

THEATER OF JAMBANDS: PERFORMANCE OF RESISTANCE

by

CHRISTINA L. ALLABACK

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Confirmation of Approval and Acceptance of Dissertation prepared by:

Christina Allaback

Title:

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This dissertation has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in the Department of Theater Arts by:

John Schmor, Chairperson, Theater Arts
John Watson, Member, Theater Arts
Theresa May, Member, Theater Arts
Daniel Wojcik, Outside Member, English

and Richard Linton, Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies/Dean of the Graduate School for the University of Oregon.

June 13, 2009

Original approval signatures are on file with the Graduate School and the University of Oregon Libraries.

An Abstract of the Dissertation of
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Approved: _____
Dr. John Schmor

Jambands were born in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco with the Grateful Dead, who dominated this musical genre until the mid-nineties. Jamband expert Dean Budnick coined the term shortly thereafter to describe bands that perform long, improvised jams during their live shows. As these improvised shows have increased in popularity, they have become great spectacles, featuring light shows, filmed images, dancing, storytelling, and short plays. While the performance happening inside the arena deserves study, there is an equally interesting performance that takes place in parking lots before and after the shows. This is the performance of the identity of the jamband fan. How is jamband fan performance maintained and negotiated in the environment of the jamband show? Why do people need to perform this identity? Do they resist or contribute to the society that formed this subculture? Is it possible to resist society and perform “utopia,” or are these fans’ philosophies and styles always recuperated back into the society they try to resist? This dissertation seeks to analyze

this performance as fans express behavior during pre- and postconcert activities. I will limit my study to fans of the four largest American arena jambands: the Grateful Dead, Phish, The String Cheese Incident, and Widespread Panic. While Performance Studies have sought to compare everyday life to theater, my dissertation seeks to use performance studies and subculture studies to examine whether a performance of an identity or membership within a group can be resistant to or contributing to society. This examination may help us gain a greater understanding of our social experiences.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Christina L. Allaback

PLACE OF BIRTH: Milton, Wisconsin

DATE OF BIRTH: December 5, 1976

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon
Illinois State University
Lawrence University

DEGREES AWARDED:

Doctor of Philosophy in Theater Arts, 2009, University of Oregon
Master of Arts in Theater History, 2004, Illinois State University
Bachelor of Arts in Theater Arts, 1999, Lawrence University

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Performance Studies
Feminist Theatre

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Graduate Teaching Fellow, Department of Theater Arts, University of Oregon,
Eugene, 2004-2008

Graduate Teaching Assistant, School of Theater Arts, Illinois State University,
Bloomington-Normal, 2002-2004

GRANTS, AWARDS AND HONORS:

Glen Starlin Research Fellowship, University of Oregon, 2007

Alumni Gift Fund Scholarship, University of Oregon, 2006

Miller Family Scholarship, University of Oregon, 2005

Scidmore Scholar, Lawrence University, 1995-1999

PUBLICATIONS:

Allaback, Christina. "Gender Performance: Phish Tour Community." *Illinois State University Women's Studies Symposium 9th Annual Publication*. Ed. Susan Harmon . Bloomington-Normal: Illinois State University, 2004. 40-45.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problems of Definitions and Project Aims

Jambands were born in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco with the Grateful Dead, who dominated this musical genre from the band's inception in the late 1960s to the mid-1990s. Dean Budnick, a Ph.D. from Harvard turned radio show host, claims he popularized the term jamband¹ in the late 1990s to categorize bands that perform long, improvised jams during their live shows. Fans, who believe he actually invented the term in 1998 with his radio show *Jam Nation* and website *Jambands.com*, emailed and called expert Budnick about the term jamband and its meaning (Budnick 241). Before the 1990s, this type of music had no name, except for the short-lived term “bay rock,” in reference to the Grateful Dead (“Relix”). As this music grew in popularity, so did the term “jamband.”

Different groups define “jamband” in different ways. When most music magazines—e.g., *Relix*, *Rollingstone*, or *Billboard*—speak about a jamband an understanding of the term is assumed. Many bands reject the label, while music fans and critics widely use it. As in the case of *Rollingstone*, they cite the band Phish as the

¹The term is spelled jam-band, jam band, or jamband. I will use the latter.

definitive example: “Want to know what a jamband is? . . . Phish was the living, breathing, noodling definition of the term” (“Phish”). Jambands are known for their long, improvised, “noodling” jams during live shows, which include several genres of music. A jamband is not a jazz band, a rock band, or a bluegrass band, but at any one time, it performs one or more of these styles. However, many fans and experts give several different definitions. Budnick claims that “For me the defining component of a jamband is its musical variegation. . . . [It’s] a penchant for bending and blending established genres” (Budnick 242). As jamband Gov’t Mule’s guitarist Warren Haynes puts it, a jamband is a group that “plays long sets, improvises like seasoned jazzmen and stretches six-minute songs into 10-plus-minute explorations” (Partridge 5). Toronto reporter Jennifer Hill merely describes it as “progressive rock” (27).² Andy Ho of Singapore’s *Strait Times* says that a jamband is one that (1) “majors in improvising intuitively its live performances as opposed to bands that preplan their live concerts down to the last detail,” (2) has their own record label, and (3) allows fans to record and trade their shows. The online encyclopedia Wikipedia provides yet another definition:

The term jam band is commonly used to describe psychedelic rock-influenced bands whose concerts largely consist of bands reinterpreting their songs as springboards into extended improvisational pieces of music. The term less describes a set genre of music than it provides a label for vastly different bands for whom the only link to each other is this improvisation. (*Jam Band*)

²This is a form of rock that evolved in the late 1960s and 1970s and which included mostly British musicians trying to elevate rock music to a plausible art form. It is characterized by going beyond chorus-verse structures into more complex compositions (*Jam band*).

Yet if improvisation is the main characteristic, we might define any band playing today by its measure. Because the music is not clearly definable, this reveals something about the music itself: that it is continually changing and pushing the boundaries of popular music.

While it is true that this type of music pushed the boundaries since its beginnings with psychedelic rock in its various manifestations, it grew and evolved, attracting more fans with each new band that challenges the music that came before it. Contributors to Wikipedia, again, define the music of jambands in terms of generations, the first being the Grateful Dead and 1960s psychedelic rock. The rise of the bands Phish and Widespread Panic in the 1980s marks the second generation; the third generation indicates the peak of Phish's fame and a renewed interest in the Grateful Dead. Fourth-generation jambands include smaller bands that jam, as well as bluegrass and newgrass (newgrass being bluegrass on electric instruments with rock influences), "livetronica" such as the Disco Biscuits, who imitate electronic music, and "loopers" or "shoegaze"³ such as Keller Williams, a one-man band who loops his music while he plays guitar solos. This fourth generation expanded the term jamband to include types of

³These musicians are called "loopers" because they are solo artists who loop tracks together, seemingly forming a one-man band. "Shoegaze" refers to musicians who constantly looking at their pedals on the floor in order to keep switching tracks. I have heard these definitions only in conversations and seen them as musical genres on myspace.com. I have not seen them defined as a musical genre anywhere else.

music that stray from the notion of psychedelic rock as originary. These generations mark inclusions and evolutions of different kinds of music in the fan base.

The music's fan base remained relatively the same throughout different incarnations of this type of music. Perhaps its lack of strict definition or style attracts a certain type of fan. It seems as if the fans are really the only commonality among all these bands. *Jambands.com* provides a definition printed in the program of the first Jammys (an awards show for jambands), which includes fans of the music:

These groups share a collective penchant for improvisation, a commitment to songcraft and a propensity to cross genre boundaries, drawing from a range of traditions including blues, bluegrass, funk, jazz, rock, psychedelia and even techno. In addition, the jambands of today are unified by the nimble ears of their receptive listeners. (*Jambands.com*)

Perhaps "jamband" is not a genre of music at all, but merely a descriptor for the music "scene" in which fans follow bands in order to hear new set lists every night.

Widespread Panic bassist, David Schools, says this of "jamband," which might shed light on differing definitions: "We're from Athens but we don't sound like REM. And yes, we're a southern rock band but we don't sound like Molly Hatchet. I guess we're a jamband, but we don't sound like the Grateful Dead. All these labels lead someone to think that you're going to sound like something else, and that's not fair" (Budnick 227).

The term jamband may not be about a sound or style of music, but rather the fans who account for the improvisation and different set lists every night. These bands improvise and perform for the fans who tour with them: is the term jamband, then, an audience construction, not a musical genre?

What is it about this music and subculture that attracts this fan base? Steve Berestein, editor of Jamband magazine *Relix*, observes, “Following a favorite band and often traveling many miles to see them has become an essential part of the jamband culture” (qtd. in Budnick ix). Fans want more from these bands: new set lists every night, long improvised jams, and four-hour shows. When the band provides this, fans follow its tour across the country. Bands allow fans called “tapers” to record the music, which many fans copy on CD or cassette and trade, while others download music as files on Internet sites. Critics and fans alike use the term jamband to describe a phenomenon that rose from improvisational rock music dependent on a particular kind of audience formation.

This project aims to explore the phenomenon of such audience formation and its inherent theatricality. The jamband fan subculture is one that follows respective bands from town to town and performs an identity to the communities in which such bands play, as well as to the community of jamband fans. Typical “parking lot scenes” can demonstrate many aspects of their theatricality, through costume, spectacle, dialogue, and the Shakedown Street economy. Before each concert, many fans gather in the parking lot for socializing before the show, to which fans may refer as the “parking lot scene” or just “lot scene.” In characterizing whether or not a venue has a good “lot scene,” fans describe the level of security the venue has to prevent illegal vending and drug sales and use. Another audience watches this performance in the lot scene, as local

citizens sit in their front yards and watch the fans travel to the venue. These local nonfans may attend the show, with fanny pack and camera in tow, like tourists.

Jamband fans perform a resistant identity to consumerist and mainstream society, creating a sort of nomadic utopia, or so many of them believe. They challenge many normative American values, including ideas about hygiene, stability, and consumerist culture. Jamband fans resist American values through behavior that disrupts the Western work ethic, using recreational drugs and alcohol, ignoring norms of hygiene, and, in the case of the more dedicated fans, touring for weeks at a time living a life of seemingly voluntary poverty. Many fans challenge mainstream culture through their choice in clothing and style. Listening to jambands, which is generally considered underground and nonmainstream, defies these values as well. And finally, jamband fans oppose mainstream ideas through their micro-economy, which exists at every show. Yet jamband fans ironically affirm other American values: rebellion, youth culture, individualist identity, and free enterprise. As these fans perform a resistant identity, they also depend on money and a free market, if microcosmic, for the experience they have at shows. They need consumerist capitalism even as they believe they resist it. Appearing to challenge American values, jamband fans are not. Not only do they reiterate certain American values while challenging them, they also create hierarchies that echo class distinctions found in mainstream society through subcultural capital.⁴ This dissertation seeks to analyze this resistant performance as fans express behavior

⁴I will explain this in Chapter III.

during pre- and postconcert activities (i.e., the “lot scene”). While performance studies sought to compare everyday life to theater, my dissertation seeks to use performance studies and subculture studies to examine the theatricality within a fan group, especially as it resists and contributes to a larger audience in society.

