

Modernism, postmodernism, and the Grateful Dead:
the evolution of the psychedelic avant-garde

by

Jason Robert Noe

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

Department: English
Major: English (Literature)
Major Professor: Nina Miller

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

1996

Copyright © Jason Robert Noe, 1996. All rights reserved.

Graduate College
Iowa State University

This is to certify that the Master's thesis of

Jason Robert Noe

has met the requirements of Iowa State University

Signatures have been redacted for privacy

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE: APOLOGY AND CONTRIBUTION	v
INTRODUCTION	1
THE HISTORICAL AVANT-GARDE, MODERNISM, AND POSTMODERNISM	8
MODERNISM AND POSTMODERNISM: CONTINUITIES AND CONFLICTS	22
THE GRATEFUL DEAD: PARKING LOT, PERFORMANCE, PARTICIPATION	35
"THE BUS CAME BY AND I GOT ON, THAT'S WHEN IT ALL BEGAN": A FIRST IMPRESSION OF THE GRATEFUL DEAD PHENOMENON	44
"LIKE I TOLD YOU, JUST WHAT I SAID, STEAL THE FACE RIGHT OFF OF YOUR HEAD": FILLING IN THE GAPS: A DEEPENING OF PERSPECTIVE	50
CONCLUSION	86
WORKS CITED	89

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the Iowa State University faculty who gave generously of their time and effort in order to make this project work. Writing this thesis was an exciting and challenging task, and I am grateful to them for the guidance they provided and the enthusiasm they showed. I would particularly like to thank Nina Miller, chair of my committee, for seeing the potential value in this project and pointing me in the right directions from the start. Her clarity of thought and objectivity challenged me to consider what it was that I was trying to say in this thesis and how to go about saying it. Thanks to Neal Bowers for the time he has spent and the encouragement he has given over the last year. I can't express how much I have enjoyed our conversations both inside and outside of the classroom and the special thrill I have received from talking to a real live poet. To David Stuart, I would like to say thanks for sharing your insights and being passionate about all kinds of music, especially rock 'n' roll. I truly appreciate your ability to see the musical entity that rages beneath the theoretical elements of this analysis. Finally, I would like to offer special thanks to Matt Roberts. Not only was he in the right place at the right time, which was close to a miracle in itself, but his contribution to this thesis went above and beyond the call of duty. I consider myself especially privileged to have worked with someone as creative, industrious, and dedicated to the successful completion of this project as Matt.

PREFACE: APOLOGY AND CONTRIBUTION

When I first began working on this project the primary impetus, not to mention major bone of contention, which was fueling my intellectual curiosity was the absolute state of confusion I was in regarding the relationship and dynamic that exists between the two artistic and theoretical configurations of modernism and postmodernism. Like many of my graduate colleagues, as an undergraduate I had been indoctrinated into the world of literature with very little (which, without too much exaggeration, can be read as no) emphasis on literary theory. I am certain that on more than a few occasions I spent hours and hours formulating intricate designs that explained high modernist works like H.D's *Bid Me to Live* and Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* in outrageously postmodernist terms without the slightest notion of my colonizing tendencies. I should mention that this practice worked just as well in reverse, and I committed similar atrocities against the works of Pynchon and Nabokov. Regardless of who my victims were, these examples should clearly demonstrate the intellectual quandary in which I was mired. In fairness to both myself and my alma mater, I should also mention that I at least eventually became aware of the existence of the postmodern entity late in the eleventh hour while I was enrolled in a 20th century women authors seminar. At last, I became attuned to the fact that many of my favorite New Critical analytical devices - such as ambiguity, irony, and Jungian psychology - quite simply were no longer sufficient grounds for discussing the multitude of literary styles that permeate the fabric of the various historical literary epochs. While my confusion only increased as a result of this new discovery, I had been, to a certain extent, liberated - at least that's what I thought. And certainly in some degrees I was correct.

Only when I entered the hallowed halls of graduate school did it begin to dawn on me just how deep a hole I had fallen into. It was there that I realized that not only does there exist an immense disagreement over the characteristics of modernism and postmodernism, but that the very center of the debate itself - does a postmodernism exist at

all? - was up for grabs. Not only was it up for grabs, but the debate had been raging for over twenty years without any definite resolutions. And it is perhaps this lack of consensus, this utter disbelief in any centralized notion of what niche or paradigm contemporary art and theory fit into, that becomes the proof in the pudding that, indeed, we are in the midst of some monumental paradigm shift. That statement is, of course, debatable, as we shall see later in this thesis. But there is, and has been for quite some time, something in the air. Whether that something stifles intellectuality or invigorates tired world views is at the heart of contemporary debate. It is not the goal of this thesis to make any ultimate judgments about the phenomenon that has swept over the humanities disciplines. The implications of this debate are too widespread, too all encompassing, for any one individual to make any authoritative claims about it. Rather, all we can do is observe it, document it, and comment on the pieces that we uncover. Perhaps the lines "I have seen where the wolf has slept by the silver stream,/ I can tell by the mark he left you were in his dream" from the poem "Cassidy" by Grateful Dead lyricist Robert Hunter may shed some light on how we stand in relation to the existence or non-existence of a postmodern paradigm. We sense - maybe we can even tell - that something is upon us, but damn, if we don't have to draw from the bottom of the deck to explain it.

INTRODUCTION

One reasonable question that immediately comes to mind upon considering this project is why when examining the dynamics between modernism, postmodernism, and the avant-garde I have chosen the Grateful Dead phenomenon as my object of study. Certainly there are other more traditional and wholly adequate sources from the literary canon that shed light upon the boundaries, or lack thereof, which define these entities. One advantage that these other more traditional texts provide the researcher is they are often informed by the theoretical vocabulary that gave birth to the concepts of modernism and postmodernism. Such texts are often designed, constructed, and consumed within a cultural matrix (institutional academia) that easily makes use of them because they already reflect the accepted standards of the community. This statement is not a condemnation, but, rather, an acknowledgment of how easy it is for one to agree with another when the other's ideas are simply reflections of one's own. As Stanley Fish has told us, you will agree with me only if you already agreed with me.

But as Linda Hutcheon explains, the postmodern is "not so much a concept as a problematic" (Hutcheon 15), and the examination of "literary" texts is only one of several avenues that we can explore when addressing this topic. In spite of the multitude of attempts to contain it, postmodernism refuses to be limited to a single interpretation or explanation. There seem to be as many postmodernisms as there are individuals thinking about postmodernism. As we are well aware, members in all of the various humanities disciplines are struggling with this phenomenon in one form or another. And many scholars would claim that each of those individualized postmodernisms is correct in its own way. So where does that leave us? In total relativity? In a world of irreconcilable pluralities and multiplicities? Perhaps. If pushed to the limit, I would probably have to acknowledge that this, indeed, is the case. And there we see the paradox in the thinking of our day. Not so much as five sentences after dismantling a coherent system of

interpretation we are dragged right back into a succeeding reifying structure. And so the battle rages on and on.

This is perhaps one of the most significant lessons that poststructuralist theory has provided us. But the acceptance of Derrida's counter-metaphysics of absence is a relatively new phenomenon. Today we might feel comfortable in making such a claim, but such an assertion is the result of time and the evolution of ideas that time brings about. It is also the product of the insular environment of academia. The average person on the street has no need nor reason to know who Derrida or Foucault are.

Thus, when contemplating the boundaries between modernism and postmodernism we need to consider whether the changes that began taking place within the academy during the 1960s, particularly changes within literary studies, were taking place on parallel levels within other cultural discourses. If this is the case, then we also need to locate when the parallel changes in other cultural discourses began taking place. And this is why an examination of the Grateful Dead phenomenon can contribute to the discussion of modernism and postmodernism. For in the evolution of the Grateful Dead as members of a 1960s avant-garde with modernist tendencies into a postmodern self-contained traveling subculture from the early 1970s onward we can observe changes in popular culture that shed light on the problematic of distinguishing between the modernist and postmodernist periods. Not only does this non-academic, popular culture object reflect changes parallel to those that took place within the world of academia, but by virtue of the fact that it originated outside of academia and waged its attack against mass culture rather than institution art we can verify that postmodernism informs popular culture as well as other areas of society located outside of academia. Indeed, such a discovery permits us to view postmodernism not only as an academic concern, but as an overriding world view that either consciously or unconsciously has influenced the various thoughts, actions, and objects that late 20th century American society has produced.

I would like to briefly present some of the primary, and at times contradictory, levels of textuality that inform the discourses that converge in the Grateful Dead phenomenon in order to demonstrate how an analysis of these discourses can contribute to our understanding of modernism and postmodernism. For in the texts that make up the Grateful Dead phenomenon we find commentary addressing the issues of narrative, history, subjectivity, language, and music. By observing the dynamic that exists between these elements we can find an in-road to the heart of the debate over the relationship between modernism and postmodernism.

As I explained in the Preface to this thesis, the primary impetus for this investigation was to sort out some of my own confusion regarding the relationship between modernism and postmodernism. The Grateful Dead's relevance to this inquiry is intimately tied to that confusion, for it was my immersion over the last seven years in the musical and cultural text that makes up that phenomenon that I became acutely aware of just how conflated my ideas regarding modernism and postmodernism were. I quickly discovered that the interpretations I was deriving from the text were comprised of seemingly irreconcilable binary oppositions. Not only did I see contradictions in my interpretations, but I was unsure as to which side of the binary opposition was characteristically modernist and which was postmodernist. Thus, I found myself struggling to formulate some sort of coherent world view, a modernist impulse in itself, by integrating the postmodernist tendencies toward multiplicity, instability, transience, and decenteredness with the modernist tendencies toward narrative unity, Romantic transcendentalism, and societal utopianism. As we will discover, my early approach was determined far too much by elements of style. On the one hand, I was acknowledging what postmodern poet and theorist Lyn Hejinian has termed a model of fluctuating multiple subjectivity where the self is indeterminate and is always in a state of redefinition. On the other, I was constructing a meta-narrative that was grounded in the modernist desire for unitary perception, a desire that is fulfilled by grounding the self to some stable subject position. This interpretation

created such a vast and complex hall of mirrors that what was modernist and what was postmodernist, while remaining a lingering question, became completely obscured. Throughout this thesis we will attempt to untangle some of the theoretical knots that songs like "Uncle John's Band" create. For example, this song contains the lines "It's the same story the crow told me/ it's the only one he know--/ like the morning sun you come/ and like the wind you go" that conflate modernist meta-narrative with the postmodernist elements of decentered subjectivity, instability, and transience. As this example demonstrates, the various texts of the Grateful Dead phenomenon will serve as a wonderfully rich source for contemplating the complexities that make up the modernist/postmodernist dynamic.

One of the primary reasons that the Grateful Dead phenomenon becomes relevant to an analysis of the relationship between modernism and postmodernism is the historical time period in which it emerged. If we accept that significant transformations in modernist sensibility began taking place in America sometime after World War II (with a special emphasis on the years from the mid-1950s through the late '60s), then the Grateful Dead can be seen as being located on one pivotal axis that delineates the modernist and postmodernist periods. I would argue that the Grateful Dead's coming into existence during such a monumentally transitional period would necessarily be responsible for what we will recognize as the conflation of modernist and postmodernist elements in its texts.

And that is why the theory of the relationship between modernism and postmodernism that Andreas Huyssen presents in his *After the Great Divide* serves as a crucial model for this investigation. His work informs this thesis in two fundamental ways. First, his analysis presents both a method and a model which we can use to delineate discernible trends within the culture of modernity. Most importantly, Huyssen effectively distinguishes between the trends of modernism and avant-gardism, concepts that he claims are too often conflated. The result of his distinction is that 1960s Pop avant-gardists such as Andy Warhol and John Cage, due to their sustained attacks against high

modernism, can be understood as postmodernist. What we shall discover later in this thesis is that just as Huyssen has shown that there are the discernible trends of modernism and avant-gardism within modernity, so too there are discernible trends within the 1960's American avant-garde. Where Huyssen conflates the Pop, Beat, and psychedelic avant-gardes into a single postmodernist entity, this thesis will attempt to show that these three entities stand in different relations to the gulf that separates the modernist and postmodernist periods (Huyssen calls this gulf the Great Divide), with postmodern Pop art retaining a clearly institutionalized focus while the Beat and psychedelic movements waged their attacks against mass culture. The Grateful Dead phenomenon, as we shall see, belongs to and originated in the post-Beat psychedelic avant-garde.

The other fundamental concept that I have adopted from Huyssen's theory of the Great Divide is that it is a mistake to focus solely on elements of style when attempting to define what postmodernism is. Both Huyssen and Linda Hutcheon emphasize that characteristically modernist stylistic elements gave birth to and have continued to be introduced into postmodernist productions. Thus, as I have already mentioned, in the text of the Grateful Dead phenomenon we encounter a complex web of modernist tendencies - particularly in the band's earliest incarnation as central figures of a utopian psychedelic avant-garde - that have undergone transformations and taken on new dimensions as the phenomenon evolved into a postmodern entity. In many cases, what has occurred is that highly Romantic songs such as "Uncle John's Band" - with its pastoral refrain "Come hear Uncle John's Band/ by the riverside/ Got some things to talk about/ here beside the rising tide" - become hybrids of sorts in their later manifestations. The modernist escapist idealism is not lost, but it is presented within a new postmodern context that has been dictated by cultural constraints and artistic discoveries made over a thirty year period.

Another level of textuality that this thesis will address is the dynamic that exists between the subcultural phenomenon of the deadhead lifestyle and the musical performance of the Grateful Dead. What is at stake in this dynamic is our understanding of how the

avant-gardist concern over the art-life dichotomy is lived out in the self-contained postmodern subculture that is the Grateful Dead phenomenon. In our examination of these two texts we can draw the distinction between the traditionally modernist approach to textual encounters in which the artistic text as guardian of high cultural values is separate from and exists outside of everyday “life,” and the postmodern avant-gardist textual encounter characteristic of the Grateful Dead phenomenon in which economic, aesthetic, cultural, artistic, and political concerns merge and break down the barriers between art and life.

I have chosen to present two possible perspectives on the Grateful Dead scene in order to reveal where and how the art-life dichotomy breaks down within the phenomenon. One hypothetical perspective is that of a white, middle-class, twenty year old male who encounters the Grateful Dead touring phenomenon for his first time and the other is that of an “informed,” or initiated deadhead. What this method of presentation does is provide a framework in which to present the other layers of textuality that make up the Grateful Dead phenomenon - texts that, in all likelihood, will be unfamiliar to many readers. Thus, the intertextuality of the deadhead lifestyle, the concert narrative, the scene’s overriding concern with the transformation of consciousness, the dynamic that exists between self-reflexive lyrics and improvisational instrumental jams, and various other elements can be described, delineated, and demonstrated. Where the uninitiated participant is only free to observe the cultural and musical sights and sounds of the day without the benefit of prior experiences that would put the event into context, the informed deadhead provides us with a frame of reference in which these other important layers of textuality can come to light.

I have organized this thesis in the following way. The first two sections historicize the phenomenon by examining the relationship between the historical avant-garde, which came to a close prior to 1950, and the contemporaneous trend of modernism. This investigation leads us up to the point where, according to Huyssen, postmodernism springs to life in post-war America out of the spirit of an adversarial avant-garde. The Beat, Pop,

and psychedelic avant-gardes were the first manifestations of the transition in sensibility that we now characterize as postmodernist. The Grateful Dead phenomenon grew out of this historical constellation as an evolutionary nodule of the precursor Beat movement. The following three sections are an in-depth analysis of the various texts that make up the Grateful Dead phenomenon with a brief overview of how the musical performance and subcultural phenomenon evolved from an avant-gardist movement into a postmodern entity. The thesis concludes with a brief look back at what we have discovered through this project and suggestions as to where this project might lead in the future.

THE HISTORICAL AVANT-GARDE, MODERNISM, AND POSTMODERNISM

The basic premise that guides *After the Great Divide*, Andreas Huyssen's investigation into modernism, postmodernism, and mass culture, is the "conviction that the high modernist dogma has become sterile and prevents us from grasping current cultural phenomena" (ix). While we must acknowledge that a relatively large number of contemporary artistic creations in the fields of literature, music, and the visual arts make use of and cannot be understood outside of certain core elements of a modernist aesthetic, Huyssen adeptly points out that far too many studies attempt to distinguish new works as postmodernist based solely upon elements of style. As I suggested earlier, this dilemma becomes foregrounded when the cultural object of study is the Grateful Dead phenomenon. Judging texts based solely upon style becomes a difficult task due to the fact that although over time there have been changes in style -- the abandonment of traditional formalist techniques in post-W.W.II American poetry, for example -- many modernist stylistic strategies have still been retained in contemporary art. As Huyssen points out, "There are many successful attempts by artists to incorporate mass cultural forms into their work, and certain segments of mass culture have increasingly adopted strategies from on high. If anything, that is the postmodern condition in literature and the arts" (ix). Huyssen suggests that if we are to gain a fuller understanding of what kind of boundaries exist between what many scholars claim to be a definite break between the modern and postmodern eras (a point at which Huyssen ultimately balks), then it becomes imperative that we examine the relationship of both these eras to mass culture. A key ingredient in his analysis is a close investigation into what characterizes the modernist era and how the existence of a distinct historical avant-garde during the first decades of the 20th century, a group that "aimed at developing an alternative relationship between high art and mass culture" (viii), has important consequences in determining the differences between

modernism and postmodernism. Huyssen claims that “even though the boundaries between modernism and avant-gardism remained fluid, the distinction I am suggesting [that modernism and avant-gardism are distinct entities] permits us to focus on sufficiently discernible trends within the culture of modernity.” Huyssen’s isolation of distinct trends in the culture of modernity carves out a path which we can follow that leads up to the rise of the Beat movement of the late 1940’s and early ‘50s, which was the first indigenous avant-garde movement in the United States, and culminates in the Pop and counter-cultures of the 1960’s.

Huyssen’s focus on the high/low dichotomy and the modernism/avant-gardism constellation in the early 20th century does in fact provide “us with a better understanding of postmodernism and its history since the 1960’s” (viii). However, the focus of this thesis - the investigation of the psychedelic avant-garde and the Grateful Dead - will reveal that Huyssen mistakenly lumps the Beat, psychedelic, and Pop avant-gardes together. We shall see that just as there are discernible trends within the trajectory of the modern - such as the differences between modernism and avant-gardism - so too are there distinctive trends within the various postmodern avant-gardes. This thesis will examine the differences between prototypical postmodernist avant-gardes (e.g., Pop art) that continue to wage their counter-cultural attacks against institution art and avant-gardes that spring out of mass culture and whose target of attack is mass culture itself (e.g., Beat and psychedelic). By doing this we shall see that the relationships among avant-gardism, modernism, and postmodernism needs to be reformulated to expand beyond the traditional adversarial equation of The Avant-garde versus High/Institution Art.

