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CULTURAL COMMUNICATION CODES AMONG DEADHEADS: A CHRONOLOGICAL ACCOUNT OF COMMUNICATIVE IMPROVISATION

NATALIE J. DOLLAR

In this essay, I take a preliminary look at the evolution of the *Deadhead "communication landscape,"*[1] exploring *communication scenes* (some enduring, others not) by means of which Deadheads call on *communicative resources—events, forms, sequences of action*, and *symbols*—to enact, inform and shape their cultural identity and community. This focus differs from my previous research by focusing on the larger communication landscape, as opposed to analyses of particular communication situations, such as Dead shows (Dollar, 2002, 1999b), or sequences of communication action, such as show talk and calling the opener (Dollar, 2007, 1999a). My intent in taking this broader approach is to suggest some possibilities for how a communication approach might influence studies of live Grateful Dead music as something essential to the interplay of Deadheads and Grateful Dead fans in general. By treating Deadheads as a *speech community*, and treating *identity* as an interactional accomplishment relying on a *communication code*, one gains insight to how the Deadhead community has responded to changes and challenges, often by seizing the latest communication technology and transforming existing technologies in innovative ways. This essay demonstrates that Deadheads' code has grown in complexity, accessibility, and sophistication, as evident in the metamorphosis from fan clubs and newsletters to the most recently created scene, SIRIUS Satellite Radio's Grateful Dead Channel.

As a preliminary analysis this essay is broadly focused, informed by the

ethnographic study of communication (Hymes, 1962, 1972) and cultural communication (Carbaugh, 1988; Philipsen, 2003). This framework differs from approaches that study Deadheads as a subculture or religious community. Instead, I explore Deadheads as a *speech community*, or group of communicators sharing a common language or linguistic variety — English, for most Deadheads — and a set of rules informing the use and interpretation of this linguistic variety in culturally meaningful communication scenes. This *communication code* includes *communication scenes* and *resources* that are deeply felt, commonly intelligible, and widely accessible means for enacting and negotiating their shared identity, what Carbaugh (1988) refers to as *cultural communication*. By examining how Deadheads communicate, we are able to attend to some of the directly observable visible and audible matters being used to construct, enact, and negotiate their identity.

Taken together, these concepts — speech community, communication code, and cultural communication — provide a theoretical framework for conceptualizing identities, relationships and communities as communicative accomplishments, enacted and transformed through cultural communication codes. Significantly, these codes allow for the inclusion of contested and oppositional communication, reflecting the diverse membership of speech communities. This helps to make the framework particularly well-suited to framing responses to the following research questions concerning the Grateful Dead phenomenon: How has the Deadhead cultural communication landscape responded/evolved since its inception at the first Grateful Dead shows (including those performed by the Warlocks)? What are the current here-and-now "means" with which Deadheads converse, and what do these means *mean* for those who use and experience them? By addressing these questions, we can begin to understand how the everyday "lived communication" experiences of Deadheads gain meaning from (all the while shaping) their understanding (and our own) of what it means to *be* a Deadhead.

The specific procedures I use are: (1) to locate communication scenes Deadheads deem cultural, (2) to formulate a brief communication profile of these scenes using Hymes' (1974) SPEAKING heuristic, allowing us to interpret the deeper meaning these resources activate as Deadheads navigate their communicative landscape, and (3) to compare and organize these profiles, suggesting a more holistic view of the Deadhead communication code than currently available. The data set includes interviews and currently available cultural communication resources. My analysis suggests that the SIRIUS Grateful Dead Channel is the latest improvisational response to availability of technology, cultural communicative resources, and the challenges that face a community grounded in a band that no longer exists except in the thousands of hours of recorded music they left. The channel functions as a communicative warehouse combining well-known scenes and resources with innovative new resources.

A Chronological Tour of the Deadhead Communication Landscape

In what follows, I sketch a chronological view of the Deadhead communication landscape, which though incomplete is nevertheless illustrative. To treat all the communicative scenes and resources available would take us well beyond the scope of this essay. Instead, taking my cue from the Deadheads in my data set, I want to explore a sampling of the scenes deemed cultural, giving particular attention to those which have yet to be explored in the growing body of Dead Studies. As such, my analysis may not represent all Deadheads, nor is it likely to reflect any particular Deadhead's use of the communication code. Nevertheless, the analysis presents an interpretation that is deeply felt, commonly intelligible, and widely accessible to many Deadheads.

