some of whom had begun to seek sobriety. Several of my respondents identify as Wharf Rats; in part—but not entirely—because I gained interviewees from referrals. The group provides, as several respondents told me, “a little bit of traction in an otherwise slippery environment.” Although Epstein and Sardiello (1990) date the Wharf Rats back to the late 1970’s, Tommy and other respondents indicate that the group began “in earnest” in the late 1980’s:

“In 1985,” Tommy explains, “I went to the world convention of narcotics anonymous and just kind of had an idea in the elevators . . . I put up a sign: ‘Deadheads, who are you? Where are you?’ like you see in the old Warner Brother’s albums [advertising the original mailing list for deadheads].”

“About 30 people showed up,” he chuckles: “you know?” Then he continues: “I was like, ‘this is cool.’ Some of them had actually worked for the band at various points in their lives. So I got all their names and addresses and I just started a newsletter . . . to, you know, we’re going to shows to hang out together.”

Tommy went on to explain that he was not the only one organizing groups: for example, in Philadelphia, a group calling themselves the Wharf Rats had the idea to fly a yellow balloon at tables so that fans could find them easily. Wharf Rats are named after a *Grateful Dead* song by the same name, quite likely because the following lyrics speak to a sense of forgiveness and hope (Garcia and Hunter 1971:150-51):

*But I’ll get back
on my feet someday
the good Lord willing
if He says I may
I know that the life I’m
living’s no good
I’ll get a new start
live the life I should*

Eventually, separate groups from different locations pooled their resources and ideas to become one group. A well-known, long-time deadhead and vendor, “Grateful Don” Bryant, was

part of this synthesis. In an informal Facebook post about the history of the Wharf Rats, Bryant (2014) explains that some deadheads were afraid to tell their Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous support groups that they were deadheads, because these groups encourage members to avoid places where they have used in the past, yet these fans continued to attend shows. It was difficult to be around so much drug use, however, and they had to practice “extreme vigilance” to avoid relapsing. “The catalyst for the Wharf Rat group,” Bryant (2014) wrote, “was the overwhelming sense of isolation that addicts and alcoholics were subjected to in Dead shows when we had to go it alone. This was an extreme environment swirling with temptation. Many people fell through the cracks and got wasted” (Bryant 2014). The Wharf Rats group quickly expanded beyond alcohol and narcotic abuse to include addicts of any type, friends, and family members. They adopted the inclusive motto: “You are a Wharf Rat if you say you are” (Bryant 2014). Bryant was instrumental in working with the *Grateful Dead* organization to become a permanent member of the band’s guest list, netting them a permanent presence inside the venue. Jim suggests that the band made this choice because it:

. . . understands what it's all about, you know. And god knows that they know, because how many of their members died because of this disease, or have been affected by it. So the band understands what we're doing and they support it, and that's a cool thing.

Today, a Wharf Rat table—staffed entirely by volunteers—is available inside every venue of every *Grateful Dead* show as part of the band’s entourage. Other jam bands’ followers have their own version of Wharf Rats, embedded into the show superstructure: Wharf Rats for *Dark Star Orchestra*, which is a *Grateful Dead* tribute band, the Phellowship for *Phish* fans, and the Jelly Fish for *String Cheese Incident*.

The Wharf Rats group is loosely based on 12-step programs, but affiliated with none. Tommy explains that when the group came together, they decided that it would be “about: ‘you’re a deadhead; you’re trying not to get drunk or get stoned today. This is a place where you can come.’” The Wharf Rat table is available before, during, and after the show to support those who are struggling with their addiction. “I’ve been clean for 29 years,” Tommy explains, but “I get that thought in the back of my head like maybe I’ll just take a toke,” in an environment where other fans are freely sharing marijuana. Because of the Wharf Rats, he continues, “I have a place I can go to say ‘this is bullshit.’ And what I’ve learned through recovery is if I share it and say ‘I just kind of had the thought’ . . . the thought goes away and I’m fine.” During intermission, Wharf Rats hold a meeting, where a yellow balloon is passed and participants talk if they choose. For some, Tommy explains, the meeting is “cheerleading,” and for others it is about struggling and needing support. At the close of the meeting, instead of the prayer that is collectively recited at the end of a Narcotics Anonymous or Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, the Wharf Rats instead sing meaningful *Grateful Dead* lyrics. During intermission at Soldier Field in 2015, I stumbled across a group of 150-200 men and women crowded around Grateful Don, near a table marked with yellow balloons. They had their arms draped over each others’ shoulders, and they swayed as a group as they sang a stanza from “Black Peter” (Garcia and Hunter 1969:100-01):

See here how everything

lead up to this day

and it’s just like

any other day

that’s ever been

Sun goin’ up

*and then the
sun it goin' down
Shine through my window and
my friends they come around
come around
come around*

When the group finished their song, they cheered, waving their hands in the air, and then dispersed.

Jim is a slender, fit man in his mid- to late-40's, likes to hike and spend time with his pre-teen daughter. He had been clean for five years at the time of the interview. Jim chose our interview location: instead of meeting in private, he wanted to talk as we waited in line to enter Red Rocks for one of the 2013 *Furthur* shows. During the interview I stood in line ahead of him, which means that to talk, I had to turn around and face him, and have full view of another gentleman who is eavesdropping while trying to appear not to. As Jim talks about the variety and volume of drugs he has used in the past, the man's eyes widen in shock. I can't help but wonder if Jim's openness is part of his recovery: like all the Wharf Rats I interview, Jim owns his addiction and his past mistakes.

The first time he witnessed a Wharf Rat fellowship in action, Jim recalls, "I was dosed heavily . . . I came across these people and it appeared like they were praying to a balloon or something. And I didn't know what the hell was going on, you know." At first, he avoided the Wharf Rats because they scared him; he was afraid that "maybe it would rub off on me." Although the statement seems absurd, Jim does not laugh.

One of the things that scares people,” he clarifies, “especially younger people, about giving up drugs and alcohol, even when they have a problem and the consequences [are] continuing to get worse and worse . . . is that they’re afraid they won’t be able to have fun” sober. “Like when I was in treatment,” he explains, “they told me absolutely do not go to concerts where drugs and alcohol [are available] . . . do not go to bars where bands play . . . do not play your own music in bars.”

As with Bryant’s experience, the language of recovery was not friendly toward deadhead culture. “I’m not saying that it’s bad advice,” Jim explains, “but what I am saying is that that also scares people away from wanting to do this, because they think ‘I’m going to have to give up everything I ever did.’” The Wharf Rat approach is different, according to Jim:

. . . all we do is show people that no, you don’t, actually [have to give it all up]. That actually you can have as much . . . at least as much, and in a lot of cases, more fun at shows, clean. And that’s what we do, is try to teach that to people and show it to them through example. I mean the Wharf Rats that I know that come to shows dance harder than anybody else there. It’s a common experience for them to be asked ‘What are you on?’ [laughing]. So it’s a pretty special thing.”

Jim’s addiction became problematic to the point that it interfered with his ability to attend shows. “My act wasn’t together enough to even buy tickets and get myself to a show,” he says, again shocking the man standing behind him. “It got that bad for me.” How did Jim go from an addict who was afraid of Wharf Rats to becoming one? His parents and two deadhead friends intervened to get him into treatment. And after the repetition of seeing the Wharf Rats at show after show, the group’s presence also had an effect on him:

“One of the things that I looked forward to when I made the decision to get clean was that I knew that this would be here for me. And it was one of the motivating factors, that I knew that all of a sudden I’d have this whole new community that I could hook up with at shows that would be a really special thing and very welcoming and loving.”

“It’s kind of like being survivors of a shipwreck that are all together on a lifeboat, if that makes sense. And the energy at those meetings and the smiles on people’s faces, and what they’re talking about, is just . . . it’s very inspiring because . . . here are people who should be dead, most of us . . . and most of us got to a point where we couldn’t even go to shows anymore.”

Becoming a sober Wharf Rat changed Jim’s ability to attend shows, not preventing him from going but giving him back the tools he needed to get there: “In sobriety, I started going to shows again, I started traveling again, which was something I had stopped doing for a long time after Jerry died. It’s like a reawakening of the spirit.”

Wharf Rats and Identity Theory

The Wharf Rat identity is a good example of strategic research material: here we see individuals whose deadhead identity was so deeply entwined with drug and alcohol use that not getting high seemed like it would fundamentally change the experience and, we can surmise, the individual’s sense of identity as well. Because the culture also valued, or at least tolerated, chemically altering one’s state of consciousness, the deadhead and addict identities formed an identity subset, in McCall and Simmons’ ([1966]1978) terms. Ongoing, worsening addiction affected identities outside of deadhead gatherings; recall that Jim was unable to even buy tickets or get himself to a show—quite likely he was also unable to maintain a job or interpersonal relationships, as well. Caught between a lack of verification/legitimation for other identities, and

a desire to maintain the deadhead identity, Wharf Rats forged a third path and created a new identity for themselves that incorporated non-deadhead recovery programs and deadhead values. This integration is visible in the Wharf Rat versions of the stealie: instead of the lightning bolt in the brain pan, Wharf Rats insert symbols for different recovery groups, thus symbolically merging the two identities. A closer analysis of the emergence of the Wharf Rats in context illustrates the interrelationship of each level of sociological analysis of identity.