Huyssen’s investigation into the relationships among postmodernism, modernism, and mass culture becomes useful for the purposes of this investigation because it provides a cultural and historical framework in which we can situate the inception and manifestation of the cultural phenomenon I will term the Grateful Dead experience. For, with Huyssen’s exhaustive research and analysis of the cultural and historical factors that resulted in “the

birth of postmodernism out of the spirit of an adversary avant-gardism" (viii) we can locate the coming into existence of the Grateful Dead within the historical epoch of the psychedelic movement - an entity that became a formidable, if not primary, presence in the counter-culture. By tracing the path of the evolution of the psychedelic avant-garde through the transformation of the Grateful Dead from an adversarial mass cultural avant-garde with modernist tendencies (primarily the struggle against structurality and the establishment of a utopian society) into a self-contained traveling subculture we will be able to delineate a pivotal transformation between the trends of modernism and postmodernism.

I believe that it is fully appropriate to locate the Grateful Dead in Huyssen's 1960s avant-garde. This claim, however, needs to be understood within the context that the avant-gardist constellation of The Beats-Ken Kesey-Timothy Leary-The Grateful Dead exists as an adversarial avant-garde that was spawned directly out of mass culture and whose target of attack is mass culture itself, rather than high/institution art. This is a key difference between the psychedelic avant-garde and the historical avant-garde (e.g., Dada) or the '60s Pop avant-garde (which Huyssen defines as the "Duchamp-Warhol-Cage axis," 181). Another factor that we will need to keep in mind throughout this discussion is that all of these avant-gardes share the early adversarial modernist tendency to resist and react against various aesthetic, cultural, economic, and political structures. Each of these avant-gardes were apocalyptic in that they wanted to bring an end to history by obliterating the constraints of form and structure. However, as the work of poststructuralist theorists such as Derrida and Foucault has shown us, there can be no way of escaping structure. Thus, inevitable failure was built in to the works of the various avant-gardes. They may have pushed the limits of structurality, but none of them ever transcended those limits. And through our examination of the evolution of the Grateful Dead we shall see that two of the primary factors that delineate the boundaries between modernism and postmodernism are, one, the band's discovery of the postmodernist lesson about structurality and, two, their

transformation from revolutionary counter-cultural force to self-contained subcultural entity.

The Grateful Dead phenomenon is created out of the incessant intermingling of various layers of textuality - the concert experience, the artist-audience relationship, the deadhead lifestyle and subculture - and through our examination of these layers we will be able to reveal the different levels of discourse that inform this unique cultural phenomenon's sensibility. One of the primary levels of discourse for the '60's counter-culture and the Grateful Dead experience is revolution of consciousness. "Cosmic consciousness" (Stevens) is the term used by members of the psychedelic avant-garde to describe, among other things, the effects that result from the ingestion of psychedelic drugs. The primary effects that the term refers to are the dissolution of the ego and the suspension of self-consciousness. This transformation of consciousness is of central importance to the subcultural lifestyle of the deadheads as well as to the Grateful Dead concert narrative itself. I will expand upon this concept later in the essay, but for now I would at least like to place this notion of cosmic-consciousness within the vernacular of the Grateful Dead experience by coining the phrase "The Way of the Wheel" as its substitute. This is in deference to the song "The Wheel" which when played is traditionally located in the second set of the Grateful Dead concert in the slot immediately following the "Drums/Space" portion of the show. The "Drums/Space" portion of Grateful Dead concerts, particularly in its "Rhythm Devils" incarnation, is a distinctive element that became a "standard feature of second sets in the late seventies" (Shenk 73) (although the "Space" segment has been an integral element of the concert experience since the band's inception - "Space" was previously entitled "Feedback" - Shenk 266). Unique about the "Drums/Space" segment of the concert are the ties that it has to the evolutionary tightening of structurality in the Grateful Dead concert experience. It is the only song/segment that retains a spot in every concert's set list. All of the other songs and music are rotated in and out of nightly set lists, the standards perhaps making an appearance every fifth or seventh

show (sometimes they are dropped from the repertoire for periods lasting up to eight years and more). According to Jerry Garcia, lead guitarist and alternating vocalist for the band, the "Drums/Space" segment is "really the show" (Gans *Playing in the Band* 17). An essential task of this essay will be to present an analysis of the correlation between the "Drums/Space" segment in Grateful Dead concerts and the counter-cultural discourse on cosmic-consciousness and the dissolution of the ego. In doing so, I believe that we will achieve two important goals: first, we will be expanding upon the work Andreas Huyssen has already done by examining in depth the relationship of a particular group of artists and the cultural phenomenon that surrounds them and placing them in relation to the framework of postmodernity which Huyssen has established; second, we will be making an attempt to establish a formal, scholarly relationship between the musical and cultural object of the Grateful Dead experience and the continuously evolving, interdisciplinary concerns of the academic discipline of literature.

The particular aspects of the 1960s counter-culture that involve the Grateful Dead are intricately related to three movements: the Beat movement, with particular attention to the figures of Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and Neal Cassady; the psychedelic revolution, with particular attention to the figures of Ken Kesey, Timothy Leary, and, again, Neal Cassady; and, to a lesser degree, certain utopia-oriented fiction and science fiction authors, particularly Robert Heinlein (*Stranger in a Strange Land*) and Hermann Hesse (*Journey to the East*). Jay Stevens, author of *Storming Heaven: LSD and the American Dream*, has provided a particularly informative non-fictional narrative account of the history and implications of the burgeoning psychedelic movement that culminated in the late 1960s. His work sheds light on the intricate relationship between the Beat movement and what amounts to its cultural successor, the psychedelic/hippie lifestyle that emerged in the mid '60s, as well as the motivations behind the psychedelic revolution and its mostly white, middle-class participants. He establishes the apparently obvious connection between the Beats and the hippies early in the work in "Prologue: An Afternoon in the

Sixties" when commenting on the Golden Gate park festival *A Gathering of the Tribes For the First Human Be-In* he writes, "Others, like Tim Leary, Alan Watts, and Ken Kesey, had their partisans, but Ginsberg was adored by all. He was a link with the past, a survivor of the Beat movement, which was the most obvious precursor of what was happening in the park today" (Stevens xi). Most importantly, his work fleshes out the details of the counter-cultural discourse that Huyssen outlines in *After the Great Divide* (Huyssen's account mentions acid rock but focuses primarily on West German and American East Coast Pop art), a discourse that forms the cultural, political, and aesthetic backdrop out of which the Grateful Dead phenomenon arises.

The general outline of the connections between the Grateful Dead phenomenon and these three areas of concentration goes something like this: Starting with the Beats as America's first indigenous avant-garde, we can trace much of the adversarial dimension of the psychedelic movement to their (the Beats') rejection of traditional straight or square values. Stevens presents an account of the state of American consciousness during the height of 1950s consumerism and then explains how the Beats emerged by the mid-50s as counter-cultural rebels. According to Stevens, during the years of the "supercorporation," Ike, and McCarthy the national mantra was "conform, or else" (94). He comments:

Perhaps it was natural that a generation weaned on depression and war should have been attracted to material success and teamwork, but this didn't explain the zeal with which they eradicated all that was distinctive or unusual from their lives.

Even the sociologists who studied the suburbs were disturbed by their lack of character, their sameness. How was one to interpret the spectacle of hundreds of identically dressed businessmen being met at the train station by hundreds of blonde wives (Clairol invented its slogan, if I have but one life to live, let me live it as a blonde, in the Fifties) who drove them via station wagons to the hundreds of identically decorated (shag rugs, Danish modern) houses in which they lived.

Was this a symbol of stability or gross conformity? (96)

Stevens outlines three particular trends that were affecting the youth of the 1950s and would ultimately have a profound effect upon the counter-culture of the '60s and conformist America's future. The first of these trends was the popularity of "a type of comic book which featured surreal superheroes like Plasticman, Captain Marvel, and the Human Torch...They were the new myths (the only American myths a writer named Ken Kesey would later claim), and in proper mythic form the heroes were eminently nonconformist...the Baby Boomers were lapping up stories about average Americans who, through a fluke of fate or industrial accident, gained superhuman powers that they used not to improve their bank accounts, but to fight the forces of evil and injustice" (97). The second trend was the appearance in the mid-50s of rock 'n' roll. Stevens devotes special attention to the liberating effect that Elvis had upon youth consciousness. In the way Elvis performed his music "rock was a kinetic joy that bypassed the rational mind. You jumped, you twitched, you found the groove and rode it out...The roar of the amplifiers combined with the physical abandon of the Twist, the Watusi, the Slop, provided many teens with their first example of an altered state of consciousness that had occurred when they were, well, conscious" (98).

Stevens' emphasis here on rock music and dance as methods by which individuals can transcend their usual daily consciousness is of central importance to the psychedelic movement and the Grateful Dead experience. In its earliest manifestation the Grateful Dead was a high powered dance band. At perhaps its most extreme level, the Grateful Dead concert experience is a shamanic/tribal exploration of altered states of consciousness, in particular the suspension of self-consciousness and the dissolution of the ego. The third element that gave rise to the rebellious Beats and carried over into the psychedelic movement was the role that Hollywood played in presenting "the theme of social deviants who preferred not to fit in" (98). The obvious examples are Marlon Brando in *The Wild One* and James Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause* (Peter Fonda in *Easy Rider* is a late '60s

manifestation). These characters, whom we might consider proto-typical hippies, reacted to the conformity that the suburban-corporate world demanded "not by issuing manifestos or agitating for social action, but by wearing blue jeans, and not shaving, by dropping out of school and mocking the pieties of the square world" (99). In many respects, this apathetic and ambivalent attitude characterizes much of the general outlook that many members of the psychedelic revolution held, and it certainly is manifest in many of the members who constitute the deadhead scene. Stevens describes the general social attitude of the participants at the *Gathering of the Tribes* in the following passage: "But in actual fact the bodies lolling on the grass next to the Golden Gate's tennis courts belonged to the educated sons and daughters of white middle-class America. They had, to use their own terminology, dropped out" (viii). Here we see the modernist tendency toward utopian escapism that permeated the early psychedelic movement. The hippies, like the Beats ten to fifteen years before them, were rejecting the image of the mass cultural, Square American that the corporations were looking for: "'the non-neurotic, reasonably hard-driving, cooperative, anti-cultural, self-confident, loyal, conservative, healthy employee.' Any creative or cultural tendencies, any deviation from the mental health norm such as anxiety or a delight in solitude, any complicated (psychologically speaking) ties with one's past and the tester would tag you as psychologically unfit" (97). But before the hippies tuned in, turned on, and dropped out, the Beats had their shot at thumbing their noses at square America.

According to Stevens, as well as most popularized accounts of the zeitgeist of America starting with the late fifties and leading through the 1960s counter-cultural revolution, the same utopian enthusiasm expressed in post-1917 Russia fueled the American avant-garde, particularly in the burgeoning San Francisco Bay Area scene. This visionary strain of utopian idealism can be traced to the cultural precursors of the psychedelic/counter-cultural movement - the Beats. Journalist John Clellon Holmes described the Beat mentality and motivation. Stevens quotes him: "What they were

seeking, he wrote, was a 'nakedness of mind, ultimately the soul,' i.e., a completely deconditioned state that would enable them to descend (or ascend) to 'the bedrock of consciousness.' That was the psychological kernel of the Beat Generation, that and the never spelled-out understanding that one of their fundamental dreams was the creation of a community of like-minded souls; a new kind of family that would be tribal rather than nuclear" (107). This attitude of the Beats is in some ways elitist and isolationist. In terms of the mass culture avant-garde resisting the mass culture of the United States, many Beats wanted to live, and luxuriated in, a separate existence from a mostly white, middle-class, suburban America. The road to satori was laden with a relatively few number of bodhisatvas and the Beats were, to a certain degree, content with that ratio. It is important to note, however, that this isolationist tendency needs to be viewed in the revolutionary light of other, more welcoming tendencies, as exemplified in the proselytizing, visionary experience expressed by Japhy Ryder in Jack Kerouac's Beat novel *The Dharma Bums*: Japhy sees "a great rucksack revolution, thousands or even millions of young Americans wandering around with rucksacks, going up to mountains to pray, making children laugh...wild gangs of pure holymen getting together to drink and talk and pray" (Kerouac 78).

This tendency toward societal transformation manifests itself in the successor movement of the hippies in the mid-60s. The revolutionary spirit of the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood, fueled by a utopian and perhaps naive belief that the youth of the country could overpower the Establishment, was the real force that had motivated the early upstarts of the counter-culture. Historically speaking, there had been for some time in the early sixties the sensation that the Beat movement of the North Shore was slowly becoming extinct. However, journalist Michael Fallon reported to his readership that "the Beat movement, far from being dead, was alive and flourishing in what had once been one of San Francisco's tonier neighborhoods. But if the Haight was where the Beat movement had fled to, then something had happened in the passage. Compared to the moody,

nihilistic beatniks of old, those clichéd cave creatures in their black turtlenecks, the patrons of the Unicorn were like vivid butterflies in their pink striped pants and Edwardian greatcoats. They were sunny and cheery, and the word love punctuated their conversation with an alarming frequency" (Stevens 299). As Stevens points out, the hippies were second-generation Beats. But there were important distinctions between the two groups. One major distinction between them was the hippies' deep involvement with the psychedelic drug LSD. And it is in the investigation of the discourse that surrounded this mind altering, consciousness expanding drug that we can begin to formulate a theory of psychedelic avant-gardism and the relationship of one of the eras most prominent and enduring artistic entities, the Grateful Dead.

My claim that the Grateful Dead were members of the 1960s indigenous American avant-garde also ties them to the early stages of the newly emerging political and cultural matrix that we now tentatively call postmodernism. I would like to now take a moment to explore how it is possible to make the connection between the historical avant-garde and the specific activities of artists and political activists in the United States in the '60s, a milieu from which the Grateful Dead emerged.

The point at which both of these avant-gardes intersect, and in fact makes it possible to continue to use the term avant-garde when referring to certain artistic and political events in the '60s, is the central focus that each movement had on breaking down the art-life dichotomy. Looking to Huyssen and his account of early 20th century international avant-gardism it becomes possible to isolate the art-life dichotomy as one of the most significant trends that informs 1960s avant-gardist sensibility. And it is this tendency, the desire to completely submerge oneself in the world of the arts and artist and to eradicate the boundaries that prevent one from responding to and living out the messages one receives/creates from the encounter with art, that lies at the heart of the post-psychedelic avant-garde Grateful Dead experience. The lifestyle of serious tourheads as well as townies who check out the two day stint at the local stadium is often a continuation

of much of what they encounter during the concert experience. For many, the grooves that they fall into, the frequencies that they tune into while hearing the live performance, become the grooves and frequencies that guide or inform their everyday lives.

In regard to the historical avant-garde's concern over the art-life dichotomy, Huyssen credits avant-garde theorist Peter Burger for making the convincing argument that "the major goal of art movements such as Dada, surrealism, and the post-1917 Russian avant-garde was the reintegration of art into life praxis, the closing of the gap separating art from reality" (Huyssen 7). The avant-gardists recognized the widening gap between art and life, a gap "which had become all but unbridgeable in the late 19th century aestheticism" (7), and were determined to set things aright. Huyssen explains that the avant-gardists' concern over this issue resulted from the fact that the separation of art from reality and the "insistence on the autonomy of art, which had once freed art from the fetters of church and state, had worked to push art and artists to the margins of society" (7). The marginalization of the art world inevitably proved to be a barrier to the socially transformative power of art. The method by which the avant-garde set out to destroy the art-life dichotomy was to attack what Burger calls institution art, "a term for the institutional framework in which art was produced, distributed, and received in bourgeois society, a framework which rested on Kant's and Schiller's aesthetic of the necessary autonomy of all artistic creation" (7). This example demonstrates formulation that all avant-gardist movements are defined by the fact that they have at the center of their world views a target on which they focus their various attacks and that they also make use of various vehicles by which they launch those attacks - thus, avant-gardism is adversarial in nature. The tactic and motivation of the avant-garde attack (Huyssen uses Marcel Duchamp's mass-produced urinal-as-fountain-sculpture as an example) was to destroy the "traditional work's aura, that aura of authenticity and uniqueness that constituted the work's distance from life and that required contemplation and immersion on the part of the spectator" (10). As Huyssen points out, if the revolt of the avant-garde - which was directed against the all-

encompassing reality of bourgeois culture, in particular bourgeois institution art - was going to be successful, then a transformation of bourgeois society itself must have occurred. Such an event, or series of events, never materialized and, thus, the historical avant-garde was practically doomed to failure.

Huyssen makes the claim that it is in the work created by avant-garde theorist Walter Benjamin that "the hidden dialectic between avant-garde art and the utopian hope for an emancipatory mass culture can be grasped alive for the last time" (Huyssen 14). After World War II he says the political and cultural strains of avant-gardism, which had previously always been wedded, went their separate ways. While Huyssen's claim certainly rings with some truth - that indeed later discussions about the avant-garde "congealed into a reified two-track system of high vs. low, elite vs. popular," etc. (14) - it appears somewhat unclear as to why, in light of his claims about '60s avant-gardism, he fails to elaborate further on the connection between the socially utopian ideals that were the heart and soul of the '60s counter-cultural movement and the utopianism of early 20th century avant-gardes. The spirit and optimism of the post-1917 Russian avant-garde, its sense of imminent change, that the people were about to gain control over the Establishment, their utopian desire to reconfigure the world in a new way, seems to be a close analog to the psychedelic avant-garde of 1960s America. Discussing the relationship between the Russian revolution and the Russian art world, Huyssen explains that the ideals of almost all early 20th century avant-gardes - the correspondence between artistic and political revolutions, the demolition of the art-life dichotomy, the "goal to forge a new unity of art and life by creating a new art and a new life seemed about to be realized in revolutionary Russia" (12).

A problem arises when we make the claim that the psychedelic/counter-cultural movement during the 1960s is an avant-gardist movement in the same way that the 1917 Russian avant-garde and the Pop art movement of the 1960s were avant-gardist projects. Our dilemma stems from certain consequences that are the result of the particular

formulation Andreas Huyssen has devised to explain the relationship between modernism and postmodernism -- his concept of the Great Divide. In his attempt to define the boundaries between these two trends in theory and the arts Huyssen claims that the only way to understand their differences is by looking at the relationship of each to mass culture. The culmination of his investigation is a focus on Eastcoast Pop art as a 1960s postmodern avant-garde. However, as we will see, while the Pop avant-garde fits splendidly into Huyssen's avant-gardist schema, the psychedelic avant-garde does not fulfill all of the necessary criteria to be a postmodern avant-gardist movement as it is represented in *After the Great Divide*.

In order for us to effectively determine whether the psychedelic movement of the 1960s is a modernist or postmodernist strain of avant-gardism it will first be necessary to examine the relationship of avant-gardism to both modernism and postmodernism. Only then will we be able to fully understand the correlations and distinctions that allow us to accurately historicize the Grateful Dead phenomenon within these intellectual categories. Huyssen points out that far too often the terms modernist and avant-gardist are conflated. In particular, he mentions that until recently in America the terms have been used interchangeably. The obstacle that this usage presents is that modernism, which once occupied an adversarial position to the realm of institution art, eventually became the dominant canonical material of academic institutions in the form of high modernism. Thus, the adversarial nature of the modernist movement becomes obscured. If we look to the basic formula Huyssen has set up for us - the totalizing mass culture versus institution art, the protector of "proper" social values - and then proceed to examine where the historical avant-garde and modernism stand in relation to that Great Divide it becomes apparent that, yes, early modernism was a strain of avant-gardism, but also that these categories of distinction are intricately bound up in the same discourse that allows the distinction between institution art and mass culture to be perpetuated. The most important information that Huyssen's account of the Great Divide provides for this investigation is the fact that the

binary opposition that he erects between institution art and mass culture, while scrupulously accurate, only serves to show that this discourse on postmodernism and modernism is inextricably bound to the assumptions of high culture. In his investigation, the avant-garde must be perceived in relation to high art. But what happens when a social, political, and artistic movement, for all intents and purposes, turns its back on the world of high art, and in fact does not even take that world or its concerns into account in its adversarial relationship to another entity? This, I would claim, is the overriding condition of both the Beat and psychedelic avant-gardes.