I organize the essay chronologically, acknowledging that some communicative scenes emerged simultaneously. This tour consists of stops at the following communication scenes along the Deadhead communication landscape: fan clubs and newsletters, Deadhead magazines, show flyers, Grateful Dead radio, virtual music sites, and finally, SIRIUS Satellite Radio's Grateful Dead Channel. Noticeably absent from this list are books, the Grateful Dead hotline and mail order system, and face-to-face interaction at Grateful Dead shows. These omissions should not suggest in any way that these communication scenes are somehow less relevant than those discussed in the essay. Instead, these omissions point to the ominous task of sketching a comprehensive description and interpretation of the Deadhead communication landscape.

Fan Clubs and Newsletters

The Golden Road to Unlimited Devotion, a fan club founded in 1965, signaled the beginning of an enduring communicative collaboration between the Grateful Dead and their fans, soon to be known as Deadheads. Fans became members of the Dead fan club by subscribing to the club:

> A dollar to the club got you posters, buttons, "biographies of each Dead," and the very first issue of *Rolling Stone*. For $2.50 you got one of the first Dead shirts ever made, with Pigpen on it. The club promised personal responses to all fan mail, and promised to divulge "secrets" about the band members' lives [Shenk & Silberman, 1994, p. 114].

The features of this *communication scene*, the fan club, were characteristic of fan clubs at the time. Members subscribed and received "inside" information, responses to their fan mail, and collectables and memorabilia. The interaction was asynchronous and written, components of the communication scene that would not change when the band took ownership of the fan club,

dropped the subscription fee, and started a newsletter published and mailed two or three times a year.

This transition was activated in 1971 when the Grateful Dead announced in the band's eponymous live album: "Dead Freaks unite! Who are you? Where are you? Send us your name and we'll keep you informed."[2] Gone were the more traditional fan club communication resources—buttons, stickers, band member biographies and personal life stories—and in their place was a "low-key and astonishingly intimate" newsletter in which "a stoned Hunter would spin a hypnocracy yarn, Alan Trist would add some tour information, and Garcia might be persuaded to contribute a little sketch" (McNally, 2002, p. 454). The outcome was a fan club and newsletter similar to but distinct from the original. First, it was written by members of the Grateful Dead family, including band members themselves, instead of by Deadheads. Second, it employed additional communication resources, such as original artwork, creative writing, and tour reports. Tour reports would become a significant communication resource spawning Deadheads' own tour and show reports. And third, it unintentionally supported the growing taper community by providing tour information which these Deadheads meticulously archived, along with tapes, establishing a network of trading that was unheard of in the music industry.[3]

This "mailing list" driven fan club grew from about 350 in its formative years to over 200,000 as it evolved into the *Grateful Dead Almanac*. This newer version reintroduced band collectables, with a notable emphasis on the music. This time, however, the collectables were not covered by a subscription. Instead, members paid for the merchandise. The *Almanac* would change forms once again when it went digital, becoming the official Grateful Dead website (www.dead.net), which currently functions as an online social network, receiving around 100,000 visits per month by over 50,000 U.S. users (www.quantcast.com Audience Profile[4]).

Significantly, the fan club and newsletter provided Deadheads an additional "communicative scene" in which to be a Deadhead. The only other scene available was the face-to-face encounter, which generally required the concert setting. Access to the "scene" is meaningful on a number of levels, one of the most important being the role of the scene as "a resource in and through which the newcomer can learn about the distinctive local means and meanings of communication" (Philipsen, 2003, p. 43). The newsletter and face-to-face interaction would remain the only two communicative scenes available to Deadheads until 1974.