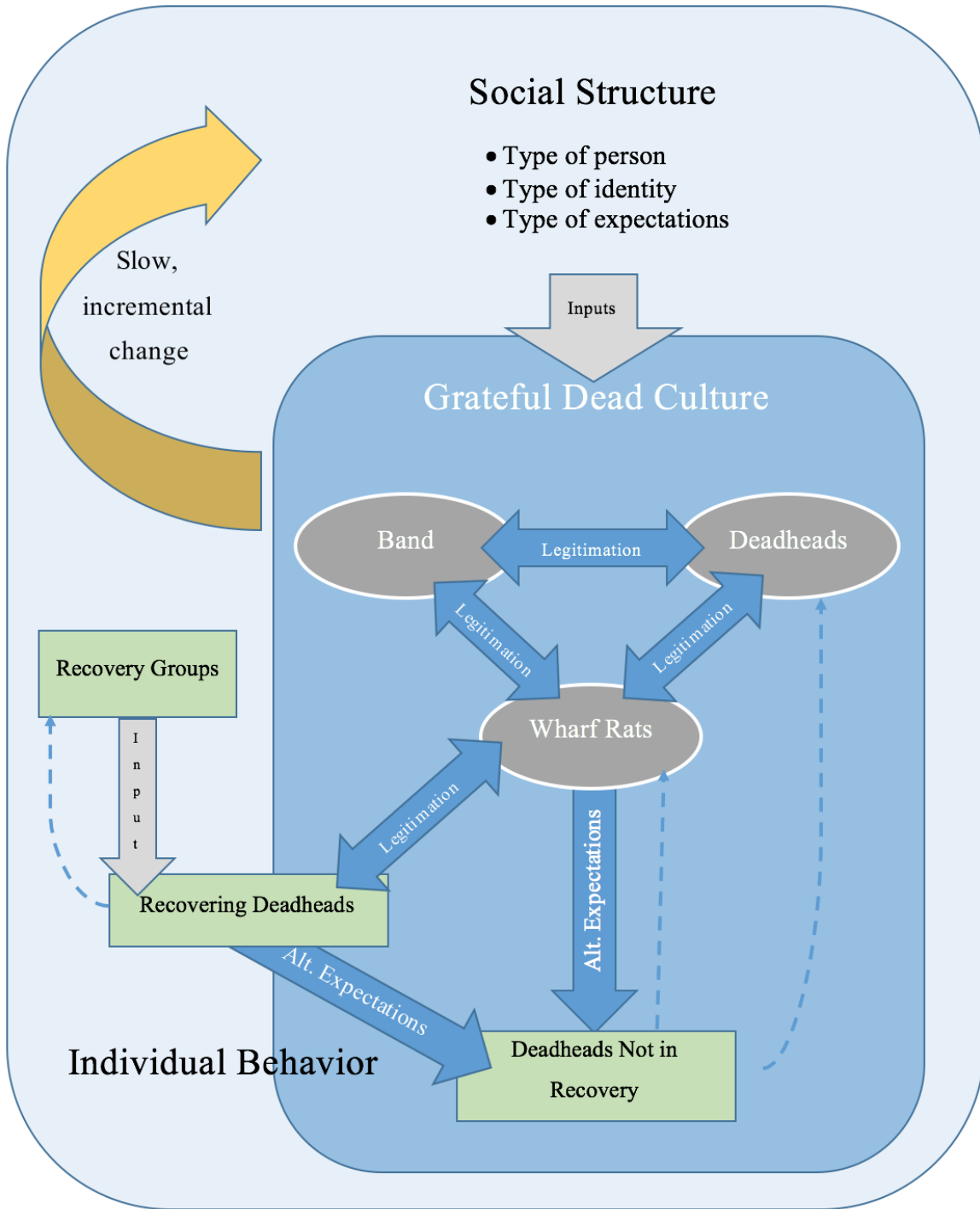


Figure 17. Identity Formation and Persistence in Wharf Rats

Figure 17 depicts the relationship between social structure, the deadhead culture, and individual behavior in relation to the emergence and continuation of the Wharf Rat identity. The

social structure, composed of socially-mediated categories, controls the types of persons who can exist in a society, the types of identities and roles that can exist, and the behavioral expectations for the same. Together, these form inputs into *Grateful Dead* culture, in the form of funneling individuals toward the culture, as well as providing interactional ground rules, so to speak. Matters of taste and a potential predisposition toward addiction are not accounted for in this model; however, the interpersonal means of sharing taste or dealing with addiction is already present.

The close initial relationship between the band and its fans created an interpersonal exchange where both the band and the fans received role support for their identity performances. In fact, at the beginning, when the band was first experimenting with the jam-band form at Acid Trip parties, the fact that most of the audience was high likely created a situation in which a wide range of behaviors would still be accepted, and thus legitimated. When the band formed the deadhead mailing list, used direct ticket sales, went on tour, and allowed tapers to record shows, the culture created by the relationship between the band and the fans met four out of five of McCall and Simmons' ([1966]1978) criteria for strengthening relationships: the rewards were dependable, band and fans were committed and invested large amounts of time and energy, and, because fans went to multiple shows and developed friendships, other deadheads became part of the individual's role identity. To be a deadhead is a profoundly social state of being. For deadheads who heavily associated drugs and alcohol with this process, it is likely that their "others" were individuals who shared the same interests. Responding to external pressures to become sober, then, would challenge not only the individual's identity that included substance abuse (which is likely disconfirmed and a source of negative energy or energy loss) but would, then, also mean losing the deadhead identity. The level of tolerance and acceptance within the

deadhead community means that for deadheads, role-performance legitimation comes easily and will therefore be a source of positive reinforcement and self-esteem. The blow of losing previously legitimated identities while simultaneously faltering one's way through a new, "sober" identity, would likely be traumatic.

We see this unwillingness to relinquish the deadhead identity in the early pre-Wharf Rats who, although in recovery through what I will call "standard" recovery programs, kept going to shows, risking relapse. These recovery groups and, for some, recovery centers, provided new inputs into the system: a new "addict in recovery" identity with a different set of expectations. Faced with conflicting role-identities, one of which would be more salient (more appropriate to recovery, with the potential for rewards) and one of which would be more prominent (more time and energy invested, more historical legitimation), Wharf Rats searched for a way to bring prominence and salience together into a meaningful and fulfilling identity. By creating the Wharf Rats, not only did these deadheads create that third path, but they also legitimated the deadhead identity (by continuing to participate in the face of difficulty). The band, raising the Wharf Rats to the level of a permanent guest inside the venue, legitimated the group and its place within deadhead culture. In turn, the Wharf Rats' insistence on remaining in the culture elevated music and community over drug use. Clearly, the *Grateful Dead* is about more than wanton drug use, if addicts are willing to go to such lengths to continue to tour without such use.

At the shows, Wharf Rats engage in role-behavior designed to legitimate other Wharf Rats, and they do so publicly and not at all anonymously, which puts the Wharf Rat identity on display for anyone who encounters them. They make visible this third path, which in turn means that it is easier for an addict to adopt the Wharf Rat identity in place of the addict identity. Wharf Rats also reach out on a one-on-one basis, offering an alternative identity and at the same time

legitimizing the deadhead identity. This combination seems to have made an important difference in the recovery of some of my respondents, and it is that one-on-one, interpersonal connection that they know will provide legitimation at any show. Verification of one's identity; of one's "self," and thus a positive investment into one's emotional buffer, is guaranteed at the table with the yellow balloons.

Relationships between groups, between groups and individuals, and between individuals are relatively fluid, with influence running both ways. Groups influence individuals, and individuals in turn can influence groups. Likewise, group and individual actions can alter the macro-level social structure, as well, although this process is often difficult and happens over a longer period of time. Although the hippie counterculture would not outlast the 1970's, some of the values persisted in former members. Likewise, deadhead culture, which has endured for far longer, has fostered generations of individuals whose ideal self includes the deadhead identity. Assuming that individuals' identity hierarchies include subsets of identities with similar characteristics, it seems likely that some of these identities would "bleed over" onto others. When faced with political decisions, for example, one would assume that a voter whose personal experience includes the recreational use of marijuana, as well as an understanding of the nature of addiction and recovery, would be more open to legalizing the drug? It may be a stretch, and more research is needed, but it seems at least possible that an enduring deadhead culture may have exerted an influence on the social structure, such that our social structure now includes categories for "responsible medical marijuana user" and "responsible recreational marijuana user" that were not widely present before.