MODERNISM AND POSTMODERNISM: CONTINUITIES AND CONFLICTS

Huyssen presents his theory of the Great Divide as an explanation for the “shift in sensibility, practices, and discourse formations which distinguishes a postmodern set of assumptions, experiences, and propositions from that of a preceding period” (Huyssen 181). Hutcheon explains the shift from modernism to postmodernism by unearthing the historical and “de-doxifying” (Hutcheon 3) principles that define her own “paradoxical postmodernism of complicity and critique, of reflexivity and historicity, that at once inscribes and subverts the conventions and ideologies of the dominant cultural and social forces of the twentieth-century western world” (11). Through an examination of these two explanations of the postmodernist-modernist dichotomy our investigation of the relationship of avant-garde movements to these historical periods will become much clearer.

To begin, we need to ask what do Huyssen and Hutcheon say regarding the debate over whether there has been a definite break between contemporary critical, theoretical, and artistic activities and those activities from the earlier 20th century intellectual and artistic trend we call modernism? Huyssen warns against posing the question in a strictly either/or dichotomy, which situates the debate in a way that prevents the postmodern phenomenon from ever coming into focus: “Either it is said that postmodernism is continuous with modernism, in which case the whole debate opposing the two is specious; or, it is claimed that there is a radical rupture, a break with modernism, which is then evaluated in either positive or negative terms” (Huyssen 182). Instead, in *After the Great Divide* he tries to provide a map that sketches the outline of the various territories where postmodern activities are taking shape. Generally, both theorists acknowledge that an alteration of modernist sensibility, if not actually a complete break from it, has indeed taken place sometime after W.W.II. Huyssen examines the development of a postmodern sensibility in

a three stage progression--the development of postmodernism through the 1960s, '70s, and '80s. He explains that it can be generally stated that "postmodernism took off with a vengeance in the early to mid-1960s, most visibly in Pop art, in experimental fiction, and in the criticism of Leslie Fiedler and Susan Sontag" (161). Since that period the concept of postmodernism has been an integral element in discussions about contemporary activities in literature and the arts. He is careful, however, not to make the claim that a wholesale paradigm shift has occurred between the modernist and postmodernist periods. Rather, he explains the changing trends as a highly significant transformation of the relationships within the modernism, avant-gardism, and mass culture constellation. When he uses the phrase new paradigm he qualifies it by writing, "By 'new paradigm' I do not mean to suggest that there is a total break or rupture between modernism and postmodernism, but rather that modernism, avant-garde, and mass culture have entered into a new set of mutual relations and discursive configurations which we call 'postmodern' and which is clearly distinct from the paradigm of 'high modernism'" (x). He explains that when mapping the postmodern, much of his discussion proceeds from the basic premise that "what appears on one level as the latest fad, advertising pitch, and hollow spectacle is part of a slowly emerging transformation in Western societies, a change in sensibility for which the term 'postmodern' is actually, at least for now, wholly adequate" (181).

Hutcheon's perception of these relations is in agreement with Huyssen's. When discussing the tenuous boundaries between these two periods she explains that "the postmodern obviously was made possible by the self-referentiality, irony, ambiguity, and parody that characterize much of the art of modernism, as well as by its explorations of language and its challenges to the classic realist system of representation" (Hutcheon 15). Hutcheon's commentary on the fluidity of boundaries between the two periods is notable for two reasons. First, it clearly demonstrates that in spite of certain continuities that persist between the modernist and postmodernist periods we are still forced to make distinctions between the two paradigms (albeit the discourse is intricately bound to the

predecessor modernist discourse). And two, if we look closely at this particular example from Hutcheon we can see that the areas of concern are all elements of style, an approach to examining the differences and similarities between the two periods that Huyssen discourages. One of the central premises of Huyssen's modernist/postmodernist analysis is that "postmodernism must be discussed as an historical condition rather than merely as a style" (Huyssen 182). Hutcheon, in fact, does consistently and effectively address postmodernism as an historical condition through her analysis of the conscious political discourses that make up much postmodernist art and commentary; but the preceding example illustrates how the boundaries between modernism and postmodernism quickly become obscured, if not completely eradicated, when the two periods are analyzed based solely upon elements of style.

One of the most important features of modernism that we need to address is the transformation that the movement underwent from the time of its inception as an adversarial avant-garde until its official academic institutionalization in the middle decades of the 20th century. It is of central importance to this discussion that the oppositionality of early modernism be seen in contrast to the passivity of the high modernism that found a comfortable niche in the 1950s academic environment. The importance lies in the fact that "both modernism and the avant-garde always defined their identity in relation to two cultural phenomena: traditional bourgeois high culture (especially the traditions of romantic idealism and of enlightened realism and representation), but also vernacular and popular culture as it was increasingly transformed into modern commercial mass culture" (Huyssen viii-ix). We are able to trace the evolution of twentieth century global avant-garde movements such as Dada, surrealism, and early modernism to the point where high modernism became the official dogma of American literary institutions in the 1950s. After that moment modernism lost its power as an avant-garde movement existing in a confrontational mode against traditional high bourgeois culture and in effect became the custodian of that which, as an adversarial movement, it had struggled against. Thus, the

birth of institutionalized high modernism. The consequences of this transformation for our pursuit of the discernible trend in modernity of avant-gardism is that the trail goes cold and we lose sight of a European avant-garde. As Andreas Huyssen explains, however, the institutionalization of high modernism in the United States is the impetus for the development of the first indigenous avant-garde movement in America.

The emergence of postmodernism is also closely tied to the evolution of modernism into high modernism. Huyssen traces the etiology of the term “postmodern” back to its implementation by Irving Howe and Harry Levin when they used it “to lament the leveling off of the modernist movement” (Huyssen 184). In general terms, his explanation of the rise of postmodernism focuses on the idea that the belief in the Great Divide (the high modernist belief that there is a necessary separation between the entities of high art/culture and mass culture) is being challenged by developments in various academic and societal fields. He claims that postmodernism is the “second major challenge in this century to the high/low dichotomy” (Huyssen viii), a dichotomy that eventually became the hallmark of high modernism.

Linda Hutcheon is more specific than Huyssen in addressing what characteristics are specifically postmodern. She claims that “the postmodern’s initial concern is to de-naturalize some of the dominant features of our way of life” (Hutcheon 2), which is consistent with Huyssen’s claim that postmodernism was born “out of the spirit of an adversary avant-gardism” (Huyssen viii). Several of the characteristics that Hutcheon labels as postmodern - primarily the interest in process over product, the breakdown of the boundaries between life and art, and the formulation of new relationships between artist and audience - are of central importance in locating post-60s manifestations of the Grateful Dead as a postmodern entity (Hutcheon 9). Another important distinction that Hutcheon attributes to postmodernism is that “postmodernism is seemingly not so much a concept as a problematic: ‘a complex of heterogeneous but interrelated questions which will not be silenced by any spuriously unitary answer’” (Hutcheon 15). This idea opens up the

potential arena of postmodernism to include a fairly broad spectrum of activities and, thus, as we shall see, clears the way for our positioning of the Grateful Dead phenomenon that evolved out of the psychedelic avant-garde as postmodernist. A final distinguishing feature of postmodernism is that, according to Gerald Graff, there are two strains of the '60s version of postmodernism - one of apocalyptic despair and another of visionary celebration (Hutcheon 10). Graff's notion can be tied closely to Jacques Derrida's explanation of postmodern sensibility and it is in the focus on poststructuralism as a postmodern phenomenon where Huyssen's and Hutcheon's theories of postmodernism diverge - Huyssen's distinguishes between the two, Hutcheon's conflates them. If we pursue Hutcheon's formulation, we see that on the one hand, one reaction to Derrida's counter-metaphysics of absence is the turn to a melancholy, nostalgic longing for some kind of lost unitary origins; on the other hand, one can face the fire of total relativity by celebrating this new world view as a kind of liberation. It should become clear by the end of this analysis that the psychedelic movement and, particularly, the Grateful Dead, in spite of their intense focus on human consciousness, fit into the visionary celebratory strain of postmodernism. In this strict interpretation, their forms of postmodernism are similar to Huyssen's delineation of modernism at the stage of its exhaustion, which "is a modernism of playful transgression, of an unlimited weaving of textuality, a modernism all confident in...its denial of the subject...a modernism quite dogmatic in its rejection of presence and in its unending praise of lacks and absences, deferrals and traces which produce, presumably, not anxiety but, in Roland Barthes' terms, *jouissance*, bliss" (Huyssen 209). The lines "The highway's for gamblers, better use your sense,/ Gather what you can from coincidence" from Bob Dylan's song "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue" would appear to be one of the primary postmodern principles that informs nearly all levels of discourse surrounding the Grateful Dead phenomenon, originating with the band's inception and continuing until the band's 1995 break up.

One of the reasons that drawing distinctions between the modern and postmodern periods becomes so problematic is the fact that so many features of modernism are carried over into postmodern art, criticism, and theory. These continuities can be felt in the production of texts in all three of these fields and, often, what we are left to sift through is a seemingly modernist commentary that is informed by an obscure postmodernist sensibility. In terms of artistic production, Huyssen claims that “modernist styles have not actually been abolished, but...continue ‘to enjoy a certain kind of half-life in mass culture’” (Huyssen 196). The ultimate function that many postmodern artists wittingly or unwittingly perform is to shed new light on modernist aesthetic strategies and techniques by appropriating them and then “inserting them and making them work in new constellations” (Huyssen 217). Huyssen claims that in the fields of theory and criticism, much postmodernist work is simply an extension of previous modernist ideas. Referring specifically to a piece of postmodern criticism by Michael Foucault, Huyssen explains that “none of this is more than a further elaboration of the modernist critique of traditional idealist and romantic notions of authorship and authenticity, originality and intentionality, self-centered subjectivity and personal identity” (213). The net effect of the critical and theoretical appropriation of modernist tendencies by postmodern critics is that poststructuralism becomes “primarily a discourse of and about modernism, and that if we are to locate the postmodern in poststructuralism it will have to be found in the ways various forms of poststructuralism have opened up new problematics in modernism and have reinscribed modernism into our own time” (Huyssen 207).

Having now sketched out at least some of the primary characteristics of the modernism/postmodernism dynamic we can begin to piece together the relationship between avant-garde movements and these two concepts. As we have already seen, the early forms of modernism and postmodernism have both been characterized by Huyssen as avantgardist in their inception. Modernism was a reaction against high bourgeois culture and a rapidly accelerating mass culture. Postmodernism responded to the reification of

high modernism in American academia with a much less adversarial stance regarding mass culture and mass cultural forms. Both of these movements also share the fate of becoming the stock and trade of academic institutions, thus leaving behind their potential as adversarial entities waging attacks against high or institution art. We can contrast this tendency with the spirit of avant-garde movements throughout the 20th century - at least up until the point where Huyssen claims that “the American postmodernist avant-garde...is not only the endgame of avantgardism. It also represents the fragmentation and the decline of the avant-garde as a genuinely critical and adversary culture” (Huyssen 170). Let us now examine how the Beat, psychedelic, and Grateful Dead avant-gardes stand in strikingly different relations to the high art/mass culture constellation than do any of the other avant-gardes of the 20th century, including the Pop art avant-garde that existed contemporaneously with these movements.

Keeping Matthew Roberts’ formulation of the avant-garde in mind we can identify the relationship between avant-gardist trends within the culture of modernity while at the same time examining how those avant-gardes act in the development of modernist and postmodernist sensibilities. A brief overview of the relationship between the historical or classical avant-garde to bourgeois culture should provide us with a basic framework in which we can analyze the similarities and differences that exist between the two strains of ‘60s postmodern avant-gardism that are our central focus - the Pop art and psychedelic movements. Huyssen explains that “the most sustained attack on aestheticist notions of the self-sufficiency of high culture in this century resulted from the clash of the early modernist autonomy aesthetic with the revolutionary politics arising in Russia and Germany out of W.W.I” (Huyssen vii). The vanguards of this assault were the historical avant-garde. One distinguishing factor between modernism and the avant-garde is that, while both movements originally perceived themselves as standing in confrontation with institution art, the relationship that evolved between modernism and mass culture became the central feature that contributed to the decline of its status as an adversarial avant-garde movement.

Hutcheon insists that “modernism defined itself through the exclusion of mass culture and was driven, by its fear of contamination by the consumer culture burgeoning around it, into an elitist and exclusive view of aesthetic formalism and the autonomy of art” (Hutcheon 28). According to Huyssen, Theodor Adorno’s isolationist high modernism may have seemed reasonable at the time due to the impending threat that fascism and Stalinist communism posed not only to high art, but to high culture as well.

With the transformation of modernism into the custodian of bourgeois values the discernible trends of modernism and avant-gardism become apparent. The various historical avant-gardes now dead, only surrealism continued on the adversarial path toward societal transformation while the modernist movement began its ascendancy into institutionalized canonization and its descent into ossified dogma. The historical avant-garde’s project of reintegrating art into life praxis in order to close the gap between art and reality, of waging war against bourgeois society by attacking institution art was subsumed by the culture industry or co-opted by the institution of high art itself. Huyssen notes that avant-garde theorist Hans Enzensberger fully understood that “the historical avant-garde had failed to deliver what it had always promised: to sever political, social and aesthetic chains, to explode cultural reifications, throw off traditional forms of domination, liberate repressed energies” (Huyssen 164). Not until developments on the North American continent through the activities of the Beat, Pop art, and psychedelic movements of the 1960s does the adversarial avant-garde launch its next - and, according to Huyssen, its final - assault against bourgeois culture.

One of the primary features that delineates the Pop art avant-garde from the Beat and psychedelic avant-gardes is Pop’s continued focus and assault on the institution of high art. Pop art characterizes the first stages of postmodernism in the United States. Andreas Huyssen characterizes the postmodernism of the 1960s and ‘70s as a rejection of and movement against the codified high modernism of the middle decades of the century. In his version of the story, “the postmodernism of the 1960s tried to revitalize the heritage of

the European avant-garde and to give it an American form along what one could call in short-hand the Duchamp-Cage-Warhol axis" (Huyssen 188). The context out of which postmodernism in the sixties arose was in the rebellion of the generation of artists consisting of Rauschenberg, Kerouac, Ginsberg and the Beats, Burroughs and Barthelme against "the dominance of abstract impressionism, serial music, and classical literary modernism" (188). While Rauschenberg, Barthelme, and, to a certain degree, Burroughs were enacting changes in form, style, content, and theme in their works with a definite eye towards the world of institution art, is it really accurate to make the same claim for the Beat movement as a whole? Were Kerouac's novels *On the Road* and *The Dharma Bums* (in spite of his obsessive desire to be acknowledged by the institutionalized literary world) and Ginsberg's poem "Howl" critiques aimed at literary institutionalism? As Ken Kesey once noted, aside from Kerouac's theory on stream of consciousness writing, the author of *On the Road* will likely be read in the future as a journalist, a historian, a documenter of his age (Stevens 225). This is not to say that the Beats did not position themselves in a different adversarial relationship. They did. They squared off, as it were, with the values and beliefs of "Square America," an opponent who more often than not had little or no connection with the world of institutional modernism and high art. But this tack is a divergence from the traditional target of the historical avant-gardes of the 20th century, as well as with the contemporary Pop art avant-garde movement. What I would like to propose, then, is that we distinguish between what on the one hand is Huyssen's postmodern Duchamp-Cage-Warhol avant-garde and a different contemporaneous postmodern avant-garde along the Kerouac-Ginsberg-Kesey axis. Thus, our final stage of exploration in the development of avant-gardes in the 20th century, will take us in for a close look at the concerns of the Pop art movement and how those concerns lead to similarities and differences with the psychedelic and Grateful Dead avant-gardes of the same time.

Avant-garde movements from Dada on “distinguish themselves from preceding movements such as impressionism, naturalism, and cubism not only in their attack on ‘institution art’ as such, but also in their radical break with the referential mimetic aesthetic and its notion of the autonomous and organic work of art” (Huyssen 9). Thus, we see two of the primary targets of the 20th century avant-gardes - institution art and the high modernist autonomy aesthetic. Huyssen combines these two elements with another final characteristic - a radical vision of the future - to situate avant-gardes throughout this century. The basic criteria we are left with, then, is that the traditional avant-gardes were visionary movements that mounted attacks against bourgeois culture and, later, high modernism, with the goal of constructing “the ideal state and the new golden age of the future” (Huyssen 3). From this general formula Huyssen then makes the connection between early European avant-gardes and the American Pop art movement in the 1960s.

The spirit of looking toward the future in American postmodernism of the 1960s is perhaps the key ingredient that connects the Pop avant-garde with earlier European avant-gardes. Huyssen claims that the outlook to the future that characterized the earlier European avant-garde “had been liquidated culturally and politically” (Huyssen 168) in the age of Stalin and Hitler. However, the “postmodernism of the 1960s was characterized by a temporal imagination which displayed a powerful sense of the future and of new frontiers, of rupture and discontinuity, of crisis and generational conflict, an imagination reminiscent of earlier continental avant-garde movements such as Dada and surrealism rather than of high modernism” (191). Huyssen lists several contributing factors that gave rise to America’s indigenous Pop art avant-garde. While postmodernism’s technological optimism and its populist trends are essential to particular postmodern avant-garde sensibilities, its sustained attack against institution art is its most important, and in terms of this thesis most controversial, connection to the historical avant-garde. If the goal of avant-garde movements was to undermine and dismantle bourgeois institution art, then such an attack “only made sense in countries where ‘high art’ had an essential role to play in

legitimizing bourgeois political and social domination” (167). The Dadaist subcurrent subsumed by ‘60s postmodernism emerged only when high art had achieved that level of social and political power in the United States through the ascendancy of high modernism into the academic establishment. If anything, in America up until the 1940s and ‘50s the proponents of the arts were trying to legitimize their works in the eyes of high bourgeois culture. Thus Huyssen claims that “it is not surprising that major American writers since Henry James, such as T.S. Eliot, Faulkner and Hemingway, Pound and Stevens, felt drawn to the constructive sensibility of modernism...rather than to the iconoclastic and anti-aesthetic ethos of the European avant-garde” (167). The anti-modernist tendency that the American ‘60s postmodernist movement shared with Dada and the surrealists provides us with a clear view of the different trajectories that high modernism and the avant-gardes took during the 20th century. It also reveals how extremely focused the Pop art movement was on institution art and high culture.