This project’s focus is on fans’ performance in the parking lots and is limited to the study of pre- and postconcert⁵ activities within the parking lot. This site is where jambands fans feel free to communicate their identity strongly with others of the same mindset to play out alternative identities of resistance and community. David Steinberg of *Jambands.com* says of the parking lot scene after Phish’s break-up: “You might be the designated freak in your town, but you could be accepted and even rewarded for that on tour. The tolerance of the lot made a huge difference in the lives of many people; not having that is a loss” (*Jambands.com*). In the lot scene, fans form community and perform their identity as fans. This is also where jamband fans who might not be subversive in everyday life are able to take on an oppositional identity. However, fans also present interesting contradictions in the parking lot: their behavior may simultaneously resist and contribute to American culture. It is my hope that this project may inspire a greater understanding of our social experiences and what part performance plays within these experiences. The jamband scene teaches us not only how a subculture works and about how our own society works, but also how to people

⁵Most fans refer to the entire event of the concert, including preconcert and postconcert activities, as “the show.” In this study, I will refer to the event as “the show” and the music as “the concert.”

attempt perform resistance, or whether or not it is even possible to perform opposition to a dominant mainstream. Theatrical performance is a part of our everyday lives and this dissertation will hopefully contribute not only to cultural studies regarding our society, but also to the dialogue regarding performance and its potential.

As well as limiting this study to fans' performances in the parking lot scene, I will limit this study to include only fans of arguably the four most important American jambands: The Grateful Dead, Phish, Widespread Panic, and the String Cheese Incident.⁶ These four bands achieved the highest success rate touring, filling large arenas and developing a following of fans, or "heads." The Grateful Dead was the first jamband, and, as aforementioned, their importance in this study is obvious because their fans, the Deadheads, were the first touring fans and the germination of the subculture. After thirty years together, the Grateful Dead were able to fill large sports arenas such as Soldier Field in Chicago, which holds 62,500 people, and Robert F. Kennedy Stadium in Washington, D.C., which holds 55, 000 people.

In 1995, Phish already filled large arena-sized venues, much like the Grateful Dead. Bitterness developed between Deadheads and Phish heads before Jerry Garcia's death, because Deadheads claimed Phish took fans from the Dead scene. A popular T-shirt worn by Deadheads in the early to mid-1990s showed a "stealie"⁷ with a Phish

⁶Chapter II will contain a more detailed history of these four bands.

⁷A "stealie" is the logo most associated with the Grateful Dead. It contains a skull with an enlarged cranium, usually with a lightning bolt inside. The lightning bolt always has thirteen points.

logo within the cranium that said, “Steal your fans,” a parody on “Steal Your Face,” a Grateful Dead song. After Garcia’s death and the breakup of the Grateful Dead, Phish inherited the Dead’s fan base and became the band to follow for many. By 2000, Phish earned more than 61 million dollars in ticket sales, making them one of the biggest touring acts in the country (Fricke 42). They, too, had their own touring fans, who dubbed themselves Phish heads in parody of or homage to the Deadheads. Others, not wanting to copy the Deadheads, called themselves “Glides,” after a Phish song. Phish also headlined its own massive weekend-long festivals, the first and only band to do so. Nearly each summer, Phish hosted its own festival, in which the band played six sets, three a night. The attendance of these festivals averaged 75,000 people. I chose Phish for this study because of their popularity and because *Rollingstone* Magazine dubbed them “America’s greatest jamband” in March of 2003.

Widespread Panic and the String Cheese Incident, although never as popular as Phish or The Grateful Dead, still play large arenas and have their own caravan of fans that tour with them. With Phish’s disbanding in the summer of 2004, these two became the largest touring jambands. They continue the Grateful Dead’s tradition: long, improvised shows with music inspired by rock, folk, and bluegrass. Their pre- and postconcert behavior is also very similar to Dead and Phish: there is a parking lot scene on their tour with similar behaviors. Widespread Panic puts more of a Southern rock spin on their music, while String Cheese Incident’s style is mostly influenced by bluegrass.

Significantly, Widespread Panic has existed almost as long as Phish. (They began in 1986, while Phish formed three years earlier.) And like Phish, they sell out large American arenas. Widespread Panic became a large touring act with little to no radio play, but still holds the record for the most consecutive sellouts of Denver's Red Rocks Amphitheatre, numbering twenty-three times (Russell). After twenty years of touring and recording, they have released fifteen albums (which have sold over three million copies) and five filmed recordings (Graff 17).

The String Cheese Incident has a particularly interesting place within the jamband scene as the only jamband to fight corporate ticket seller Ticketmaster. Most jambands have their own ticket sales on the Internet or through the mail. But these tickets are usually small in number, averaging 8% (Waddell 68). The String Cheese incident wanted to sell a larger number of tickets to their fans through their own ticket house, SCI ticketing, and without high service charges. Suing Ticketmaster, the band claimed that the company tried to monopolize the ticketing industry, preventing competition. The band won their lawsuit and sold tickets through their own ticketing company. The String Cheese Incident's willingness to sue a large corporation shows that fans are not the only ones performing resistance with regard to jamband fan subculture.

Although I focus on the four arena jambands, I must note that many smaller jambands, such as moe., Umphrey's McGee, and The Disco Biscuits, do have committed followers who travel the country, touring with their respective band. In fact,

many fans and critics compare them to larger arena jambands. The winter 2005 issue of jamband magazine *Relix* features Umphrey's McGee on their front cover entitled "Umphrey's McGee fights for the Jamband Crown!" Their percussionist, Andy Faraq, says, "It was great to be compared with a band like Phish. I could see us compared with them—we're trying to do the same networking—we're trying to grow our fan bases" (Toporek). From the Grateful Dead to these smaller jambands, fans evolve and change as new bands enter the jamband scene.

Many jamband fans look back to the time of the Deadheads as a Golden Age, since many associated the Grateful Dead with the hippy movement, antecedent to the current jamband fan subculture. Today, many fans borrow aspects of the hippy lifestyle: organic and vegetarian diets, the use of recreational drugs, or the rejection of American middle-class values, such as capitalist consumerism and stability. However, they have present-day comforts the hippies would reject, such as mobile telephones, computer laptops, and the money it takes to tour. If the "purist" Deadheads were more "authentic" than fans of jambands today, how has performance of identity evolved as something that is seemingly not authentic? The Deadheads were directly related to the hippy urban experiment of the Haight-Ashbury scene, while jamband fans today merely imitate the hippy philosophy. This question of contradiction between the jamband fan subculture's performance of resistance and its aim of achieving "authenticity" is key.

Methodology

This study makes use of observations I made at shows and festivals during the summers of 2000-2006, but it is also the result of my involvement as a participant in the subculture at large. Although pre- and postshow culture is very similar for each of these four different bands' fans, each fan culture has its own idiosyncrasies, argot, and rituals. This fieldwork includes notes, tour diaries, observations, and the reading of fan literature in publications and on the Internet. It is through this examination that I hope to gain an understanding of fan performance and the construction of fan identity, as investigated through the complimentary lenses of performance studies and more traditional theatrical performance.

In examining the performance of jamband fan subculture, I come to this study as a "participant observer" (Hebdige 75), participating in the subculture studied, but pulling back from it as an observer. Participant observation is common in anthropology, folklore, and cultural studies, but Richard Schechner, in *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, places this type of fieldwork as having greatest importance in the discipline of performance studies (2). He calls it "active fieldwork," in which the participant observer analyzes from a "Brechtian distance allowing for criticism, irony, and personal commentary, as well as sympathetic participation" (Schechner, *Performance Studies* 2). Criticism of this sort of methodology notes that a participant may not be able to look at the culture as he or she is studying with an unbiased point of view. Different people experience a subculture in different ways that constantly change.

Critics argue this process of experiencing a subculture according to the researcher's own context may make an analysis unclear (Gillespie 68). A researcher from the outside occupying the "insider" identity may be seen as dangerous to the subculture, and therefore members of the subculture might not want to cooperate with the researcher, creating inaccurate research (Song and Parker 243). However, Paul Hodkinson, participant observer of Goth subculture, believes it is wrong to assume just any researcher is capable of researching a complex subculture without situating him or herself within it. A participant observer has a practical value, as he or she has access to informants and events, and has a level of participation within a subculture that is important for a deeper understanding of it (Hodkinson 5). Although scholars debate the merits of this methodology, it is an accepted form of cultural documentation in various disciplines, including anthropology, performance studies, folklore studies, and sociology. As a participant observer, I have been in touch with the jamband culture since 1997 and have attended countless shows and festivals. In this study, I learned many terms as the result of participant observation made on tour and at jamband shows. But there may be variations in the subculture that I have not yet discovered. Also, as a participant observer, a good amount of my research dealt with fieldwork and observations made from my experience as a fan. Because this is a subject about which very little has been written, many statements I make are drawn from my own experience and represent my critical opinion about the jamband fan subculture.

Because much of this study deals with my experience as a fan, I also position myself as a scholar-fan. This is a term fan scholar Matt Hills uses in his book *Fan Cultures*, which discusses fans of science fiction television series, such as *Dr. Who* and *Star Trek* (2). The challenge for the scholar-fan is to maintain the ideal of scholarship and practices, while balancing his or her passion for the subject. For an outside observer, it could be difficult to get the entire picture of a given subculture, as members might not want to share certain aspects of the culture. Part of the experience of being a fan is being “in-the-know” about certain phenomena regarding the subculture, which a nonfan academic would not have the privilege of knowing. As a fan, however, the scholar may have a difficult time being objective about the subject at hand. One challenge in this study, then, is to study my subject rationally, without romanticizing it, empowering the fan rather than belittling him or her. In this case, I acknowledge objective study is nearly impossible.

The field of performance studies has not addressed the topic of jamband fans, and so fieldwork—the collection of information gained from observation of people in situ—becomes necessary. I am coming to this project from an emic, or insider, perspective, much like Paul Hodkinson came to his project on the Goth subculture, as a participant observer who is an active member in the subculture studied. Emic analysis attempts to understand and represent cultural worlds as informants experience them. Etic analysis, on the other hand, attempts to provide an analysis that offers explanations of cultural phenomenon. A truly objective point of view is nearly impossible from either

an etic or emic perspective. Of course, the emic perspective could perhaps favor or romanticize the researcher's subject, while the etic perspective might be overly critical and fail to discover certain ideas that can come only from an emic perspective. An ideal analysis includes an emic approach complementing an etic analysis, but a study on culture should be based primarily on etic theory. This is the goal of my project: to combine my training as a performance analyst to examine what I observed in my experiences as a jamband fan over the past eleven years. It is my hope that combining an emic perspective with an etic perspective will result in a piece of scholarship that is more insightful and balanced regarding whether fans' performance constitutes resistance or not.

Definition of Terms

As a way to analyze jamband fans' performance further, it is useful to explore different basic definitions of performance. Scholars in theater, anthropology, and sociology have varying definitions. Dell Hymes has perhaps the broadest definition in arguing that performance is all behavior and conduct (Carlson 13). But perhaps this is too vague, as it does not include the audience, intention, and time. Erving Goffman's definition of performance includes all these elements: "All the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers" (22). Marvin Carlson provides us with three definitions of performance: a public display of skill, recognized and culturally coded patterns of behavior, and the

general success of an activity (4). Richard Schechner claims, on the other hand, that performance is not a display of skill, but rather a distance between self and behavior (*Theatre and Anthropology* 36). Gender theorist Judith Butler expands this definition a little more and sees performance as not “a single or deliberate act, but rather, as a reiterative and citational practice” (2). Performance, to Butler, is more of an unconscious performance that is repeated, rather than an intentional action in front of an audience. The jamband fan performs coded behavior, to use Carlson’s term, which may not be a doubling of consciousness or a distance between self and such coded behavior. Some jamband fans perform the identity only at shows, therefore taking on the identity “before a particular set of observers,” while others perform the identity in their everyday lives.