Deadhead Magazines

In 1974, a new cultural communication scene was introduced by two east coast tapers with the publication of *Dead Relix*, a specialty magazine catering

to Deadheads and complementing the Grateful Dead's media coverage in such rock magazine institutions as *Crawdaddy!* and *Rolling Stone*. *Dead Relix* originally served the taping community, as its founders were also the creators of the Grateful Dead Tape Exchange, one of the earlier tape trading networks. As the Grateful Dead's relationship with the "underground" tapers was not yet at the stage Deadheads would come to enjoy, *Dead Relix*, with the encouragement of the Dead, expanded its focus to include culturally meaningful and established communication forms such as show reviews, tour stories, and columns devoted to themes of relevance to the Deadhead community. In time, *Dead Relix* became *Relix* and has over the years veered from its commitment to the Grateful Dead, covering music beyond the interest of many Deadheads (who nonetheless remained their biggest customer base). Of late, *Relix* has returned to featuring the jam band scene, part of the Grateful Dead legacy. *Relix*, like *Crawdaddy!*, continues to exist and is available online.

In 1978 John Dwork and a group of tapers founded The Hampshire College Grateful Dead Historic Society and began publishing the magazine *Dead Beat*. As with *Relix* the impetus for *Dead Beat* was the growing body of mislabeled, unorganized available tapes. In this sense, these magazines are the precursor of *Dead Base* and *The Tapers Compendium* series, two resources Deadheads call on while enacting communication forms organized around show reviews, set lists and show talk. Sensing the growth of the Deadhead community and the desire of Deadheads for informed, reasoned discussion of the music, Blair Jackson and Regan McMahon launched the quarterly, mail-order glossy magazine *The Golden Road* in 1984.[5] Jackson had already begun to build a reputation as one of the most articulate, informed, and scholarly voices on the Grateful Dead. *The Golden Road* was an instant hit with Deadheads.

In 1986 John Dwork and Sally Ansorge Mulvey changed the name of *Dead Beat* to *Duprees Diamond News* (*DDN*). By this time, *DDN* had evolved to a 72-page color magazine with 35,000 subscribers and over 10,000 *DDN* flyers were being passed out by volunteers at Grateful Dead shows (Dwork, 11/16/2007, Unbroken Chain presentation). *DDN*'s particular emphasis in the community was to "articulate the Deadhead experience as a compassionate and socially aware view of the world, supplementing setlists and show reports with articles on environmental action ... interviews with Wavy Gravy and psychedelic theorist Terence McKenna, collections of DEAD DREAMS, and features on myth and spirituality" (Shenk & Silberman, p. 75).

These Grateful Dead-inspired magazines have served as valuable communication scenes, each with common yet distinctive features. All were subscriber-based, indicating the willingness of Deadheads to pay for this asynchronous interaction, which in the Deadhead spirit of sharing is passed on to non-subscribing Deadheads. The organizations required to produce the magazines were significantly larger and more sophisticated in terms of presentation than their precursor, the show flyer (which, significantly, would continue to have a place

in the scene, especially for people standing in line to get into shows). The scene now produced and sustained at least three communication resources, as Deadheads used *Relix*, *The Golden Road*, and *DDN* to gain information, and to learn culturally significant symbols (such as show dates and set lists) and patterns of communication (such as show reviews and nuanced interviews). Each had its distinct focus: spirituality and environment (*DDN*), scholarly show reviews (*The Golden Road*), and the East Coast Dead and jam band scene (*Relix*).

These magazines—as with the show flyers, each addressing its own passion within the community—would serve as an important communicative scene with a central locus within the continually evolving Deadhead communication landscape. As with the evolution of fan clubs, these magazines would facilitate the introduction of new communicative resources. For instance, in his "Roots" column, Jackson explored cover tunes and how the Grateful Dead were inspired by these tunes, a theme of communication Deadheads call on when engaging in show talk (Dollar, 1999a & b, 2007). As show flyers and magazines recorded set lists, show reviews and taper columns, Deadheads began to call on these communicative forms in their interaction. More and more non-taper Deadheads began to keep their own set lists at shows, often complimented by unique artwork that would eventually show up on a traded tape cover. These norms and forms of communication are in use to this day, as evidenced in the most recently emergent communication scenes, online and satellite radio.