And, perhaps it is at this point in our analysis where we begin to see not only discernible trends within the trajectory of the modern, but also where we get our first glimpse of the fissures that exist between the Pop and Beat/psychedelic postmodern art movements themselves. For we cannot make the same anti-institution art claims that we have just made about the Pop avant-garde for the Beat and psychedelic avant-gardes. Their concerns generally seem to arise out of and focus on the mass culture shore of the Great Divide. While they can be recognized as existing on one side of the Great Divide, they do not appear to be engaged in waging war against the opposite shore. And it is this unique mass culture-criticizing-mass culture tendency that seemingly complicates the issue as to what 1960s postmodern avant-gardism is really all about.

The preceding discussion may prompt us to ask the following question: if the primary impulse of modernity, which can be traced to modernity’s origins in the Enlightenment, is to reject traditional bourgeois values with the intention of constructing an alternative society, then how can we make the claim that the historical and ‘60s avant-

gardes are postmodernist, when we know full well that their projects were in fact attacks against bourgeois culture and attempts to build society anew? Doesn't this fact indeed make such movements modernist? If anything, we may now make the claim that avant-gardism should not necessarily be regarded as primarily postmodernist in its tendencies. Which only makes sense considering that the historical avant-garde existed in the latter years of the 19th century, nearly a hundred years prior to the era that is our concern.

This point has important implications for how we situate the Grateful Dead in the modernism/postmodernism debate. On the one hand, the historical circumstances out of which the band originated unequivocally situate them as an avant-garde movement. The general sensibility of the psychedelic avant-garde was the apocalyptic rejection of square American values with the hope of creating an alternative utopian society. Its dominating impulse was toward the total critique and transformation of society and its institutions. Therein lies the avant-gardist tendency; but there too is the connection to modernism. On the other hand, we need to take into account the state of the Grateful Dead and the cultural milieu that evolved around it in its post-60s manifestation. When we look to the evolution of the Grateful Dead phenomenon from the early 1970s right up until the break up of the band after Jerry Garcia's death in August of 1995 we can witness the distillation of certain central elements from the psychedelic movement into a new underground psychedelic/rock 'n' roll subculture. The transformation of the Grateful Dead from a powerful presence in a mass cultural avant-gardist movement geared toward the fundamental reformulation of society into a self-contained, itinerant, subculture can be perceived as, perhaps, the most elemental factor in locating them as a postmodernist entity. For, it is in their movement away from the utopian goals of societal transformation and into a self-contained sector of the public that enjoyed, valued, and, celebrated its lifestyle without the overriding concern that the entire country be turned on to the Grateful Dead "thing" that their historical bonds to the modernist tendencies of avant-gardism are broken. Another factor that distances the post-60s Grateful Dead phenomenon from the modernist tendencies that all three '60s

avant-gardes shared is the evolution that took place in the Grateful Dead's relationship to form. This modernist tendency - the struggle against and the attempt to completely disentangle themselves from reified structure - closely ties the Pop, Beat, and psychedelic avant-gardes to modernism. What we shall see is that as the power of the psychedelic movement dissipated and, as certain of its revolutionary, anti-structuralist tendencies filtered into the Grateful Dead subculture, certain lessons about structurality were learned - primarily that escaping from structurality is an impossibility. In this discovery, which the Grateful Dead realized over a thirty year period of musical exploration, we can locate the transition of the psychedelic avant-garde from an adversarial movement with modernist tendencies into a postmodern entity whose primary focus becomes the manipulation of inescapable structurality with the intention of transforming consciousness.

THE GRATEFUL DEAD: PARKING LOT, PARTICIPATION, PERFORMANCE

The primary focus of the psychedelic movement was a revolution of consciousness. To summarize briefly, the conflict between the psychedelic avant-garde and square American values resided in the fact that the rich textures of psychic experience cultivated through psychedelic experience were not within the accepted bounds of nine-to-five corporate America's daily routine. In a society where the ultimate goal is to produce tangible products that are exchanged for other tangible products, namely money, there is no practical use value in a lifestyle spent exploring the ramifications of the dissolution of the ego and the subsequent effects such a transformation has upon consciousness. The nature of revolutionary psychedelic experience, if adopted by the masses, necessarily would have led to fundamental changes in late 20th century capitalism. Thus, there would appear to have been no middle ground upon which either American mass culture or the psychedelic avant-garde could stand. To locate the Grateful Dead project within this revolution we can look to David Gans' *Conversations with the Dead*, in which Grateful Dead lyricist John Barlow outlines the Grateful Dead project: "What the Grateful Dead does is work on consciousness, which is the best way to approach politics anyway. You change consciousness, and politics will take care of itself" (Gans 260). Barlow's commentary seems to generally reflect the approach that the psychedelic movement took toward achieving its goal of the "liberation" of the human species. Political transformation is dependent upon consciousness transformation. In academic terms, his commentary reflects the explanations that Tom Wolfe and Jay Stevens have provided regarding the motivation of the psychedelic movement. In artistic terms, Barlow's revolutionary sentiments are expressed in the Beatles' song "Revolution" when John Lennon sings, "You say you want to change the constitution,/ Well, we want to change your head." These sentiments were the central focus and motivating factor of the burgeoning psychedelic movements on both the East and West Coasts of America in the early '60s.

Commenting on the explosion of the psychedelic movement into mainstream American consciousness, Tom Wolfe credits the Trips Festival in 1966 as the torch that set the movement ablaze. In his various claims about the differences between the East Coast and West Coast avantgardes he manages to create the perception that what happened to popular culture in the '60s was influenced not so much by the cloistered New York Pop avant-garde of Cage and Warhol, nor even by the only slightly less cloistered psychedelic avant-garde of Tim Leary and his League for Spiritual Discovery at Millbrook, but, rather, by the California psychedelic movement that was led by novelist Ken Kesey. The new alternative art form that was rarely alluded to in artistic terms were the Acid Tests that Kesey and his band of psychedelic cohorts organized in California, Oregon, and Mexico from the years of 1964 to '66. Wolfe claims that "the Acid Tests were the epoch of the psychedelic style" (223) and that everything that eventually came under the focus and scrutiny of the media as a result of the Trips Festival can be traced directly back to the work of Kesey's psychedelic avant-garde at those now historic acid blowouts. Wolfe's observations shed light upon this project for he also makes the claim that "'Mixed media' entertainment--this came straight out of the Acid Tests' combination of light and movie projections, strobes, tapes, rock 'n' roll, black light. 'Acid rock'--the sound of the Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper* album and the high-vibrato electronic sounds of the Jefferson Airplane, the Mothers of Invention and many other groups--*the mothers of it all were the Grateful Dead* at the Acid Tests" (Wolfe 223, emphasis added). The Dead moved quickly from their earliest days in 1965 as the bluegrass Mother McCree's Uptown Jug Champions into the electrified acid rock band that took the stage at the first Acid Test. We should take note of these points because they are significant indications of the fissures that existed between the Pop and psychedelic avant-gardes. Kesey's perception of the Acid Tests was that they were a step out of and beyond art; they were a merging of the art-life dichotomy the purpose of which was to push one's consciousness to its outermost limits through the complex interaction of sound, film, light, and psychedelic drugs. The overriding concerns

of the participants resided in the individual experience happening right then, in the moment, in the unceasing flux of the narrative of the present. How institutionalized academia reacted to their project was of no concern or consequence to them.

The evolution of the Grateful Dead and the psychedelic movement into an essentially non-threatening subculture can be likened to the effects that early scientific researchers recorded after administering LSD to a single chimpanzee and reintroducing him into his social group. Jay Stevens explains that “within minutes the place was in an uproar. The chimp hadn’t acted crazy or strange, per se; instead it blithely ignored all the little social niceties and regulations that govern chimp colony life (Stevens 11). The key idea demonstrated here is that society reacts against those who ignore or dissociate themselves from the arbitrary values and customs that it has developed. When the human participants in the psychedelic revolution began ignoring society’s most sacred doctrines, American culture reacted with the same fear driven fervor and pandemonium as the chimpanzee colony. However, with the criminalization of LSD in 1966 and the imprisonment of Tim Leary by 1970 the revolutionary power of the psychedelic counter-culture was beginning to wane. As the psychedelic movement moved from the front pages of America’s newspapers and magazines to the dustbins of vintage record stores the mass movement questing for a psychedelic utopia slowly began to dissolve. As John Lennon said in one of his solo efforts, “I was the walrus, but now I am John...the dream is over.” And so the energies that once flowed so feverishly in the pre-Summer of Love years eventually became channeled into projects that were, in a practical sense, less of a threat to the destruction of the mass consumer society that square American values had forged. Certainly, this statement is debatable, as America’s mind-boggling War on Drugs would suggest. In any case, not all of the energies from the psychedelic era dissipated into complete nothingness. In a few instances, psychedelia gained a real foothold in American culture. Rather, it might be more appropriate to say that American culture got a real foothold in the aesthetics of psychedelia - the swirling, day-glo images in everything from Starburst fruit chew adds to

the latest MTV video attest to the nearly total commodification of the counter-culture. By the mid-70s, the head chumps were once again wielding “the ethic of adjustment” (Stevens 287) against the “head” chumps and by the late 1970s the psychedelic movement, at least in its previously formidable transformational role, had ground to a halt.

This is not to say that the messages and lessons that the experimentation with psychedelics produced, the doors that those drugs had opened, were then forgotten, the doors once again closed and sealed tight. Rather, the power that a once burgeoning psychedelic movement possessed had all but been eradicated. The creeds, beliefs, aesthetic values, and spiritual direction that the psychedelic avant-garde had once held up to the face of America while screeching out the day-glo proclamation that “You, too, will one day live like us, be like us” had been quelled. If anything, the psychedelic vanguard had to face the reality that square America was resolutely determined to remain that way, if not only for the reasons that the psychedelic avant-garde itself provided them, namely the throngs of strung out kids that were the residue of the mass invasion of San Francisco during the ‘67 Summer of Love. The revolution could no longer rightfully be called a revolution in any sense that suggested that the Establishment was going to evolve into a turned on, electrified, spiritually enlightened corporation. There was to be no monumental bronze statue of Buddha on the lawn of the White House. It is true that there are perhaps some stragglers from the psychedelic revolution still around today who are waiting for the psychedelic calvary to come and take up the charge, but such people are the exception and not the rule. What has carried over from the psychedelic revolution, however, is the lifestyle of many of the hippies - the renunciation of nine-to-five jobs, the turning to New Age philosophy, macrobiotic diets, the steady ingestion of hallucinogenic drugs like psilocybin mushrooms, LSD, and marijuana, the nearly religious devotion to various forms of music. The commercialization of the psychedelic movement, as I have already mentioned, has also kept those forces from the mid-60s from completely vanishing. All of these factors, while not being engaged in with the apocalyptic avant-garde/modernist goal

of transforming society, have been modified and have taken on a more isolated and personalized character. Indeed, it would appear that the “private revolution” espoused in the mid-60s by Bob Stubbs, owner of the Haight’s Blue Unicorn, has now, after a few brief years of outward expansion in the middle and late ‘60s, revolved back into exactly that - a private, as opposed to public, revolution.

One of the channels into which many of the subcurrents from the psychedelic movement have flowed is the sub-culture of the Grateful Dead. In the nomadic traveling community comprised of individuals known as Deadheads - individuals who follow the band from city to city across the United States (and on tours past, to Europe and Egypt) we can locate a continually evolving community in which many key concepts that were of central concern to the psychedelic movement are still being actively played out. David Gans asked Grateful Dead lyricist John Barlow about the transformation of the Grateful Dead into an institution and Barlow responded, “Well, it means that for one thing we are a community ourselves. Which I think is damned important. I mean, we are a *community*. We’re not a commune, we’re not brothers--we’re a community like a small town in Iowa, where everybody farms right outside of town” (Gans 177). Commenting on the evolution of the Grateful Dead phenomenon and the deadheads in another interview with Gans, Barlow addressed deadheads directly: “You folks are trying to keep something alive that needs to be kept alive. You’re not an artifact, and you aren’t archaic, and you aren’t taking refuge in the past, you’re pushing the revolution. And I really appreciate that about you” (Gans 265). There is an obvious tension that exists between these two quotes from Barlow. On the one hand, he acknowledges that the Grateful Dead has become institutionalized; on the other, he claims that the deadhead community is actively engaged in the revolutionary causes that characterized the psychedelic movement. Thus, here we can see the inherent contradiction that has beset nearly all avant-garde movements - the struggle to wage an attack against the structural forces that limit and determine their existences without becoming in the process a reified structural force themselves. In literary theory we

can see this paradox being played out even in the work of Derrida when his own theory of the counter-metaphysics of absence itself becomes a new, reified center to literary theory. One of the greatest lessons that we have learned both from postmodernist theory and the failed efforts of various avant-garde attacks against the establishment is that it is impossible to escape the structurality of any and all structures. As we shall see, the Grateful Dead's thirty year long evolving relationship to structural forces is one of the pivotal factors that characterize them as a postmodernist entity.

As we have already discovered, the Grateful Dead phenomenon has evolved out of the aesthetic, cultural, and political concerns of the Beat and psychedelic avant-gardes. The *On the Road*, hobo, rolling stone grows no moss, sensibility lies at the heart of the Grateful Dead experience. In a world where the barriers between art and life are perhaps as broken down as any avant-garde movement could have ever dreamed, it becomes the difficult task of the chronicler to decide where to begin. Should we begin our discussion from the center of the phenomenon, the band on the stage playing music, and move out in concentric circles discussing the relationship between band, audience and the specific event of any given night's "concert" experience; progress into an analysis of the parking lot scene where the multitudes from every state in the Union, Canada, Mexico, and a host of other countries in the Western hemisphere gather several hours before and after the show (several thousand of those fans ticketless and waiting for a "miracle"); then move on to the dispersal of the crowd into that venue's city streets where the townies go home and the tourheads go to hotels and campgrounds; to the following day when the townies go to work and the entire Grateful Dead scene pulls up stakes and heads out in search of the American adventure and the next stop on the Grateful Dead itinerary - an exodus that ultimately opens up the entire matrix of America's superhighways and backroads to the ceaseless intermingling of the road life text with the Grateful Dead text; finally concluding our analysis as we walk through the turnstile to the next night's concert, finding a spot on the lawn and delving into that concert's set list and performance? Or should we start from the American wilderness

end, and move inward toward the concert experience? In either case, we are bound to enter into territory that quite simply cannot be understood without first knowing something else. This is probably the single most important obstacle to overcome in any organized discussion of the Grateful Dead phenomenon.

Maybe we should begin with a look at the devoted followers of the band, for they represent a sort of middle ground where the road life text and the Grateful Dead text reach their greatest synthesis. In the lifestyle of the followers of the Dead we witness the avant-gardist and postmodernist tendency of integrating art into life's praxis. The Tourheads themselves probably make up around 10 to 20% of the crowd at any given concert. When I use the term Tourhead here, I am referring to the nucleus of people who live the tourhead lifestyle everyday, all year, traveling any and everywhere the Grateful Dead goes for years on end. These individuals are generally the most devoted participants in the Dead scene - either as the result of a voluntary total immersion into the Grateful Dead lifestyle and music, or because they have become so financially dependent on the Grateful Dead scene that they have few if any options that would enable them to sever their ties to it. I think it is important to distinguish the individuals who I am here naming Tourheads from the general group of loyal fans typically known as Deadheads because one can be a fanatical Deadhead without having the same level of involvement in the Grateful Dead scene as a Tourhead, a distinction that perhaps loosens one's ties to the psychedelic subculture. The Deadheads probably make up anywhere from 40 to 60% of the crowd. (This figure varies depending on where the venue is located. The percentage of tourheads/deadheads in attendance is likely to be greater at a Greek Theater concert in Berkeley than it will be at Cardinal Stadium in Louisville.) The distinction I am making here is that, like the tourheads, the deadheads are extremely devoted to the music and lifestyle that surrounds the Dead scene. Traveling out of town to see Grateful Dead concerts is often included in their involvement with the Grateful Dead, if only out of necessity, but neither touring nor making their living off of the Grateful Dead scene is the central preoccupation of their lives. These participants

in the scene might go on mini-tours of two or three cities, or even embark on a summer-long odyssey with the band, but these brief stints with the scene are not on the same level of commitment, at least in terms of livelihood, as that expressed by the tourheads. This is not to say that those individuals are not participating as fully in the concert environment as “serious” tourheads do. There is a staggering variation of levels of awareness that crosses all sectors of the Grateful Dead scene. In some instances, the most “dedicated” looking tourheads are perhaps the least aware of what’s happening musically or otherwise within the scene. There is one particular reason, however, why touring with the band, either on the highly involved level of a tourhead or on the slightly less involved mini-touring level of deadheads, becomes an integral aspect of the concert experience. The connection between the musical performance and touring resides in the flow that develops as the band makes its way around the country on a spring, summer, fall, or winter tour. This flow becomes an essential ingredient to understanding what is happening on a given night’s show in terms of the set list that is played and the feel of the show - whether it is perceived as being a “mellow” or laid back experience versus a high energy, acid rock blowout or some variation in between. For example, during the first concert the Grateful Dead played after the 1995 gate crash/riot at Deer Creek Music Center, an event that caused the first ever cancellation of a Grateful Dead concert because of Grateful Dead fans, before drawing the second set to a close the band played the song “Goin’ Down the Road Feelin’ Bad” in which Garcia remonstratively crooned the lines, “I ain’t gonna be treated this old way.” The next night’s show turned out to be one of the best of the tour and the touring crowd who had watched what came to be known as the “tour from hell” evolve shared a special appreciation for the events of that evening which only someone living on the road and following the unique developments of a particular tour could have understood.

I would now like to present an analysis of the evolution of an individual’s involvement with the Grateful Dead phenomenon in order to devise a means by which our previous discussion of postmodernism, modernism, and avant-gardism can come to light.

One reason for choosing this manner of presentation is in order to present the various levels of textuality that comprise the Grateful Dead phenomenon, a text that, for some, may be completely unfamiliar. I also feel that only by examining how the relationship of the individual audience member to the central artistic figure of the Grateful Dead evolves can we come to understand the dynamic that exists between the various levels of textuality that comprise the Grateful Dead phenomenon - such as the concert narrative, the art/life dichotomy, lyrical self-reflexivity, the tourhead lifestyle, and the Beat and psychedelic movements. The experiences of an uninitiated concert goer attending his first Grateful Dead show will be vastly different from those of an experienced tourhead. Thus, since it is impossible to describe the entire spectrum of perspectives that come together at a Grateful Dead concert, it seems that the most productive avenue of exploration we can take is to look at a set of possible differences that may exist between a novice concert goer and an individual who's journey with the Grateful Dead is well under way.

“THE BUS CAME BY AND I GOT ON, THAT’S WHEN IT ALL BEGAN”:

A FIRST IMPRESSION OF THE GRATEFUL DEAD PHENOMENON

Let us use for our example show a venue the Grateful Dead played during their summer tour on June 23, 1993. The June 23 concert was the third and closing night of a three day gig played at the Deer Creek Music Center in Noblesville, Indiana. It was the thirteenth show of a fifteen show summer tour. For the sake of comparison, let’s look at two possible perspectives that could exist regarding the day’s events: that of John, a twenty year old resident of nearby Indianapolis, who is a complete newcomer to the entire Grateful Dead scene and, in fact, has no idea of what he will encounter either culturally or musically that day; and the perspective of a deadhead who attended all of the Deer Creek shows as well as the entire 1993 summer tour.