As jamband fans construct their resistant identity through performance, what exactly is it they resist? It is very difficult to define what the members of the subculture think they oppose, as the boundaries blur between consumerist culture and subculture. Dick Hebdige uses the phrase “parent culture” to describe that which members of subculture challenge. According to him, subcultures lie within a parent culture—a broader, local dominant culture—which ultimately attacks or commodifies the subculture and incorporates it back into society. Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson discuss parent culture as something different than the mainstream culture. To working-class punks, skinheads, and mods, the parent culture is the culture of their working-class parents. Scholars use this term because subcultures share elements of their parents’

cultures: members of working-class subcultures are part of the working-class, much like their parents. Subcultures are subordinate to their parent culture, and the parent culture of the working-class, then, is subordinate to the dominant culture (Hall 14). However, this model is problematic because today, thirty years after the punk movement, for example, the boundaries of the parent culture, the mainstream culture, and the subculture are obscured. In his study on the punk movement, Hebdige claims the parent culture is the culture where media and consumerist capitalism dominate. The subculture is the space in which its members resist the media and consumerist capitalism, but this is not necessarily the case today. Subcultures use dominant media resources and are very much a part of consumerist capitalism. Hall, Jefferson, and Hebdige dealt primarily with working-class subcultures. In this study, the parent culture of jamband fans is middle-class culture, for the most part, but class is still not clearly demarcated among jamband fans. Also, this term is not used in the everyday parlance of the jamband subculture. So, I feel the term “parent culture” is not useful for this study.

Mark Slobin, in *Subcultural Sounds: Micromusics of the West*, uses the term superculture to describe the culture outside the subculture. Claiming terms like mainstream and dominant class are too vague, Slobin posits that this term can imply “an umbrella like, overarching structure that could be present anywhere in the system—ideology or practice, concept or performance” (29). So in the case of music subculture, the superculture is made of three elements: the music industry, the state and its rules, and hegemony. Slobin gives us a clear definition of what exactly the superculture is.

However, even though Slobin feels this term is more appropriate to describe that amorphous, vague “mainstream” or “dominant” culture, and he describes and defines it very clearly in his book, I do not feel it is appropriate to my study. As useful as his term is, I will not use it because it is not in common usage, especially in the jamband subculture.

For the purposes of this dissertation, I use the term mainstream culture, still a problematic general marker, for what jamband fans appear to resist. However problematic it is, this term is an emic one of which fans have a general understanding and one that fans often use themselves, within the subculture. We can only approach a working definition of “mainstream”: the term for the thoughts of the majority. But this can refer to normative American values, or white middle-class values, and it is impossible to pinpoint the values of an entire demographic. I use the term mainstream to refer to normative American values that jamband fans are trying (or think they are trying) to challenge, such as mainstream rules on hygiene, behavior, language, and money. Although the term mainstream can refer to the status quo (another equally problematic term), it is also used in reference to music, art, performance, and film. Many fans and musicians within this subculture rebel against music of the mainstream, which is played on the radio. This subculture is opposing both definitions of mainstream: the economic mainstream of consumerism, and the artistic, music mainstream.

Another problematic term I use in this study is “subculture.” Dick Hebdige, an important scholar in the Birmingham School⁸ and author of *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, defines subcultures as subordinate groups within our culture “who are ultimately dismissed, denounced, and canonized . . . treated at different times as threats to the public order and as harmless buffoons” (Hebdige 2). He notes that the meaning of subculture is always in dispute. In *Resistance Through Rituals*, Hall and Jefferson define subcultures as: “sub-sets—smaller, more localized and differentiated structures, within one or other of the larger cultural networks” (13). Ken Gelder, in his introduction to *The Subcultures Reader*, says “subcultures are groups of people that are in some way represented as non-normative and/or marginal through their particular interests and practices, through what they do, and where they do it” (1). Essentially, a subculture is a social group that shares something and distinguishes itself from other groups. However, this could mean any general group of people.

Today many cultural theorists argue that the term subculture is useless in analysis because subcultures take part in that which subordinates them. They are no longer completely resistant or made of members of one class. The Birmingham School defined subcultures as a homogenous group, and now scholars understand subcultures as something more complex. Neither the culture nor the subculture has definite boundaries as they did in the 1970s (Muggleton 7). Michel Maffesoli prefers to use the

⁸This is an important group of cultural studies on subcultures, which I discuss later in this chapter.

term “tribe” to describe what subcultures are: a group that shares social values and custom. It is in values and customs that “expression of the collective sensibility . . . binds people together” in a tribe (qtd. in Gelder, *Subcultures Reader* 202). Victor Turner’s phrase “communitas” is another that expresses the intense feeling of community that a member might feel in a subculture. Communitas is an antistructure, and within a liminal area, members of this group form a tight bond. Many postsubculture theorists use words such as “neo-tribe,” or “subchannels” to express the fluidity of boundaries between a subculture and the dominant culture.

Some scholars prefer the word “scene” to describe what happens in subcultures, which, according to Gelder, is more appropriate as subcultures participate in a capitalist economy (“Subculture Studies” 9). Scholar Barry Shank uses the term “scene” to describe a relationship between music and a geographic area. It is “an overproductive signifying community” (122). The members of a scene continually construct what it means to be a part of that scene, accurately describing what the jamband community is: a community that forms in a geographic area, in which its members signify their membership to each other. Will Straw defines “scene” as a “musical community” in which “a range of musical practices co-exist” (469). This, again, could describe jamband subculture. However, Shank’s description of the Austin music scene in his book *Dissonant Identities: The Rock ‘n’ Roll Scene in Austin, Texas* relies more on the geographic area of Austin, the history of the music of that city, and the various identities that converge on that scene, rather than one musical community in one geographic

place. The “scene” in Austin, Texas, is more about the evolution of fans and the music they like, rather than one community at one show with one kind of music, such as the jamband subculture. For example, in the music scene in Austin, country and honky-tonk gave way to punk. I believe that “scene” is more about geographic location, and even though jamband fans perform their identity in the specific geographic location of the show, the jamband subculture exists in bars, music stores, fan zines, and on the Internet. There is a broader subculture that exists within smaller, local scenes. The identity of a jamband fan is not restricted to a show. In fact, the Internet plays a huge part in the formation of community within the jamband culture. It is where fans go to get music, talk about music, plan travel, find places to stay on tour, and discuss any number of subjects regarding the subculture. For the purposes of this study, I use the term subculture because this term is still more widely used than the terms scholars are debating currently. And the jamband subculture is not one that is restricted to geographic location. I also use this term because I am dealing with resistance in a group that sees itself as challenging mainstream society. As complicated as “mainstream” and “subculture” may be as markers, they are still in common currency and become useful entry points for the questions this study proposes to pursue.

Besides academic definitions, there are many terms that I use in this dissertation that are common to jamband fan subculture. Many fans use terms to communicate their dedication to the subculture or as a way to perform their being “in the know.” The following introduces these vernacular terms and slang. A common term within the

subculture that fans use is “head.” The term “fan” describes anyone who is a fan of the music. However, a more committed fan is called a “head.” The term “head” does not simply explain a commitment to a band such as Phish, the Dead, or Widespread Panic. A head is anyone who is involved in the jamband subculture. Paul Willis’s book *Profane Cultures* discusses the term “head” as what hippies used to denote their drug of choice: pot head or acid head, for example (83). “Deadhead” describes someone whose “drug” of choice is the music of the Grateful Dead. According to the online *Urban Dictionary*, “deadhead” can also refer to someone who has done an overabundance of drugs throughout his or her life. The Phish heads appropriated the term “head,” as they were the successors to the Deadheads. Fans that did not want to define themselves with similar terms as the Deadheads, called themselves “Glides,” as I mentioned before. Widespread Panic fans often call themselves Spreadheads, invoking the Deadheads by reference. Fans of later, smaller jambands chose names that do not include the term “head” to distinguish themselves from the Deadheads.⁹ For example, fans of the band moe. call themselves moe.rons and fans of the band Umphrey’s McGee: Umphreaks. Even though these fans do not use the term “head,” they are still called heads within the larger subculture because of their status as jamband fans. The adjective version of head is “heady” or “headie” and describes anything that is good or of good quality, as well as

⁹The term “head” is more negative within Grateful Dead circles, but more widely used in younger jamband fan argot.

describing a head. Although used quite frequently in jamband fan subculture, the term “head” or “Deadhead” carries different meanings with Deadheads.

David Pelovitz’s article “No, But I’ve Been to Shows: Accepting the Dead and Rejecting the Deadheads,” in *Perspectives on the Grateful Dead: Critical Writings*, discusses the title “Deadhead” and what it means to different fans. Some fans of the Grateful Dead denounce the term Deadhead as a word steeped in many negative stereotypes. Even though the term infers the idealism of the 1960s, it also infers immaturity. The term is unstable and contested. To some outside the Deadhead subculture, a Deadhead is merely a fan of the music. For those inside the Deadhead culture, a Deadhead is lazy and always in a hallucinatory haze. Many Deadheads try to fight that stereotype, as it is one that the media exploits and is not representative of the community. One Deadhead quoted in the article says, ““There are—holes of many colors and income brackets . . . but the subset of “tour rats”¹⁰ who impose on society and have no respect for other people are the ones who have cost us many venues”” (Pelovitz 63). Pelovitz shows how the use of certain argot can mean different things to different people in the subculture. While someone might use the term Deadhead with a negative connotation, others might use it positively, showing how the term “head” evolved since the Grateful Dead. Once it had an unclear meaning, one that could be an unfavorable insult or a description of a subcultural affiliation. Now among jamband fans, such as

¹⁰Tour rats are fans (sometimes not, though) who tour with a band, panhandle in the parking lot rather than sell on shakedown, and consume a large amount of inebriants. This is a negative term for the subculture.

Phish heads and Spreadheads, “head” is a term that fans want to be called; it not only means a fan but is also an adjective meaning something favorable, as explained above. However, the fans of the newer, smaller jambands tried to break away from the term “head” in order to disassociate themselves from the Grateful Dead and Phish.

Review of Literature

Scholars have written very little about jamband fans, and most of the literature on the subject deals with the Grateful Dead and, to a lesser degree, Phish. Because of this fact and the interdisciplinary nature of this dissertation, I draw from literature of several different fields: subculture studies, fan studies, performance studies, and literature regarding the Grateful Dead and Phish.¹¹ I will add to this dialogue regarding fans and subcultures with my argument regarding the subculture’s performance.

¹¹Grateful Dead Caucus’ official eleventh meeting defined Dead Studies as an interdisciplinary area that includes all scholarship relating to the Grateful Dead and relevant music. It now has its own journal, *Dead Letters*, edited by Nicholas Meriwether at the University of North Carolina. Although I do not think this is considered a discipline in academia, the scholars who are a part of the Grateful Dead Caucus and the scholars who presented at the Unbroken Chain Symposium, another Grateful Dead conference at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, consider it a legitimate area of study.

Subculture Studies Literature

First, I will cover a brief history of subculture studies and the associated theories as they relate to jamband fandom. Subculture studies emerged in the early twentieth century with the Chicago School, so called because the sociologists who were a part of this school were scholars at the University of Chicago and because they studied the urban environment around them. The school dominated sociology until the mid-twentieth century and began examining “delinquents” as individuals, looking at how race, class, culture, and immigration play a part in people’s life in an urban environment. Paul G. Cressey’s study on taxi-dancers created a narrative of the life of a taxi-dancer: a woman to whom men pay money to go out to dance-halls. The theory began as a study of individuals, but as the theory progressed it began to look at groups using the word “sub-culture.” Albert Cohen’s 1950s study, *Delinquent Boys: The Culture of the Gang*, changed the way the Chicago School looked at delinquents. Revolutionizing the school, Cohen saw delinquents not as individuals, but as groups who follow their own set of values and receive meaning from their sense of community. He felt that subcultures were *groups* of individuals coming together in order to deal with their low status in society—in this case, delinquent boys who formed gangs in Chicago. Their forming a group together improved their status and created their own value system separate from society’s values.

One solution [to the status problem] is for individuals who share such problems to gravitate towards one another and jointly to establish new norms, new criteria of status which define as meritorious the

characteristics they do not possess, the kinds of conduct of which they are capable (Cohen 65).

