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CONFERENCE PROGRAM

The Third Annual Meeting of the Grateful Dead Studies Association

Schedule

The Third Annual Meeting of the Grateful Dead Studies Association, held at the Fifty-Third Popular Culture Association conference, San Antonio, Texas, April 6–8, 2023.

Session 1: The Dead in the Eighties

Thursday, April 6, 2023 (4:00–5:30 p.m.) *Room 15*

Chair: Nicholas G. Meriwether, Haight Street Art Center

Granville Ganter, St. John's University

“Let's Go: The Dead in the Early Eighties.”

Nicholas G. Meriwether, Haight Street Art Center

“Halloween '85 and the Hidden Grateful Dead.”

Session 2: Dimensions of the Deadhead Experience

Thursday, April 6, 2023 (5:45–7:15 p.m.) *Room 15*

Chair: Brett Whitley, University of Georgia

Nathaniel Kogan, Rowland Hall School

“Disability and the Dead.”

Annabelle J. Walsh, Parsons School of Design

“The Carnavalesque Dimensions of Deadhead Aesthetics.”

Brett Whitley, University of Georgia

Monica Sklar, University of Georgia

“It Came From the Lot: A Study of Fan-Made Grateful Dead T-Shirts.”

Session 3: Roundtable: Library and Information Science in Grateful Dead Studies: Foundational Issues and Emerging Topics

Thursday, April 6, 2023 (7:30–9:00 p.m.) *Room 15*

Chair: Gary Burnett, Florida State University

Panelists: Joseph A. Salem, Jr., Duke University Library
Shan Sutton, University of Arizona Library

Session 4: Mysticism, Spirituality and Transcendence in the Grateful Dead

Friday, April 7, 2023 (12:30–2:00 p.m.) *Room 15*

Chair: Deepak Sarma, Case Western Reserve University

Michael J. Kaler, University of Toronto–Mississauga

“‘Magic is What We Do, Music is How We Do It’: Music as a Facilitator of Transcendent Experience.”

Deepak Sarma, Case Western Reserve University

“The Grateful Dead, Mystical Experience, and the Creative Moment: Being a Vessel, Being a Medium.”

Session 5: Musicological Aspects of the Grateful Dead

Friday, April 7, 2023 (2:15–3:45 p.m.) *Room 15*

Chair: Shaugn O’Donnell, City College, City University of New York

Chadwick Jenkins, City College, City University of New York

“Bleshing: Listening through Phil Lesh at Veneta, Oregon 1972.”

Shaugn O’Donnell, City College, City University of New York

“Weir(d) Rhythm Guitar.”

Session 6: Roundtable: The Bust at 710: The Grateful Dead and the Politics of Pot

Friday, April 7, 2023 (4:00–5:30 p.m.) *Room 15*

Chair: Susan Balter-Reitz, Montana State University–Billings

Panelists: Susan Balter-Reitz, Montana State University–Billings

Andrew McGaan, Kirkland & Ellis, LLC

Nicholas G. Meriwether, Haight Street Art Center

Peter Richardson, San Francisco State University

Session 7: The Dead and the Sixties

Friday, April 7, 2023 (5:45–7:15 p.m.) *Room 15*

Chair: Peter Richardson, San Francisco State University

Jay Williams, University of Chicago Press, *ret.*

“Whose Sixties? A Cultural Context for the Grateful Dead.”

Ben Luke Williams, Naropa University

“Aesthetic Experience and the Grateful Dead: The Aegis of the Acid Tests.”

Peter Richardson, San Francisco State University

“Covering the Dead: *Rolling Stone*, the Grateful Dead, and the Social Revolution.”

Session 8: Literary Aspects of the Grateful Dead

Saturday, April 8, 2023 (9:00–10:30 a.m.) *Room 15*

Chair: Nathaniel R. Racine, Texas A&M International University

Christopher K. Coffman, Boston University

“‘Like an Angel’: Robert Hunter, Rainer Maria Rilke, and the Problematic Muse.”

Jason Robert Gallagher, Maryville University

“‘The Holy on Their Knees’: The Catholic Background of the Hunter/Garcia Partnership.”

Nathaniel R. Racine, Texas A&M International University

“Robert M. Petersen in Mexico: On His Own and Among Others.”

Session 9: The Beat Generation and the Grateful Dead

Saturday, April 8, 2023 (10:45 a.m.–12:15 p.m.) *Room 15*

Chair: Granville Ganter, St. John’s University

Matthew B. Lynch, Oregon State University

“Ecstatic Utterances and Improvisational Epiphanies: Formlessness Beyond Form in Allen Ginsberg’s Poetry and the Music of the Grateful Dead.”

Julie DeLong, Elgin Community College

“The Golden Road to Desolation: The Motif of the Road in the Lyrics of the Grateful Dead and the Works of Jack Kerouac.”

Session 10: Roundtable: Teaching the Grateful Dead: A Multi-Disciplinary Reflection on Extending Pedagogical Theory and Praxis

Saturday, April 8, 2023 (12:30–2:00 p.m.) *Room 15*

Chair: Natalie J. Dollar, Oregon State University–Cascades

Panelists: Steven Patrick Garabedian, Marist College

Chadwick Jenkins, City College, City University of New York

Eric Jay Mlyn, Duke University

Session 11: Association Business Meeting

Saturday, April 8, 2023 (2:15–3:45 p.m.) *Room 15*

Chair: Nicholas G. Meriwether, Haight Street Art Center

Panelists: Susan Balter-Reitz, Montana State University–Billings

Granville Ganter, St. John’s University

Deepak Sarma, Case Western Reserve University

Welcome

Reports

Keynote Presentation:

Granville Ganter, St. John’s University

“Fan Studies and the Grateful Dead.”