We should briefly look at the cultural scene of the parking lot from John’s perspective, for his astonishment at the carnivalesque atmosphere should certainly shed some light on the art-life dichotomy that is being broken down at this event. The first thing that John would notice upon entering one of the vast open fields that serve as parking facilities at Deer Creek is the multitude of people who are straggling for miles along the country road that every vehicle must take to arrive on Deer Creek’s premises. As John waits in his car, the traffic is at a stand still and he is flanked on the front and rear by VW tourbuses, he sees hundreds of people walking in every direction, in and out of the surrounding fields, up and down the road, the majority of which are holding up a single raised finger. This is the universal deadhead signal that indicates that one needs a ticket for that evening’s concert. John doesn’t know this at first, but he soon discovers this piece of deadhead jargon when the barefoot hippie walking between the two lanes of traffic, selling home-made tie-dyed candles without lowering his one finger, leans into his window and says, “I need a miracle. You guys got any extras for tonight?” Looking at the hippie in his window - a real hippie, in 1993! - John realizes that he is asking him for a ticket to tonight’s show. “Ah, no. Sorry.” “Do you want to buy one of my candles? Got any

buds (marijuana)?" John shakes his head and the guy's off to the next car. It all happened in a flash and John starts sensing that this isn't going to be his ordinary concert outing. Over the next hour John was approached by at least another fifty people either seeking their elusive miracle ticket or trying to pawn off their Grateful Dead tour shirts, necklaces, hand-crafted clothing articles, beers, sodas, or doses. As John would later find out, a significant portion of the heads only sold imported beers. If he had asked, he would have discovered that their reason was they thought domestic American beer companies were waging a war in Congress trying to keep marijuana illegal. All of this and he hasn't even gotten to the seven by twelve piece of grass that will be his parking space for the day.

The rest of John's afternoon is simply a magnification of what he experienced on the roadway in. For hundreds of yards in all directions John sees rows and rows of VW buses, camper tops popped up, a festival of people sitting, playing, some laughing, a few crying. Mostly, he senses a euphoria in the air. As he walks around the parking lot taking in the scene the things which draw his attention the most, aside from the sight of all the hippies parading around, are the smells and the sounds. There is a distinctive smell that permeates the lot, the smell of a wild variety of meals being cooked and sold. He notices that for every five or six clothing, pipe, and trinket vendors, there is at least one person selling food and beer.

The vending is perhaps the most obvious and enticing aspect of the parking lot for the newcomer, but the sounds that accompany the scene are just as interesting. Four sounds are the most common: the shouts and laughter and screeches of people playing hacky sack or gathered in small groups just rapping; the unfamiliar but distinctive sound of the release of nitrous oxide gas into gigantic balloons. John saw someone take a hit off a balloon and a few seconds later the person fell over (nitrous oxide is known in the deadhead community as "hippie crack"); the intermingling of the sounds of the Grateful Dead from live bootleg concert tapes from tens of thousands of buses and cars (some tapes recorded the night before in the tapers' section of the venue); and, finally, the slightly

unsettling sound of people playing bongo drums. This phenomenon is the most curious of all for John. As showtime gets closer, John notices that the sound of the drums becomes more prominent, more intense. Just before showtime John finally stumbles across the source of the drumming and there is a large circle of people, maybe fifteen or twenty, banging out a tremendous flow of rhythm. Some deadheads are dancing in the most unusual ways, arms twirling, Guatemalan dresses spinning out in wild circles of color, sweating it out and grooving on the rhythms the drummers are laying down. A police officer walks by and John overhears him say to his partner, "The natives are getting restless." And that's it! That's the whole feel that he had been sensing all afternoon long. The tribalness of it all.

Deer Creek is an outdoor amphitheater, and as John is herded in line and passes through the turnstiles (after being heavily frisked, he noticed a young woman being pulled aside by security when they searched her backpack and found a stash of marijuana), various deadheads start making mooing and baahing sounds, and once they get through the gate they let rip boisterous and gleeful shouts of "All right!!" and "Take me to Jerry!" If John were only slightly more naive he might have asked someone beside him, "Jerry who?", but he at least knows who the "leader" of the band is. He settles himself out on the lawn next to hippie couples, some with young children, and he notices that most of the people don't have beers like he does; instead on nearly every third or fourth blanket people are rolling joints and passing bowls around. He noticed the preference for marijuana rather than alcohol in the parking lot also, although there were quite a few elbows being bent there as well.

A lot of the overall vibes going on in the scene are being lost on John simply because he has no previous expectations or knowledge of what the music will be like. The music that is being piped into the sound system before the show is nothing he has heard of before, but he is sure that it isn't the sound of the Grateful Dead. There's no opening act for the smaller venues like Deer Creek he found out. Sting, however, was opening for the

large stadium shows this summer. What's weird is that every so often, as the happy-go-lucky tune winds down to an inaudible nothing, people begin standing up in various pockets of the stadium in anticipation that the band will come out, and then the same bouncing happy-go-lucky tune winds up again and everyone takes their seats. Until, finally, the tune stops once and for all. The band walks unpretentiously onto the stage, throwing up a quick wave to the now roaring multitudes. But John senses that it's a kind of a muted roar - very enthusiastic, but relatively brief and under control. The band tunes up for about five minutes and they break into the first song.

The band played seven songs and after about sixty minutes, built up to an intense instrumental finale and then left the stage. The crowd roared in ecstasy and John couldn't believe that the show was over. Of course, it wasn't. The band was simply taking their standard break between the first and second sets. The first set was characterized by a fairly low key sound with bursts of improvisational instrumental sections interwoven tightly with country western lyrics. Nothing too illuminating as far as John was concerned. He only recognized a couple of the songs they played, both of which were covers - Dylan's "(Stuck Inside of Mobile with the) Memphis Blues Again" and Robbie Robertson's "Broken Arrow." At the start of the show John stood up in excitement to see the band and then sat down to enjoy the show. To his chagrin, just about everyone else around him remained on their feet the entire set, dancing in the strangest ways, apparently without any rhythm or specific moves - much like the dancers he saw gathered around the drums circle in the parking lot. During the set break he witnessed some intriguing behavior. Walking through the crowd, mingling with the people gathered were certain individuals who stood out. There was one man whom he thought had completely lost his mind, because all he did the entire break was stand up and turn around in a circle waving very placidly to the multitudes with a gigantic smile pasted on his face. On a level that John could identify more...sanely...with, a middle-aged hippie approached the family sitting on the blanket next to him. The family had a little girl and the hippie, who had an arm puppet with velcro

balls that he juggled, began to put on an individualized puppet show for the child. He must have spent five or ten minutes playing with the girl, after which someone behind John invited the puppeteer over and the two shared a communal bowl of marijuana to get ready for the second set. This event struck John as both touching and as a rather odd combination of paternal care and drug ingestion. As he whittled the remaining time away between the sets he observed several over-the-hill middle-agers staked out at various places on the lawn donning gigantic Cat-in-the-Hat striped hats and wearing glowing tye-dyes with enormous red neon hearts at the center of their spirals. John sensed that there was a lot of what people from the '60s would call "good vibes" being shared, and that in spite of all the drugs and strange behavior he had witnessed, the day's event in many ways resembled a family outing.

After about a forty minute break, the sun had gone down, a clear starry sky blanketed the amphitheater. The sliver of a new crescent moon was out. The band came back out to the wild roars of the crowd. After another brief tune up they launched into a powerful rendition of "Samson and Delilah." All the next day, John kept humming the tune and singing the refrain from that one - "If I had my way, if I had my way, if I had my way - I would tear this old building down!" Then they played what were two interminable tunes that were, quite frankly, so bad that they were embarrassing. They moved into a richly complex number that evolved after a long, mystical jam into a twenty minute drum solo conducted by the band's two drummers. John's ear's pricked up upon hearing one of the lyrics from the song played directly before the drums solo - "By the shadow of the moon -- Terrapin Station" - and he wondered if anyone else had picked up on the coincidence between the singing of that line and the shining moon overhead. The drums segment led into a spacey, at times screeching, guitar segment which led without stopping into the next "real" song that they played. With the first notes of this next song the entire audience erupted, really erupted, and continued to scream wildly for upwards of two minutes. Earlier in the evening the crowd had often broken out in wild applause upon

hearing the first notes of one song or another, but nothing compared to this. John was enjoying himself, but he could not figure out why the crowd was reacting this way. It was an alright song, but geez. After tapering that song down into some musically unrecognizable form the band segued into another song that was again met with wild enthusiasm. The band closed with the only song John recognized during the entire hour and a half long second set - the Rascal's "Good Lovin'." John was somewhat disappointed. They hadn't played any of the Grateful Dead songs that he was familiar with. There was no "Truckin'," no "Uncle John's Band," no "Friend of the Devil." After a few more minutes the band came out and played the encore - "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" - and upon its conclusion, the amphitheater let loose its last, and longest lingering, burst of cheers and applause.

The atmosphere from inside the concert carried over into the parking lot after the show, and the party that had started earlier that afternoon began to really rage. Fireworks were being blasted off into the night sky; the vendors were out selling their wares; nitrous oxide canisters were in full gear blasting out their last breaths of hippie crack. John lingered around the scene for a short while and watched as the drum circle fired up for a final Deer Creek tribal gathering, many of the deadheads dancing on top of day-glo school buses in ecstatic, blissed out frenzy. He stayed until the flashing lights of the Noblesville Sheriff's deputies coaxed him into leaving the scene. Thousands were leaving, yet thousands remained. As he was pulling out of the lot into the snaking line of red taillights trailing off into the Indiana corn fields, he looked over his shoulder at the ongoing party, the sea of cars, the bus-top roof dancers, the exploding display of red, white, and blue fireworks in the dark Indiana sky and all he could think about was the scene from Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* when Martin Sheen and company arrive at the last military outpost before losing all contact with the civilized world.

**“LIKE I TOLD YOU, WHAT I SAID, STEAL YOUR FACE RIGHT OFF
YOUR HEAD”: FILLING IN THE GAPS, A DEEPENING OF
PERSPECTIVE**

Through this lengthy anecdote, the general structure of a day in the life in the Grateful Dead scene can now be grasped. The events that John witnessed and took part in need to be elaborated on from an informed perspective on the Grateful Dead scene in order to reveal the correspondences that exist between the subcultural phenomenon of the Grateful Dead and our topics of modernism, postmodernism, and avant-gardism. As we shall see, it is the evolution over time of the dynamic between the musical text and the road-life text that characterizes the Grateful Dead phenomenon in its post-60s incarnations as postmodernist. As our discussion develops we will be able to delineate the postmodern tendencies within the Grateful Dead subculture that define that phenomenon as being characteristically different from modernism and avant-gardism. We shall see how both the distillation of the psychedelic movement from a strictly adversarial avant-gardist movement into the isolated subculture of the Grateful Dead and the evolutionary changes that occurred over the years through the band's experimentation with structural forms locate them within the framework of postmodernism.

I have already provided a relatively thorough description of the events of June, 23, 1993, in the sketch on John. The basic outline of the parking lot scene flowing into the concert amphitheater itself, and then returning to the parking lot reveals how the separation between events taking place within the traditional modernist artistic text - in this case the performers on stage - and the audience are, in significant ways, breaking down. The texts that make up the Grateful Dead phenomenon retain little, if any, of the protective escapism that characterized high modernist works. The Grateful Dead phenomenon is formed out of the complex interweaving of several different discourses that are each open to the intervention of spontaneous events in the present. Thus, the boundaries of the texts are open and the high modernist tendency to perceive the art work as a closed, unitary structure

somehow existing outside of spatial and temporal constraints is abandoned. We can draw close parallels between John's observations of the Grateful Dead subculture from that day and Huyssen's description of the 1917 Russian avant-garde, who "aimed at an art which would intervene in everyday life by being both useful and beautiful, an art of mass demonstrations and mass festivities, an activating art of objects and attitudes, of living and dressing, of speaking and writing" (Huyssen 13). As we have seen, "the artificial barriers between work and leisure, production and culture" (Huyssen 13) are, in the Grateful Dead parking lot, reduced to their lowest possible levels. A closer look at the complex matrix of textuality and discourse that John encountered will reveal, however, that the avantgardist activities from that day, and the Grateful Dead post-60s lifestyle in general, are characterized by a postmodern sensibility.

The parking lot scene that John encountered at Deer Creek was a complex matrix that functioned on cultural, social, and economic levels. The parking lot is a maze of wildly painted day-glo tourbuses (VW Westphalia campers being the most common), frisbees, hacky sacks, food stands manned by deadheads, makeshift clothing boutiques, unleashed dogs, and lost children. David Shenk calls it the "show before the show" (Shenk 215). He describes the parking lot at a Grateful Dead show in the following way: "At one end of the lot, there's a row of customized tourbuses in various states of repair, hand-painted and festooned with insignia flags. Heads who live in the buses spread out blankets in front of their rolling homes, offering all manner of wares for sale - from drums, to Guatemalan sweaters, t-shirts, lyric books, plump burritos, jewelry, bongs, incense, photographs, holy images, and 'kind imports' (beer). The main row of vendors is sometimes called 'Shakedown Street' [the title of a Grateful Dead song]. The economy of Shakedown Street thrives on barter: a juice for a cookie, a red clay pipe for a pinch of something fragrant to get high, a brass thunderskull buckle for a hand-stitched dress" (Shenk 215). One characteristic of Shakedown Street that Shenk leaves slightly unclear is the notion of the bartering as currency on Shakedown Street. The barter system at Dead

shows is an important institutionalized counter-cultural force for the deadhead community and is, paradoxically, both a clear connection to the anti-capitalist tendencies that characterized the psychedelic movement as well as a celebration of the free-enterprise system. The barter system, however, generally applies only to serious tourheads, not the average townie going to his first show. It takes cash to run a successful tourbus/vending operation and the one time curiosity seekers are the ones who provide it. On the other hand, if one is a dyed-in-the-wool tourhead and recognizable as a "holy seeker," then that person is often entitled, depending on the disposition of the particular vendor, to a free veggie burrito, a grilled cheese sandwich, or whatever else that individual might have to offer. This "shared lunch" mentality among serious tourheads, while not an absolute standard, does reveal the "us versus them" sensibility that permeates the Grateful Dead subculture. What John witnessed in the parking lot after the show was not merely a communal celebration of the deadheads after the concert. Rather, most of the vendors who had skipped out of the June 23 show with the closing note had hastily reassembled Shakedown Street in a last ditch attempt to earn food, gas, and supply money before setting out for the tour's next stop in D.C.

Thus, the primary differences regarding the parking lot scene between what John and serious tourheads would experience generally stem from the fact that the parking lots tourheads pull into in various cities literally become their homes for the day - although camping in most venue parking lots is not permitted. Another difference between a townie perspective and that of the tourhead is that the tourhead's economic and social lives are essentially lived out in these parking lots. Tom Wolfe's observations on the Merry Pranksters' lifestyle works well in describing that of the deadheads': "Suddenly it hits me that for the Pranksters this is *permanent*. This is the way they live. Men, women, boys, girls, most from middle-class upbringings, men and women and boys and girls and children and babies, this is the way they have been living for months, for years, some of them, across America and back, on the bus" (Wolfe 16). The tourheads generally spend

two out of every three days on a tour setting up shop in a different city's arena parking lot. The cumulative effect of this transient lifestyle is that the tourheads sprawl out in the parking lots in the way most people sprawl out in their living rooms. It can generally be said that while on the road deadheads feel like the concert venues are their homes. Other than the campgrounds and rest areas along the highway, while on tour most deadheads neither have, nor want, a different place to go other than the parking lot. This attitude is obviously different from John's, who, when he set out for the concert, definitely did not think he was going "home."

The most important consequence that the touring lifestyle has upon an individual's interaction within the Grateful Dead scene is that one's central focus becomes the music of the Grateful Dead and the activities, events, and occurrences that surround the touring deadhead community. This focus becomes objectified in various ways as one enters into the deadhead lifestyle. As John saw, people transfer their devotion to the music through the creation of hand-made crafts thematically designed specifically around Grateful Dead symbology - like the dancing bears, the "Steal Your Face" skull and lightning bolt image, or Jerry Jasper skeletons - or more generally around the psychedelic aesthetic of spiraling tie-dyes, environmentally conscious products, and hand-crafted clothing and jewelry. These activities translate into the livelihoods of many deadheads.

The focus also becomes objectified in the various rituals that have developed over the years before and during shows. In the most extreme case, the Grateful Dead experience has evolved into a quasi religious dogma in the form of The Church of Unlimited Devotion, now simply known as the Family of Unlimited Devotion. John would most likely have been within the midst of some of these individuals as they danced in the parking lot and inside of the venue, but it would be highly unlikely that he would have been able to distinguish those individuals from the vast multitudes of other hardcore tourheads. Spinners, the common nickname for members of this group, "were a striking presence at shows throughout the late '80s and early '90s, young women and men whirling rapidly

and gracefully near the hallway speakers in earth-toned cotton dresses, and dropping to the floor in supplication at the end of jams. (The community supported itself by selling the handmade dresses in the parking lot and by mail order.)” (Shenk 269). Inside of darkened in-door arenas, one could often observe the silhouettes of Spinners twirling in open arena doorways above and to the sides of the stage. Until 1992, members of the church lived on a communal farm referred to as “the Land” in Mendocino County, California (Shenk 269). The spinners took formal vows - including celibacy, ate a strictly vegetarian diet, and practiced an extreme asceticism. Shenk explains that “rapid and prolonged whirling has long been recognized as a way of altering consciousness” (268), and the Spinners, like 20th century whirling dervishes, used twirling to the music of the Grateful Dead as a means for engaging in spiritual contemplation. Shenk quotes Jerry Garcia’s reaction to the Family of Unlimited Devotion: “They’re kind of like our Sufis. I think it’s really neat that there’s a place where they can be comfortable enough to do something with such abandon. It’s nice to provide that. That’s one of the things I’m really proud of the Grateful Dead for. It’s like free turf” (270).

The most telling of the rituals that has developed in the Grateful Dead scene is the drums circle, for in this congregation lies the heart of the Grateful Dead experience - music, dance, altered states of consciousness, community, spirituality. Drum circles, which manifest themselves both in parking lots before shows and at the campgrounds where deadheads stay while touring, are, perhaps, the clearest example of the continuity that exists between the stage performance of the Grateful Dead itself and the audience participation of the deadhead community. In this element of the Grateful Dead experience the art-life dichotomy breaks down completely and the unceasing pursuit that is the motivating force for the entire deadhead lifestyle - the dissolution and reconstruction of the ego and the effects that the practices, rituals, and activities which bring about this transformation have upon consciousness - becomes most visible.