With their new status, the members exhibited hostility and nonconformity with those outside the subculture; thus, they were characterized and labeled. Individuals in the groups also grew very dependent on each other, increasing the schism between themselves and outside society. Howard Becker's work on jazz musicians also emphasizes these divisions between members of these groups and outside society. Jazz musicians labeled themselves and their values as "hip," and divided themselves from their audience: "squares." The scholarship regarding polarization continued within the Chicago School through the 1960s and 1970s. Scholars like Stan Cohen and Jock Young continued with the Chicago School's philosophies in their studies on drug abusers in Great Britain. Drug users caused media moral panic and affirmed both dominant values and furthered the division of these groups from dominant values. The first sociologists to examine individuals' choice to group themselves outside of society's values as subcultures founded the Chicago School.

The Birmingham School and contemporary subcultural studies scholars claim the Chicago School characterizes members of subcultural groups mostly as deviants, such as taxi-dancers and gang members, arguing instead that subculture is more complex and cannot easily be summed up as such (Hodkinson 11). Birmingham University's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies of the 1970s, or the Birmingham School or CCCS, examined subcultures in a different way: in terms of spectacular styles. These scholars argued that, rather than being deviant, subcultures used their

styles to resist mainstream society. This school is famous for studying the working-class subcultures of young people in Great Britain in the 1960s and 1970s, such as the punks, mods, skins, and motorbike boys. One of the first pieces of scholarship to come out of the CCCS was an edited volume on subculture: *Resistance Through Rituals*. The first article, by John Clarke, Stuart Hall, Tony Jefferson, and Brian Roberts, discusses what formed subcultures and what subcultures do. According to these authors, an “interplay of economic, ideological, and ‘cultural’ factors give rise to subcultures” (Clarke 169). The article gives a history of working-class subcultures in the context of the redevelopment of postwar East End London. Subcultural styles of working-class youth in Great Britain provided a solution to the interference youth felt with their family and their culture. The forming of a subculture, to the CCCS, provided the youth a solution to the need for expression of their separation from the culture of their parents and the necessity to maintain their identification with their working-class parent culture.

Dick Hebdige took this analysis further. As a member of the Birmingham School, Hebdige discusses the subcultures of punks, teddy boys, and Rastafarians, in *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. Examining each subculture, Hebdige writes about their style and its meaning in postwar England. The style of subculture is a “symbolic form of resistance; as spectacular symptoms of a wider and more generally submerged dissent which characterized the whole post-war period” (80). In short, he calls it “noise.” Youth formed these subcultures in order to settle contradictions they felt as part of working-class youth and as part of a working-class “parent culture.” As these youth

created their own culture, they also kept some aspects of their parent culture. Through their style, they performed resistance. Hebdige characterizes their style as “pastiche,” in which the youth appropriated everyday objects from the parent culture with new meanings subversive to the parent culture. For example, punks used safety pins through the lips and ears as facial decorations, rather than using them conventionally. Even though they tried to be oppositional with these styles, the dominant or parent culture always incorporated the styles and removed their subversive meaning. For example, the commodity form of incorporation includes commodities that the subculture uses for subcultural communication that become part of the parent culture, such as the safety-pin style I described earlier. Punk fashion became high fashion as designers made dresses held together by safety pins. The ideological form of incorporation, the mainstream’s act of appropriation, trivializes the members of the subculture, and makes them look harmless to the parent culture. The media present this form of incorporation most. The newspapers resituated punks in photos with family members in domestic situations in order to show them as “harmless buffoons” rather than dangerous criminals. This relieved moral panic the subculture created (Hebdige 98). Media culture and what Hebdige calls parent culture find ways of removing the subversiveness from their style and philosophy.

Paul Willis’s *Profane Cultures* (1978) is another work that is part of the Birmingham School. In his research as a participant observer, Willis spent a good deal of time with motor bike boys and hippies in order to study their cultures. He stayed in

their homes, and ate and drank at their pubs, interviewing them and getting to know the nuances of their cultures. This study is a publication of his findings from his observations, including descriptions of argot, and tastes in clothing and music. In his research on motor bike boys, he examined the extreme masculinity the motor bike boys expressed in their dress and argot, discovering the motor bike signified this masculinity. In the time that he spent with the hippies, he observed their style and how, through their way of life, they rejected middle-class values. By their use of recreational drugs, the hippies placed extreme importance on spirituality, naturalness, and the subjective experience of the “now” (Willis 99). As a participant observer, Willis took his readers inside the world of these subcultures.

Scholars like Willis and Hebdige, as part of the Birmingham School, provided a different way of looking at subcultures and their place within society than the Chicago School. Rather than seeing deviants, the Birmingham School empowered members of subcultures as resisting the world around them. Not only is this seen through their language and behavior, but through style, the most striking part of many subcultures. However, contemporary scholarship on subcultures—postsubculture studies—argues that the Birmingham School, which studies subcultures as homogenous groups, is simplistic and that its theories can no longer apply to subcultures today. Subculture scholar Gary Clarke believes the problem with the Birmingham School is its assumption that every member of a subculture is from a specific class and location, not taking into account that youthful members seem to move across subcultural boundaries. Also, those

elements around which subculture forms—such as music, dancing, or clothing—are also those enjoyed by youth who are not a part of the subculture. Postsubculture scholarship tries to account for the contradictions that the Birmingham School does not acknowledge (Clarke 170).

Paul Hodkinson's book *Goth: Identity, Style, and Subculture* critiques the Chicago and Birmingham Schools as he tries to "rework subculture" in his own exploration regarding where the Goth subculture sits in a postmodern world. He finds the Chicago and Birmingham Schools' analyses to be one-dimensional in that the schools ignore variety within the groups, movements within the groups, group instability, and the amount of hangers-on or posers. The Chicago and Birmingham Schools also presume that these subcultures are uniform, that they formed spontaneously and responded similarly to circumstances in their parent culture. It is through this assumption that the Birmingham School gives no agency to the individuals in these groups. Claiming that subculture studies ignored the positive role that the media and commerce had on subculture, Hodkinson says individuals' small-scale consumerism develops the subculture and keeps it alive. He attempts to show Goth subculture as a group made up of diverse individuals and a group in which consumerism helps it survive (12-13).

Hodkinson also claims Goth is a subculture that borrowed from many other styles to create their own subcultural style. They borrow styles from punk, postpunk, the nineteenth-century Victorians, Rastafarians, Christians, vampire fiction, fetishism, and

drag queens. Goths take fragments from all these styles and create their own subculture. But some postsubculture scholars say this borrowing from other styles proves that there is no real or original subculture. Subculture is merely a reworking of previous resistant identities and is no longer oppositional.

Subculture also fails as resistance through its use of commodities: yet this is a very important part of subculture, as Hodkinson argues. Goths “communicate” Goth through commodities they buy such as clothing, music, accessories, and magazines. Many Goths also want to include their subculture in their careers, so they open Goth boutiques, music stores, run magazines, and organize Goth festivals to sell these forms of communication. A good amount of this communication happens on the Internet, through which Goths learn about these businesses. Hodkinson relates an anecdote about a Goth boutique he visited in northern England filled with people from all over the country who heard of the boutique from the Internet. The Internet made this small shop famous within its subculture. Earlier subculture studies focused on style, but scholars have not emphasized the marketplace of the subculture. Hodkinson and other contemporary subculture scholars place more importance on the place in which subcultures occupy in the mainstream culture.

David Muggleton’s book *Inside Subculture: The Post-Modern Meaning of Style* discusses how postsubcultural analysis differs from the CCCS. He argues that the CCCS analysis of subcultures associates itself with modernity: subcultures are shown to be homogeneous and static. A scholar must look at subcultures from a postmodern point of

view: they are hyperindividualistic and fragmented. Boundaries blur between subcultures and other subcultures, between subcultures and mainstream. The CCCS examined youth subcultures within the context of class oppression, contending that their styles are merely ways they “win” against dominant culture. Style was merely a “symbolic response” and “imaginary” (Muggleton 17). Showing subcultures as a homogenous group, their analysis does not work on the individual level. To Muggleton, individuals can embrace several subcultural styles and philosophies; therefore, the discipline needs a postmodern analysis. The members of youth subcultures today are active postmodern consumers, consuming ideas and styles from past subcultures. For example, the postpunk revivals of style can say nothing new, but are merely “pop images” and “cultural stereotypes” of the past rather than any original style. Muggleton says, “The concept of ‘authenticity’ must likewise be expunged from the postmodern vocabulary” (45). Within this piece of scholarship, Muggleton includes interviews with current members of subcultures who prove his thesis. Some youth are part of revivals of subcultures, such as punk or mod. Other youth he interviews have no group identification, but discuss what other people call them. Many youth express a group identification (i.e., collective philosophies, styles, and activities associated with punk or Goth or mod subcultures) yet express their individuality, saying that their subculture is about “being yourself, freedom, doing what you wanna do” (Muggleton 58). Members of these subcultures often internalize meaning rather than externalize. However, these

youths still express a style borrowed from the original subculture. The re-creation of a new style robbed the original styles of the ability to shock and critique.

The ideas of the Birmingham School and the postsubculture scholars will both be useful in this study, as style and commodification are important facets of the jamband fan subculture. The idea of style as being transgressive is definitely a part of jamband subculture, as fans wear clothing and styles that go against normative values. Through handmade clothing and parody T-shirts, jamband fans express their dissatisfaction with mainstream culture. Although the Birmingham School's theory on resistance works for the jamband subculture, the theory of the postsubculturists also applies. Capitalist consumerism is an important topic in a discussion of the jamband subculture, as many fans buy and sell commodities related to their subculture at shows. Their use of consumerism and media, mostly the Internet, brings them closer to the mainstream against which they wish to rebel. The fans' cultural borrowing also brings them closer to that which they resist. While the fans are resistant in dress and style, they also affirm normative American values through their subcultural, almost colonialist, borrowing of styles from Rastafarianism, rave, and hippie cultures.

While jamband fans borrow styles and philosophies from other subcultures, mainstream society borrows styles and philosophies from the jamband fan subcultures through a process called recuperation, a term coined by a group called the Situationists. In my investigation of jamband fan subculture, I explore Situationist theories of spectacle. The Situationists were a group of French intellectuals that formed in 1957

with ideas founded in Marxism, but they also followed the thought of avant-garde art movements such as Dada and Surrealism. They discussed their “revolutionary project” in a journal: *Internationale Situationiste*. Believing that capitalist society prevents members of society from experiencing life, the Situationists felt that capitalism forces a life “lived at a distance” (Plant 27). The Situationists call this idea the spectacle, which is commodity-controlled life. It is that which people see and think is possible because of capitalism, such as a glamorous and comfortable life, and which is attainable only through the ownership of commodities. These commodities offer a promise of satisfaction, yet consumers are never able to reach this. What the spectacle shows members of society is wealth, fame, and comfort, yet members of society are never able to earn what the spectacle promises through capitalist society. People work hard to earn this satisfaction through commodities, but it is all ultimately unattainable.

A major part of Situationist theory is its notion of recuperation, the process by which society incorporates criticism against it. A once revolutionary cry becomes an advertising slogan. Dominant society recuperated much subcultural style and philosophy, and this has been the fate of jamband fans as well. Fans made styles on Dead tours, such as handmade patchwork clothing, that catalogues now sell. High fashion also took the style of the apron shirt and made it a popular, sexualized piece of clothing. *Relix* magazine, which started out as an underground Grateful Dead newsletter, is now a nationally recognized magazine containing ads for Teva sandals and high-end outdoor grills. In conjunction with *Jambands.com*, they sponsor a

jamband award show: The Jammys. While some jamband fans try to be subversive, their music and style are constantly recuperated into mainstream society and markets. This has been happening since the Deadheads first began touring with the Grateful Dead. I will discuss Situationist theory in relation to jamband culture in greater detail in Chapter III.