The Third Annual Meeting of the Grateful Dead Studies Association

Abstracts

Christopher K. Coffman, “‘Like an Angel’: Robert Hunter, Rainer Maria Rilke, and the Problematic Muse.”

Robert Hunter was not only the Grateful Dead’s premiere lyricist, but also a published poet. During the first decades of his career as a writer, his work appeared only infrequently. However, the 1987 publication of his translation of Rainer Maria Rilke’s *Duino Elegies* signaled a change in practice, and the following decade saw a tremendous increase in publication. What was it about translating and publishing Rilke’s *Elegies* that motivated Hunter to publish more? This paper will focus on both poets’ complicated relations with the muse. As his listeners know, Hunter’s songs often dealt with the nature of the muse, and I argue that the muse as presented in Hunter’s writings takes on a particularly Rilkean cast in the 1990s.

More particularly, this paper will read excerpts from Hunter’s poems alongside Rilke’s, demonstrating that Hunter follows Rilke’s example in three ways. First, both are drawn to the notion of supernatural inspiration. Secondly, they both find the workings of such inspiration fraught. Consequently, although they have a strong attachment to supernaturally inspired verse, both are unable to accept the role of the muse uncritically. Finally, this inclination to greet the muse with suspicion frequently makes inspiration not only something that plays a role in the origin of their poems, but something that often serves as poems’ subject matter. Tracing the development of this tendency in Hunter’s work not only indicates a point of intersection between his poetry and Rilke’s, but suggests that some measure of his increased publication in the later 1980s and 1990s

was motivated by a careful look, through the lens of the Austrian poet's verse, at the nature and promise of poetic inspiration.

Julie DeLong, "The Golden Road to Desolation: The Motif of the Road in the Lyrics of the Grateful Dead and the Works of Jack Kerouac."

The Beats and the Grateful Dead frenetically traveled the country for the sake of the journey; the destination was secondary. The Beats' philosophy galvanized young people like Jerry Garcia, who sought more than what mainstream consumerist culture offered. When "the bus came by," the Grateful Dead got on board, beginning a literal and metaphorical journey. That decision helps explain why the Grateful Dead have long been understood as being more than just a band. One of the most important roles they served was to continue the legacy of the Beats: to Garcia, the Dead "represent the spirit of being able to go out and have an adventure in America at large."

Although the road initially offered promise for Kerouac and the Dead, its power to enchant later waned. Disillusioned with fame, both Kerouac and Garcia turned inward, seeking solace in inebriation, unable to shed the weight of their reputations as American counterculture heroes. While the road for both men had earlier been golden, ripe with opportunity, toward the end of the Dead's career, the speaker of "So Many Roads" simply wants "one to take me home." Similarly, the protagonist of *Desolation Angels* descends into a nihilistic ambivalence with the lifestyle that formerly entranced and energized him. This paper will examine the romanticization of, and the disillusionment with, the nomadic lifestyle led by the Dead and the Beats by analyzing the motif of the road in the lyrics of the Grateful Dead and in Kerouac's *On the Road* and *Desolation Angels*.

Jason Robert Gallagher, "'The Holy on Their Knees': The Catholic Background of the Hunter/Garcia Partnership."

Little explored in the literature about the writing partnership between Jerry Garcia and Robert Hunter is their shared Catholic upbringing. Garcia was the more outspoken of the two about the enduring influence of his childhood faith; as late as the 1990s, he observed that he "was raised a Catholic so it's very hard for me to get out of that way of think-

ing” (Brown and Novick 1995, 173). Hunter also grew up in a Catholic home and his work reveals a number of Christian tenets and principles, as scholars such as Michael Kaler, David Bryan, Pittman Potter, and Andrew McGaan have explored. This presentation examines the role that Catholicism played in Garcia and Hunter’s poetic and artistic partnership and how these basic tenets and teachings informed their songs, in particular the humanism that so typifies their work. Following Byron’s *Ten Principles of Catholic Social Thought* (2017), the basic principles of “human dignity” fundamental to Catholicism help to define the songs “St. Stephen,” “Days Between,” and “The Wheel,” showing how they illustrate the continuing influence of Catholicism on the two men’s work throughout the Dead’s career. As Dead studies deepens its exploration of the spiritual and religious dimensions of the Dead’s work and impact, the role of Catholicism constitutes a vital element.

Granville Ganter, “Let’s Go: The Dead in the Early Eighties.”

This paper asks how we might talk about the music of the first half of the 1980s, which is a relatively fallow area for musical discussions of the Dead. In his authorized band biography *A Long Strange Trip*, Dennis McNally’s account of the early ’80s is instructive. The era is glossed in about forty pages: he makes a brief compliment about the jam after “He’s Gone” at Nassau in 1981 and moves on. Indeed, rather than talk about the music, most of the band autobiographies and other discussions of the early ’80s focus on frustrations with Garcia’s heroin use, epitomized by the “Chief Smoking Moccasin” syndrome so graphically recounted in Rock Scully’s *Living with the Dead*.