Magazines allowed Deadhead writers and publishers, with varying degrees of access to the Grateful Dead, and Deadhead readers (with even less access) to celebrate their shared identity, producing a popular and resourceful communication scene within the emerging Deadhead communicative landscape. The act of being able to communicate set lists with abbreviations and notations, for instance, is evidence of one form of *membering*, hearing oneself and being heard by others to be a Deadhead. The act of being able to call on deeply felt and commonly intelligible symbols and forms in face-to-face interactions with other Deadheads is an act of membering with a significant history. These print resources certainly made these ways of communicating more widely accessible while simultaneously enriching their content. This shared identity, however, was not taken to be an agreed upon or static way of being a Deadhead, but reflected instead a diverse yet coherent identity. These magazines encoded this view not only in the different audiences they addressed but also in the diverse opinions and views comprising specific issues arising within the emerging scene. In this way, this communicative scene came to nurture and support the diverse communities taking shape within the Deadhead community, including but not limited to spiritual, taper (Ritzer, 2000) and serious music critic communities.

Flyers Distributed at Shows

With well-established tour schedules and the Grateful Dead Hotline providing information about tickets and schedules, the Deadhead show community had grown quite sizably. Deadheads recognized an opportunity to develop yet another cultural communication scene, flyers distributed at shows, the earliest according to most Deadheads being the *Mikel* flyers, which emerged on the Grateful Dead show scene in August of 1982. John Dwork, who founded another early flyer, also named *Dupree's Diamond News*, described show flyers as a response to "incomplete information that needed to be woven together, mythical and true, accurate [becoming] a log of what's important to Deadheads such as helping members of the Grateful Dead help the Rainforest, tour problems, helping to share a clear light" (Unbroken Chain presentation, my notes, 11/07).

The *Mikel* flyers were the "embodiment of the best aspects of the Deadhead spirit: creative, idiosyncratic, earnest, bigheartedly enthusiastic about the music and the virtues of the tribe—and free" (Shenk & Silberman, p. 193). For three years, *Mikel* offered Deadheads thumbnail essays, press clippings, set lists, letters from Deadheads, crossword puzzles, and statements from founder Michael Linah, who died of cancer in 1985. *Terrapin Flyer* quickly emerged to fill the gap, as by then the show flyer had become a significant contribution to the communicative scene among Deadheads. During this time, *DDN* continued to be distributed by a group of volunteers, eventually merging with *Terrapin Flyer* in 1984. (To this day, Dwork publishes a free eight-page flyer passed out by volunteers in support of the jam band scene, called *In da Groove*.)

These early flyers were both similar and different from the fan club newsletters and Deadhead magazines. The flyers were available at Grateful Dead shows rather than through the mail. Distributed by volunteer Deadheads involving face-to-face interaction, show flyers represented a communicative resource written and published by Deadheads. Although each had its own unique message, the flyers all tended to include set lists, reports on shows, original Deadhead artwork and tour information. There were several important outcomes of these flyers: they offered support for the tape-trading community by providing set lists and show reports; they introduced a new dimension to the Deadhead community—archivists and historians documenting the evolution of the community; they offered the possibility of face-to-face contact with Deadheads one did not know, via the distribution of flyers listing contact information; they provided new information to individuals interested in the Dead and to newer Deadheads learning the scene; and they introduced yet another cultural communicative resource Deadheads would call on in the process of enacting and negotiating their identity.

Grateful Dead Radio

Members of the Dead family used recording equipment in new and creative ways, eventually producing thousands of live soundboard recordings which were not getting airplay (since radio shows tended to play only official record releases of signed bands). Nevertheless, the innovation characteristic of the Deadhead communication landscape facilitated exposure to live Grateful Dead music on commercial radio as early as 1966. Shenk & Silberman describe it this way: "Healy would sneak the Dead into Commercial Recorders at night, and they would record until dawn. Top 40 AM radio wouldn't touch the tapes, because the Dead were an unsigned band, but Healy took them down to KMPX-FM, and played them on his late-night radio show. Word got around that KMPX was playing some interesting music at three in the morning, and Healy's show, and the shows hosted by Tom Donahue and a couple of others, marked the beginning of underground FM radio" (p. 141). Soon the Dead would allow FM broadcasts of entire shows. In time, campus FM stations would begin playing Dead tapes. Thus from the beginning, Deadheads came to rely on commercial and public radio stations for expanded access to their Grateful Dead music.