Literature Regarding the Grateful Dead and Phish

The Grateful Dead is the topic of most jamband literature, which can be placed within subculture studies, fan studies, folklore, or American studies. It is very much an interdisciplinary area of research. There have been two edited volumes written about the Grateful Dead: *Deadhead Social Science* and *Perspectives on the Grateful Dead*, both of which have valuable scholarship on the band and its fans. Natalie Dollar's "Understanding 'Show' as a Deadhead Speech Situation," an article in *Perspectives on the Grateful Dead*, examines the kinds of speech rituals Deadheads have with one another. Dollar explains an interesting performance phenomenon in her article. Argot used in verbal communication between Deadheads is a type of performance that shares information regarding identity. This kind of performance is still prevalent in the jamband subculture. Dollar explains two speech situations: "show talk" and "calling the opener." Show talk is the discussion of show statistics, which is not unlike statistics discussion among sports fans. Deadheads know many trivial facts about how often the Grateful Dead played a certain song, the last time the band played a song, or historical

jams.¹² This allows Deadheads to perform their identity as part of the larger group of Deadheads. Through the use of language, which Dollar calls “Deadhead speech situations,” Deadheads communicate their subcultural affiliation before their “audience” of other Deadheads. Through the acceptance of their language, they are accepted into the subculture as a Deadhead. “Calling the Opener” is an interesting speech situation and a type of competition. Before the show begins, a fan predicts the song that will open the show. Another fan responds and makes his or her prediction. These events can be the result of studying the set lists of the shows prior to that evening’s show or may just be what the fan wants to hear. Many times fans place bets and claim winnings in the lot after the show. According to Dollar, these speech events express a shared identity and function to build community (Dollar 92).

Such speech events are performances within the contemporary jamband subculture. Through speech events and competitions such as those Dollar describes, jamband fans place themselves in a hierarchy, using their performances as subcultural capital.¹³ Much like Bakhtin’s notion of the carnivalesque, there appears to be “free and familiar contact” between fans (Bakhtin 10). Everyone is supposedly on equal footing at shows. Still, hierarchies form that echo class distinctions from the mainstream culture, which the fans supposedly resist. By showing that they are more “in the know,” fans claim their higher “class” or status compared to other fans. Fans champion themselves

¹²I argue that all jamband fans do this.

¹³This term will be explained further in Chapter III.

as being oppositional to that ominous outside culture or mainstream, but how can they truly be resistant if they are echoing it? I will take Dollar's argument a little further, suggesting community here also includes aspects of hierarchy.

American studies student Craig Carson at the University of Texas at Austin wrote a master's thesis in 2003 entitled *Phish Fan Culture*, which discusses the possible existence of hierarchy beneath the surface of supposed egalitarian community. Phish finds ways of heightening fan enjoyment by creating community through their band/audience interactions. When a fan is at the "top" of the hierarchy, he or she presumably enjoys the band more than those at the "bottom," as teases¹⁴ in the jams, phrases the band says, call and response between band and audience, and rituals that take place during shows are all very inter-referential. A listener at the concert has to be well-versed in Phish music to understand it (Carson 53). The music of Phish, the show's rituals, and concert etiquette are similar to a language and its literature. Audience members must learn it as they keep going to shows, until they are fluent. Carson argues the hierarchy of the Phish subculture is a positive one, yet very exclusive, claiming that only those who know the music and language can appreciate the shows. Carlson's piece is essentially an argument dealing with subcultural capital, a concept proposed by Sarah Thornton: the more knowledge you have on a subcultural topic, the higher your status in the group (Thornton 186).

¹⁴Teases are phrases that allude to songs during jams.

Another article that focuses on community building is Mathew Sheptoski's "Vending at Dead Shows: The Bizarre Bazaar," from *Deadhead Social Science*. This article provides an excellent description of vending at a Grateful Dead show. The Bizarre Bazaar provided a place where vendors could sell their wares in order to make money to follow their favorite band on the road. Profit-making was not of prime importance: earning money in order to tour was of prime importance. Someone could essentially get whatever they wanted or needed in the parking lot: food, beverages, drugs, clothes, and even tattoos. Before and after shows, fans strolled up and down the Bazaar and purchased items. Sheptoski further argues that through the Bizarre Bazaar and the parking lot scene in general, Deadheads constructed a sense of community and group consciousness (163).

I believe this is the same in the jamband fan subculture today, but the Bizarre Bazaar is now called Shakedown Street as a tribute to the Grateful Dead. Shakedown Street is still a major part of the event and a way to create the community and group consciousness about which Sheptoski speaks. However, it is also a place of protest. This is where you hear cries to "keep your money in the lot where it belongs," asking you to give your money to other fans, rather than the corporations that own the venues in which the bands play. In Shakedown Street, fans replicate consumerist society by creating their own economy. Sheptoski's view of Shakedown Street can expand from the idea that it is a place where fans build community and group consciousness happens, but it is much more complex than that. My study elaborates on the already present

literature on jamband fans by exposing and analyzing the various contradictions that lie within the subculture.

Fan Studies Literature

Fan studies, a young field in which media or communications scholars explore the phenomenon of the fan, is another useful discipline for the study of jamband fans. Most literature in this discipline emphasizes science fiction television fans; its theory, however, applies to jamband fans as well. Henry Jenkins' *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* refutes the idea to which many cultural studies scholars subscribe: that fans are passive, nonthinking consumers of media. Jenkins gives agency and power to the fan. Arguing that fans are actively engaged with the media of which they are a fan, Jenkins calls them textual poachers, taking the term "poacher" from Michel de Certeau (Jenkins 24). In their poaching of their respective media, fans are actively reading, internalizing, and personalizing meanings for themselves. These meanings are fodder for discussion with other fans, and through poaching, fans form a larger community that surrounds their media. Textual poaching takes on many forms. Fans may watch a series and interpret an episode or the series' characters in a certain way: interpretations that television writers often invalidate. However, Jenkins claims that this does not invalidate fan meaning. Poaching also includes fan fiction,¹⁵ fan films,

¹⁵This is fiction that fans write in which they tell their own story using the world of the television series.

filk music,¹⁶ and visual art. Through these acts of creation, fans make their own meanings of the series that is the object of their affection. Jenkins argues that through creating their own meaning, fans are active, creative participants in their subculture.

Jenkins believes that fans are not only active poachers, but are also nomadic, again using a concept from de Certeau. Fans' readings are always in motion, not claiming ownership of any text, but making meaning and connections as they move from text to text. On the cover of Jenkins' book is an illustration that also hangs in his office, which he gives as an example of nomadic textual poaching. It shows four characters of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* in an Arthurian world. In this print, not only is the fan who created it making a meaning unique to him or her, but also making connections between texts, *Star Trek* and Arthurian legend, inferring relationships between characters, which may not be in the original series. Through their nomadic poaching, as shown in this example, fans also show the intricate and detailed way they examine a television show, textually and intertextually. Being in a space of active participation, not passive consumerism, the phenomenon of the fan is more complex and diverse, according to Jenkins. Jenkins' work shows how fans are active participants in society, raising their status as fans from comic nerds to active, intelligent subjects.

Jenkins' work is of value to this study. Jamband fans, like science fiction fans, appear to be passive consumers in their subculture: they buy tickets, albums, paraphernalia, and collectibles, but are in a way "textual poachers" as active members of

¹⁶Filk is folk music written by fans about their interests.

their subculture. They analyze the text of the music the bands play in detail: many fans write blogs, discuss their subculture in forums, and write entire books on the subject of the bands' music and statistics. The fans are also consumers, and even though they consume, they are active in their culture through changing the way they consume in the Shakedown Street economy. They choose to whom they give their money: primarily bands that challenge business practices and push musical boundaries. On Shakedown Street, many jamband fans also choose to give their money to other fans, not corporations that own musical venues. The media may view jamband fans as mere youth who passively consume music and products, as well as drugs and alcohol, or may view older fans as immature dreamers. I argue that most jamband fans are active and aware of their place as consumers, much like science fiction fans are active and creative as described in the discipline of fan studies.

Performance Studies Literature

Along with fan studies, I draw theory and literature from the discipline of performance studies, as this is a dissertation which deals with a performance that takes place outside a theater. Richard Schechner's book *Between Theatre and Anthropology* is a performance studies text that explores the places where theater and anthropology meet. In fact, Schechner defines six "points of contact" between theater and anthropology: transformation, intensity, audience-performer interactions, performance sequence, transmission of knowledge, and evaluation. At these points, theater and

anthropology meet and have something to say about each other. The most important concept to come out of these points of contact is something Schechner calls “restored behavior.” Considering this to be the main characteristic of performance, he explains it as “living behavior treated as a film director treats a strip of film” (35). A performer arranges and rearranges these strips of behavior. There is an original behavior in the past, which performers store, maybe even change, then it is recovered and “rebehaved.” The performer could be either absorbed into the behavior, such as acting or trance, or the performer could exist next to his or her restored behavior, such as in the case of Brechtian acting. The theory of restored behavior is important both in performance, in analyzing acting, and in anthropology, in analyzing rituals, play, and social behavior. Examples of restored behavior can be found in the social behavior of jamband subculture. As the subculture evolved from the Grateful Dead to Phish, Widespread Panic, and The String Cheese Incident, behavior such as speech situations and argot, and experiences such as Shakedown Street, changed and evolved from what they were in the 1970s, but are still similar from band to band. Schechner’s idea of restored behavior describes not only performance in the theater, but also performance in everyday life.

Victor Turner, with whom Schechner worked on many occasions, examines performances in everyday life as well. As an anthropologist, he looks at performance within societal organization. His book *From Theatre to Ritual: The Human Seriousness of Play* examines the performance of ritual and how it can invert, subvert, and/or

maintain dominant ideas of the society in which it functions. Turner's two main ideas, the liminal and *communitas*, are relevant to this study. The liminal takes in the margins of society where the person is "inbetwixt and inbetween" identities. Liminality might take place in a ritual in which someone's identity changes, such as a rite of puberty or an initiation into a group. In this in-between place, identity is destabilized until the individual emerges with a new identity. This all must take place separated from society, such as in a chapel, where religious rituals take place, or perhaps in a sorority house, where a pledging ritual might take place. The liminal gives its participants temporary freedom from society and responsibility, allowing them to enter a new and different world, and giving them permission to play. The liminal generally inverts, but does not subvert. The traditional organization of society is changed for a moment, but those involved in the ritual always return to the outside society. The liminal teaches its participants that order is generally desired in their world. However, the disorder of the liminal creates *communitas*, a community in which its members have formed very tight bonds. In jamband subculture, participants take part in a liminal experience, one that encourages behavior that goes against normative values and creates disorder, through which fans create a strong bond with each other. Because fans experience disorder, they must return to order when the jamband show or tour is over, thus impeding the resistance that the subculture tries to perform.

The field of gender studies has also provided performance studies with concepts useful to my project. Judith Butler discusses the performativity of the drag queen in

Gender Trouble. Butler sees performance as not “a single or deliberate act, but rather, as a reiterative and citational practice” (2). As someone performs an identity, he or she is performing cultural codes through their gestures and mannerisms. Gendered gestures give the appearance of inherent and natural gender and are repeated to create the identity. Through the drag queen’s performance, s/he shows that gender is a social construction through her repetition of the acts and gestures that are thought to be of the female gender. In *Gender Trouble*, Butler says, “in imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender as well as its contingency” (124). The repetition of gendered gestures constructs gender, much like the performance of a drag queen. S/he has the body of a man, yet imitates what society believes to be “woman.” Performance shows gender as a construction, then it becomes critique, according to Butler. In the drag queen’s performance, s/he critiques the assumed naturalness of gender. In much the same way, jamband fans use Shakedown Street to comment upon the capitalistic marketplace: they “wear” the costume of capitalism, like the drag queen wears the costume of gender. They repeat gestures that are thought of as natural in capitalistic society: consuming and selling goods. Through their repetition of capitalism, they critique it, but is this performance effective?