Music criticism is no stranger to this terrain, however: there is an extensive critical literature on twentieth-century jazz which also wrestles with the paradox between inspired music and drug use, especially alcohol, opiates, and cocaine. This paper will draw on that earlier discourse to ask what we might hear if we don’t punish the music even as we lament Garcia’s addiction. There is much to consider: the early ’80s is characterized by Brent Mydland’s introduction to the band and an exciting transformation of their sound; the advent of a regularized touring rhythm of shows and the growing role of Bob Weir; and continued improvements to their

concert sound system. Garcia also developed further technical mastery during this period, becoming a guitarist of speed and dizzying complexity. Although there is much to say about how the developing Dead scene shaped the music of the early '80s, this paper will focus on the music itself, referring to examples from 1980–85 that illustrate how their sound developed a rich and ornate tapestry of effects.

Chadwick Jenkins, “Bleshing: Listening through Phil Lesh at Veneta, Oregon 1972.”

Early in his autobiography, Phil Lesh stresses the importance of Theodore Sturgeon’s 1953 science fiction novel, *More Than Human*, as a model for the attempts of the Grateful Dead to achieve a “group mind.” Although Lesh emphasizes Sturgeon’s neologism “bleshing” (a seeming combination of “blending” and “meshing”), a major theme of the novel is the importance of listening: listening beyond what is merely said, listening as a kind of spiritual openness, listening as anticipation, and listening as action, not passivity.

Rich Mahan’s interactive application, “Playing in the Band: A Grateful Dead Interactive Experience” allows users to manipulate the mixes of selected performances from the Veneta Oregon show of August 27, 1972. Being able to concentrate solely on what Phil Lesh performs reveals a wealth of insight not readily apparent when listening to the group as a whole. Through closer examination, one hears at least three salient aspects of Lesh’s playing: his variable orientation toward the beat (shifting in response to what others are doing), his penchant for risk (trying something out then “making it right” through variable repetition), and his alternation between the traditional role of the bass and his celebrated deviation from that role.

This paper listens through selected portions of Lesh’s performances on “Bertha” and “Playing in the Band” from the Veneta show to assess his contribution to the “group mind” as a bass player and his strategies for accessing that collective. Using Sturgeon’s ideas about listening combined with selected insights from phenomenology, specifically Merleau-Ponty and Levinas—all inspired by Gestalt psychology—this paper will portray Lesh’s playing as a form of active listening. By listening through

Lesh, we develop an active mode of creative listening that alternately elides with the group mind of the Grateful Dead and faces up, in the manner of Levinas, to its radical alterity.

Michael J. Kaler, “‘Magic Is What We Do. Music Is How We Do It’: Music as a Facilitator of Transcendent Experience.”

A long-running theme in Grateful Dead studies is the degree to which the band’s music and the audience’s reaction to it had spiritual or even religious dimensions. In addition to my work (Kaler, forthcoming), scholars such as David Bryan (2012), Joseph Holt (2012), Daniel Pinti (2022), Pitman Potter (2014) and others have also argued that some of the uniqueness and power of the Grateful Dead’s music can be better understood if we see the band as attempting not just to play music, but rather to create musical contexts that would be favorable to spiritual or religious experience. This understanding of music as having the potential to create transcendent experience is not unique to the Grateful Dead, of course; scholars such as Bivins, Brumell, Cobussen, Hill, Partridge, and Sylvan have discussed how music can help to feed a hunger for re-enchantment shared by listeners living in an allegedly disenchanted modern secularized Western context.

This presentation draws on their work to discuss some of the ways in which modern music’s connection to transcendent experience has been theorized, particularly with regard to music’s ability to create significant experiences without set meanings, and will show how taking this work into consideration can enhance our understanding of the spiritual ambitions at the core of the Grateful Dead’s work. As musicological work on the Dead’s project deepens, the scholarly assessment of its larger contexts plays an increasingly critical role in grounding the discourse about the band’s significance.

Nathaniel Kogan, “Disability and the Dead.”

Throughout their career, and even after Jerry Garcia’s death and the surviving band members’ subsequent projects, the Grateful Dead inspired their fans to form a radically inclusive community. Dead concerts became gathering places not only for counterculturalists who emerged in San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury in the 1960s but also a place where, in time,

recovering alcoholics, tapers, dancers, and even political conservatives all found a sense of community and connection. One group that became a notable subsection of Dead shows in the 1980s were deaf individuals, nicknamed “Deafheads.” While this group—individuals without the ability to hear who would presumably not find audio-centric concerts of interest—seems an unlikely one to forge a community around the Dead, their existence highlights the intersection between the Grateful Dead, their fanbase, and people with disabilities.

Using a disability studies lens, this paper explores how the Dead and the scene they inspired fostered a space for fans with disabilities. In the light of disability history, this topic raises several key questions: how did the emergence of the independent living and disability rights movement in San Francisco in the late 1960s intersect with the subculture around the Grateful Dead? How did the spaces of Grateful Dead concerts create impromptu venues of accessibility and transform notions of what defined one as “able”? How did psychedelics and other mind-altering drugs create openness to neuro-diversity amongst the Dead community? This paper offers a preliminary examination of these questions to suggest that the Dead phenomenon’s embrace of those with disabilities is central to our understanding of the Dead. As Dead studies widens its theoretical and disciplinary reach, disability studies represents an important addition to the discourse.

Matthew B. Lynch, “Ecstatic Utterances and Improvisational Epiphanies: Formlessness Beyond Form in Allen Ginsberg’s Poetry and the Music of the Grateful Dead.”