It might be beneficial to briefly take a closer look at the concept of the dissolution of the ego and its relation to the Grateful Dead project because what we can learn about the dissolution of the ego from the drumming ritual we can transfer to the transformative effects that I will describe later in regard to the Grateful Dead's concert narrative. The dissolution of the ego is an ambiguous phrase in that it connotes both the modernist impulse for unity but also the postmodernist acceptance of the instability of subjectivity. This concept is intimately connected to the structurality of the concert narrative due to the paradoxical acceptance of structurality in the hope that that structurality will become a framework for an infinite intermingling of content. What we observe through the drumming ritual in which bourgeois ego consciousness is dissolved and replaced by a postmodern multiple fluctuating subjectivity are two effects: one, the loss of individuated bourgeois ego consciousness; and two, the expansion of perception and realization that results by letting go of a fixed, stable, and singular egocentric perspective. The hypnotic effects that are the product of the group drumming enterprise assist individuals in suspending self-consciousness which, in effect, is bypassing the singular vantage point of the bourgeois ego. As one becomes more attuned to the unitary "one" beat the ego is, in effect, being lulled to sleep. As individuality becomes lost or obscured, a new consciousness emerges that replaces the old one. I would characterize this consciousness as postmodern. It operates on multiple levels. The central one beat, or the fundamental rhythm, that guided the individual out of singular ego consciousness fades into the background and the syncopations that members of the drum circle make off of the one beat open up a nearly infinite horizon of interpretation. Having been freed from the individualistic and habitualizing tendencies of bourgeois ego consciousness - tendencies that inhibit non-linear, recursive cognitive processes - the deconstructed ego can synthesize information in new, novel, and heretofore undiscovered ways. The process is both paradoxical and in some ways circular. The pre-drumming bourgeois ego is individualized prior to the drumming exercise. But its individuality is constructed out of and determined

by bourgeois habit and conditioning. In American society this habit and conditioning generally reflects rationalist, linear, capitalist tendencies. The process of dissolving Western bourgeois consciousness through the drumming ritual is to fall back into a unitary modernist one beat and effectively "escape" the confines of an individualized bourgeois ego. Thus, individuation is momentarily lost. But this modernist surrender of individuation is only a stage that bourgeois ego consciousness must pass through in order to induce the awareness of the postmodern multiple fluctuating subjectivity. The self is no longer perceived as a reified structure; instead, ego consciousness is understood as being spontaneously constructed. At this stage the self can literally be understood as being determined by the moment. As the multiple rhythms of the drum circle interweave, reverberations and echoes form a complex matrix where linear progressions and rationality become obscured. All of this is perceived on an individually subjective level, but that subjectivity is now a site where consciousness is understood to be spontaneously constructed. If one is focused specifically on the music of the drum circle, then the self becomes nearly identical with the spontaneous rhythms and syncopations. Where the music goes, so goes the self. In terms of the Grateful Dead musical performance, when Garcia sings about the "paradise" waiting "on the crest of a wave/ her angels in flame" we can reasonably interpret that paradise as being the postmodern subjectivity that replaces the bourgeois ego. It is a subjectivity that is constructed spontaneously, coming into existence each and every second, as on the crest of a breaking wave. The self becomes nothing more than part of the narrative of the present. The modernist tendency toward escapism is superseded by the postmodernist acceptance of multiple textualities and the inevitable construction of subjectivity out of the incessant intermingling of those texts.

One might make the mistake of claiming that drum circles are the extension of the Grateful Dead concert into the deadhead community, but such a formulation privileges the artistic contribution of the band over the artistic contribution of the audience. All of the members of the Grateful Dead readily admit that what occurs within the framework of a

concert venue is not under their control. They insist on acknowledging the dialectical relationship between artists and audience as the generator of the group experience during a show. The result is not merely a synching up of band and audience members into a homogenous unity, as when different rhythms maintrain. Rather, a third entity emerges through the participation of the present musicians, dancers, listeners, and seers. In an interview with David Gans, Jerry Garcia and Phil Lesh responded to Gans' question on the multiple interpretations that audience members produce for the events of any given concert:

Garcia: It might be one of those recognition things, where they would remind us of something...we already know about. There's nothing to say that we know the most about this that can be known--because we're it--

Lesh: We're just a piece of it, too.

Garcia: That's right...we're not *it*--

Lesh: No. *It* is informing all of us.

Garcia: That's exactly right. So our opinions are just that. They're our opinions, in our tradition.

Lesh: And our position.

Garcia: That's true. A unique experience. But everybody who experiences it, on whatever terms anyone experiences it, is right about it.

Lesh: It's like we're all orbiting around the sun. By the very nature of that situation, we each look at it in a different way. (Gans 214).

In a separate interview with Gans, guitarist Bob Weir responded to a question about all the "baggage that goes with the magic that's ascribed" to the Grateful Dead by saying, "That's a symbiotic situation...What people in many instances fail to recognize is that they are every bit as much a part of that magic as we are. It doesn't exist in a vacuum--it's magic that transpires between us and our audience. They're as much a part of it as we are" (Gans 122).

The participants in the drum circles, and deadheads in general, share these beliefs. As a result the drum circles become a primary ritual through which deadheads celebrate their own world views as well as the upcoming Grateful Dead concert. David Shenk claims that "drum circles are a vital example of a Deadhead social form that doesn't depend on the band to produce the music" (Shenk 72). He describes the drum circles that form at Grateful Dead performances as "impassioned assemblies of drummers and dancers in the parking lot and in the halls of shows reaching peaks of thunderous intensity just before showtime, during the set break, and afterward...At West Coast shows, conch shells are sounded to convene the circles...Drummers with congas, shakers, and other ancient instruments form a drum circle, drawing dancers in from the lot's far corners, as if the primordial rhythms were a warming fire. As the sun sets, and ticket holders join the long lines to the doors, the drums' thunder increases, and the cries of the Miracle seekers grow more desperate" (Shenk 72, 216). Shenk's metaphor of the drumming as warming fire is particularly important, for that metaphor precisely defines the fluidity of the road text and the concert text. While, on one level, the concert event is generally the highlight of the deadhead lifestyle, the energies that permeate the parking lot scene can be seen here as an incantation, a deeply communal ritual in which the Grateful Dead community celebrates the transformational events that are taking place while living on the road, namely the disintegration of the bourgeois ego, and which are highlighted during the concert narrative.

These ritualistic practices - the communal drumming rituals, the centrality of the Grateful Dead concert experience - may appear to reflect modernist tendencies. However, I would argue that the events taking place are the working out of modernist sensibility and discourse into a newly configured postmodernist world view that is based upon the realization of intertextualities and the acceptance of unstable subjectivity. The traditional modernist text, in this case the band on the stage, is a place where discourse on this new subjectivity can be focused, but it is not the sole location where this new subjectivity can be discussed and explored. Hence, we see the existence of "tour families" who try to maintain

and cultivate an awareness of this new postmodern consciousness. Trying to stay attuned to the moment by moment development of self is a challenging task. The concert ritual provides individuals the opportunity to concentrate on the dismantling of the bourgeois ego, but the concert event, in traditionally modernist terms, lasts for only a brief few hours. This is where the tourhead lifestyle and the rituals that have evolved within the Grateful Dead community close the gap between events taking place within the traditionally modernist text of the musical performance and the lives that individuals live outside of the concert venues.

Thus, the economic, aesthetic, and ritualistic practices from the parking lot all combine to create an intense social matrix that is informed by the pressures and demands that life on the road produces and which ultimately infiltrate the concert venues as deadheads cross through the threshold of the venue turnstiles and hand over their ticket stubs to the "gatekeepers." What I would like to do now is provide a framework that addresses the specific events of the Grateful Dead musical performance on June 23, 1993. Our first order of business will be an analysis of the general narrative structure of Grateful Dead concerts in order to reveal the various levels of motivation, intertextuality, and self-reflexivity that are enacted through the Grateful Dead's stage performance. These aspects of the musical performance become essential ingredients that inform the experienced deadhead's involvement in the concert, and it is improbable that a newcomer to the scene such as John would be able to pick up on all of these nuances that are the lifeblood of a Grateful Dead show. While I am postulating that a general concert "narrative" exists, a formulation that would initially appear to implicate the concert event with modernist tendencies, I believe that this narrative structure represents a postmodern surrender to the ubiquity of structure and the acknowledgment that structures can be manipulated in order to open up a text to infinite freeplay. At times during the analysis of the June 23 concert, it will be necessary to bring in information regarding both previous and future concerts and set lists, if only for the reason that one particular concert cannot possibly shed light on

every possible aspect of the Grateful Dead concert phenomenon. More importantly, as I explained earlier in this thesis, the flow of the tour, the rotation of songs as they are played during a tour, become vital elements to the level of energy at a show and the interpretations that band members and audience members will come away with regarding the night's events.

Looking at the concert from June 23, what appeared to John to be an unfamiliar collection of Grateful Dead songs and covers from other bands, looks to the experienced tourhead as a road map, an incantation, and a display of technical prowess by the band. The concert experience is considered by most deadheads to be a journey of sorts, a journey which they make repeatedly over the years and repeatedly within each tour. Multiple levels of interpretation based upon previous encounters with songs and set lists from the band's repertoire begin to inform one's perception of a particular show. The metaphor of the journey functions primarily on two levels - a musical journey that travels through the musical terrain of the Grateful Dead both historically and as an artistic experience; and a journey through consciousness. In order to explain the concert narrative I would like to look at some ideas David Lenson presents in his work *On Drugs*, with a particular eye toward the chapter "Mystery Drugs II: Acid Metaphysics." In his theory on the LSD trip, Lenson explains that during psychedelic drug usage historical narratives often take a backseat to the narrative of the present; thus, I would like to look at the Grateful Dead concert experience as a narrative whose analog structure is that of the psychedelic trip with a focus on the psychological/consciousness journey. Both of these events are adequately described through the concept of narrative, but the particular elements that make up those narratives are drawn from an infinite range of potential experiences. This is not to say that one must be using psychedelic drugs to take part in the concert journey, but, rather, that the narrative of a psychedelic trip, in light of the Grateful Dead's close connections to the psychedelic movement, is in keeping with the historical tradition from which the phenomenon sprung. In a 1988 interview, Jerry Garcia responded to the question,

“There’s still a large contingent of Deadheads who are into psychedelics. Do you feel farther away from that now than you used to?” by answering, “No, no. I still feel as close as I ever did. Psychedelics are still the most important thing that ever happened to me. Psychedelics is a lot of why I’m here doing what I’m doing. And a lot of the vision I have--such as it is--I owe to my psychedelic experience” (Jackson 27). Lenson explains that “for all its temporal distortions, the trip, as its (spatial) name suggests, has a beginning, middle, and end. It is a surrogate narrative for a world that has become an endless and beginningless middle” (Lenson 155), and I believe that this formulation is of central importance if we are to fully recognize the destruction of the art-life dichotomy and the intertextuality that inform the Grateful Dead concert experience.

Lenson’s theory of acid metaphysics interrogates the Eastern based psychedelic theories of acid pioneers such as Tim Leary and Aldous Huxley. He criticizes their investigations of psychedelic drugs because he believes that through their introduction of Eastern mysticism and the language of the Other into Western society’s psychedelic experience they precluded the development of an indigenous Western mysticism. His main contention with Leary is that the grafting of Eastern mysticism onto the psychedelic experience ultimately resulted in the demand for the dissolution of the ego with the goal of reconditioning Western consciousness into an Eastern religious mindset. The key point here is that Eastern mysticism’s essential claim is that the ultimate state of enlightenment is the dissolution of the ego and the reabsorption of selfless consciousness into the universe, the loss of ego being the end goal, rather than a starting point for new worldly consciousness. According to Jay Stevens, Leary’s psychedelic therapy was oriented around the use of psychedelic drugs in order to break through the layers of the ego, stripping away detrimental habit and conditioning, with the ultimate goal of making a new psychological imprint on the freshly cleared blank slate of the cerebral cortex. Lenson claims that what psychedelic experimentation needed instead was “an exemplary ego, not a dissolved one” (154). While Lenson’s interpretation of Leary’s all-Easternizing tendencies

is debatable, we can, nevertheless, agree that the dissolution of the ego is of central importance to the psychedelic revolution, whatever individual plans for the future may have been, and for our purposes it is important that we keep in mind Lenson's statement that what acid experimentation needed was the formulation of an exemplary ego rather than a dissolved one. For in this formulation we can locate the transitional focal point where the Grateful Dead phenomenon moves beyond the avant-gardist-modernist tendency towards the complete obliteration of structure and form and passes into the postmodernist acceptance of spontaneously constructed multiple subjectivity as well as the ubiquity of structurality.

The result of Lenson's reformulation of ego, as opposed to the total dissipation of it, is a new narrative of the psychedelic journey in which the goal of the trip is not simply the dissolution of the ego, but the reconstruction of a new exemplary ego. The "'trip' comes to be a process of reassembly, of bringing diverse elements together under the aegis of the drug itself, as their only unifying field....It is up to the user to arrange these things. The result is an improvised performance piece of consciousness, a dramatization of the choices made by the undrugged mind every day, as it grapples with a world in fragments" (155). The narrative of the psychedelic journey ties the experience to structurality and form in the loosest of senses, while the content and specifics of the journey remain open to an infinite set of possibilities. This process can be likened to the deadhead's relationship to the Grateful Dead concert experience in which the musical performance becomes the surrogate for the drug. (Of course, often the drugs and the music combine to fulfill this same function.) For the band itself, as Jerry Garcia mentions, each and every concert the musical relationships between band members becomes "a process of rediscovery"(Jackson 5). Ultimately, this process of reassembly that is enacted through the ritual of the Grateful Dead concert narrative serves as a late twentieth century Western parallel to the shamanic rituals performed by Native American mushroom cults in which the shaman, as "the remote ancestor of the poet and artist" (Lenson 151), reveals his vision of the cosmos and the role

of his community within that cosmos through creative expression. In the case of the Grateful Dead, one of the main visions that is expressed through the musical text is the identification, implementation, and exploration of postmodern subjectivity.

The general narrative of the trip that Lenson provides - beginning, middle, end - closely parallels the concert narrative. He explains that psychedelic drugs, unlike injected or smoked drugs which skip the beginning stage of a trip, “come on slowly, giving the user time to adjust to them before they intensify into their greatest strength, before ‘peaking.’ The process of coming down is also gradual, unlike the sudden crash of the stimulants. The curve of getting high and coming down is smooth enough that the various parts of the trip are closely related to one another, thus conferring on them a sense of narrative unity” (156). (The fact that the 1993 Deer Creek run spanned three days allows us to witness the slow emergence of a multiple concert narrative.) The concert begins with a first set which sets off the ritualistic process of dissolving the bourgeois ego and builds up to and through the second set where the peak during “Drums/Space” is effectively the deconstruction of traditional Western structures as well as the complete dissolution of the bourgeois ego. In other words, the “Drums/Space” segment is the point in the concert narrative where bourgeois consciousness undergoes its greatest transformation and evolves into a postmodern subjectivity. The concert then progresses toward its conclusion where the unceasing demands of structurality reassert themselves, and the newly transformed postmodern subjectivity inevitably reassumes some of its ties to individuated ego consciousness. Upon the conclusion of the concert the multitudes of deadheads proceed out into the American night, newly baptized and transformed. As Lenson explains, “how a user goes about orchestrating the trip, then, can teach her or him about the orchestration of a Tuesday afternoon” (155), and, thus, we can see that for some deadheads and band members the concert event retains a narrative unity that may ultimately transcend the concert arena and manifest itself in their everyday lives.

Keeping the above discussion in mind, I would now like to examine the structure of Grateful Dead concerts as they have evolved over the years because such an investigation will reveal how the band has transformed from a modernist avant-garde struggling against the domination of structure into a postmodern entity that has accepted structurality and proceeded to manipulate it in order to achieve various aesthetic effects and to comment on ontological, spiritual, and cultural concerns. The structure of Grateful Dead concerts in terms of musical style and set lists has solidified considerably over the years. While the latest incarnations of the band still exhibited long improvisational sequences combined with the standard experimentation of the “Drums/Space” segment in the second set, the concert experience tightened into a more structured event. The band eventually dropped its early tendencies of opening up the musical horizon for long, extended, highly exploratory jams several times within a given night’s show, replacing that structure with a new format in which extended jams were relegated most often to the second set with the most radical experimentation being contained within the “Drums/Space” segment. As Bob Weir told David Gans, “When we were experimenting with accidental music, it was a little bit too far in that direction. There’s a big difference between a happy accident and a real, genuine musical revelation...happy accidents are wonderful stuff...but you need a little bit of control to get a genuine revelation” (Gans 128).

When we look to the evolution of structurality within the Grateful Dead musical enterprise from its early manifestation as a psychedelic avant-garde in the mid-1960s to its 1990s incarnation we can see a parallel with the transition from the stream of consciousness and free form verse and prose writing of the Beat and psychedelic authors of the ‘50s and ‘60s to the postmodern poetry of 1970s L-A-N-G-U-A-G-E movement poet Lyn Hejinian. The stream of consciousness and free form writers attempted to abandon structure altogether. Hejinian and the language movement poets, having learned what poststructuralist theory had shown about structure, namely that it is impossible to completely abandon it, attempted to integrate rigid structurality within their works hoping

that such a move would open the text up to infinite freeplay. Hejinian is, perhaps, the most prominent figure in the L-A-N-G-U-A-G-E movement and her most well known work, *My Life*, is an autobiographical prose poem that “enacts a theoretically astute poetics, one that performs and discusses poststructuralist and deconstructive theory as it refigures the poem as information system” (Spahr 141). Primarily she makes use of a phenomenologically based reader response theory grounded in the processes of anticipation and retrospection in combination with her theory against closure. And this is why her poetics is relevant to a discussion of the Grateful Dead. Because, the typical way that deadheads encounter the Grateful Dead musical text - a process of anticipation and retrospection from one concert to another and from one tour to another - is the reading method that Hejinian emphasizes in the construction of her own texts. In terms of reader response theory, Hejinian’s text is constructed out of unconnected multiplicities and repetitions. By reiterating sentences, phrases, images, and words throughout the text the reader is forced to reformulate his/her assumptions each time s/he encounters those lines within different contexts. The dynamics of the textual encounter result in a system of emerging meanings that is triggered by Hejinian’s manipulation of linear structures. Thus, each separate reading experience is turned into an act of choosing among multiple interpretations of the work and what once appeared as limiting structurality can now be seen as an arena for infinite freeplay within structurality. In terms of closure, her theory of separations, or gaps, in which the spaces between sentences, words, and even letters become charged with a potentially infinite set of meanings opens the text to an inexhaustible number of interpretations. The combination of locating the reader as site of signification, emphasizing anticipation and retrospection, and opening the infinite possibility of meaning through her theory of separations results in an emergent system of meaning that transforms the categories of author, text, and reader into models of fluctuating multiple subjectivity, where identity and meaning become dependent upon each encounter with the text. Any single authoritative meaning is decentered and undermined. Each time the reader returns to the work - and returns to the various reiterated

sentences, images, and phrases within the work - the text, and thus the author's autobiographical self, takes on a new set of meanings that are determined by the specific circumstances that inform each particular encounter with the text.