Sociologist Erving Goffman provides performance studies with another point of view when examining performance of identity in his book *The Performance of Self in Everyday Life*. He combines the language of the theater with the language of sociology to examine the various ways human beings perform in their daily lives. The activity in

which the performer takes part has an effect on his or her observers in some way, as we hope it does in the theater. Goffman divides this effect into two parts: the performance someone gives off and the performance someone gives. The performance someone gives is the intentional part: argot or clothing that cues the audience to their identity. The performance someone gives off is the unintentional part: gestures or action. All these make up what Goffman calls the performance “front,” the part of the performance that the audience sees, which is presumably the same for all of the observers. Jamband fans have a performance front, though intentionally and unintentionally revealing clues as to their subcultural affiliation. The setting is part of the front, which is, much like the theater, the environment in which the performer finds him/herself, and they are free to use any of the props they find in this environment to aid their performance. There is also a backstage area of a performance, like the theater—the space the audience never sees. Within the jamband community, the backstage is often the lot scenes, where certain performances occur that are understood only by other fans, while nonfans and newbies (new fans) are the audiences to a performance that they do not understand. Goffman’s ideas are key to performance studies, as well as to this study, as he uses theater to discuss the performance of life outside the theater.

Overview of Chapters

Before I examine questions of theatricality and performance in the jamband fan subculture, I must offer a brief history for the sake of context. In the second chapter of

this dissertation, I present a comparative history of the four major jambands included in my study. This chapter sketches out connections between other subcultural trends and historical influences upon the jamband subculture. For instance, one of the first things someone might notice about jamband subculture is the appropriation of hippy styles and philosophies. I argue important sources of the jamband subculture are the Beats of the 1950s and the hippies of the 1960s. Jamband fans are mostly white, middle-class, college-educated (or currently in college) heterosexual men rebelling against corporate America, their parent culture, and contemporary popular music through their following of jambands. In this way, they are not unlike the male-dominated Beats and the hippies. Jamband subculture also borrows from Rastafarian subculture, a religious movement in Jamaica in which blacks rebelled against “Babylon,” or the white man’s society, looking for an exodus to “Zion”: their rightful place, Africa. Reggae music became an important part of this religion. Jamband fans, and the jambands themselves, appropriated the music of this religion, as well as style. Many heads and fans don the dreadlock hairstyle, which is popular in the Rastafarian religion. Rasta colors—black, yellow, and red—are popular in clothing and accessories, as well as images of Bob Marley. It appears that fans’ supposedly resistant performances are still based in the mainstream through imperialistic borrowing.

The third chapter of this dissertation, “Jamband Fans’ Resistance, Recuperation, and Reiteration,” discusses the ideas of resistance, recuperation, and hierarchy. Although many jamband fans try to perform resistance as I suggested, this is a

problematic view. Recuperation or incorporation shows jamband fans' contradictions. Although the fans are in a way challenging society, their styles and philosophy are taken back into mainstream society. Fans are also contradictory through their reiterating of capitalist culture via their microeconomy, the Shakedown Street marketplace. They simultaneously embrace capitalism and reject it, as they make it their own. Fans also echo mainstream societal hierarchy through their use of subcultural capital. This chapter explores the idea of subcultural capital as a way in which the jamband subculture reiterates mainstream society. Jamband subculture provides a useful example of the porous boundaries between resistance and recuperation.

The jamband fan subculture provides an interesting contradictory performance. In order to resist the mainstream culture, jamband fan subculture needs the consumerist society it challenges. As the bands they follow engage in consumerism, the fans need consumerist capitalist markets in order to buy tickets and have transportation to each show. Once at the show, they buy and sell their wares on Shakedown Street. It is an interesting cycle: the jamband fans need consumerism, they attempt to resist consumerism, their resistance becomes recuperated into consumerism, and then they attempt to rebel against it all again. As many subculture scholars examine modes of resistance in subcultures, this idea becomes increasingly complicated. I hope through this study, I shed some light on how subcultural resistance is performed and how recuperation continues in one contemporary model.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE BANDS AND SUBCULTURE

The history from which jambands grew is important for an understanding of how they regulate a communal performance of identity. This chapter presents the history of the bands and their musical styles, as well as a history of the subculture and its influences. Both the music of the bands and the subculture present a pastiche of styles and philosophies. Jambands today create a hybridized type of music, borrowing from different styles; while the subculture is a hybridized subculture, borrowing from other subcultures. Through this hybrid style of music, and hybrid subcultural styles, jamband fans today present a different, and perhaps weaker, form of resistance than their predecessors, the Deadheads.

The Bands

Though the term “jamband” did not exist before Phish, the history of jambands and their subculture begins with the Grateful Dead and guitarist Jerry Garcia. The Grateful Dead has a different history compared to the other bands in this study, because its rise to popularity coincided with the rise of a counterculture coming out of San Francisco in the 1960s: the Beats and hippies, both of which resisted middle-class American values and post-World War II prosperity. The antiwar movement in the late

1960s against American's involvement in Vietnam also became a large backdrop to the counterculture. Although Jerry Garcia biographer Blair Jackson states that the Grateful Dead's involvement with this counterculture and rock'n'roll renaissance in San Francisco during the late 1960s is usually overstated (103), one cannot ignore the huge impact and contribution they had in sustaining the ideals of the counterculture after that time.

Although most identify psychedelic rock as the roots of jamband music, its beginnings really lie with the folk boom of the late 1950s, a movement in which Garcia was involved. A shift in popular youth culture created a renaissance of folk music. The first generation of rockers of the mid-1950s, whom students felt to be their rebellious voice, disappeared: Chuck Berry was jailed, Buddy Holly and Eddie Cochran died, Jerry Lee Lewis was involved in a scandal, and Elvis Presley was in the army. All this took place between the years of 1958 and 1960. Teen idols, who performed a watered-down version of rock and roll dealing almost exclusively with the subject matter of love and heartbreak, took the place of these rockers. For college students at this time, folk music replaced rock and roll as the music of rebellion and allowed a blossoming in grassroots music and politics. Evolving into a phenomenon that expressed struggle and community, folk drew from many different traditions that expressed struggle of a different type: blues, Appalachian, sea chanteys, Southern mountain music, and what Garcia biographer Blair Jackson calls "old-timey pickin' music." Garcia used Appalachian and bluegrass as his model for music not only because of this rebellious

philosophy, but also because it contained a good deal of improvisation. Inspired by the writing of the Beats, Garcia and Robert Hunter (later lyricist for the Grateful Dead) traveled around California playing folk music. In the early 1960s San Francisco Bay Area, Garcia played in a handful of bluegrass and folk bands such as the Sleepy Hollow Hog Stompers and The Wildwood Boys. During this folk boom, musicians explored country blues. Rarely heard by people outside the South before the 1950s, rural and black music inspired country blues, the true source in Jerry Garcia's development and a genre that later evolved into jamband music.

During the folk boom of the late 1950s and early 1960s, Garcia met the musicians who would later become the Grateful Dead. With Garcia's background in folk and bluegrass, Phil Lesh's jazz and classical training, Ron McKernan's (Pigpen's) proclivity for the blues, Bill Kreutzmann's and Mickey Harts' experimental drumming, and Bob Weir's rock guitar, the Grateful Dead initiated a kind of improvisational rock combining different genres, later to be named jamband music. The musicians' backgrounds, plus the social and political climate of San Francisco of the 1960s, created the music that started the jamband phenomenon.

The Grateful Dead began as the Warlocks, an electrified jug band. In *Living with the Dead*, Grateful Dead manager Rock Scully described the young Grateful Dead: “[They were] not exactly a rock band. Remnants of a jug band really. Coffeehouse folkies and music students. Just a ragtag, rooty, down-home bunch of people who had never been out of Northern California” (Scully 21). Pigpen added R&B and blues to

their repertoire and by 1966, their “mix was basically blues, R&B, untempoed folk and jug-band songs with a few current chart hits and Dylan numbers” (Scully 43). Jerry then applied psychedelic rock momentum to their interpretation of jug-band music and country blues to form the Grateful Dead’s style (Scully 43).

Things changed when members of the band began taking psychedelic drugs. With this change into psychedelic rock in the late 1960s, songs such as “Good Morning Little School Girl” and “Viola Lee Blues” attracted a following of rebels not interested in commercial music inspired by the British invasion (Jackson 69).¹ The Grateful Dead’s music evolved into something more complex and experimental because of their psychedelic experiences. Jackson describes this early Dead music: “The interweaving of Phil’s relentless, propulsive bass, Weir’s slashing rhythm guitar attack, and Garcia’s wiry lead offers a glimpse of what was ahead” (85). They also decided on a new name. Lesh saw an LP in a record store by another band called the Warlocks.¹⁷ Therefore, the band changed their name to the Grateful Dead, not after the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, as fans commonly believe, but after Jerry saw the phrase in a dictionary. Grateful Dead is the name for a certain type of folk tale in which a traveler comes across a group of people refusing to bury a corpse of a man who had debts. The traveler pays the debts, and later in the story the ghost of the corpse helps him (Jackson 85). Because of the description of this story, the band became the Grateful Dead.

¹⁷This story is not confirmed, nor is the other band (Jackson 83).

Ken Kesey and the Merry Band of Pranksters¹⁸ played a large part in shaping the Grateful Dead and the counterculture of the Bay Area in the 1960s. Novelist Ken Kesey formed the Pranksters, who experimented with drugs and lived communally. Kesey felt the novel limited the artist and he wanted to explore other types of art (Wolfe 153). In the search for new forms of art, the Merry Pranksters took a historical road trip in 1964, ingesting a good deal of orange juice infused with LSD and other intoxicants as they drove a now famous bus painted in Day-Glo colors—on the front, promising “Further,” with “Weird Load” on the back. This legend of wanderlust still resonates with the jamband subculture today. In many jamband parking lots, a visitor can see painted buses, stickers, psychedelics, and the phrase “Further” in homage to 1960s tribes like the Merry Pranksters.

Kesey wanted the Pranksters’ cross-country trip to be the source of a film in which he tried to document the psychedelic experience. When the Pranksters returned to California, they moved to a cottage in the Redwoods in LaHonda to continue their artistic journey. Pranksters painted surrounding trees in Day-Glo colors; the house became a collage of various found objects, paintings, and photos; and film, microphones, and wire were everywhere (Wolfe 154-57). For those on the West Coast seeking a rebellious alternative, this house became the place to be in 1965. As news reached people about events with the Merry Pranksters, the Acid Tests began, of which

¹⁸People often called the The Merry Band of Pranksters “The Merry Pranksters” or “The Pranksters.”

the Grateful Dead became a vital part (Jackson 83). Garcia recalls the parties that inspired the Acid Tests: ““Before there were Acid Tests, there were these parties, and we got invited to one of these parties and we . . . plugged all our stuff in and played for about a minute. Then we all freaked out”” (Jackson 86). They made an impact on that audience because the Pranksters invited the Grateful Dead to every party and Acid Test. The Acid Tests were a series of parties that took place in the San Francisco Bay Area in the late 1960s and which centered on the use of the psychedelic drug LSD. To advertise these parties, Pranksters handed out flyers with the phrase “Can YOU Pass the Acid Test?” Garcia commented on how the Grateful Dead fit in with the Acid Tests: ““It went along with where we were going, which is . . . experimenting with psychedelics, as much as we were playing music”” (Jackson 86). The use of LSD proved to be a major inspiration in the music of the Grateful Dead. Through their use of the drug, they started the tradition of long, noodling jams, which is still a characteristic of jamband music today.