Allen Ginsberg, along with his friend and sometime lover Neal Cassady, connected the Beats with the countercultural movement spearheaded by the Merry Pranksters and their fellow Acid Test avatars, the Grateful Dead. Ginsberg, along with other countercultural figures such as Ram Dass and Pir Vilayat Khan, also formed a bridge between East and West. Ginsberg’s poetry utilized mystical themes drawn from his travels to India and elsewhere. The psychedelic movement’s embrace of mystical ideas later manifested in the music of the Beatles, the Grateful Dead, and others. This presentation uses the Sufi concept *shatt*, or ecstatic utterance, to examine aspects of Ginsberg’s writing and the Dead’s improvisational

music. The genealogies and webs of connection among the mystical traditions Ginsberg and the counterculture engaged with (including Hindu, Buddhist, and occult philosophies) provide a foundation for exploring the mastery of technical forms that allows for the ecstatic to emerge in language, thought, and music, using Ginsberg's poetics and members of the Dead's statements as my guide.

I argue that, in order to "have faith in this form that has no form," as Jerry Garcia put it, one must first acquire the technical skills in the art form to engage with possibilities of formlessness. As Sophia Arjuna's recent *Buying Buddha, Selling Rumi* illustrates, theories and methods developed by scholars such as Carl Ernst, Marcia Hermansen, and Fate-meh Keshavarz to study Sufism can also connect American pop cultural phenomena, such as the Dead's *Blues for Allah* and Ginsberg's "The Terms I Think of Reality," though other examples abound. This paper offers a first look at how this approach can facilitate broader understanding of the Grateful Dead phenomenon.

Nicholas G. Meriwether, "Halloween '85 and the Hidden Grateful Dead."

For decades, Deadheads have grouched that the band's archival releases have neglected the Dead's work in the early to mid-1980s. Although that has begun to change in recent years, notably with the recent release of the six-show box set *In And Out Of The Garden: Madison Square Garden '81, '82, '83*, this remains a largely unexplored era, both by official recordings as well as the band's chroniclers. Yet the years from 1981 to 1986 represent a vital period in the Dead's history, marked by increasing ticket sales, ongoing development of the band's sound, and evolution in their repertoire, all of which informed powerful performances that furthered the Dead's reputation and expanded their reach, both geographically and demographically.

This paper uses the band's sole concert in South Carolina as a lens for exploring these themes. The show the Dead performed in Columbia on Halloween 1985 has never been considered epic, but it won the hearts of both seasoned fans and locals, and it speaks to the transformative power of even—and perhaps especially—minor shows. Viewed from a micro-historical perspective, the Columbia show offers insights into how the

early to mid-1980s can be better integrated into the dominant narratives of Grateful Dead history, suggesting useful additional avenues for theorizing the Dead's concert history.

Shawn O'Donnell, "Weir(d) Rhythm Guitar."

It is generally accepted among listeners, critics, and musicians that Bob Weir's rhythm guitar style is highly unusual, perhaps best summarized in a 2014 *New Yorker* article: "To the initial exasperation of his bandmates, who wanted someone to keep time more diligently, he developed one of the most unusual styles in rock and roll, built on lyric asides and cunning contrapuntal remarks that suggest a line of melody traveling through the map of the chord changes" (Wilkinson 2014). In numerous interviews, Weir cites piano players, particular McCoy Tyner, as one of his primary influences—an influence scholars have noted (cf. Boone 2016)—while on other occasions he mentions modeling his approach on the role of horn sections or second violins.

In 2022, Dead.net launched an interactive application called "Playing in the Band—A Grateful Dead Interactive Experience" (www.dead.net/playingintheband) that allows users to jam along with selected songs from the August 27, 1972, performance in Veneta, OR. Through the mixing board interface of the app, users can mute, isolate, and change the volumes of individual band members, creating an invaluable tool for analytical musicologists studying the improvisational techniques of the Dead. Having access to Weir's parts gives us a rare opportunity to both hear him completely isolated and in contrapuntal combination with any subset of his bandmates.

Using passages from "Bertha" and "Playing in the Band," this paper is an exploration of how Weir navigates a 'map' of chord changes, simultaneously performing his role as second guitarist, serving the song structure, and interacting with the rest of the band, who are tracing their own paths through the changes.

Boone, Graeme M. 2016. "McCoy Tyner and the Grateful Dead." Paper presented at the Southwest Popular/American Culture conference, Albuquerque, NM February 12, 2016; Wilkinson, Alec. 2014. "Grateful for Bob Weir." *New Yorker*, April 25, 2014.

Nathaniel R. Racine, "Robert M. Petersen in Mexico: On His Own and Among Others."

Perhaps best known for the handful of lyrics he wrote for the Grateful Dead, Robert M. Petersen was first and foremost a poet. Steeped in the countercultural scene in San Francisco during the 1960s and 1970s, he led an itinerant life "from Vancouver to Guadalajara," as fellow lyricist and poet Robert Hunter writes in his foreword to *Alleys of the Heart* (1988), Petersen's book of posthumously collected poetry. This paper presents a preliminary analysis of four poems from that collection, each identified as written in Mexico in the mid-1970s in Ajijic, on the shores of Lake Chapala or in Yelapa, on the Pacific Coast. Located in the western state of Jalisco, both were favorite locations on the expatriate circuit in Mexico. These poems offer readers a glimpse of Petersen as one of the many writers and artists from the United States who found inspiration in Mexico throughout the twentieth century. As such, Petersen can be situated amid a collage of poetry written in and about Mexico from a diverse set of better-known writers, including John Brandi, Gregory Corso, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Allen Ginsberg, Robert Hayden, Langston Hughes, Jack Kerouac, Denise Levertov, Robert Lowell, Michael McClure, Kenneth Rexroth, Selden Rodman, and Muriel Rukeyser.