As I mentioned above, Hejinian's poetics closely resembles the approach that the Grateful Dead subculture takes to its encounters with the Grateful Dead musical text. The Grateful Dead community is constantly engaged in the repeated exposure to the "same" musical text, but the interpretations of that text are in a constant mode of flux. The interaction between the reifying structure of the lyrics, which generally remains a constant from one performance to another (with the exception of variations on tone and inflection), and the spontaneous improvisational instrumental segments that are located between lyrical verses becomes the basis of an open ended structural form that is ripe for multiple interpretations. Nightly sojourns into "Dark Star" and "Terrapin Station" are profoundly different events that, on good nights, have the power to take band and audience members to previously unexplored spaces - both musically and psychologically. Thus, "Terrapin Station" is not a fixed entity with a single authoritative meaning; instead, it is reborn with each performance. The contexts of events from the road and past performances more often than not can have a significant influence on how individuals interpret and respond to the music. The way "Terrapin" fits into the structurality of the concert narrative is fairly rigid - second set just prior to "Drums/Space" - but the musical event itself is considered to be a unique event, happening right at that moment, with the potential for new discoveries. Psychedelic theorist Terrence McKenna writes "for the shaman, the cosmos is a tale that becomes true as it is told itself" (Lenson 151). For the Grateful Dead, the general structure of the individual songs remains relatively stable, yet the tales that they tell also become true as they are themselves told. Two specific examples from "Terrapin Station" should make this clear. The opening lines of the song - "Let my inspiration flow/ in token rhymes suggesting rhythm/ that will not forsake me/ till my tale is told and done// While the firelight's aglow/ strange shadows in the flames will grow/ till things we've never seen/

will seem familiar” - reveal that what is taking place is an event that is dependent on the moment, on the powers and resources that are at hand now. The fact that Garcia and the band have played “Terrapin Station” hundreds of times since the late seventies has no bearing on what “Terrapin” will be tonight. Audience and band members can look back on past experiences of the song and anticipate what lies ahead, but only in the telling of the tale at this particular moment will “Terrapin Station” as a musical entity exist. Like the sailor in the song who is challenged by the “Lady with a Fan” to retrieve the fan she has thrown into a lion’s den, band members dive into the structure of “Terrapin” questing for the musically transformative moment. After an early exploratory instrumental jam the musical intensity reaches a climax and Garcia returns to the linguistic platform singing the lines “The sailor coming out again/ the lady fairly leapt at him/ that’s how it stands today/ you decide if he was wise,” which is commentary on the instrumental journey the band has just undertaken in the narrative guise of the sailor. Here we can see the dynamic that exists between the structurality of the concert narrative and the openendedness that that structurality allows - “that’s how it stands *today*,” now make your judgment as to whether the music has worked its magic upon your consciousness. It is as if Garcia is directly addressing the audience, asking them to evaluate the moment, and determine if they, as a collective entity, achieved anything by risking “uncertain pains of Hell” and taking the musical and psychological chance to be reborn, to retrieve the fan and gain the Lady’s affection.

While the repertoire from which the band drew its nightly selections grew over the years, a kind of flexible rigidity evolved in song selections which, in a very general sense, relegated certain songs to the first set of concerts and others to the second sets. The net result of this tightening of structure is that we can now sketch a general narrative outline that accounts for certain fundamental motivations which give shape to the concert experience.

This last point brings us to the topic of the role that first and second sets play in the Grateful Dead concert narrative. First sets generally showcase tight, shorter, pieces that

function as a prelude to the longer exploratory jams that characterize the songs of the second set. The structure of first set songs like “Hell in a Bucket,” “Cassidy,” “Loser,” and “Bird Song” display the self-reflexive commentary on the concert event itself through lines such as “Take me to the river” and “Let the good times roll” as well as lyrics that function as commentary on the instrumental jams of the music as exemplified in the lines “All that I am asking for is ten gold dollars/ I could pay you back with one good hand,” which is followed by an extended instrumental jam, which is then followed by the self-reflexive lines “Everybody’s bragging and drinking that wine/ I can tell the queen of Diamonds by the way she shine” from the song “Loser.” First sets generally progress toward an outward expansion into exploratory jams, and first set closers like “Deal,” “The Music Never Stopped,” “Bird Song,” and “Let It Grow” are some of the richest, longest, and most exploratory pieces in the band’s repertoire. These songs are the first tastes of what in the second set will evolve into a marked progression into the uncharted psychic consciousness territory of improvisational jams like “The Other One,” “Terrapin Station,” “Dark Star,” “Eyes of the World,” and “Drums/Space.”

After the band takes a break the second set picks up where the first set exploratory jams left off and the band often launches directly into extended improvisational jams. The second set, particularly from its opening songs to the conclusion of the “Drums/Space” segment is the equivalent of the second stage of Lenson’s psychedelic trip-as-journey metaphor. It is the heart of the concert narrative where traditional structures diminish, progressing on a slow spiral until dissolving completely. After exploring five or six exploratory pieces, both audience and band start swimming deeper and deeper through the psychic reservoirs, exploding the boundaries of musical form, exploding the boundaries of the individuated bourgeois ego and of subject-object differentiation, and the band’s efforts, according to Garcia, “come up in triple bars. Pour out all the dollars, all the golden yummys” (Gans 215). This process is also taking place specifically in the performance of individual songs. Bob Weir explains this process as like being on a tightrope: “on the one

hand, you're trying to forget yourself, and at the same time you're trying to maintain control and be assertive. About what, you only have sort of an inkling--you have your intuition to go by, and that's it. Music for us happens best when we rely on our intuitions more and our egos less" (Gans 128). At a certain point the music completely diverges from traditional musical form and structure and drifts into something that questions and challenges the relationship between sound and music, until finally, all the members of the band except the drummers leave the stage. At this point the "Drums/Space" segment of the show begins.

"Drums/Space" is an integral element of every Grateful Dead concert and, as I have already mentioned, unlike all of the other songs from the repertoire which alternately make appearances every fifth or seventh show, "Drums/Space" remains a constant in every second set. "Drums/Space" is the single most important element that connects the Grateful Dead musical enterprise with the revolution of consciousness that was the objective of the psychedelic avant-garde. Early scientific studies on psychedelic drugs described the effect of LSD and mescaline upon consciousness as inducing a kind of schizophrenia. Some scientists claimed that "a molecular fragmentation of the entire personality, exactly similar to that found in schizophrenic patients" (Stevens 11) occurred under the influence of these drugs. Interestingly, the exact opposite effect also occurred in users of psychedelics. Instead of perceiving the self as shattered and fragmented, many people experienced "the barrier between the subjective and the objective, the personal and the impersonal, the I and the not-I disappearing" (Wolfe 40). And this is where Lenson's discussion on the construction of the exemplary ego becomes important. For during the Grateful Dead concert both of these effects - one alienating, the other unifying - become integrated in a unified narrative in which the bourgeois ego is voluntarily deconstructed with the ultimate goal of redefining the self and subjectivity.

The "Drums/Space" segment of a Grateful Dead concert can be likened to the mystical "Pure Void" that Aldous Huxley claimed lay at the heart of his first LSD trip.

Until that point Huxley had only experimented with mescaline. He had anticipated that the effect of mescaline would be to open the doors of his consciousness to “the Blakeian world of heroic perception” (Stevens 45). What he had encountered was indeed the world of the personal unconscious, but a world still cluttered with psychic debris, a world limited by boundaries. He described the experience of the mescaline trip in the following way:

with its flora and fauna of repressions, conflicts, traumatic memories and the like.

Traveling further we reach a kind of Far West, inhabited by Jungian archetypes and the raw materials of human mythology. Beyond this region lies...what may be called the Antipodes of the mind. In this psychological equivalent of Australia we discover the equivalents of kangaroos, wallabies, and duck-billed platypuses--a whole host of extremely improbable animals, which nevertheless exist and can be observed. (Stevens 50)

Upon taking his first LSD trip in 1955 Huxley “finally escaped from the land of the platypuses and wallabies” (Stevens 55). The psychologically cleansing effects of LSD had propelled him beyond the apparent fragmentation of the early stages of psychedelic experience into the “central perception”; an awareness “apparently, of all who penetrate deeply in their explorations, that behind the apparent multiplicity of things in the world of science and common sense there is a single reality, in speaking of which it seems appropriate to use such words as infinite and eternal” (Stevens 180). Huxley’s experiences here work well to demonstrate how bourgeois ego consciousness is dismantled during the psychedelic experience. However, it is tainted with the Eastern mysticism that Lenson warns against and we can see that Huxley’s goal was modernist in its objective of finding some sort of unitary, escapist grounds on which to anchor subjectivity. What we encounter in the Grateful Dead narrative during “Drums/Space” is a deliberate movement out of traditional rational, positivist, Western structures in the attempt to reconfigure those forces that assist and inhibit the reformulation of the subjectivity. Thus as the unity of

traditional linear structures comes under attack beginning with the opening songs of the first set, by the conclusion of the “Drums/Space” segment the unity of the straight, bourgeois ego consciousness dissolves and is replaced by a newly reformulated multiple subjectivity.

The “Drums” segment lasts for about fifteen minutes and then the drummers leave the stage and the other members of the band return to conduct the second half of the most musically experimental segment of the show - “Space.” David Shenk quotes Bob Bralove’s description of “Space”: “‘Somewhere in the middle of the second set the band turns a corner. They enter a musical environment without walls...the song form is abandoned, and the very elements of music may be called into question. The only mandate is to explore new territory...where rhythm, tone, color, melody, and harmony can be explored without rules or predetermination’” (Shenk 266). Here, the “musical environment without walls” is a musical description for the dissolution of the bourgeois ego that the concert narrative has been building up to. Both “Drums” and “Space” are purely instrumental pieces. The limiting structures of language have been completely abandoned, if only temporarily. Most often, the fundamental processes of ego dissolution reach their climax during this section of the concert and what follows is a celebratory reconstruction of the psychologically reconfigured postmodern subject.

Coming out of “Space” the concert narrative progresses into the third or end stage of the psychedelic journey and the band begins to re-tie the separated strands of consciousness by returning to more traditional musical structures. On one level this reflects the postmodernist tendency to accept the domination of structurality. On another level it is an acknowledgment that structurality can be manipulated and that psychological transformation and human growth can move in an infinite variety of directions within that structurality. The return to structure at the end of the second set can be perceived as a necessary move if the community is going to be able to reflect on and communicate the non-structured, non-verbal transformations that have just taken place. Thus, the dialectic

between structurality and non-structurality is the dynamic that allows the events of the concert to take place at all. On particularly good nights, after coming out of “Drums/Space” the band might continue along the reformulation of the ego trajectory by breaking out particularly consciousness expanding songs like “Dark Star,” “The Other One,” “Wharf Rat,” or “The Wheel”; just as often as not, on good nights the band drops the consciousness busting tendency in the songs after “Drums/Space” and alternately plays sensitive ballads and good old fashioned rock ‘n’ roll covers by the likes of Chuck Berry. Usually, the ballads and uptempo celebratory tunes are played in a bitter sweet mixture that emphasizes the loss, changes, and transformations that have just taken place until the band plays the closing song of the second set in a final burst of celebration. A re-birth, a baptism of sorts has taken place and the final songs, including the encore, often are the most explosive parts of the show.

Having now sketched out a theoretical framework in which to view the Grateful Dead concert narrative we can look to some of the specific events that our newcomer, John, witnessed with a clearer understanding. We might wish to first look at the relationship between the three shows the band played at Deer Creek that summer. This relationship dictated the general ambiance of the third night, the selection of songs the band played that evening, and the response of the crowd to various musical pieces. As I mentioned earlier, certain songs are generally relegated to either the first or second set with tighter, less exploratory numbers turning up in the first and the more expansive consciousness expanding numbers in the second. During the three day stint at Deer Creek the band played “Help on the Way”->“Slipknot!”->“Franklin’s Tower,” typically a second set opener, as the second afternoon’s first set opener. The effect of this maneuver was to create a continuity between the three night’s concerts. The opening stanzas from “Help on the Way” - “Paradise waits/ on the crest of a wave/ her angels in flame” (Hunter 93) - get the audience and band members thinking about the musical and psychological journey they are about to undertake and, thus, the song serves as an ideal first or second set opener. As I

mentioned above, the song's lyrics refer to the "paradise" waiting on the crest of a wave which we can now understand as the newly reformulated state of postmodern subjectivity that is induced through the musical performance. The effect of playing that song as the opener for the middle day's gig was to make each evening's concert effectively one set of a three set (day) concert, the finale being when they played "Dark Star" for the first and only time during the '93 summer tour. The Deer Creek shows were the only three day stint on that tour, and the extra evening's concert enabled the band to settle into the environment with a relaxed attitude that effectively said, "We've all got three days here, so we're not going to rush it, and everything's going to work out just fine." Even though all three concerts still retained the typical concert narrative structure on individual levels, the three days blended together and days two and three became an extended second set of sorts, with traditional first set standards, even in their tightly restrained forms, acquiring the spacey, deep consciousness probing sensibility characteristic of second setters.

The opening song of a Grateful Dead concert functions on many levels. Two of its primary functions are that it gets the crowd up and dancing right away and it serves as an introduction to the evening's events. As an introduction it may be an incantation of the muses or a tentative claim about what might transpire during the evening's events. For example, after shelving the song "Here Comes Sunshine" in 1974, the band broke it out again during the '92 winter tour. After its reintroduction the song was usually played as the opener of either the first or second set. The self-reflexivity of the song's opening lines "Here comes sunshine!" are recognized by all deadheads as celebratory commentary on what is going to transpire over the next three hours. Following verses in which Garcia sings the lines "Get out the pans/ don't just stand there dreaming" and "Line up a long shot/ Maybe try it two times/ Maybe more/ Good to know/ you got shoes to wear/when you find the floor/ Why hold out for more?" directly address the audience and reveal that what will transpire during the concert event depends upon each individual's participation. The first song the band played on the third night of the three day gig when John was in attendance

was “Let the Good Times Roll.” This song serves well as an example of an opener that establishes the agenda for the evening. As John noted, the crowd responded to the band with an enthusiastic, but muted roar. This was the result of having been at the venue for three days already and experiencing two shows the prior two evenings. Deadheads and band members were relaxed and in the groove of the concert narrative. In a sense, serious business was being conducted and the newcomer was walking right into the middle of a three day exploration of consciousness. Typically, the state of consciousness that had been induced during the prior shows would only begin to take on its full bloom in the second set of a concert. Having three days to get in synch, the audience and band members were already deeply engaged in the transformative process when the band played the opening song. It was an exciting time, and thus the enthusiastic welcoming; but the participants shared a knowledge that the evening was just getting underway. When each member of the band took his turn at singing a verse from the opening “Let the Good Times Roll,” and then the entire band joined in on the refrain “Come on and let the good times roll/ We’re gonna stay here till we soothe our souls/ If it takes all night long” was a promise from the band to try to induce the postmodern consciousness that we have discussed earlier in the thesis.

In some ways, getting the crowd up and dancing right off the bat gets counteracted by some of the songs that fill the second song slot. As often as not, these second songs may come across as warnings or instructions about one’s approach to the music, with the main emphasis being that even if you’ve been here before, don’t close yourself off from the transformative experience by thinking you know all of the answers. Thus, when Jerry Garcia sings the lines

When they come to take you down

When they bring that wagon round

When they come to call on you

and drag your poor body down

Just one thing I ask of you
 Just one thing for me
 Please forget you knew my name
 My darling Sugaree

You thought you was the cool fool
 Never could do no wrong
 Had everything sewed up tight
 How come you lay awake all night long?

we can interpret them as advice to open oneself up to the narrative of the present.

Forgetting the past, or the singer's name, is the first step toward having one's body, or bourgeois ego dragged down, dissolved, and reformulated into postmodern subjectivity, a process that culminates in the second set. On the night of June 23, the second song the band played was "Hell in a Bucket," sung by Bob Weir. Weir sang the warning lines "You fancy me sipping champaign from your boot/ For a taste of your arrogant pride/ I may be going to hell in a bucket, babe,/ But at least I'm enjoyin' the ride" and the audience, if not already in tune with this sensibility, was offered its chance to get their mental frames of reference in check. Bourgeois ego consciousness is what is going to hell in a bucket, or in the case of many tourheads, has already gone to hell in a bucket, and now they are enjoying the "ride" that is the acceptance of postmodern, unstable, multiple subjectivity. The remaining songs of the first set were a restrained mix of Grateful Dead originals and cover songs. "Lazy River Road" was a relatively new Garcia tune at the time and, as the song's title suggests, is a narrative celebrating the road life that serves as the basis of the Grateful Dead community. The typical "Dylan slot" was filled when Bob Weir sang "(Stuck Inside of Mobile with the) Memphis Blues Again." The self-reflexivity of the concert narrative was eloquently demonstrated in Garcia's rendition of "Loser." Bassist Phil Lesh made his vocal appearance singing Robbie Robertson's "Broken Arrow" and the set concluded with

the playing of Bob Weir's "Easy Answers." After crooning the lines "Easy answers...I don't want to hear it...Easy answers...No one said there'd be an easy way" Weir and company drew the set to a close. But the message from "Easy Answers" resonated within the crowd. There was psychic territory yet to be explored, but the answers or the dissolution of the bourgeois ego does not just happen automatically. Thus, everyone was left to ponder what they wanted from the second set and how they could go about achieving it.

The second set of the concert began with a cover of "Samson and Delilah." This song served as a bold statement, proclaiming the narrative theme of the evening in its lines "If I had my way, if I had my way, if I had my way...I would tear this old building down." The project of reconfiguring the bourgeois ego, which in this case is represented metaphorically by the old building that must be torn down, was officially, and for the last time that year at Deer Creek, underway. This was the song that John kept humming and singing to himself all the next day. It was a catchy, pick-me-up, rockin' tune. What John would not have been aware of was that the song's thundering rhythms, its proclamations of Samsonian strength, were again serving as commentary, incantation, and demonstration of the transformational event taking place. The story of Samson culminates when he engages a lion in battle, killing the lion by ripping its jaws asunder. The linguistic image that communicates the struggle and the rewards of Samson's, and thus the band's and audience's, triumph appears in the lines "Samson got his hands up around that lion's jaw/ Ripped that creature, killed him dead/ the bees made honey in the lion's head." The central dynamic addressed here is that Samson, who represents the band and audience, must face the dominating force of the lion, in this case the limiting structural world views and bourgeois egos that they have brought into the concert, and attempt to deconstruct those forces to reap the rewards of spiritual, intellectual, and psychological growth - which are represented in the image of bees making honey out of the remains of the lion's head. It is this cycle of birth and death, of regeneration, of making something extraordinary out of

what once was that serves as the basis of the transformative concert narrative. Robert Hunter's lyrics from "Eyes of the World" are one of the purest Grateful Dead expressions of this dynamic at work during the concert narrative: "There comes a redeemer/ and he slowly, too, fades away/ There follows a wagon behind him/ that's loaded with clay/ and the seeds that were silent/ all burst into bloom and decay/ The night comes so quiet/ and it's close on the heels of the day." Here, the self is defined as a site of fluctuating subjectivity, where perception, interpretation, and meaning are all dependent upon the unceasing progression of the narrative of the moment. The human being, like the vibrating particles that make up a wooden table, is never completely stable, never completely solidified; if one opens one's eyes s/he can literally observe as subjectivity evolves and is reformulated. And this is the golden honey that the bees made in the lion's head - the rebirth and evolution of human consciousness.