Many Deadheads consider the "Grateful Dead Hour," introduced on San Francisco's commercial rock station KFOG as the Deadhead Hour, the most significant Grateful Dead radio show on the communication landscape. Today the Grateful Dead Hour, hosted by expert Deadhead, notable music journalist, and talented musician David Gans, is broadcast, simulcast, and streamed online to over 75 stations (see Gans' website—"Truth and Fun"—for his writings, recordings, interviews, bibliography, and extensive list of Grateful Dead radio programs, http://www.trufun.com). The format of his show represents what I call the "original 'head set,'" anticipating a program currently popular on the SIRIUS satellite radio Grateful Dead Channel. Once again, a communicative scene facilitates the development and acceptance of a new communication form, reflected in the growing popularity of Dead radio shows. Recognizing the generative force of the Grateful Dead Hour, some have referred to this communication form as an example of "'*idées fortes*'—ideas of magnitude that shape culture" (http://www.well.com/conf/gdhour/annals.html).

When Gans assumed hosting responsibilities in 1985, after guest hosting to promote his just released book, *Playing in the Band*, he relied on his relationships with members of the Grateful Dead to gain access and permission to air recordings from the Grateful Dead's musical Vault. By 1987, Gans had secured the band's support to syndicate the Grateful Dead Hour. In a move consistent with Deadhead values of grassroots, community-based endeavors, Gans moved the Grateful Dead Hour from commercial to community radio, Berkeley's KPFA, where it celebrated its 24th anniversary January 29, 2009.

In addition to facilitating new communication forms, the Grateful Dead Hour provided yet another scene, privileging a form of communication

popularized by Blair Jackson in *Golden Road*, namely critical discussion of musical history and thoughtful conversations about where the Dead fit within this larger scene. Gans describes the focus of his show in this following way: "I see my mission as putting the Grateful Dead's best musical foot forward every week and looking at the roots and branches of their creative tree" (www.nestormedia.com/jazz/019/anniversary_grateful_dead_hour_radio_program.html).

The Grateful Dead Hour and local Grateful Dead radio shows continued to make the music more available to Deadheads, Grateful Dead fans, and new listeners. Ironically, there would come a time when Deadheads actively resisted increasing their community, as growing crowds at shows enacted behavior resulting in harm to the community's image and limiting the places that would allow the Dead to play.[6] That, too, would change when Garcia died and the Dead stopped touring, effectively eliminating the problems caused by growing numbers of concertgoers.

Local Grateful Dead Radio: "Dead Air" and Beyond

Relying on Deadhead interviews and communicative resources has not produced a clear timeline for tracing Grateful Dead radio back before the Grateful Dead Hour. What is clear is that sometime in the early 1980s Dan Healy hosted "Dead Air," playing soundboard tapes on his Garberville, CA, radio station KERB until he asked Deb Trist, who lives in Eugene, OR, to continue the show. Over time, multiple community radio stations would feature Grateful Dead radio programs called "Dead Air," "Live Dead," "Lonestar Dead," and other assorted Dead-based names.

Deb Trist, a member of the Dead family, was able to continue the show format, featuring Grateful Dead soundboards and recordings from the Vault, currently available only through the Grateful Dead Hour and recordings Deadheads made of Grateful Dead Hours and Healy's Dead Air. As with the Grateful Dead Hour, Dead Air would spend time on commercial radio before moving to KLCC, a public radio station, where it continues to air Saturdays, 7–9 PM. Downtown Deb's Dead Air has evolved with technological advances, as did the Grateful Dead Hour, developing a website (www.klcc.org/page.asp?navid=89) and streaming online to national and international audiences.