The combined historical, countercultural, and international contexts of Petersen's poetry suggest an interrelated set of questions. First, what does Petersen's poetry contribute to the perennial discussion of how Mexico has been interpreted in US art and literature? Second, what does Petersen contribute when placed in the larger catalog of twentieth-century US poetry? Finally, in terms of Grateful Dead studies, how can this place-based approach expand the prospect from which we view the intersection of the Grateful Dead, the San Francisco counterculture, and the larger patterns found in US literature during the postwar era? This paper provides a first look at these questions with an eye toward how they connect Dead studies to several larger cultural and literary arenas.

Peter Richardson, "Covering the Dead: *Rolling Stone*, the Grateful Dead, and the Social Revolution."

The Summer of Love media blitz in 1967 led the Diggers and Grateful Dead manager Danny Rifkin to claim that national media outlets

had created the hippies they purported to describe. Focused primarily on drugs and politics, most of the coverage was negative, and few outlets bothered to report on the San Francisco music scene. During this time, however, hippies were reinventing rock music and its live performance. Founded later that year, *Rolling Stone* magazine dedicated itself to that music and the counterculture that produced it. In doing so, it sought to solve the problem of media saturation with more and better media. The magazine's cofounders, Ralph J. Gleason and Jann Wenner, believed that rock music and hippie culture would have far-reaching consequences. On this point and others, the Grateful Dead were a good match for the magazine. This paper will review the magazine's earliest coverage, what distinguished it from other media accounts, and how the magazine portrayed the Dead in particular. Although the band's authenticity and hip cachet lent credibility to the magazine, that support was reciprocal. During the magazine's first years, *Rolling Stone* mentioned the Dead hundreds of times in its pages, often in ways that far outstripped the group's standing in the music industry.

Deepak Sarma, "The Grateful Dead, Mystical Experience, and the Creative Moment: Being a Vessel, Being a Medium."

What was the creative moment like for members of the Grateful Dead? Both Bob Weir and Jerry Garcia characterized their creative impulse as the manifestation of an energy they channeled, a qualified denial of their own agency in the notes they played and the music they created. Where did they think that their creativity came from? Picking up on psychologist Stanley Krippner's suggestion that rock musicians such as Jerry Garcia performed a role akin to that of a shaman, especially in the 1960s, and extending his analysis of Garcia's performances and music in particular as exemplifying that role, this paper examines Bob Weir and Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead as modern-day shamans.

Though Garcia and Weir were reluctant to connect these experiences with religion, and indeed viewed organized religion with skepticism, they both used language in interviews that was heavily influenced by Joseph Campbell and the burgeoning language of a new kind of spirituality that emerged from the counterculture of the late 1960s and early '70s. In a recent interview, Weir alludes to an infinitely large storehouse of songs

which download into specific musicians. His speculation is reminiscent of the mythemes first characterized by Claude Levi-Strauss in the 1950s and, not surprisingly, of the archetypes put forth by Jung.

Drawing on William James' taxonomy first articulated in his *Varieties of Religious Experiences*, this presentation explores how such perspectives, combined with the use of psychedelics and especially LSD, suggest that both Weir and Garcia had mystical experiences, and were able to re-enter them in the right set and setting. In this way, they were indeed acting as shamans, as Krippner has argued, not unlike the kinds characterized by Campbell and Mircea Eliade, Campbell's counterpart in the academic world. This paper explains how.

Annabelle J. Walsh, "The Carnavalesque Dimensions of Deadhead Aesthetics."

By the mid-1980s, the parking lots outside concert venues had become a space for Deadheads to congregate, feast, barter, and vend, engaging in behaviors and rituals that some observers likened to medieval carnivals or folk festivals. Mikhael Bakhtin describes folk culture of the Middle Ages as "a boundless world of humorous forms and manifestations [that] opposed the official and serious tone of medieval ecclesiastical and feudal culture" (Bakhtin 1984). This paper argues that the parking lot scene cultivated by Deadheads occupies a similar role in contemporary American society: the lot functioned as a space in which one could openly resist normative values in the pursuit of music, enlightenment, laughter, and play. Deadhead style extended the Bakhtinian comparison with its humorous, grotesque, and carnivalesque aspects.

Building on existing scholarly explorations of carnivalesque displays in Deadhead identity expression, this paper focuses on the sartorial and corporeal aspects of Deadhead style, analyzing the clothing worn and sold in the lot and the bodies that occupy the space. In addition to Bakhtin, this paper draws on the work of Frances Connelly and John Fiske in order to explore the grotesque and carnivalesque dimensions of Deadhead style and identity performance, focusing on three dominant aspects: transgression, humor and parody, and death and renewal. Focusing on style recasts the Grateful Dead parking lot scene as a carnivalesque fashion

show where humor, laughter, and parody abound, adding to the work on Deadhead identity.

Brett Whitley and Monica Sklar, “It Came From the Lot: A Study of Fan-Made Grateful Dead T-Shirts.”