Chapter 8 - Were They Ever Really Here? Discussion

Keep on dancin' through the daylight,

Greet the mornin' air with song

No one's noticed, but the band's all packed and gone

Was it ever here at all?

But they kept on dancing

“The Music Never Stopped”

(Weir and Barlow 1975:249-50)

Introduction

This study began with a hunch that something important was involved in the remarkable longevity of the deadhead community. How has this community survived for decades, despite band member deaths and the breakup of the band in 1995? By the time the band gave a name to the community—deadhead—I suspect that the distinctive *Grateful Dead* culture had already begun forming: the band did not will this culture into existence. With very little bureaucracy and hierarchy, a shifting, voluntary membership, and temporary physical meetings, this community is self-governing. Deadhead culture is not tied to a place, but rather exists within itself, manifesting online and briefly at shows. Despite the seeming ephemeral nature of the deadhead community, it persists, and gives the impression that it will continue to persist in the future. Using a combination of qualitative methods: interviews, surveys, and seven years of participation, I here present my argument for religion, ritual, identity, and emotion as mechanisms that account for the rise and persistence of the deadhead community. This research in turn informs a broader,

theoretical question that contributes to the Sociological understanding of group behavior: what mechanisms are responsible for social cohesion?

The concept of social cohesion is poorly understood in sociology, in no small part due to its application across a wide range of group behavior. A search for causal mechanisms that link individual behavior to the social context allows us to set aside the search for global laws at the same time as we expand our understanding of social cohesion (Friedkin 2004). A causal mechanism should be (1) reliable; (2) detail a close connection between the thing to be explained and the explanation; and (3) provide an explanation for a subset of related phenomena rather than a universal covering law (Hedström and Swedberg 1996). If cohesion cannot be easily defined, how are we to distinguish a cohesive group? Friedkin (2004) wrote that groups are cohesive when individuals interact in ways that maintain the group, so that the group in turn offers individuals benefits to membership, with the result that individuals feel attached to the group. Lawler (2002) and colleagues introduce emotion into the equation, noting that positive group interactions produce positive emotions, which further bind the individual to the group. Deadhead culture meets these general guidelines: individuals interact in ways that maintain the group, believe that there are benefits to the membership, feel positive emotions toward group membership, and thus cohere to the group. Three areas of interest stood out in my search for mechanisms of social cohesion in deadhead culture: religion, ritual, and identity.

The Deductive Approach

Deductive reasoning moves from the general (theory) to the specific (the object of study). Each set of theories: religion, ritual, and identity, applied to *Grateful Dead* culture, provided insight into what draws deadheads to the culture and keeps them coming back for more. In Chapter 5, I explored the ways in which Durkheim's ([1912]1995) theory of religion informs

deadhead show behavior. The LSD-fueled acid test dance parties, which were accompanied by light shows and Grateful Dead music, created prime conditions for the emergence of collective effervescence and from that, sacred objects and a sense of society—of moral community—produced through collective action in such a way that it becomes an energy or “force” larger than the individuals who created it. Because these parties occurred in a countercultural environment, where dominant society was deliberately cast aside, these parties can be seen as liminal (Turner [1969] 2009), as well, creating an opening for a new social structure to emerge. For over 50 years these sacred gatherings have been re-created and deadhead culture reified. What we see today at a *Grateful Dead* show is a re-making of the culture as fans together experience collective effervescence, strengthen symbols through the re-creation of sacred objects, and then wear these symbols in various ways to bring that sacredness and belonging into everyday life.

Chapter 6 focuses on Collins’ (2004) concept of Interaction Ritual Chains, which builds on and refines a portion of Durkheim’s theory of religion, detailing how collective effervescence and symbol creation works to tie an individual to a group. By repeatedly bringing together ritual elements, experience the shared emotional energy of entrainment, creating and maintaining symbols—like the stealie—that become a “battery” for the energy created by the group. This battery is then used to spark new interaction rituals at the group level as well as personal interaction rituals at the individual level. The latter influences the way that the individual thinks, bringing the individual’s thought processes into line with the group. When deadheads invest time in knowing set lists, or use lyrics to express themselves in daily life, or tattoo a stealie onto their forearm, they bring those symbols with them into daily life and tie themselves even more closely to the group. Deadheads seek out more concerts because of the emotional burst they receive from engaging in that collective behavior. This emotional burst of short-term emotions, however, do

not create cohesion, according to Collins. Rather, the emotional charge attached to a symbol, which represents the group, paired with the shared physical experience of entrainment, creates a desire in the individual to participate in group activities again and again. Repeated exposure and increasing desire create long-term emotions which, for Collins, are represented by social solidarity or (if the individual does not feel that they belong), alienation.

Chapter 7 combines the work of core identity theorists Stryker ([1980] 2002), McCall and Simmons ([1966] 1978), and Burke (Burke and Stets 2009) to arrive at an explanation for how identity binds deadheads to the culture. From Stryker, we see that the classification system that makes up social structure also influences the distribution of resources and the likelihood that certain people will meet, with the result that certain types of people are more likely to become deadheads than others. When an individual's network of acquaintances that expect to see the deadhead identity grows, the deadhead identity will rise higher in a salience hierarchy and thus more likely to appear (Stryker [1980] 2002). To this system, McCall and Simmons ([1966] 1978) added agency, in that the deadhead negotiates, between social-structural expectations and the self, an idiosyncratic identity. This idiosyncratic identity helps to explain the variation in behavior and commitment to the culture that we see between deadheads. McCall and Simmons ([1966] 1978) also posited two hierarchies of identity: prominence and salience. When an individual invests more time and resources into the deadhead identity—attends more shows, perhaps goes on tour and/or vends at shows—then the identity rises in prominence. When the deadhead identity results in an identity that receives an emotional payout, or when the deadhead identity is appropriate to the situation (for example, the person is at a show), then the identity is more salient and more likely to be deployed. In both schemas, individuals feel good when they successfully perform the role expectations that accompany the deadhead identity: when identity

is verified, they receive positive emotions, which can carry over into other situations. In contrast, Burke (Burke and Stets 2009) shifted focus from observable behavior to internal processes with the perceptual control model. As deadheads perform the deadhead role identity, according to Burke, they subconsciously evaluate the feedback they receive from others to determine whether their performance meets social standards for deadhead behavior. If not, the deadhead changes their behavior to better meet that identity standard – a process that also creates either positive or negative emotions. Since the deadhead identity standard encompasses an extremely wide range of behaviors, the odds of an identity performance being legitimated are high for both external performances and the internal process of judgement. The deadhead, then, receives positive emotions from participation in deadhead culture on a regular basis. The identity will therefore be more attractive and the individual more likely to enact that identity under certain circumstances.

The preceding paragraphs apply deductive logic to show how theoretical approaches to religion, ritual, and identity can be mobilized to explain the longevity of deadhead culture. Ultimately, however, this study is a sociological project, and not simply a study of the *Grateful Dead* and deadhead culture. What can be gleaned from reversing the direction of inquiry?

The Inductive Approach

Hedström and Swedberg (1996:282) argued that mechanisms should explain “the particular by the general”—in other words, mechanisms should explain underlying patterns that may function across multiple situations. Instead of first theorizing and then seeking supporting data to arrive at a general mechanism, however, Katz (2001a:465) argued for the opposite—what he called *analytic induction*—which involves searching for a logical, rational explanation that fits the evidence or that makes the evidence relevant. One moves back and forth between data and theory, Katz (2001a) explained, refining theory as more data accrues and challenges the

validity of the theory. This approach runs counter to the practice of omitting outliers in data and instead pushes variations in data to their limit, establishing boundary conditions for a phenomenon (Stinchcombe 2005). Katz (2001b) argued that the ideal sites for such research are areas of historical change with many differentiated members, and deadhead culture certainly fits those criteria. Using analytic induction, Katz (2001b) wrote, ideally results in a “perfect relation between data and explanation” (130), or what Hedström and Swedberg (1996) called a “fine-grained explanation[.]” between the thing being explained and the explanation (287).