Recently, I spoke with Kevin Matthews, the current host of Tucson's KXCI "Dead Air" broadcast, with a few interruptions, since December 11, 1983, and he was aware of one or two of these programs but unaware of Downtown Deb's "Dead Air." Further, Matthews reported that his program is not officially related to the others but shares their goal of spreading the music by providing links to local Grateful Dead radio programs on their website (www.kxci.org/deadair). As with each of these local programs, KXCI's "Dead Air" has developed its own identity, both similar to and different from other Grateful Dead radio programs.

Locally designed logos featured on T-shirts, coffee mugs, and other merchandise available from these community radio stations create and rely on communicative symbols distinct to their program and listeners. In most cases these symbols are innovations of culturally recognized symbols such as the Steal Your Face and the Doo-Da Man. This localized Deadhead identity is further created and enacted as most local Grateful Dead radio shows rely on Deadheads, not the Grateful Dead Vault, for music to play. With this comes added insight from the perspective of Deadheads who have collected the music, activating yet another level of meaning for Deadhead listeners experiencing the interactional accomplishment of Deadhead identity.

Over the years, more and more of these Grateful Dead radio programs collaborated with the Grateful Dead, thus extending the availability of rare Grateful Dead music and access to the Deadhead community. Even so, the local programs maintain a distinct identity among Dead radio shows through their websites, using links to Deadhead-relevant sites, histories of their program and hosts, and virtual forums featuring topics of local interest to distinguish their program from others. For instance, KPFT's "Dead Air: Grateful Dead Sets and Diaspora" link to www.dead.net and www.thebear.org. While WESU's "Dead Air" provides a link to the gdradio.net Message Board.

Grateful Dead radio continues to be a vibrant scene in which Deadheads interact about the music, the community, and international, national, and local topics. Participants are listening instead of reading, as with the newsletters and magazines. Participants are engaging one another in synchronous, oral communication which was previously available only in face-to-face scenes. The radio scene continues the improvising pattern of the landscape, offering more and more connections between scenes as hosts and guests cross-reference resources and programs and include links on their websites to additional communicative scenes and resources. The programs call on culturally meaningful communicative resources and develop new resources, thereby increasing both access to the music and the size of the Deadhead community. As would be expected, the programs have been particularly meaningful for tapers. And, as I will briefly explore below, the programs provide a scene that removes the stigma imposed on the Grateful Dead and Deadheads, a communicative predicament addressed in only a few studies (Adams, 2002; Dollar, 2002).

Grateful Dead Online

A growing body of research has developed focusing on virtual Deadhead interaction. Burnett, for instance (this volume), uses a hermeneutic approach to understand these "robust environments continually used by Deadheads to redefine and reconceptualize what a 'community' might be in the absence of physical proximity." Studies of this sort offer insight beyond the scope of my

analysis. For the purpose of my discussion, I present a brief examination of two music websites to illustrate the role these virtual communicative scenes have played, and continue to play, in the Deadhead communication landscape.

These communication scenes stream Grateful Dead music, support other meaningful scenes through web links and direct reference, and host forums where listeners interact. For instance, gdradio.net lists the following forums in which their 460 registered users interact: General Discussion, DEAD NEWS, Wharf Rats, Raffles, Vines, CD-R Trading, BitTorrent, and The Dumpster (http://gdradio.net). Gdradio.net users, according to Quantcast Audience Profile, are 58 percent male and 42 percent female, range in age from 3 to 11 (two users) to 50+ (the second largest user group at 137, behind 35 to 49-year-olds at 147 users), are mostly Caucasian (90 percent), tend to make over $60,000 a year (29 percent at $60 to 100K and 28 percent at 100K+), and are college educated (45 percent hold bachelor degrees and 29 percent have completed graduate school), demographics consistent with sociological studies of Deadhead interaction (Adams and Sardiello, 2000; Adams, 2002).