This paper explores the history and evolution of fan-made t-shirts in Deadhead subculture. The development of the garments’ aesthetics and design process can be traced in part through the work of notable designers such as Ed Donohue, Mikio Kennedy, and Jerry Jaspar. This study surveyed nineteen Grateful Dead-era lot artists through an IRB-approved, open-ended online survey, analyzing the data using Rin Tanaka’s *My Freedamn! 4*, an archival reference book on hippie style, which includes over 700 Dead tees organized by year (Tanaka 2005). Taken as a whole, Deadhead fan t-shirts serve as a historical record for not only the band’s art world, imagery, and catalog, but also for design styles and production technique, all of which evolved together. The visual aesthetics of the Deadhead t-shirt as a garment developed from a wide array of various inspirations and influences. These shirts also serve as a reflection of the contemporary cultural canon, featuring pop culture tie-ins, allusions, and references. In this way, the Deadhead t-shirt lives as a form of modern pop art, where familiar images are repurposed and given new meaning in the context of the Grateful Dead.

As graphics evolved, so too did screen printing, dying, and graphic design techniques. The shirts represent the development of many innovative art styles and production techniques, ranging from extreme DIY to professional grade. Lot artists benefited from a deep understanding of their scene and a community-based affinity space where knowledge, art, and ideals were shared in a cyclical learning environment. The DIY ethos and design process that emerged in the Dead scene is often mirrored in other subcultures even as the aesthetics of the lot shirt continue to influence the worlds of modern fashion, band merchandise, and design.

Ben Luke Williams, “Aesthetic Experience and the Grateful Dead: The Aegis of the Acid Tests.”

The cultural phenomenon of the Grateful Dead, particularly in the intersecting worlds of San Francisco’s 1960s counterculture and the Acid

Tests organized by Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters, provides a fascinating case study on collective effervescence and the phenomenology of live concerts. This talk explores the immersive environment of Grateful Dead performances, drawing on an unlikely resource to appreciate the modes of collective experience they facilitated: classical Indian aesthetics. These theoretical traditions in Sanskrit sources include cogent insights into the way that collective settings can amplify the experience of art, bringing it to a high pitch through the dissolution of distinctions between the awareness of the author/songwriter, performer/band, and audience.

These traditions also outline the kind of connoisseurship required to make possible rarefied capacities for savoring music. This appreciation is based on the qualifications of deep knowledge of the artistic genre and the ability to merge with the art form, allowing the emotions it evokes to permeate the body, like fire enveloping dry wood. By examining the genesis of the sonic and cultural environment the Grateful Dead cocreated, particularly through their formative experience as house band for the Acid Tests, this paper explains how the Dead's concert experience spawned fearless experimentalism, extreme altered states of consciousness, and a distinctive spiritual template for collective rapture.

Jay Williams, "Whose Sixties? A Cultural Context for the Grateful Dead."

The Grateful Dead provide a near-complete context for the Sixties just as the Sixties provides a context for the Dead. And both provide contexts for understanding late twentieth-century bohemianism. Given the capaciousness of the concept of the Sixties, by necessity this history leaves people and movements out. Significantly, it is predominantly a white history. Mainstream, nonacademic histories of the Dead, bohemianism, and the Sixties beg a fundamental question: whose Sixties? Although my work ultimately decides in favor of using a white history to better understand the Dead in the Sixties, this paper examines what is lost when I do so.

The primary example I use is the Watts Acid Test of 1966. The Dead and the Pranksters had come down to Los Angeles in late January or early February 1966. Their first Acid Test was in Northridge, a long trek from their rented house, nicknamed the Pink House, at 1123 Third Street in

L.A. The so-called Watts Acid Test was held at the Youth Opportunities Center, a mere twenty-minute drive due south. It just happened to be in an African American neighborhood, a fact that did not seem to register with many of those who have recounted their experiences at the Acid Test. And the event was held as law and military enforcement scoped them out. I argue that it was a natural consequence of their practice of disengagement that the Dead and their fellow bohemians did not acknowledge the Watts uprising. As scholars embrace an increasingly historicist element in our work on the band, understanding this pivotal era in the Dead's development is critical for integrating Dead studies into larger scholarly arguments.

Roundtable: "Teaching the Grateful Dead: A Multi-Disciplinary Reflection on Extending Pedagogical Theory and Praxis."

Chair: Natalie J. Dollar. Panelists: Steven Patrick Garabedian, Chadwick Jenkins, Eric Jay Mlyn.

Pedagogy has long been a central theme in Grateful Dead studies, at least since the first meeting of the Grateful Dead area of the Southwest Popular Culture Association in 1998. Literature scholar Chris Norden's paper "Contrapuntal Humanism: The Grateful Dead as a Paradigm for a Multiculturalized Liberal Arts Education" proved to be the first of many conference papers, articles, and chapters on a wide range of pedagogical issues raised by the Dead. That trend has not slowed in the years since, as demonstrated by the 2022 volume of the journal *Dialogue*, devoted entirely to teaching the Grateful Dead.

This roundtable contributes to that ongoing discussion by bringing together four senior professors in communication, history, political science, and musicology, who will reflect on their recent experiences teaching the Grateful Dead. Chaired by Natalie Dollar, who has taught courses on the Grateful Dead for many years at Oregon State University–Cascades, the panel includes the perspective of three recently developed courses on the Dead, taught by Steven Garabedian at Marist College, Chad Jenkins at the City University of New York, and Eric Mlyn at Duke. All four professors approach the Dead in the context of the issues and legacies raised by their history and music, but through very different

disciplinary lenses. This panel extends the work in pedagogical theory and praxis to show how the Dead continue to elicit and reward classroom instruction from a wide range of perspectives.

Roundtable: “Library and Information Science in Grateful Dead Studies: Foundational Issues and Emerging Topics.”

Chair: Gary Burnett. Panelists: Joseph Salem, Shan Sutton.