The composition of the deadhead community may be primarily white, middle class, and male, but it is not entirely so. By tapping into extant material, in addition to data I gathered, I was able to get a sense of the culture as it has existed for over 50 years. In addition to variation in demographic characteristics, deadheads exhibit a great deal of variation—as noted in the Deadhead Literature section in Chapter 7—in commitment to the deadhead lifestyle: Shenk and Silberman’s (1994) definition of deadhead is vague for a reason. As I wrote the chapters on religion, ritual, and identity, pulling data from the lived experience of people who identified themselves as deadheads but who often meant different things by that designation, I began to make connections across these theories; connections that explain why deadheads behave the way that they do, and that have the potential to be applied to other groups as well. Working across theories, this section describes multiple, overlapping and contemporaneous mechanisms that operate at different levels. Providing the grammar for my discussion of mechanisms is Hedström and Swedberg’s (1996) typology as described in Chapter 3: the (1) the *situational mechanism* concerns how macro-level states affect micro-level interactions; (2) the *individual action mechanism* concerns how micro-level individual interactions generate action at the micro-level;

and (3) the *transformational mechanism* concerns how micro-level individual interactions transform macro-level conditions.

Categorizing mechanisms in this way is not without its problems, however. Studies of group behavior have a chicken-and-egg problem: at what point in the development of humankind did society develop? When did groups emerge? Where was the dividing line between not-group and group? Durkheim ([1912]1995) addressed this problem by claiming that (as reported in Chapter 5), “like every other human institution . . . religion begins nowhere” (7). We cannot locate a time in history when the first group emerged; therefore, the starting point must simply be now. Durkheim ([1912]1995), Collins (2004), Stryker ([1980] 2002), and McCall and Simmons ([1966] 1978) all described a social structure already affected by transformational mechanisms, where society (and ultimately the social structure) is created by individuals, through social interaction. This same society also comes to dominate individuals within that system in such a way that individuals believe the social structure to be bigger than themselves – with real consequences for their behavior. This leads us to situational mechanisms.

Situational Mechanisms

Situational mechanisms focus on the ways in which macro-level conditions affect the individual’s “beliefs, desires, and opportunities” (Hedström and Swedberg 1996:297). As discussed in Chapter 5, Durkheim ([1912]1995) (and, by extension, Collins (2004), whose work is grounded in Durkheim’s theory (see Chapter 6)), based on his observation of aboriginal tribes, theorized a time when social structure emerged from the group’s experiences with collective effervescence. Group interaction also elevated some objects to the level of sacredness, at the same time creating a moral order and behavioral code. Although originally created through micro-level group interaction, these macro-level social codes directed the tribe’s identity and

sense of belonging, determined what was considered sacred, and created a set of expected behaviors for group members toward each other and toward sacred things.

Stryker ([1980] 2002), and to a lesser extent, McCall and Simmons ([1966] 1978) described society as made up of a set of categories, created because of an innate human need to classify. Classification resulted in criteria for belonging—expectations—to a category. As described in Chapter 7, once created, these categories exert tremendous pressure on individuals at the micro-level. Resources are channeled according to one's membership in demographic classifications that are beyond the individual's control, for example. Expectations for behavior constrain the types of identities that can exist, irrespective of individual choice. McCall and Simmons' ([1966] 1978) introduction of the idiosyncratic identity loosens the grip of social structure on individual choice to an extent, but the classification system still maintains a powerful influence over the individual.

Identity theory can be read as a natural progression of a society that emerged from collective effervescence. What is the distinction between the sacred and the profane, if not a classification? And as Weyher (2012) noted, the sacred and the profane can exist in levels; they need not be absolute. Likewise, Durkheim's ([1912]1995) moral code can be read as a set of expectations for individuals and objects contained in a particular category. If we imagine Durkheim's ([1912]1995) development of society as a starting point, then identity theory demonstrates the complexities in social interaction that emerge over time and as societies become more complex. The content of the beliefs, desires and opportunities may vary from society to society, but the existence of such a regulatory influence at the macro level is well demonstrated sociological literature and in deadhead culture as well.

The set of expectations for beliefs and behavior, paired with expectations for behavior by category, resulted in a mechanism of *internal constraint*, in which individuals internalize group-created beliefs and modes of appropriate thought and behavior. As individuals enact these appropriate behaviors through appropriate lines of thought, they alter the flow of resources and opportunity, producing the mechanism of *external constraint*. These two mechanisms reinforce each other: as thoughts and behavior determine social structure, the existence of difference within that structure becomes self-reinforcing, solidifying ways of thinking and acting.

Individual Action Mechanisms

Individual action mechanisms focus on the ways in which the interaction of individuals generates “a specific action” at the micro-level (Hedström and Swedberg 1996:297). It is through the interaction of individuals that Turner’s *communitas*, Durkheim’s collective effervescence, or Collins’ emotional entrainment occurs, and it is through collective effervescence and emotional entrainment that objects become sacred symbols that are imbued with energy (Collins 2004, Durkheim [1912]1995). Collective rites thus have great power to influence the emotions, beliefs, and even mental states of co-participants, as well as the power to draw individuals back to subsequent rites in order to receive more positive energy from the encounter. Such rites create a feeling in the individual of becoming one with the collective—the mechanism of *self-transcendence*.

Considering rites in a pre-existing society, individuals enter the rite having already chosen which role-identity they intend to perform. The salience and/or prominence of that identity exists in a dialectic with the individual’s participation in ritual, influencing whether the individual will participate in a power or status ritual, and if a status ritual, whether the individual will be located near the center or periphery of a rite, as category expectations dictate for that

identity. *At the same time*, the individual's desire to participate with intensity (at the center) or very little (at the periphery) will influence choice of identity is called upon. Prominence, in turn, will be affected by the individual's successful role performance, and the level of legitimation the individual receives for that identity. Salience, prominence, and level of involvement, then, appear to be linked: an individual enters the encounter with an identity, and that identity is either reinforced or not during that encounter, with the potential for long-term consequences for that identity. The choices the individual makes in regard to adopting an identity that will receive positive rewards is represented by the mechanism of *self-reinforcement*.

Finally, the individual engages in *self-talk* as an intensely subjective mechanism that ties themselves to the group. Durkheim ([1912]1995) and Collins (2004) both noted that individuals make use of symbols to make sense of their experience and to feel a sense of belonging to the group. As symbols enter the individual's thought processes, their thinking is brought more and more in line with the values and expectations of the group. This type of self-talk is a form of self-transcendence: subjectively, the individual ties their thoughts and emotions to the group. Lawler (2002) and colleagues described another form of self-talk in the micro social order. When individuals move from immediate, global emotions to specific emotions, they engage in self-talk to attribute what they feel to either themselves or to the group. Burke (Burke and Stets 2009), on the other hand, described a cyclical, subjective cognitive process of judgement through which the individual constantly compares their performance to the identity standard. That identity standard is composed of idealized, symbolic representations of identity; the inputs received by others in interaction are likewise symbolic representations, and the individual engages in self-talk and self-judgement as they alter or maintain their identity to bring it into line with the idealized identity standard. This form of self-talk is a type of self-reinforcement mechanism.

Like internal and external constraint mechanisms, self-transcendence, self-reinforcement, and self-talk mechanisms act in concert with one another. For the individual to feel a part of the group, the self must be transcended, at least to some degree. It is also to the group that the individual looks for reinforcement of that social identity; in other words, the individual's sense of successful performance of the social self—and, ultimately, confidence, is defined in relation to the group. Under some circumstances that reinforcement will be met with enough emotional energy that self-transcendence will again occur, and the cycle continues. Self-talk makes these two processes intensely subjective and hidden to the outside world, but in such a way the individual's very thought processes are attuned to and aligned with the group. When the individual uses group-level symbols to think about everyday life, per Collins (2004), self-talk functions as a form of self-transcendence, connecting the individual to something larger than themselves. When the individual engages in self-talk as judgement, comparing the individual's interpretations of group-level symbols to their own behavior, per Burke (Burke and Stets 2009), ultimately making changes to bring their performance in line with their interpretations of identity expectations, self-talk functions as a form of self-reinforcement.

Transformational Mechanisms

Transformational mechanisms focus on how micro-level interactions influence the macro-level through collective behavior (Hedström and Swedberg 1996:297). For Durkheim ([1912]1995) and Collins (2004), the energy/force created by rituals fades over time; symbols lose their efficacy and adherence to the social structure weakens. Rituals must be repeated to maintain society: this is the mechanism of *group maintenance*. For deadheads, group maintenance extends beyond the ritual itself and into alternate means of sharing (mailing lists and social media, for example) as well as wearable symbols that permeate daily thought. When

individuals participate in interaction ritual chains and thus feel connected to the culture, they experience what Collins (2004) called a long-term emotion: solidarity, which also reaffirms the existing social structure. Likewise, identity theorists conceived of daily life as a reification of social structure where, at the micro level, an aggregation of individual actions undertaken to meet categorized behavioral expectations has the effect of upholding those social-structural categories. This mechanism of group maintenance is essentially negative; that is, the macro level *fails* to transform the macro by re-making the macro social order.