The Grateful Dead Almanac became digitalized with the introduction of www.dead.net, the Grateful Dead's official website. The site, relaunched "as a full blown social network" in 2007 (Gonzalez, 2007) where approximately 54,700 people visit generating 103,941 posts per month. In 2008, September was the busiest month with 72,600 visitors (Quantcast). The progression from the newsletter to social network allow this communication scene to serve as both a music site from which Deadheads can download Dead music and a social site where Deadheads can celebrate and negotiate their identity. Gonzalez (2007) describes the newer version of Dead.net to feature "extensive archives cataloging Grateful Dead history, songs, photos, memorabilia, and shows, indexed and searchable by tags. Dead users will be able to participate in forums, upload their own photo, and bookmark concerts and shows they have attended. Fans will also be treated to exclusive free mp3 show downloads." These forums, archives, and the opportunity to upload photos and bookmark shows allows this scene to function as a heuristic through which interested listeners can observe and learn, as well as experiment with communicating as a Deadhead.

SIRIUS Satellite Radio

The most recently created communicative scene, the SIRIUS Grateful Dead Channel, which launched September 7, 2007, functions as a communication warehouse, supporting widely accessible communication scenes and the communicative symbols, forms, and norms used in these scenes through regular programs such as "Grateful Dead Interviews" and "Grateful Dead Concert Recordings," and introducing new scenes and communicative resources through regular programs such as "Tales from the Golden Road," "'head set," "Today

in Grateful Dead History," and "Celebrity Guest DJ Series." This communication scene, as with the scenes discussed above, reflects the continually innovative approach Deadheads have taken in creating a communication landscape responsive to the challenges and opportunities this community has experienced.

One of the most interesting programs, "'head set," relies on a form popularized by Grateful Dead radio (particularly the Grateful Dead Hour, which I call the original "'head set"). This innovative program allows Deadheads to enact a role previously reserved for Grateful Dead radio hosts and experts. As Deadheads assemble their own set, including contextual comments, they add another layer of meaning as they share their individualized account of the "ideal set." Some Deadheads construct their set by combining songs from different shows. Some include musicians covering Dead tunes and Dead-influenced music. Still others improvise the "roots and shoots" form using their "'head set" to continue the ongoing discussion about who influenced the Dead and the influence of the band's legacy.

A number of the channel's regular programs provide Deadheads and other listeners with historical information, exclusive information, and a means for celebrating important dates in the community history. Deadheads use this information to reflect on what it means to be a Deadhead. Consider a recent online response to significance of this scene:

> Personally my favorite part about the channel besides 24/7 access to my favorite rock band of all times is the "Today in Grateful Dead History" segment. This segment will help you think back to your favorite memories of the Dead as David Lemieux, a Grateful Dead archivist, takes you back one day at a time to the events and music that shaped the music world as we know it today [September 11, 2007, http://ezinearticles.com].

As Deadheads hear others engage culturally significant themes, such as one's favorite memories of the Dead, they cannot help but reflect on the theme with regard to self, once again illustrating the interactional accomplishment of shared identity.

This communicative scene also provides Deadheads with a means for celebrating their identity, as listeners participate in specials such as "Jerry Week," consisting of nine days of special programming from August 1, his birthday, through August 9, the anniversary of his death. Another example was the "exclusive premiere of the Dead's upcoming release *Rocking the Cradle: Egypt 1978*" on September 7, 2008, to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the Grateful Dead Channel. Knowing Deadheads anxiously awaited the release of this "historic, never-before heard concert performed at The Great Pyramids of Giza," scheduled to be released in stores on September 30th, SIRIUS and the Grateful Dead used this sought-after cultural resource to symbolize a year of the Grateful Dead Channel (and to increase listener interest in the release).

One cannot discuss the Grateful Dead Channel without including an exploration of "Tales from the Golden Road," a "roundtable discussion/audience participation program" which debuted as a monthly show on January 21, 2008, but in response to listener support was quickly converted to a weekly show by March 2. David Gans and Gary Lambert, both well-known and respected Deadheads with access to the Grateful Dead Vault and family members, have hosted shows with themes such as the 1966 Trips Festival, the release of *Winterland 1973: The Complete Recordings*, Women in the Grateful Dead World, *American Beauty*, and Amazing Taper Tales, to name just a few. Listeners, Deadheads and not, call in to contribute their individualized account of the program's theme. It is in such places that Deadheads often contest one another's interpretation of a show, or of the Deadhead community. Often these discussions continue after the program airs as Deadheads take their communication to Dead.net forums, where the Grateful Dead Channel programs and/or the topic being contested are deemed culturally appropriate. This cross-utilization of the Grateful Dead Channel and Dead.net further facilitates interaction among Deadheads.