The Grateful Dead participated in another important countercultural event influential to jamband practices: The Human Be-In. On January 14, 1967, the “freaks” living in the Haight-Ashbury, North Beach, Berkeley, and Marin gathered at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco (Jackson 120). Drawing over 20,000 people, the “Be-In” marked the beginning of the Bay Area hippy counterculture. The event included readings by beat poets, writers, performances by the Dead among other local bands, and speeches by various leaders of the movement. Timothy Leary urged those in attendance

to “Tune in, turn on, and drop out”: turn on to the scene, tune in to what’s happening, and drop out of school and society. The Hell’s Angels, an outlaw motorcycle gang, provided security and helped lost children. People ran free, played Frisbee and musical instruments, and flew kites, among other things. Ralph Gleason of the *San Francisco Chronicle* wrote of the event,

As the sun set and the people glowed, [Ginsberg’s] voice came over the sound system, asking everyone to stand up and . . . watch the sunset. Later he asked everyone to help clean up the debris and they did. No fights. No drunks. No troubles. . . . Saturday’s gathering was an affirmation, not a protest. A statement of life, not death, and a promise of good, not evil. . . . This is truly something new . . . asking for a new dimension of peace. (Jackson 120-21)

To this day, jamband fans try to emulate this sort of event in the parking lot at shows. Many fans spread messages of peace through their clothing, material culture, and argot—often referring to each other as “brother” or “sister.” Fans champion cleaning their own trash and recycling so much that each band has its own clean-up and recycling crew of volunteers, who hand out trash and recycling bags to fans, and collect them at the end of the night. These volunteers also collect and recycle any trash in the venue’s parking lot after fans have left. Phish fans pioneered this effort, forming the Phish Green Crew in 1994 in order “to help keep venues and locals happy, Mother Nature stronger, and the history of Phish longer” (*The Phish Net*). In another attempt to help the environment, Phish started a ride-share program in 2009 so fans can reduce their carbon footprint. The jamband fan subculture, in a way, carries the spirit of the 1960s counterculture with it.

During the same time as the height of the Haight-Ashbury counterculture and the Summer of Love, the Vietnam antiwar movement gained momentum. Perhaps the antiwar sentiments spreading across the country fueled the Summer of Love and the Human Be-In, or maybe vice-versa. Protests and resistance ran rampant in the United States, spreading to all walks of life. When the war began in 1965, a hundred people came together to protest on the Boston Common. On October 15, 1968, the year after the Summer of Love, that number grew to 100,000 to protest the war (Zinn 486). Protests of chanting college students, underground newspapers at high schools, and secret coffeehouses for antiwar GIs started infiltrating American society. The United States experienced the greatest antiwar movement in its history and the movement helped to bring the war to an end. The philosophy of peace was no longer limited solely to the hippy subculture. Even though they never intended to be, the Grateful Dead are a part of this legacy of 1960s political turmoil.

Although the Grateful Dead attended many of these political events in the 1960s, they themselves did not carry such a political message. Garcia said in an interview in 1967:

“We’re trying to make music in such a way that it doesn’t have a message for anybody. We don’t have anything to tell anybody. We don’t want to change anybody. We want people to have the chance to feel a little better. That’s the absolute most we want to do with our music.”
(qtd. in Jackson 120)

Although many Deadheads, and jamband fans today for that matter, tend to have certain politics they express—antiwar, anticapitalism, or animal rights—the bands’ music does

not express any of these politics. Although the Dead influenced and reflected the West Coast hippy movement, their music did not explicitly express the movement's philosophies. The Dead's music encapsulated American mythologies, such as "Terrapin Station" and "Casey Jones," as well as party music like "One More Saturday Night" or "Playin' in the Band." Some songs, like "Samson and Delilah," even told Biblical stories. As a precursor to contemporary jambands, their music demonstrated musical experimentation and virtuosity, but made no political statements. Scully expressed the band's philosophy: "We don't want to be connected with anti-anydamnthing. We're not anti-war, anti-this, anti-that, we're just pro-music, pro-party, and pro-getting down" (Scully 147). Although they claimed this, they still continued to play at rallies and countercultural events that supported political causes of the period, showing their political alliance with such movements. Their refusal to make a political statement in interviews shows a resistance to the classification of their music and their identity. Individually, the members of the band were political activists, as they demonstrated by their attendance at countercultural events, but they never wanted their music and politics to mix. Contemporary jambands carry on this tradition, as well.

Because of these peaceful, countercultural events, which culminated in the Summer of Love in 1967, young people from all over the country moved to the Haight-Ashbury district. Media hype and popular music spread a buzz all around the country, which piqued young people's curiosities. Haight-Ashbury hippies rejected Western materialism and saw capitalism as an outmoded system. Many believed they could save

the planet by expanding their mind through recreational drug use (Howard 248). For a brief time, the Haight's reputation attracted those looking for a utopian society: a group called the Diggers handed out free food; the Haight-Ashbury Free Medical Clinic, free music in parks, and free places to stay, called crash pads, were all a part of this ideal (Howard 248). But soon, the neighborhood held too many people. Garcia said of the scene: “[There were] too many people to take care of, and not enough people willing to do something. There were a lot of people looking for a free ride. That’s the death of any scene, when you have more drag energy than you have forward-going energy” (Jackson 132). The Dead became symbolic of the Haight-Ashbury scene; a constant stream of youth came in and out of their house, crashing on the floor and eating their food (Scully 77). A regular stop on San Francisco bus tours, their house was a subcultural museum; people felt they could just walk in and talk to the band (Scully 128).

By 1968, the Grateful Dead moved out of the Haight because the area grew a great deal and changed from the utopian society its residents wanted. The Free Medical Clinic focused on youth who overdosed on drugs. The police started strictly enforcing the law in regards to drug use. Garcia said: “Who could blame them, because it had gotten pretty ugly there. By '68, they had had enough of it” (Jackson 151). During the weekends, tourist traffic in the Haight-Ashbury prevented police from having access to the area. Petty and violent crimes rose and the Mafia, wanting to get in on “the scene,” started dealing drugs such as cocaine and heroin (Scully 139). In order to communicate this end of the scene in the Haight-Ashbury, the Grateful Dead marched in the San

Francisco Mime Troupe's *Death of the Hippie* parade. Organizers hoped the parade caught the eye of the media and encouraged youth to stay at home. "Stay where you are, it's getting worse here by the moment. We can't feed you, there's no housing, and there's bad drugs" (Scully 129-33). The hippy-inspired communal utopia of the Be-In and Haight-Ashbury deteriorated. This, however, did not end the Grateful Dead's music.

In December 1969, the Altamont Free Concert marked the end of a movement. The Rolling Stones became interested in the free concert phenomenon in the United States. Along with the Grateful Dead, they chose Altamont Speedway as the site of the concert, because no park in San Francisco could accommodate the expected 150,000 people (Jackson 172). Mick Jagger hired the Hell's Angels as security for a truckload of ice and beer. The Rolling Stones had successfully hired the British Hell's Angels club for security in London, but they were quite a different kind of motorcycle gang from the gang in the United States. To make things worse, these were not the senior members of the Hell's Angels who normally provided security for the Dead; these were new members who lost control and began attacking members of the audience (Jackson 173). When the Jefferson Airplane performed, a Hell's Angel named Animal seriously beat Marty Balin, leader of the band, who had to be taken from the stage. The Dead refused to play and left early (Scully 182). The violence culminated during the Rolling Stones' set, when someone stabbed a man with a gun. Garcia said of the event: "It was like hell; it was like a nice afternoon in hell" (Jackson 173).

Regardless of these negative experiences, the Grateful Dead spread the spirit of the Be-In, the Pranksters, the Haight-Ashbury, and the 1960s political resistance and antiwar movements when they started touring across the country. By the mid-1970s, they were rock stars: “In 1970, the craziness begins: One hundred and forty-five gigs this year alone, not counting a large number of free shows” (Scully 194). Unfortunately, at this time in the Dead’s career, Pigpen fell seriously ill, his liver weakened from years of alcohol abuse, and could not tour. The Dead hired Keith Godchaux to play keyboard and his wife, Donna Jean, to sing vocals. Pigpen died in 1972, and the Dead’s line-up permanently changed.

With Pigpen gone, the Dead’s music moved farther away from the blues and R&B. Bob Weir and Phil Lesh wrote increasingly complex and ambitious songs: long epic songs that took up entire sides of vinyl albums. Weir’s mini-opera, “Weather Report Suite,” takes up the second side on *Wake of the Flood*. Lesh recorded his song cycle on *Grateful Dead at the Mars Hotel*. While Lesh and Weir’s music became more epic, Hunter and Garcia wrote more traditional American-type tunes that dealt with mythology, the Wild West, and gambling—Bob Dylan-inspired subject matter (Scully 230). Garcia wanted to tell stories through folk-inspired songs. *Terrapin Station*, in 1977, demonstrates this well. In “Terrapin Suite,” Garcia and Hunter told stories steeped in American folklore and mythology, which included sailors, gamblers, ghosts, and ships (Scully 299).

The next year, the Grateful Dead tried something completely different: disco. Because the 1960s were over, critics from the various music publications labeled the Grateful Dead as a cliché (Scully 310). Emulating disco and 1980s progressive rock, their new music did not succeed in the commercial sphere or with the Deadheads. They released less studio material with longer intervals between albums (Scully 310). This did not deter the band's touring popularity. Deadheads still followed the band and fans still filled large arenas and outdoor amphitheaters.

Even though their newer music was not as popular, they experienced an important resurgence in their popularity in the 1990s. The Grateful Dead, now living icons, symbolized the ideals of the 1960s. Bass player Phil Lesh stated in 1994 that the Grateful Dead were “the last holdout—the last piece of culture that really exists from that era. It's history, and for some, I suppose, it's nostalgia. But it's very much alive—that's the key. If it's the only remnant of the 60s, thank goodness there's something left” (Jackson 437). Their last tour in 1995—their thirtieth anniversary—was a difficult one. They played large sports arenas and outdoor venues that held between 20,000 and 60,000 people. Garcia grew weak and ill, and his band mates worried about his disoriented and unhappy behavior. But they went through with the tour. At Deer Creek Music Center,¹⁹ in Noblesville, Indiana, Garcia received a death threat before the show. Police set up metal detectors, creating a long wait to get inside the venue. Thousands of people, with and without tickets, pushed down the fence at the back of the venue, and a

¹⁹This venue is now called the Verizon Wireless Music Center.

riot ensued. The rest of the tour was very tense (Jackson 448-50). After their final show at Soldier Field in Chicago in 1995, Garcia checked himself into a rehabilitation center for his heroin addiction, where he finally died in August.

The Grateful Dead broke up after Garcia's death. In later years, members joined and played concerts under the name The Other Ones.²⁰ Phil Lesh and Bob Weir started bands that mostly play Grateful Dead covers, but also play originals. Garcia's death stranded the Deadheads, who spent years touring. While some opted to settle down, many decided to follow another band known for long jams like the Dead. Already playing arena-sized shows in 1995, Phish had their own following. With the death of Garcia, Phish inherited a new audience willing to follow them across the country. While many fans ended their tour lifestyle, many Deadheads toured with Phish and their fan base (Fricke 42).

Richard Gehr, writer for *Spin* magazine, said this of his first Phish show:

My first Phish show was a revelation. Assigned by *New York Newsday* to review the Vermont quartet's April 13, 1994 appearance at the New York City's Beacon Theatre, I attended the show with virtually no expectations and in return experienced nearly everything I could want from a nineties rock band. Phish made me dance, think, and laugh—often at the same time. . . . Phish seemed like heralds of a secret American music scene that was being purposely kept underground so as to preserve it from defilement. (Gehr 2)

²⁰After the Grateful Dead Family Reunion in 2002, a huge music festival at Alpine Valley, Wisconsin, they changed their name back to the Dead, but without the "Grateful" to honor Garcia.