Deadhead culture provides two examples of what I call the mechanism of *disruption*, where the macro-level social order is disrupted by micro-level interaction, allowing for a change at the macro-level. The very experience of liminality (Turner [1969] 2009), where a group exists outside of the social structure, creates an opening through which social change can occur. Deadhead culture in general represents the outcome of such a challenge to social structure, and although deadhead culture has in some ways become more aligned with the mainstream, it is not solely because deadhead culture capitulated. Although marijuana use is broader than deadhead culture, deadheads are certainly part of the push for legalized medical and recreational marijuana. The concept of the free sharing (or streaming) of music, likewise, has today become a marketing style for some recording artists, as well as the subject of high-profile lawsuits and a part of everyday existence. Collins' (2004) concept of long-term emotions here has the potential to alter social structure, if participation in the culture results in feelings of alienation rather than solidarity. If the social structure fails to meet needs at the micro-level, an opportunity for change may appear. Although this study does not focus on the countercultural and political movements of the 1960's, a strong argument could be made that these movements represent a sense of alienation. At the meso-level, conflicts created by unverified identities (as discussed in Chapter

7) resulted in the creation of the Wharf Rats, which altered the social structure of deadhead culture and created a new deadhead institution.

Although the mechanisms of group maintenance and disruption may appear at first glance to operate in opposition to each other, in reality the two exist in tension but not in opposition. Without group maintenance, the social structure would simply slowly waste away. Even when disrupted, the “new” social structure is built on the bones of the old, mitigating the amount of change possible at any one stage. Disruption relies on the force of maintenance to alter, but not destroy a system, and once the change has been made, relies on maintenance to reify the newly altered structure. It may be that with maintenance and disruption in tension, groups are able to change and grow in ways that maintain the system over time, in a way that a purely static group, without the ability to adjust to change, would not survive. Transformative mechanisms, therefore, may create flexibility in an otherwise relatively rigid system.

Application

The goal of social science is broad: to explain. As discussed in Chapter 3, however, the purpose of identifying causal mechanisms is far more specific: to arrive at a reliable explanation for the behavior of individuals in interaction, to create a close, detailed connection between the thing to be explained and the explanation, and ultimately to arrive at an explanation that can be applied to a set of related phenomena. In order to apply the mechanisms identified above, therefore, it is necessary to understand what *type* of phenomenon deadheads represent. Which elements of deadhead culture are important to this understanding of mechanisms of social cohesion? In Chapter 1, I described the deadhead community as transient: both stable (through a network of ties) and fleeting (coalescing briefly at concerts and then dissipating). The culture has very little hierarchy or bureaucracy, with the band and other organizations functioning as nodes

within a larger network. Although concerts are planned, fans are not required to attend, to linger in the parking lot, or create Shakedown Street – yet they do. Deadhead culture has an emergent quality, then, as the group more-or-less spontaneously re-generates. Finally, deadhead culture is bounded by an identifiable set of values and norms, with its own language, symbols, and economy. I will add this to the list: much of the deadhead community is populated by motivated members, with the result that the membership seeks out information about the band and culture and then works to discuss and share, which has led to the development of a large community in cyberspace.

Hedström and Swedberg (1996) argue that mechanisms should reliably help to explain the behavior of individuals in interaction, result in a detailed, close connection between the thing to be explained and the explanation, and provide, instead of a universal law, an explanation for a smaller subset of related phenomena. How does one determine what makes phenomena “related?” My representation of the deadhead culture/community as transient, emergent, bounded, motivated, and with little official structure suggests other groups against which these mechanisms could be tested. One such potential location for future study is the emergent grassroots political movement in the United States that was sparked by the November 2016 national election. This movement is also drawing in large numbers of participants who have not taken part in political activity in the past, and is beginning to reach across the ideological divide between political parties. This movement is emergent, transient (it exists largely in cyberspace; physical meetings are often temporary gatherings—town hall meetings and the Women’s March on Washington, for example), bounded by the values that bring individuals to the group, are clearly motivated, and, although existing political organizations are at work within this movement, the energy generated does not appear to be stemming from established political

organizations. The qualities of transience, emergence, boundedness, and motivation, however, can also be applied to organizations labeled as “hate groups,” which have begun responding to the actions of the grassroots movement. Structure and hierarchy, however, are different between these two types of group. Does that mean that the phenomena are not “related?” Like the metaphor of the elephant I raised at the beginning of this dissertation, I believe that the ways in which we define the phenomena under study affect the ways that we see them. Although this reality may seem limiting, it may also open up new possibilities, through looking for commonalities among groups, for example, even when those groups seem to be diametrically opposed. Discovering what is the same between groups that press for social change for the betterment of all and groups that press for expulsion and restriction of rights based on race, ethnicity, orientation, etc., calls upon analytic induction (discussed earlier in this chapter) and sampling at the margins (see Chapter 2) in order to get at the heart of a phenomenon.

Discussion

In this dissertation, I have applied the deductive approach to assess the ways in which Durkheim’s ([1912]1995) theory of religion, Collins (2004) concept of Interaction Ritual Chains, and the structural Social Interactionist school’s approach to identity theory speak to the creation of the deadhead community and culture. Using an inductive approach and Hedström and Swedberg’s (1996) typology of mechanisms, I arrived at a number of mechanisms at work in deadhead cohesion: (1) *situational* (macro-level) mechanisms include internal and external constraint; (2) *individual action* (micro-level) mechanisms include self-transcendence, self-reinforcement, and self-talk; and (3) *transformational* (micro-level to macro-level) mechanisms include group maintenance and disruption. Future work should test these mechanisms using

groups that share characteristics with deadhead culture to reject, refine, or expand this list of mechanisms and better understand group cohesion.

No theory, and no study, can account for every aspect of human interaction, nor should it attempt to. However, what I have presented here raises several questions, the most pressing of which, I argue, are meaning-making and the role of emotions in cohesion research. Although the theories presented here explain how people interact in groups and how they work to match their identities to the group situation, they do not explain how individuals become attracted to these groups in the first place, why an individual becomes deeply involved in deadhead culture or simply attends shows, why some fans left the culture when Garcia died and others continued, what accounts for a concert attendee making themselves part of the “center” of a ritual as opposed to the “periphery,” and so on. Agency is addressed but not well explained. What do these activities mean to the individual? How does participation in the deadhead culture—or not—speak to meaning-making in individual lives? Stryker and Burke (2000) noted out that the structural social interactionist approach to identity theory does not pretend to answer this question, instead focusing on the performance of role-identities. Lawler (2002) and colleagues described the micro social order in terms of social exchange, but this approach speaks to the existence of meaning, but not meaning-creation itself. What meaning do these activities hold for participants? How do these activities fit into participants’ understanding of their lives?

Finally, most of the theorists in this study referenced emotion, but with little specification. Turner ([1969] 2009), Durkheim ([1912]1995) and Collins (2004) referenced shared emotions of a transcendent nature, which feel to the individual to be larger than themselves and that result from an altered state of consciousness during group rites. These emotions produce groups, societies, shared symbols, a moral order, and so on. Of the three,

Collins (2004), approached emotion with detail, identifying the conditions under which such emotions emerge and tying emotions to neurological and biological processes (in his description of entrainment). For the identity theorists, however, emotion is individual, subjective, functions to bind individuals to a group, and is references as little more than feeling positive or negative emotions, a reward for a successful performance. Taken together, it appears that externalized emotion has the power to create, whereas internalized emotion has the power to maintain (membership). Both processes are at work within the deadhead culture. These two emotional processes—one group-oriented, and the other oriented toward the fulfillment of individual needs—seem quite different, and it seems reasonable to assume that they function differently. Yet we know little about the difference. All of the above theorists, as well as Friedkin (2004) and Lawler (2002) and colleagues, saw a positive emotional state as desirable and sought after by the individual. Friedkin (2004) referenced “strong membership attractions and attachments” (410) as markers of a cohesive group. Lawler (2002) and colleagues argued that involuntary, positive or negative global emotions result from joint activities, and that through thinking about what triggered those emotions, these emotions transform into second-order, attributed emotions like pride or anger, where strong levels of positive emotion attributed toward the group leads to high levels of cohesion. Under what conditions would this two-stage model be appropriate? Is it appropriate to say that all individuals seek positive emotional experiences? Under what conditions?