"The Golden Road" is also a popular program for curious or new Deadheads. The range of topics explored, the prominence of guests appearing on the program, and the opportunity to listen to rare live music interpreted by Grateful Dead experts and Deadheads contributes to the availability of the Deadhead folk logic necessary for navigating the communicative landscape. For Deadheads who have not attended a Grateful Dead show, particularly those who avoided the concert scene due to the stigma associated with Deadheads, SIRIUS and Grateful Dead radio allow listeners to develop an interest in the music and community without attending a show. In response to the Golden Road's July 27, 2008, show addressing "the ways in which the world is finally coming around to realizing what we've known all along: that loving the Grateful Dead is—dare we say it?—*cool!*" (Dead.net forum), one Deadhead expressed this common struggle with the stigma:

> I've been waiting for a year for this topic to come up. I went to college in '89 and used to go see Widespread Panic and was really into their music but wasn't interested in the Dead scene because I looked at all the drug using hippies as dirty people destined to be second rate citizens many of whom went on to be doctors, lawyers or whatever. And now some 19 years later thanks to this web site [Dead.net], channel 32 on sirius satellite radio and a Bob Wier show I saw last year I'm finally on the Bus and lament grately my narrow minded views of the scene.... Nevertheless, I am in a poker group and play golf with about 8 guys who are completely blown away that a 40-year-old could actually just start to be a serious Dead fan (maybe even a Dead Head) [posted July 28, 2008, Dead.net forum].

As demonstrated in this brief consideration of the Grateful Dead Channel, the scene brings together well-known communicative forms and resources while continuing to extend the Deadhead communication landscape. One benefit of these new forms is that individuals who avoided the Grateful Dead

due to a stigma now have a means for accessing the music and exploring the Deadhead community.

Where Do We Go from Here?

This study demonstrates that Deadheads continue to thrive as a speech community, continually utilizing new technologies and opportunities to grow their communication landscape. As this landscape grows, it becomes more and more complex and sophisticated, and increasingly accessible to Deadheads, Grateful Dead fans, and curious participants. The description and interpretation presented in this essay is intended to suggest the possibilities provided when one takes a communication approach to the study of Grateful Dead concerts and Deadheads. The view of the Deadhead communication landscape presented in this chapter is obviously incomplete. Even so, it can be used to suggest many productive directions in which one could take this line of research.

Notes

1. I use the phrase "communication landscape" in place of construct "communication code" to reflect a fundamental Deadhead folk logic grounded in geography (see Dollar, 2007).

2. *Grateful Dead*, Warner Bros, 1971.

3. This collaboration around sharing live GD shows and music has a history and life beyond the scope of this chapter. As documented in other scholarship and DH communication, this relationship has experienced ebbs and flows as the band and their fans have responded to the changing technology and possibilities for access and sharing this afforded.

4. Quantcast is a new breed of audience service, focused on helping buyers and sellers quantify the real-time characteristics of digital media consumers against which they can activate addressable advertising solutions. Quantcast provides publishers, marketers and agencies unmatched capabilities to measure, organize, discover and transact based on directly-measured traffic and inferred audience data. Online at: http://www.quantcast.com/docs/display/info/About+Quantcast.

5. Most Deadheads immediately recognize the reference to either the original Fan Club or the title of the first song on the Grateful Dead's first album, or both.

6. At this time, some scenes promoted the voices of Deadheads, and the Dead, calling for changes in the community in response to the growth. See, for instance, Sutton (2000), who, in his chapter on religion and spirituality with the Deadhead community, writes, "In Deadhead periodicals such as *Dupree's Diamond News* and *Relix*, letters implored people at the concerts to act in the community's best interests" (p. 123). This was in response to "large numbers of people [who] attached themselves to the community without becoming part of it, primarily drug dealers, gatecrashers, and panhandlers who took from the community without giving anything back" (p. 123).

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