The next two songs the band played, and which John found so unbearable that he could barely stand them, were new material played by the band. "Way to Go Home," sung by the newest member of the band, keyboardist Vince Welnick, and "Wave to the Wind" sung by bass player Phil Lesh, are not two of the band's strongest songs. Nevertheless, the songs functioned within the concert narrative on two levels. First, the introduction of new material represents the attempt to progress out of past limiting musical and psychological structures. This seems wholly appropriate when we consider the theme of the concert narrative as I have presented it. Secondly, both songs function as superb commentary on the events that are transpiring and will continue to transpire throughout the course of the second set. During one verse of "Way to Go Home" Welnick reiterates the warning presented in the second song of the first set about keeping one's mind open for the transformative experience when he sings the lines "It's a long, long, long, long, way to go home/ It's a long, long, long, long way to go home/ Any which way you are tempted to roam/ It's a long, long, long, long, long way..." Later in the song the transformational theme is once again addressed when he asks the question "Who do you want to be? What

do you need to set your body free?" Lesh follows Welnick's offering with his second number of the evening, an occurrence considered by many deadheads to be a treat due to the vocal problems that have physically plagued him over the years. His song "Wave to the Wind" is another of the "pull back" tunes which, in spite of the hopes the band has for them, the audience generally perceives as the calm before the storm. The lyrics of the song integrate nicely within the narrative framework because they specifically refer to a transformational journey. The lines "Gonna wave to the wind..gonna wave to places I've never been" represent the kind of ephemeral, psychological, transformative experience that the concert narrative is. "Gonna wave to the memories I carry in my heart/ And to the new ones I find along the way" is one of the last statements that the bourgeois ego will make before embarking on the most transformative leg of the journey. With the incantation that "Way to Go Home" and "Wave to the Wind" make, the slowly disintegrating steamboat that is the structure of the bourgeois ego sets sail from its last port of call into the psychically transformative waters of "Terrapin Station," "Drums/Space," and "Dark Star." Civilization, reified structure, the self, all are left behind as the band and audience "speak to the breeze," sailing off on a postmodern wave to the wind.

With the performance of "Terrapin Station" the audience erupted for the first time in the second set. The musical metaphor of the journey continues with the story of the sailor trying to win the heart of the Lady with the Fan. The lyrics of the opening lines of the song - "Let my inspiration flow" - proceed through a lyrical and musical voyage intricately developed where the text of the fictional story and the live musical enterprise become conflated and the boundaries between art and life become obscured. These lyrics are some of the strongest verbal representations of the process that has been taking place all evening. The result is the creation of a musical space that is ripe for the transformational processes the event has been leading up to. The boundaries that normally delineate reality from fiction dissolve. Rigid structure gives way to free form expression as the standard musical structure dissipates. "Terrapin" is constructed in two parts - "Lady with a Fan" and

“Terrapin Station.” “Lady with a Fan” progresses through standard musical passages culminating in the stanzas “The storyteller makes no choice/ soon you will not hear his voice/ his job is to shed light/ and not to master// Since the end is never told/ we pay the teller off in gold/ in hope he will come back/ but he cannot be bought or sold.” Here we can see the connection between Terrance McKenna’s comments that “for the shaman, the cosmos is a tale that becomes true as it is told and as it tells itself” (Lenson 151) and the musical experience of “Terrapin.”

With the beginning of the second movement, “Terrapin Station,” Garcia again calls upon the muses, singing, “Inspiration move me brightly/ light the song with sense and color/ hold away despair.” The second movement continues the progression out of traditional musical structure. The band intermingles standard riffs with improvisational fills leading up to the eventual move out of predetermined musical forms completely. A final incantation, a call for power that resides outside of traditional Western structure, is made - “More than this I will not ask/ faced with mysteries dark and vast/ statements just seem vain at last.” From this point on “Terrapin” moves into its final stages, traditional structures soon being completely abandoned. The multiplicity of the communal experience is acknowledged in the lines “some rise, some fall, some climb/ to get to Terrapin.” The self-reflexivity of the experience, the narrative of the moment, is emphasized in the following stanzas:

Counting stars by candlelight
all are dim but one is bright:
the spiral light of Venus
rising first and shining best,
From the northwest corner
of a brand-new crescent moon
crickets and cicadas sing
a rare and different tune

Terrapin Station
 in the shadow of the moon
 Terrapin Station
 and I know we'll be there soon

Terrapin--I can't figure out
 Terrapin--if it's the end of the beginning
 Terrapin--but the train's got its brakes on
 and the whistle is screaming: Terrapin.

As we recall, the line "in the shadow of the moon" caught the attention of John and he wondered if others had noticed the coincidence that a new moon was out. For the band and audience members these coincidences are generally noticed and add to the texture of the unique performance taking place on a given night. The self-reflexivity of the above quoted lines transforms the artistic performance into a non-fictional narrative account of the moment. The "rare and different tune" that the crickets and cicadas sing is the song of the moment, happening right then. Their song is the prologue to the collective arrival at Terrapin Station, or the postmodern subjectivity that provides new perspectives from which to engage the world. Singing "and I know we'll be there soon" Garcia speaks for everyone participating in the event. The collective loss of the bourgeois ego and reconfiguration of a postmodern subjectivity is foreshadowed by the lines "I can't figure out...if it's the end or the beginning." The traditional signposts have by now all but been abandoned. Only the whistle screaming "Terrapin!!!" remains and the band engages the complex musical production of the final instrumental movement of "Terrapin." From this point on all linear structures are abandoned. "Terrapin" leads into the "Drums/Space" segment through an extended exploratory, completely improvised instrumental segue way. Spiralling rhythms

and the tinkling of chimes raise up a cloud of mystery as band and audience stand at the edge of the psychic abyss.

A continuity through the “Terrapin”->“Drums/Space”->“Dark Star”->“The Wheel” sequence is established by an unbroken musical continuum. No one song arrives at a conclusion in which the music stops. Instead all four of the pieces are woven together. The transformation of consciousness which finds its deepest musical expression during the “Drums/Space” segment is closely tied to the formal structures, namely the first set and the final three songs of the evening, that contain it. Thus, the revolution of consciousness is acknowledged as taking place within an inescapable structural framework. Most likely, John’s experience of the “Dark Star” that directly followed the “Drums/Space” segment would have been taking place on a purely aesthetic level. He would have been unprepared to follow the narrative that set off from the safe shores of a reified bourgeois ego structure, leading to the final structural stop - “Terrapin Station,” diving through the completely uncharted territory of “Drums/Space,” and coming out on the other side and discovering what is perhaps the most beloved and transformational piece in the band’s repertoire - “Dark Star.”

The performance of “Dark Star” that evening incited the crowd to its most thunderous outburst of applause for several reasons. Primarily, as I just mentioned, it is one of the most revered songs that the band plays. Any “Dark Star” is bound to unleash a huge response from a crowd. Part of the song’s reception that evening resulted from the fact that it was the first and only time the band introduced it into a set list during the 1993 summer tour. Hearing a “Dark Star” is a highlight in any tourhead experience and tourheads had attended thirteen shows and traveled to seven different specifically tour cities without hearing the song once. But its location within the concert contributed equally to its significance that evening. As I mentioned, after passing through the “Drums/Space” continuum, band and audience members arrived on the “other side” and found “Dark Star.” The song’s title suggests an inversion. I would like to suggest the inversion that is referred

to is the replacement of the previously accepted world view that accompanies bourgeois ego consciousness with a non-linear postmodern subjectivity. The two opening stanzas of "Dark Star" should provide some indication of what has happened to the bourgeois ego: "Dark star crashes/ pouring its light/ into ashes// Reason tatters/ the forces tear loose/ from the axis." By this stage, having passed through the monumentally transformational segment of "Drums/Space," the bourgeois ego has been transformed into a postmodern fluctuating multiple subjectivity. The concert narrative from this point on is viewed by and understood from the perspective of this new postmodern sensibility and the remaining musical experience becomes a method by which to investigate one's world with the benefit of this reformulation of consciousness. In a sense, it's like taking a new car out for a spin, putting it through the paces, and finding out what it can do. Thus, when Garcia sings the lines "Shall we go/ you and I/ while we can?/ Through/ the transitive nightfall/ of diamonds" we hear the request that band and audience continue on their communal journey, now being guided by their reformulated consciousness. He asks whether the audience is ready to set sail into the uncharted, postmodern, transitive nightfall of diamonds, a journey that will take them to places where they cannot remain; it is a journey about the acceptance of the transitory nature of immediate experience and about one's relation to that transitive universe. Lyrically, what band and audience encounter on this journey is described in the stanzas "Mirror shatters/ in formless reflections/ of matter// Glass hand dissolving/ to ice-petal flowers/ revolving// Lady in velvet/ recedes/ in the nights of good-bye." The world when viewed from the perspective of this newly formulated postmodern subjectivity is perceived as in a state of flux, paradox, sublime beauty, and transience. We have to ask the question, then, why should we go on this journey through the transitive nightfall of diamonds? One answer that resoundingly comes back is that we find reflections of ourselves in those fleeting and ephemeral crashing stars. In our encounter with them we witness what it means to be a human being whose perception of the world originates from an unstable, fluctuating, multiple subjectivity.

Coming out of "Dark Star" the band then segued into the song "The Wheel," a move that indicated that the consciousness busting tendency was going to be integrated that evening with celebration. "The Wheel" is an intermediate song between truly consciousness expanding songs like "Dark Star" and "Terrapin Station" and the more celebratory second set closers like "Goin' Down the Road Feelin' Bad" and "Not Fade Away." "The Wheel's" opening lines reflect the poststructuralist postulation that one cannot exist apart from or outside of structurality when Garcia sings "The wheel is turning and you can't slow down/ You can't let go and you can't hold on/ You can't go back and you can't stand still/ If the thunder don't get you, then the lightning will." The significance of these lines for our discussion is that they demonstrate the condition of a postmodern subjectivity that, if it is aware of what is happening to it, can observe its continuous and spontaneous construction. Some lines from "The Wheel" provide an answer to the question we asked earlier of why the band and audience should embark on the journey through the transitive nightfall of diamonds. In one verse Garcia asks the questions "Won't you try a little bit harder?/ Couldn't you try just a little bit more?" and answers them in the following verse by explaining "Every time that wheel turn 'round/ [You're] bound to cover just a little more ground." I would interpret this question and answer sequence as an acknowledgment that even though the bourgeois ego can be deconstructed during the concert event, it is hard, if not impossible, to retain the state of postmodern awareness that the concert experience and life on the road open up. Thus, members of the community use the concert experience and the tourhead lifestyle as vehicles to break free from the constraints of bourgeois ego consciousness and to sustain as completely as possible the awareness that reformulated postmodern subjectivity makes possible.

With the conclusion of "The Wheel" the band immediately broke into a rendition of the Rascal's "Good Lovin'." One thing that is indeterminate in a Grateful Dead concert is how many songs the band will play. The performance of "Good Lovin'" as a second set closer is fairly standard due to its uptempo rhythms and lighthearted bantering. When the

band broke out this highly celebratory tune deadheads knew that this was indeed the last song before the encore and the second to last song of the three day Deer Creek run. It is an ideal song to celebrate and comment upon the transformations that have taken place throughout the evening. As many of us know, the main character in the song goes to see his doctor to find out what is ailing him. The cure, we find out, is a good dose of "good lovin'." And I think this is representative of the overall experiences of the evening. The ailment that audience and band members entered the concert venue with was the reified, unitary bourgeois ego that either had never before been challenged- as in the case of our newcomer John - or had regained some of its foothold on the reformulated postmodern subjectivities of initiated tourheads. The good lovin' amounts to the journey through the transitive nightfall of diamonds that serves as the basis of the concert narrative. A liberation of consciousness has taken place. The bourgeois ego, at least temporarily, has been dismantled and perception has been altered as the result of reconfiguring the self into a model of postmodern subjectivity. This, in the world of the Dead, is a transformation worthy of celebration.

After leaving the stage, the band returned to play the encore - a cover of the Beatles' "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds." A relatively new and rarely played tune by the Dead, "Lucy in the Sky" tied together many of the discourses that comprised the day's events. Its performance brought into focus the nostalgic, historical narrative of the psychedelic movement which highlights the band and scene's connections to days long gone by. The performance of "Lucy" was tinged with a melancholy and reverential look at what the activities of the 1960s avant-garde had, in the case of the Grateful Dead phenomenon, brought about. The squares were still at home watching "Jeopardy" anchored to their bourgeois egos as securely as they were anchored to their easy chairs. But at the Deer Creek amphitheater, and at concert venues across the nation, the deadheads were exploring postmodern consciousness. Thus, on one level, the song was a tribute to the Grateful Dead/hippie lifestyle. On the other, it was a celebration of the unique events that transpired

that evening. Like the "Loser" both band and audience had thrown their cards on the table; like the Sailor they had braved the lion's den, and like the "Lady in Velvet" they had skipped through the transitive nightfall of diamonds and come out on the other side. They had not just witnessed Samson tear the lion's jaws asunder. They were the bees making honey from the lion's head.

CONCLUSION

By way of concluding, I would like to briefly examine some of the main ideas that have been presented and to suggest a few possible directions in which further research regarding this topic may go. Perhaps the most beneficial contribution that this study has made to the inquiry on the relationship between modernism and postmodernism is its delineation of the 1960s American avant-garde movements. By distinguishing between Huyssen's Pop avant-garde and the Beat and psychedelic avant-gardes we have in some ways reconfigured his theory of the Great Divide. While the Duchamp-Cage-Warhol axis should rightfully be regarded as postmodernist due to its reaction against high modernism, the Kerouac-Ginsberg-Kesey-Grateful Dead axis posited by this thesis should be considered postmodernist for other reasons. We have seen that this avant-garde movement directed its attack against mass popular culture while for the most part ignoring institution art. Both constellations reside on the postmodern side of the Great Divide, but the Pop avant-garde with its continuing focus on high modernism should be considered as residing closer to the gulf than the Beat and psychedelic movements. In the specific example of the Grateful Dead, while as part of the 1960s psychedelic avant-garde the band still retained some elements that characterized early modernism, namely an apocalyptic vision of history in which Western capitalistic society was to be replaced by a new utopian society that was to be run by enlightened individuals who had, through the use of psychedelic drugs, made an evolutionary jump in human consciousness. Even in the latest incarnations of what evolved into the Grateful Dead subcultural phenomenon, the apparent tribalness of the subculture and its central concern over becoming a community that exists somehow outside of mainstream culture appears as modernist.

I would argue, however, that in spite of its apparently modernist tendencies, the Grateful Dead phenomenon is clearly dominated by what I would call a postmodernist sensibility. Due to the phenomenon's emergence during an historical period of transition that has been acknowledged by Huyssen and others as a shift out of modernist sensibility,

it is my position that the evolution of the Grateful Dead phenomenon acutely demonstrates the shaking off of the presiding modernist dogma that gave rise to the discourses of the 1960s psychedelic movement and marks a progression into a new postmodern sensibility. This thesis has primarily attempted to show that this new postmodern sensibility is represented in the breaking down of the art-life dichotomy, the reformulation of the modernist text and its rigid separation between art object and audience into a postmodern resistance to textual closure, and the acceptance and exploration of what I have characterized through the postmodern theory of Lyn Hejinian as a model of fluctuating multiple subjectivity. The Grateful Dead emerged during a tumultuous era. The changes that were taking place within academia and popular culture did not happen over night. As we have seen, modernist stylistic elements such as self-referentiality and ambiguity carried over into the production of what we now consider postmodern works. The Grateful Dead as musical entity and as traveling subculture represents the evolution of the transition between the modernist and postmodern periods. The phenomenon lived through the modernist apocalyptic vision that characterized its early avant-gardist position, surviving up and through the mid-1990s as a self-contained postmodernist entity. In a society of boundless diversity, the Grateful Dead community, by carving out its niche along America's highways, found a way to coexist among the multitudes.

The goal of this thesis was to contribute to the ongoing discourse regarding the relationship between modernism and postmodernism by looking to the Grateful Dead phenomenon as a source for new insights. Due to the absence in literary studies of any substantial inquiries into the relevance of the phenomenon to the topics of modernism and postmodernism, I have tried to present an overarching perspective of the Grateful Dead. This method of presentation enabled us to investigate both the artistic and sociological texts that make up the phenomenon and then proceed to make our connections to the debate over the modernist and postmodernist periods. However, due to practical limitations that dictated what information this thesis could address and how the information could be

presented, certain areas relevant to the discussion could not be addressed as specifically as they need to be. Primarily, I believe that a further inquiry into the dynamic between the lyrical text and the instrumental segments of songs is critical to expanding our understanding of the postmodernist tendencies represented in the Grateful Dead musical text. Looking at the relationship between the music and the lyrics should, among other things, demonstrate the evolution of the Grateful Dead's acceptance and manipulation of form and structurality and the role that self-reflexivity plays within the concert narrative and road life text. Along the trajectory of a cultural studies approach to the material, the sociology of the Grateful Dead phenomenon is ripe for further exploration. The interaction of individual tourhead families would appear to be fertile ground for further analysis of the transition of the psychedelic movement out of its early modernist tendencies and into a postmodern phenomenon. In the Grateful Dead community, as John Barlow's comments earlier in this thesis suggest, there are bound to be divergent views regarding whether the traveling subculture has any recognizable "mission" or not and it would be interesting to discover what those missions are perceived to be. It would seem that this point is of central concern to some of the commentary made in this essay. I have attempted to present the Grateful Dead phenomenon in light of what its effects upon society have been, not as they are necessarily perceived within all sectors of the subculture. This point brings up the matter of intention. What some members of the Grateful Dead community perceive themselves to be and how they come across to people outside of the subculture will at times be contradictory. It will be the task of future research to shed light upon both of these perspectives in order to expand our understanding of the relationship between modernism, postmodernism, and the Grateful Dead.

WORKS CITED

- Bralove, Bob. Introduction. *Infrared Roses*. By The Grateful Dead. Ice Nine Publishing, 1991.
- Gans, David. *Conversations with the Dead: The Grateful Dead Interview Book*. New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1991.
- Gans, David, and Peter Simon. *Playing in the Band: An Oral and Visual Portrait of the Grateful Dead*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985.
- Hunter, Robert. *A Box of Rain: The Collected Lyrics of Robert Hunter*. New York: Viking, 1991.
- Hutcheon, Linda. *The Politics of Postmodernism*. London: Routledge, 1989.
- Huyssen, Andreas. *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1986.
- Jackson, Blair. *Goin' Down the Road: A Grateful Dead Traveling Companion*. New York: Harmony Books, 1992.
- Lenson, David. *On Drugs*. Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1995.
- Shenk, David, and Steve Silberman. *Skeleton Key: A Dictionary for Deadheads*. New York: Doubleday, 1994.
- Sparh, Juliana. "Resignifying autobiography: Lyn Hejinian's *My Life*." *American Literature* 68 1. Raleigh: Duke UP, March 1996, 139-59.
- Stallybrass, Peter and Allon White. *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1986.
- Stevens, Jay. *Storming Heaven: LSD and the American Dream*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1987.
- Whiteley, Sheila. *The Space Between the Notes*. London: Routledge, 1992.
- Wolfe, Tom. *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*. New York: Bantam, 1969.