Durkheim ([1912]1995), Collins (2004), McCall and Simmons ([1966] 1978), and Burke (Burke and Stets 2009) all posit some form of “storage” for emotion created through social interaction. This emotion aids in the individual’s sense of acceptance and belonging within the social structure. McCall and Simmons are quite vague, referring to this emotional store only as a

“buffer,” and Burke refers to this stored energy as a “reservoir.” These emotional stores serve as a store of emotion that can be tapped to sustain the individual’s positive self-concept between interactions, when an identity is disconfirmed, or when a new identity has yet to be confirmed. The buffer or the reservoir, then, is an emotional “snack” that staves off hunger in between meals. Like McCall and Simmons and Burke’s description of the creation of that emotion, these stores of energy are intensely personal (they reside within the individual) and individualized (although created through interaction, it is felt only by the individual). Lawler’s (2002) description of “good” and “bad” emotional responses to the individual’s actions, which are then translated into more specific emotions (“pride” and “shame,” perhaps) and attributed to a specific source, retains this intensely personal emotional aspect but adds a specific point at which the individual’s emotions are tied to a specific social actor. The emotion storage for Durkheim and Collins, however, is quite different. For them, the collective emotions that build solidarity must first be located externally to the individual, where it is then available for the individual through the use of symbols. That collective energy—for both Durkheim and Collins, the result of successful collective activity is joy—is invested in a collectively created symbol, which comes to represent the group. Once that symbol exists, it is used to represent the group and trigger feelings of belonging and carry group membership forward into the next encounter. Symbols also resurrect echoes of the emotion that created the symbol: the individual is able to use the symbol to cognitively access bodily and emotional memories that are tied to that symbol in the individual’s memory – a sort of indexing, if you will. Using the metaphor from above, because the emotional energy derived from the collective ritual can be recalled through the symbol, the emotional “meal,” although it diminishes in time, is far different from the steady emotional drip from successfully performing a role.

It seems likely that meaning-making and emotion are, like emotion and religion, ritual, and identity, tied up together in both human interaction and human introspection. By widening the field, we may learn something more about the nature of social cohesion.

Epilogue

Sometimes the light's all shining on me

Other times I can barely see

Lately it occurs to me

What a long strange trip it's been

“Truckin’”

(Garcia, Hunter, Lesh, and Weir 1970:131-34)

In March 2017 I attended the joint annual meeting of the Midwest Sociological Society and the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction to present a portion of this research. While waiting at the airport for the shuttle to the hotel, I realized that I had no small bills with which to tip the shuttle driver, and there were no options nearby for me to get change. Later, as I and a group of seven other meeting attendees were fighting our way across the road to the shuttle stop, I noticed that the woman in front of me had a half-dollar sized stealie embroidered on her jacket. She didn't seem like she wanted to talk, so I left her alone, but we ended up sharing a bench seat on the shuttle. When the driver announced that we were leaving and that tips were always welcome, I commented to her that I didn't have small bills. Her response? She immediately dug into her bag and gave me—a stranger she hadn't even spoken to—two dollar bills for a top, with no expectation of getting the money back. After thanking her, I asked her about her stealie, and we spent the next half-hour talking about shows, band members, and discovering that we were both at the 50th anniversary shows in Chicago. I didn't see her again after I left the shuttle, but we both left rejuvenated and happy, and that encounter still makes me smile—because of the kindness of a deadhead.

I have seen this kind of encounter repeated time and again over the past seven years, and it is not for nothing that deadheads cheer when the band sings “are you kind?” It may seem trite, but conducting this research fundamentally changed who I am. Perhaps this is simply the nature of participant observation: giving oneself over to the research experience should result in change. But still, I was not prepared to become part of this study population and for the study population to become part of who I am. I have learned more self-acceptance, because regardless of the day, I am the eyes of the world. I have learned to let things go when they can’t be controlled, because sometimes, all that’s left to do is smile, smile, smile. I have learned that it’s ok to be confused, because all I have to do is listen to the music play (and it has a calming effect). Not only do I have a family of origin encouraging me to complete my research; I have a broader family cheering me on, as well.

Thank you for your kindness to a stranger.

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Appendix A - Facebook Terms of Service

Retrieved May 17, 2016 from <https://www.facebook.com/terms>

This agreement was written in English (US). To the extent any translated version of this agreement conflicts with the English version, the English version controls. Please note that Section 16 contains certain changes to the general terms for users outside the United States.

Date of Last Revision: January 30, 2015

Statement of Rights and Responsibilities

This Statement of Rights and Responsibilities ("Statement," "Terms," or "SRR") derives from the [Facebook Principles](#), and is our terms of service that governs our relationship with users and others who interact with Facebook, as well as Facebook brands, products and services, which we call the "[Facebook Services](#)" or "[Services](#)". By using or accessing the Facebook Services, you agree to this Statement, as updated from time to time in accordance with Section 13 below. Additionally, you will find resources at the end of this document that help you understand how Facebook works.

Because Facebook provides a wide range of [Services](#), we may ask you to review and accept supplemental terms that apply to your interaction with a specific app, product, or service. To the extent those supplemental terms conflict with this SRR, the supplemental terms associated with the app, product, or service govern with respect to your use of such app, product or service to the extent of the conflict.

1. Privacy

Your privacy is very important to us. We designed our [Data Policy](#) to make important disclosures about how you can use Facebook to share with others and how we collect and can use your content and information. We encourage you to read the [Data Policy](#), and to use it to help you make informed decisions.

2. Sharing Your Content and Information

You own all of the content and information you post on Facebook, and you can control how it is shared through your [privacy](#) and [application settings](#). In addition:

1. For content that is covered by intellectual property rights, like photos and videos (IP content), you specifically give us the following permission, subject to your [privacy](#) and [application settings](#): you grant us a non-exclusive, transferable, sub-licensable, royalty-free, worldwide license to use any IP content that you post on or in connection with Facebook (IP License). This IP License ends when you delete your IP content or your account unless your content has been shared with others, and they have not deleted it.
2. When you delete IP content, it is deleted in a manner similar to emptying the recycle bin on a computer. However, you understand that removed content may persist in backup copies for a reasonable period of time (but will not be available to others).
3. When you use an application, the application may ask for your permission to access your content and information as well as content and information that others have shared with you. We require applications to respect your privacy, and your agreement with that application will control how the application can use, store, and transfer that content and information. (To learn more about Platform, including how you can control what information other people may share with applications, read our [Data Policy](#) and [Platform Page](#).)
4. When you publish content or information using the Public setting, it means that you are allowing everyone, including people off of Facebook, to access and use that information, and to associate it with you (i.e., your name and profile picture).
5. We always appreciate your feedback or other suggestions about Facebook, but you understand that we may use your feedback or suggestions without any obligation to compensate you for them (just as you have no

obligation to offer them).

3. **Safety**

We do our best to keep Facebook safe, but we cannot guarantee it. We need your help to keep Facebook safe, which includes the following commitments by you:

1. You will not post unauthorized commercial communications (such as spam) on Facebook.
2. You will not collect users' content or information, or otherwise access Facebook, using automated means (such as harvesting bots, robots, spiders, or scrapers) without our prior permission.
3. You will not engage in unlawful multi-level marketing, such as a pyramid scheme, on Facebook.
4. You will not upload viruses or other malicious code.
5. You will not solicit login information or access an account belonging to someone else.
6. You will not bully, intimidate, or harass any user.
7. You will not post content that: is hate speech, threatening, or pornographic; incites violence; or contains nudity or graphic or gratuitous violence.
8. You will not develop or operate a third-party application containing alcohol-related, dating or other mature content (including advertisements) without appropriate age-based restrictions.
9. You will not use Facebook to do anything unlawful, misleading, malicious, or discriminatory.
10. You will not do anything that could disable, overburden, or impair the proper working or appearance of Facebook, such as a denial of service attack or interference with page rendering or other Facebook functionality.
11. You will not facilitate or encourage any violations of this Statement or our policies.

4. **Registration and Account Security**

Facebook users provide their real names and information, and we need your help to keep it that way. Here are some commitments you make to us relating to registering and maintaining the security of your account:

1. You will not provide any false personal information on Facebook, or create an account for anyone other than yourself without permission.
2. You will not create more than one personal account.
3. If we disable your account, you will not create another one without our permission.
4. You will not use your personal timeline primarily for your own commercial gain, and will use a Facebook Page for such purposes.
5. You will not use Facebook if you are under 13.
6. You will not use Facebook if you are a convicted sex offender.
7. You will keep your contact information accurate and up-to-date.
8. You will not share your password (or in the case of developers, your secret key), let anyone else access your account, or do anything else that might jeopardize the security of your account.
9. You will not transfer your account (including any Page or application you administer) to anyone without first getting our written permission.
10. If you select a username or similar identifier for your account or Page, we reserve the right to remove or reclaim it if we believe it is appropriate (such as when a trademark owner complains about a username that does not closely relate to a user's actual name).

5. **Protecting Other People's Rights**

We respect other people's rights, and expect you to do the same.

1. You will not post content or take any action on Facebook that infringes or violates someone else's rights or otherwise violates the law.