Although the scholarly bibliography of Grateful Dead studies has a handful of articles and chapters by library and information science (LIS) scholars, there has been no systematic exploration of how LIS as a field can contribute to Grateful Dead studies. This roundtable will provide an overview of the topic with a survey of foundational issues and emerging topics in the intersections of LIS and Dead studies, organized around three primary questions: What can LIS bring to Dead studies, and vice versa? How do recent trends and emerging theories in LIS interrogate, extend, and refract larger issues in Dead studies, and how can LIS scholars contribute to the larger field?

Chaired by an LIS professor, the panel will bring together two directors of major university libraries, organized around three principal topics: student learning, social contexts, and library space design; collections and metadata; and Open Access. These three areas connect longstanding issues in both fields, highlighting the rich potential of LIS for addressing, reframing, and illuminating critical aspects of the Grateful Dead phenomenon, and demonstrating the utility of Grateful Dead studies as a useful case study and compelling context for LIS professionals engaged in these topics.

Roundtable: “The Bust at 710: The Grateful Dead and the Politics of Pot.”

Chair: Nicholas G. Meriwether. Panelists: Susan Balter-Reitz, Andrew McGaan, Peter Richardson.

In October 1967, members of the Grateful Dead and several of their friends were arrested as part of a large, coordinated drug raid by law enforcement that focused on several houses in the Haight-Ashbury. Although official accounts deprecate the significance of the event, it cast a cloud over the young band and threatened to disrupt their career at a crucial time. The Dead responded with *élan*, writing a concise and elo-

quent statement and holding a press conference to declare their annoyance at what they characterized as unfair, capricious and hypocritical harassment. This roundtable brings four scholars together to discuss the raid, the band's response, and the larger implications these have for how we view the event and its context from historical, legal, rhetorical, and media studies perspectives.

The Third Annual Meeting of the Grateful Dead Studies Association

Presenters

Susan Balter-Reitz is Professor of Communication at Montana State University–Billings. Her current research project studies the intricacies of freedom of expression on university campuses, which builds on her work in argumentation theory, free speech, audience studies, and visual rhetoric. She has presented on the Grateful Dead to a variety of conferences and institutions, and is President-Elect of the Grateful Dead Studies Association.

Christopher K. Coffman is Master Lecturer in Humanities at Boston University. He is the author of numerous essays and has written or edited four books, most recently *After Postmodernism: The New American Fiction* (Routledge, 2021). His poetry, fiction, and creative essays have appeared in a range of periodicals, both print and online.

Julie DeLong is a literary scholar who has served as Associate Professor of English at Odessa College and adjunct instructor at Elgin Community College. She coedited a volume of *Dialogue* on pedagogy and the Grateful Dead and has given papers on a range of the Dead's work and its contexts, including British literary antecedents, the role of iconography in the Dead phenomenon, and subcultural recruitment in the Grateful Dead community. She is the creator and host of the So Many Reads Grateful Dead Book Club, hosted on Zoom.

Natalie Dollar is Associate Professor of Speech Communication at Oregon State University–Cascades. She has published articles and book chapters on houseless and street-oriented youth, members of a musical speech

community, and ethnographic approaches for studying cultural and intercultural group interaction. She founded the Community Dialogue Project (CDP) and her current research interests focus on dialogue, cultural communication codes, and negotiating identities in intracultural interactions.

Jason Robert Gallagher is an adjunct English instructor at Maryville University and completing a Masters of Fine Art in Creative Writing at the University of Missouri–St. Louis. He is a member of The Unbearables poetry collective and was a contributing editor at *Evergreen Review*. His work has been published in *A Gathering of the Tribes*, *The Santa Clara Review*, *South Florida Poetry Journal*, and *Grateful Dead Studies*.

Granville Ganter is Associate Professor of English at St. John's University in Queens, NY. His research focuses on nineteenth-century oratory. He has edited a collected edition of the speeches of Red Jacket, a Seneca diplomat of the early 1800s, and his current research focuses on early American women popular lecturers. His first essay on Grateful Dead was presented in Lubbock at the first Grateful Dead area meeting of the Southwest Popular Culture Association in 1998, later published in John Rocco's *Dead Reckoning* (Schirmer, 1999), and he is President of the Grateful Dead Studies Association.

Steven Garabedian is Associate Professor of History at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, NY. An historian of the twentieth-century US, he specializes in race, music, and radicalism, with a teaching concentration in African American studies and US public history. He is the author of *A Sound History: Lawrence Gellert, Black Musical Protest, and White Denial* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2020) and his work has appeared in *American Quarterly*, *African American Review*, *Popular Music & Society*, *Journal of Southern History*, and others.

Chadwick Jenkins is an Associate Professor of Music at the City College of New York City and the City University of New York, Graduate Center. He focuses on the interactions between philosophy and music, mostly popular music. He also hosts a podcast, *Sound Philosophy*, on that topic, available on Spotify and other outlets, and plays guitar in the Jug Band of South Jersey, which specializes in the music of the Grateful Dead, the Allman Brothers, and reggae.

Michael Kaler is Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto–Mississauga, where he teaches and researches academic writing. He earned a doctorate in religious studies from Laval University and one in ethnomusicology from York University. He is the author of *Get Shown The Light: Improvisation and Transcendence in the Music of the Grateful Dead*, forthcoming from Duke University Press.

Nathaniel Kogan teaches history and chairs the Upper School History Department at Rowland Hall, an independent school in Salt Lake City. He has taught world history, European history, US history, and disability history, and his academic interests center on disability history, transatlantic history, and religious/cultural history. His scholarship has appeared in the *Journal of Mormon History* and *Disability Studies Quarterly*.