2. We can remove any content or information you post on Facebook if we believe that it violates this Statement or our policies.
3. We provide you with tools to help you protect your intellectual property rights. To learn more, visit our [How to Report Claims of Intellectual Property Infringement](#) page.
4. If we remove your content for infringing someone else's copyright, and you believe we removed it by mistake, we will provide you with an opportunity to appeal.
5. If you repeatedly infringe other people's intellectual property rights, we will disable your account when appropriate.
6. You will not use our copyrights or Trademarks or any confusingly similar marks, except as expressly permitted by our Brand Usage Guidelines or with our prior written permission.
7. If you collect information from users, you will: obtain their consent, make it clear you (and not Facebook) are the one collecting their information, and post a privacy policy explaining what information you collect and how you will use it.
8. You will not post anyone's identification documents or sensitive financial information on Facebook.
9. You will not tag users or send email invitations to non-users without their consent. Facebook offers social reporting tools to enable users to provide feedback about tagging.

6. **Mobile and Other Devices**

1. We currently provide our mobile services for free, but please be aware that your carrier's normal rates and fees, such as text messaging and data charges, will still apply.
2. In the event you change or deactivate your mobile telephone number, you will update your account information on Facebook within 48 hours to ensure that your messages are not sent to the person who acquires your old number.
3. You provide consent and all rights necessary to enable users to sync (including through an application) their devices with any information that is visible to them on Facebook.

7. **Payments**

If you make a payment on Facebook, you agree to our [Payments Terms](#) unless it is stated that other terms apply.

8. **Special Provisions Applicable to Developers/Operators of Applications and Websites**

If you are a developer or operator of a Platform application or website or if you use Social Plugins, you must comply with the [Facebook Platform Policy](#).

9. **About Advertisements and Other Commercial Content Served or Enhanced by Facebook**

Our goal is to deliver advertising and other commercial or sponsored content that is valuable to our users and advertisers. In order to help us do that, you agree to the following:

1. You give us permission to use your name, profile picture, content, and information in connection with commercial, sponsored, or related content (such as a brand you like) served or enhanced by us. This means, for example, that you permit a business or other entity to pay us to display your name and/or profile picture with your content or information, without any compensation to you. If you have selected a specific audience for your content or information, we will respect your choice when we use it.
2. We do not give your content or information to advertisers without your consent.
3. You understand that we may not always identify paid services and communications as such.

10. **Special Provisions Applicable to Advertisers**

If you use our self-service advertising creation interfaces for creation, submission and/or delivery of any advertising or

other commercial or sponsored activity or content (collectively, the “Self-Serve Ad Interfaces”), you agree to our [Self-Serve Ad Terms](#). In addition, your advertising or other commercial or sponsored activity or content placed on Facebook or our publisher network will comply with our [Advertising Policies](#).

11. Special Provisions Applicable to Pages

If you create or administer a Page on Facebook, or run a promotion or an offer from your Page, you agree to our [Pages Terms](#).

12. Special Provisions Applicable to Software

1. If you download or use our software, such as a stand-alone software product, an app, or a browser plugin, you agree that from time to time, the software may download and install upgrades, updates and additional features from us in order to improve, enhance, and further develop the software.
2. You will not modify, create derivative works of, decompile, or otherwise attempt to extract source code from us, unless you are expressly permitted to do so under an open source license, or we give you express written permission.

13. Amendments

1. We'll notify you before we make changes to these terms and give you the opportunity to review and comment on the revised terms before continuing to use our Services.
2. If we make changes to policies, guidelines or other terms referenced in or incorporated by this Statement, we may provide notice on the Site Governance Page.
3. Your continued use of the Facebook Services, following notice of the changes to our terms, policies or guidelines, constitutes your acceptance of our amended terms, policies or guidelines.

14. Termination

If you violate the letter or spirit of this Statement, or otherwise create risk or possible legal exposure for us, we can stop providing all or part of Facebook to you. We will notify you by email or at the next time you attempt to access your account. You may also delete your account or disable your application at any time. In all such cases, this Statement shall terminate, but the following provisions will still apply: 2.2, 2.4, 3-5, 9.3, and 14-18.

15. Disputes

1. You will resolve any claim, cause of action or dispute (claim) you have with us arising out of or relating to this Statement or Facebook exclusively in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California or a state court located in San Mateo County, and you agree to submit to the personal jurisdiction of such courts for the purpose of litigating all such claims. The laws of the State of California will govern this Statement, as well as any claim that might arise between you and us, without regard to conflict of law provisions.
2. If anyone brings a claim against us related to your actions, content or information on Facebook, you will indemnify and hold us harmless from and against all damages, losses, and expenses of any kind (including reasonable legal fees and costs) related to such claim. Although we provide rules for user conduct, we do not control or direct users' actions on Facebook and are not responsible for the content or information users transmit or share on Facebook. We are not responsible for any offensive, inappropriate, obscene, unlawful or otherwise objectionable content or information you may encounter on Facebook. We are not responsible for the conduct, whether online or offline, of any user of Facebook.

3. WE TRY TO KEEP FACEBOOK UP, BUG-FREE, AND SAFE, BUT YOU USE IT AT YOUR OWN RISK. WE ARE PROVIDING FACEBOOK AS IS WITHOUT ANY EXPRESS OR IMPLIED WARRANTIES INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, AND NON-INFRINGEMENT. WE DO NOT GUARANTEE THAT FACEBOOK WILL ALWAYS BE SAFE, SECURE OR ERROR-FREE OR THAT FACEBOOK WILL ALWAYS FUNCTION WITHOUT DISRUPTIONS, DELAYS OR IMPERFECTIONS. FACEBOOK IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTIONS, CONTENT, INFORMATION, OR DATA OF THIRD PARTIES, AND YOU RELEASE US, OUR DIRECTORS, OFFICERS, EMPLOYEES, AND AGENTS FROM ANY CLAIMS AND DAMAGES, KNOWN AND UNKNOWN, ARISING OUT OF OR IN ANY WAY CONNECTED WITH ANY CLAIM YOU HAVE AGAINST ANY SUCH THIRD PARTIES. IF YOU ARE A CALIFORNIA RESIDENT, YOU WAIVE CALIFORNIA CIVIL CODE §1542, WHICH SAYS: A GENERAL RELEASE DOES NOT EXTEND TO CLAIMS WHICH THE CREDITOR DOES NOT KNOW OR SUSPECT TO EXIST IN HIS OR HER FAVOR AT THE TIME OF EXECUTING THE RELEASE, WHICH IF KNOWN BY HIM OR HER MUST HAVE MATERIALLY AFFECTED HIS OR HER SETTLEMENT WITH THE DEBTOR. WE WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ANY LOST PROFITS OR OTHER CONSEQUENTIAL, SPECIAL, INDIRECT, OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES ARISING OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THIS STATEMENT OR FACEBOOK, EVEN IF WE HAVE BEEN ADVISED OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGES. OUR AGGREGATE LIABILITY ARISING OUT OF THIS STATEMENT OR FACEBOOK WILL NOT EXCEED THE GREATER OF ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$100) OR THE AMOUNT YOU HAVE PAID US IN THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS. APPLICABLE LAW MAY NOT ALLOW THE LIMITATION OR EXCLUSION OF LIABILITY OR INCIDENTAL OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES, SO THE ABOVE LIMITATION OR EXCLUSION MAY NOT APPLY TO YOU. IN SUCH CASES, FACEBOOK'S LIABILITY WILL BE LIMITED TO THE FULLEST EXTENT PERMITTED BY APPLICABLE LAW.

16. Special Provisions Applicable to Users Outside the United States

We strive to create a global community with consistent standards for everyone, but we also strive to respect local laws. The following provisions apply to users and non-users who interact with Facebook outside the United States:

1. You consent to having your personal data transferred to and processed in the United States.
2. If you are located in a country embargoed by the United States, or are on the U.S. Treasury Department's list of Specially Designated Nationals you will not engage in commercial activities on Facebook (such as advertising or payments) or operate a Platform application or website. You will not use Facebook if you are prohibited from receiving products, services, or software originating from the United States.
3. Certain specific terms that apply only for German users are available [here](#).

17. Definitions

1. By "Facebook" or "Facebook Services" we mean the features and services we make available, including through (a) our website at www.facebook.com and any other Facebook branded or co-branded websites (including sub-domains, international versions, widgets, and mobile versions); (b) our Platform; (c) social plugins such as the Like button, the Share button and other similar offerings; and (d) other media, brands, products, services, software (such as a toolbar), devices, or networks now existing or later developed. Facebook reserves the right to designate, in its sole discretion, that certain of our brands, products, or services are governed by separate terms and not this SRR.
2. By "Platform" we mean a set of APIs and services (such as content) that enable others, including application developers and website operators, to retrieve data from Facebook or provide data to us.
3. By "information" we mean facts and other information about you, including actions taken by users and non-users who interact with Facebook.
4. By "content" we mean anything you or other users post, provide or share using Facebook Services.
5. By "data" or "user data" or "user's data" we mean any data, including a user's content or information that you or third parties can retrieve from Facebook or provide to Facebook through Platform.
6. By "post" we mean post on Facebook or otherwise make available by using Facebook.

7. By "use" we mean use, run, copy, publicly perform or display, distribute, modify, translate, and create derivative works of.
8. By "application" we mean any application or website that uses or accesses Platform, as well as anything else that receives or has received data from us. If you no longer access Platform but have not deleted all data from us, the term application will apply until you delete the data.
9. By "Trademarks" we mean the list of trademarks provided [here](#).

18. Other

1. If you are a resident of or have your principal place of business in the US or Canada, this Statement is an agreement between you and Facebook, Inc. Otherwise, this Statement is an agreement between you and Facebook Ireland Limited. References to "us," "we," and "our" mean either Facebook, Inc. or Facebook Ireland Limited, as appropriate.
2. This Statement makes up the entire agreement between the parties regarding Facebook, and supersedes any prior agreements.
3. If any portion of this Statement is found to be unenforceable, the remaining portion will remain in full force and effect.
4. If we fail to enforce any of this Statement, it will not be considered a waiver.
5. Any amendment to or waiver of this Statement must be made in writing and signed by us.
6. You will not transfer any of your rights or obligations under this Statement to anyone else without our consent.
7. All of our rights and obligations under this Statement are freely assignable by us in connection with a merger, acquisition, or sale of assets, or by operation of law or otherwise.
8. Nothing in this Statement shall prevent us from complying with the law.
9. This Statement does not confer any third party beneficiary rights.
10. We reserve all rights not expressly granted to you.
11. You will comply with all applicable laws when using or accessing Facebook.

By using or accessing Facebook Services, you agree that we can collect and use such content and information in accordance with the [Data Policy](#) as amended from time to time. You may also want to review the following documents, which provide additional information about your use of Facebook:

- [Payment Terms](#): These additional terms apply to all payments made on or through Facebook, unless it is stated that other terms apply.
- [Platform Page](#): This page helps you better understand what happens when you add a third-party application or use Facebook Connect, including how they may access and use your data.
- [Facebook Platform Policies](#): These guidelines outline the policies that apply to applications, including Connect sites.
- [Advertising Policies](#): These guidelines outline the policies that apply to advertisements placed on Facebook.
- [Self-Serve Ad Terms](#): These terms apply when you use the Self-Serve Ad Interfaces to create, submit, or deliver any advertising or other commercial or sponsored activity or content.
- [Promotions Guidelines](#): These guidelines outline the policies that apply if you offer contests, sweepstakes, and other types of promotions on Facebook.
- [Facebook Brand Resources](#): These guidelines outline the policies that apply to use of Facebook trademarks, logos and screenshots.
- [How to Report Claims of Intellectual Property Infringement](#)
- [Pages Terms](#): These guidelines apply to your use of Facebook Pages.
- [Community Standards](#): These guidelines outline our expectations regarding the content you post to Facebook and your activity on Facebook.

To access the Statement of Rights and Responsibilities in several different languages, change the language setting for your Facebook session by clicking on the language link in the left corner of most pages. If the Statement is not available in the language you select, we will default to the English version.

Appendix B - Interview Themes

Over 40 years⁶ of Grateful Dead fans coming together – that’s a remarkable thing. I’d like to understand why; to let Deadheads and non-Deadheads tell their stories. What does the band or culture mean to you? Specifically, I am looking for insight into the following areas:

Becoming: how are people introduced to the band/style of music and how does one become a fan?

Belonging: how do you know if you are a Deadhead? What is that like?

Experiencing/participating: What does it mean to be a Deadhead?

“Getting it”: What is the “it” that people “get”?

Sharing: How does a Deadhead share their experience and why?

Ending: How does one exit the Deadhead culture or cope with the death of fellow fans or band members, or the breakup of the band?⁷

⁶ This number changed to 50 years at the appropriate point.

⁷ Approximately two weeks prior to the 2014 shows at Red Rocks, *The Further* (Lesh and Weir) announced that they would no longer be touring. As a natural response to events, then, the question about “ending” typically became focused on that announcement than on the question as written.

Appendix C – Online Survey Questions

Expected time

This survey will take between 20 minutes - 2 hours, depending on two things: (1) How many questions you choose to respond to and how fully you answer the questions (you are not required to answer them all and may stop at any time) and (2) Whether you choose to type or to upload an audio file with your answers. Thank you for your time.

Demographics – Please provide some very basic data about yourself

What year were you born? (Drop-down box)

What is your gender? Male / Female / Other

Which of the following best matches your race?

- White/Caucasian
- African American
- Hispanic
- Asian
- Native American
- Pacific Islander
- Other

What is your profession/job? (Text box)

What is your family status? (Married, divorced, etc; children, no children, etc) (Text box)

About this survey

This survey is meant to function, as much as possible, similarly to the face-to-face interviews also being conducted on this topic. The questions in the sections that follow are meant to be open-ended and to encourage storytelling. The more detail you can recall, the more helpful it will be.

You are not required to answer all of the questions, and you may save your changes and come back to finish later if you choose.

Thank you for taking the time to share your experiences with me.

You may record your answers using audio recording software on your computer or other electronic device, and then upload the recording here. Please note: there is no audio option within the survey itself; if you choose this option you will have to record on your own device and then upload the file. Another file upload option appears at the end of the survey.

Beginnings

Think back to the first time you ever heard a Grateful Dead song. What song was it? How did you react to it? (Text box)

Think back to your first show. How did you come to be there? Close your eyes for a moment and imagine that you are back at that show. What did it feel like? Sound like? Smell or taste like? What happened there? (Text box)

What were the people like at your first show or shows? Think back and try to remember - what did they look like? How did they act? How did they dress? (Text box)

When did you know that you were becoming a fan? How did you know? Alternately, if you don't consider yourself to be a fan, when did you know that? How? (Text box)

What is it that drew you to this music/culture? (Text box)

Belonging

Do you consider yourself to be a Deadhead? Why or why not? (Text box)

How do you know if you or someone else is a Deadhead? What identifies someone as a Deadhead? (Text box)

What does it mean to be a Deadhead? What is it like? (Text box)

How much of your life is influenced or taken up by Grateful Dead music or the lifestyle? Please explain. (Text box)

Are all fans or Deadheads the same? Why or why not? (Text box)

Experiencing/Participating

People often talk about "getting it." What does it mean to "get it"? What is the "it" that people "get"? (Text box)

We could think of going to a show as a process. Looking at it that way, can you walk me through going to a show? (Text box)

Close your eyes for a moment and think about the parking lot at a show. What do you see? What does it smell like? Sound like? Taste or feel like? Feel free to tell a story about an experience you've had. (Text box)

Think back to a show that was especially meaningful for you. Tell me that story. What led up to it? What happened that was so meaningful? How did it affect you? (Text box)

Are all shows the same? Why or why not? (Text box)

Sharing

Do you share your experiences with others? If so, how? What do you get from sharing with others? (Text box)

Would you say that your experience begins and ends at the shows, or does the music/lifestyle touch other areas of your life? Please explain. (Text box)

Explain "miracle." Have you ever been miracled or have you miracled anyone else? Why? How did it feel? (Text box)

Ending

Getting off the bus: why do people get off the bus? How does that work? Please share a personal experience if you would like. (Text box)

Where were you when you learned that Jerry was gone? How did the news of his passing affect you? Those around you? (Text box)

Was the Grateful Dead still the Grateful Dead after Jerry died? Why or why not? (Text box)

Band members are aging and several will no longer be touring. Are we seeing the end of the Grateful Dead phenomenon, in your opinion? Please explain. (Text box)

The past several years have seen the passing of several members of the Deadhead culture. Have these deaths affected you? Please explain. (Text box)

If I said "the Grateful Dead is over," what would you say to me? How does the statement make you feel? What did it make you think? (Text box)

Reunion Shows

How did you learn about the 50th reunion shows? (Text box)

Did the reunion shows change anything for you? For example, did your daily routine stay the same or alter in any way? (Text box)

The band's choice of Trey rather than John K. or another guitarist has been a source of controversy. What do you think about the choice? Did it make a difference to you about whether or not you will attend the shows? Why or why not? (Text box)

Are you attending/did you attend any of the 50th reunion shows? If so, which ones? How did you choose? (Text box)

Approximately how much money did you spend on going to the show(s), if any? (Text box)

Are you going to the shows without tickets? If so, why? (Text box)

[Before the shows] What are you most looking forward to? (Text box)

[After the show] Did the shows live up to your expectations? Tell me about your experiences. What did it feel like? Look like? Did it look/feel like you expected? (Text box)

Upload audio responses

You may record your answers using audio recording software on your computer or other electronic device, and then upload the recording here.

Please note: there is no audio option within the survey itself; if you choose this option you will have to record on your own device and then upload the file.