Matthew B. Lynch teaches Islamic Studies and history at Oregon State University and has held teaching positions at Rutgers University, the University of the South, and Bard College. He earned a PhD from the University of North Carolina in Religious Studies and an MA in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Chicago. He is working on a book on the Muslim mystic poet and teacher Mawlana Jalal ad-din Rumi.

Andrew McGaan is a partner at Kirkland & Ellis LLC and a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers. He serves as Clerk of Session at Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago and is a board member of *Christian Century* magazine. He has presented several conference papers on the Grateful Dead and serves as a member of the Board of Advocates for the Grateful Dead Studies Association.

Nicholas G. Meriwether is Director of Museum Planning and Development at Haight Street Art Center in San Francisco. He is cofounder and Executive Director of the Grateful Dead Studies Association and editor of the series *Studies in the Grateful Dead*, forthcoming from Duke University Press. His work on the Dead includes scholarly and popular publications, liner notes, and edited anthologies, and he has curated numerous exhibitions on various aspects of the band's work and history.

Eric Mlyn is a Distinguished Faculty Fellow at the Kenan Institute for Ethics and Lecturer at Duke's Sanford School for Public Policy, where

he serves as Director of Kenan's Democracy and Higher Education project and chairs Duke's Global Travel Advisory Committee. His research focuses on the role of higher education in fostering democracy and political and civic engagement. He coedited *The Civic Mission of Higher Education: Connecting Social Innovation and Civic Engagement* (2020) and he has taught a course on the Grateful Dead to first-year students at Duke for two years.

Shaughn O'Donnell is a musicologist specializing in the twentieth century with analytical interests ranging from post-tonal "classical" music to rock music. His work on the Grateful Dead has appeared in a variety of journals and scholarly anthologies, and he is an active guitarist and gear aficionado. He is currently Chair of the Music Department at the City College of New York, where he recently launched a new degree in Popular Music Studies.

Nathaniel R. Racine is Assistant Professor of English at Texas A&M International University in Laredo. He was awarded a Postdoctoral Scholarship to Mexico and his primary area of research focuses on the literary and cultural exchange between the US and Mexico in the early to mid-twentieth century. He holds an MA in urban planning and serves as Associate Editor at the *Review of International American Studies*.

Peter Richardson teaches literature and history at San Francisco State University. He has written critically acclaimed books about Hunter S. Thompson, the Grateful Dead, *Ramparts* magazine, and radical author and editor Carey McWilliams. His essays have appeared in *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and many other outlets. A frequent book reviewer, he received the National Entertainment Journalism Award for Online Criticism in 2013.

Joseph A. Salem, Jr. currently serves as the Rita DiGiallonardo Holloway University Librarian and the Vice Provost for Library Affairs at Duke University. He has published and presented widely on open educational resources, student engagement, teaching and learning, library assessment, and library management. He earned his PhD in Evaluation and Measurement and MLS from Kent State University. He currently serves

on the Board of Directors for the Association or Research Libraries and for the Center for Documentary Studies.

Deepak Sarma is Professor of Indian Religions and Philosophy at Case Western Reserve University. He is the author of *Classical Indian Philosophy: A Reader* (2011), *Hinduism: A Reader* (2008), *Epistemologies and the Limitations of Philosophical Inquiry: Doctrine in Madhva Vedanta* (2005) and *An Introduction to Madhva Vedanta* (2003). He earned a BA in religion from Reed College and a PhD in the philosophy of religions at the University of Chicago Divinity School. His current reflections concern cultural theory, racism, bioethics, and post-colonialism, and he is Vice President of the Grateful Dead Studies Association.

Shan Sutton is Dean of University Libraries and Katheryne B. Willock Endowed Chair at the University of Arizona. He is the lead administrator for the University of Arizona Student Success District, an \$81 million initiative, and also serves as Principal Investigator on the Digital Borderlands project, funded by the Mellon Foundation. An abridged version of his 1993 Master of Humanities thesis on the Deadhead community was published in *Deadhead Social Science* (2000) and excerpts were published as entries in *Skeleton Key: A Dictionary for Deadheads* (1994).

Annabelle Walsh is completing her MA in Fashion Studies at Parsons School of Design in New York City. Her research examines the role of fashion and dress within subcultures and fan communities to explore how clothing reflects identity and helps us navigate the social world. She has presented papers at two Grateful Dead Studies Association meetings that focused on Deadhead material culture, from the evolution of the vending scene to the semiotics of t-shirts.

Brett Whitley earned his MA at the University of Georgia, where his thesis focused on the history and development of the fanmade Grateful Dead t-shirt as it related to the worlds of merchandising and subculture. He has created apparel designs for a wide array of companies and bands, including for the Grateful Dead and Jerry Garcia Band estate.

Ben Luke Williams is Assistant Professor of Hinduism at Naropa University and serves as the chair of the MA program in Yoga Studies. An

intellectual historian focused on Indian religions and the history of Śaiva tantra, he has received extensive training in Indian philosophy, literature, and aesthetics in Sanskrit sources. His current research is an intellectual history of America with a focus on the counterculture, the reception of Hinduism and Buddhism, and American literary movements.

Jay Williams retired as Senior Managing Editor of *Critical Inquiry* in 2017. He is the general editor of the Complete Works of Jack London, underway now, and is completing the third volume of *Author under Sail: The Imagination of Jack London*. He is also at work on a book on the Grateful Dead entitled *Dancing through the Sixties with the Grateful Dead*.