Although quite different from the Grateful Dead, Phish experimented musically as well. Born in a much different environment than the Grateful Dead, Phish first performed in a Vermont college in the 1980s. There were no Acid Tests, no Be-Ins, and no hippies. During the Reagan years, the media and government smothered the resistance resulting from the movements of the 1960s. The United States of America experienced economic, environmental, and familial insecurities. President Ronald Reagan cut funding for lower class Americans, while military spending skyrocketed and multinational corporations spread across the globe. Some activists tried to continue the movements of the 1960s, but political leaders and the media ignored them, rendering their protests powerless. This was the political environment of Phish. However, this band never aligned itself with any political movement and their music never took a political stance, as with the other jambands that followed the Grateful Dead and Phish.

Much different than the Grateful Dead, these were four middle-class, white college guys just wanting to play music. Phish guitarist Trey Anastasio heard Jon Fishman playing drums through his dormitory walls at the University of Vermont in Burlington. Anastasio and Fishman joined with another guitarist, Jeff Holdsworth (who left the band in 1986), then auditioned Mike Gordon to play the bass and formed Blackwood Convention. Their first gig failed: playing in a basement for an ROTC dance on October 30, 1983. Supposedly they ran out of songs, and played “Proud Mary” over and over while the attendants of the dance set up a stereo to play Michael Jackson songs. Anastasio played louder and held up the check the ROTC had paid them (*Phish*:

Bittersweet Hotel). After a good deal of work and the addition of a fifth band member, keyboardist Page McConnell, the band, now called Phish, started playing at a popular bar called Nectar's in Burlington, where a small following formed. When they started playing out-of-state gigs in clubs in Boston and New York City, busloads of people from Vermont and New Hampshire traveled to see them (Bernstein 19-21).

A tour to Colorado in 1988 changed their low profile. In a 1999 interview with David Byrne on the PBS series *Sessions at West 54th Street*, lead guitarist Trey Anastasio said,

“Those shows all got taped and then we left. A year or two later we came back to Colorado and we had an audience that, because of these tapes that had spread, they were familiar with all our songs, not just the songs on the album, and it enabled us to continue playing those kind of shows. . . . It's been a big help to us.” (qtd. in Byrne)

The members of Phish credit word-of-mouth and the Internet for their popularity. Phish is an early example of how the Internet has the potential to allow grassroots movements to grow. In 1990, fans used a discussion email list—rec.music.phish—to discuss the band. This ultimately led to a fan site: phish.net (Budnick 163). Like all jambands, Phish allowed fans to record their concerts, as setlists changed every night. Fans then copied these shows and traded them on the Internet, which also helped create the community of jamband fans today. Through the internet, a “newbie,” or a person new to the scene, could contact more seasoned fans to obtain recordings of shows,²¹ find

²¹In order to trade tapes over the Internet, one can ask for a B&P (Blanks and Postage) from another fan. In the last five years, as technology has become more readily

connections between fans for rides to shows, places to stay on tour, or ticket traders, or simply find a friend with a common interest. In autumn of 2000, appearing on the national public television show *Austin City Limits*, McConnell said, “somehow or another we were in the right place at the right time for all these kids to get into it and talk about it online.” Anastasio also commented on the popularity of the Internet in the same interview: “It was a lucky thing or something . . . we mixed up the set lists every night and we’d do weird plays . . . we had too much information without a format, and along came this format and it just fit perfectly” (“Phish”). Through the Internet, fans set up a media archive, a women’s organization called the Phunky Bitches, a charity organization called the Waterwheel Foundation, a fan story page called Pholktales.com, and a game site called Phantasy Tour (where one can predict set lists, comparable to fantasy football). In addition, many sites allow downloading live Phish shows, such as nugz.net and Phish’s own site: Livephishdownloads.com (Budnick 163-64). Through cataloging, self-documentation, fan distribution of music, printed fan zines as well as fan sites, and printed and electronic works with statistics, Phish is the most documented of jambands (Budnick 164).

Phish’s attitude about their music and their personas also helped their popularity. While extremely serious about their music, they do not take themselves too seriously. Their concerts included spectacles such as trampolines, vacuum cleaner solos, and the

available, rather than trading tapes, people can get live shows by downloading MP3s from the Internet or through pier-to-pier networks.

donut dress worn by drummer Jon Fishman. They usually joked around and played pranks on the audience, very different behavior from their predecessors, the Grateful Dead. On their return from a two-year hiatus in 2003, they played a concert at Madison Square Garden. During a song, Anastasio announced Tom Hanks, and a man in sunglasses who looked like Tom Hanks walked onstage. Of course, the venue was so large that nobody could really tell whether or not this actually was Tom Hanks. Later, they announced on their website, phish.com, that this was actually keyboardist Page McConnell's brother. Phish routinely played jokes like this one on its audience.

Phish also expressed an inclusiveness that feels exclusive to everyone at their shows. Through teasing songs in jams, games, jokes, and mail-order ticketing, the band encouraged the more committed fans to feel like a part of an exclusive fan base (Budnick 165). Through use of musical teases and audience participation, the audience is made aware that they are part of an exclusive community. On certain musical cues, the Phish audience knew to do certain things, like lie on the ground, turn to the back of the auditorium, or scream certain obscenities—actions known among Phish fans as the Secret Language. The band continued this from 1992 until 1997 (*The Phish Net*). For Halloween concerts, the band allowed fans to participate in the selection of their musical “costume”²² through voting. During the group's fall tour of 1995, fans played a

²²Phish's tradition for their Halloween shows was to perform an album of another artist. They called this their musical costume. They performed The Who's *Quadrophenia*, The Velvet Underground's *Loaded*, and the Beatles' *The White Album*.

game of chess with the band, moving a piece each night (Budnick 166).²³ Through contests on tour, a voicemail box with announcements during tour, the Meatstick Dance,²⁴ and trying to break world records, the band created a subcultural environment for each concert.

Curiously, Phish never called itself a jamband. The band wanted an open-ended name that did not define or confine what kind of music they played. Drummer Jon Fishman remembers, “Phish was a fitting name because it allowed us the freedom to define that however we wanted. . . . If you call yourself Slayer, then you must slay. . . . We wanted an open-endedness preserved” (*Phish: IT*). In the beginning, fans called their music progressive rock, but Phish does not classify their music. It is as eclectic and varied as their shows. Phish’s songs have complex structures and time signatures that change quickly. Whereas the Grateful Dead’s roots were folk, blues, and rock, Phish’s sources vary from song to song. From the bluegrass tune “My Sweet One,” to a heavy punk tune “Big Black Furry Creature from Mars,” to Celtic-sounding “Glide,” their music draws from many different genres without committing to one. If the definition of jamband that Budnick relies on—“blending and bending genres”—holds, Phish is perhaps the most quintessential jamband (241). In fact, *Rolling Stone Magazine* even cites Phish as the definition of jamband (“Phish”). Their 1992 album, *A Picture of*

²³Both sides won.

²⁴Phish fashioned the Meatstick Dance after La Macarena by Los del Rio, which was popular in the mid-1990s. It is a box dance in which one moves their hands from their head to the hips, along with other gestures that match the lyrics.

Nectar, is the epitome of a jamband album (Budnick 162). It begins with the fast-paced, bass-heavy short tune called “Llama,” followed by a consonant, light jazz piece called “Eliza.” The album continues with “Poor Heart,” a quirky bluegrass tune, and “Manteca,” scat done a cappella. It also includes driving rock songs—e.g., “Tweezer,” “Cavern,” and “Chalkdust Torture”—juxtaposed with a couple of nonsensical oddities like “Catapult” and “Faht.” Johnathan Romney of *Q4* music magazine said of this album, “A bit of funk, a bit of ska, a bit of metal are all piled into the mincer, impressing with prowess but without asserting their identity. The closest comparison is with those early 1970s ‘progressive’ bands . . . who used Dada humour to distract attention from the deadly studiousness of their music” (Romney). Phish is an extremely well-rehearsed band and is able to play an eclectic mix of styles, as *Picture of Nectar* demonstrates.

Phish produced a unique musical experience because of their rehearsal techniques. Through rehearsal games, Phish strengthened their ability to perform live improvised shows. Zen Language Ball was an early technique in which the members of the band blindfolded themselves and improvised. One person improvised and another took on that improvisation, all done without looking at each other or speaking. They threw the “ball around the room” and made new music out of nothing (Schoeller 42).

Anastasio remembers their earlier rehearsals:

We rehearsed like demons. A lot of it was mind games, challenging each other. We’d change roles. . . . We’d make Fish set up his drums left-handed instead of right: Use your mind to play, not your hands. Or we’d just play one note for an hour. Weird stuff. (Fricke 42)

Phish also played the Big Ball Jam game at concerts. Each member assigned themselves a big beach ball, and threw it into the audience. The balls bounced around the venue and each band member had to play according to their ball. Page McConnell said: ““That’s how our whole career has been—stupid ideas that work”” (Fricke 42).

Besides their musical style and rehearsal techniques, Phish’s weekend-long festival also set them apart from other bands.²⁵ During the first part of their career, before the break-up in 2004, Phish organized seven huge music festivals in which they were the only band featured. They played six long sets over two nights, along with unannounced late-night sets. These festivals were more than merely music concerts; they were all-encompassing events. The band hired a team of visual and graphic artists to create an environment from art installations as well as interactive art. And at every festival, the band tried to break a world record. At the Great Went, the fans broke the world record for the most nude people in a photograph. At IT, fans tried to break the world record for the most people wearing Groucho Marx glasses at one time.

In fall of 2000, Phish shocked their fans with an indefinite hiatus. The band needed a break from the stress of their success (Fricke 45), perhaps exacerbated by fans, who increasingly booed performances they considered commonplace (Budnick 161). The media advertised the hiatus as a blessing to other jambands, which may or may not have been true (Budnick 162). It is true that other jambands prospered during the hiatus.

²⁵The festivals were Coventry, 2004; IT, 2003; Big Cypress, 2000; Camp Oswego, 1999; Lemonwheel, 1998; the Great Went, 1997; and the Clifford Ball, 1996.

The String Cheese Incident started to fill large amphitheaters like Alpine Valley in Wisconsin and Verizon Wireless Music Center in Indiana. However, jamband interest might have grown regardless of the hiatus, because interest overall increased due to the growth of the jamband scene. Smaller jambands, such as Umphrey's McGee and the Disco Biscuits, began national tours (Budnick 162). Two years after returning from their hiatus, Phish broke up.²⁶ After the breakup, many fans speculated about who would take on Phish's role the way they took on the Grateful Dead's role.

One of the bands that fans speculated might be the next big thing broke up during the course of this study: the String Cheese Incident²⁷ This band included five musicians (Michael Kang on violin and electric mandolin, Bill Nershi on guitar, Keith Moseley on bass, Kyle Hollingsworth on keyboards, and Michael Travis on percussion and drums) who began their career as ski bums playing to people in lift lines in Crested Butte, Colorado. Travis explained the early days: "Ski bumming was the priority" (Riefer 60). Kang, who is a classically trained violinist, just moved to Colorado from Alaska and played with Moseley in a bluegrass band: the Whiskey Crate Warriors. After inviting Nershi, Hollingsworth, and Travis, they changed their name to the Blue String

²⁶As of February 2009, Phish planned a reunion show in Hampton, Virginia, the following March. They also have a very short Midwest summer tour planned in June 2009.

²⁷The String Cheese Incident announced their breakup in spring 2007 after their summer 2007 tour.

Cheese Band. After settling in Boulder from Crested Butte, they became the String Cheese Incident in 1993 (Budnick 208).

Like all jambands, many fans and critics compare the String Cheese Incident with the Grateful Dead. Their music is based on bluegrass, much like the Grateful Dead, but their sound is very different. The Grateful Dead played primarily blues, rock, and folk; String Cheese plays a wide selection of genres. Although they began as a bluegrass band, they first classified their music as “funkalantino-afrojazzadelic bluegrass” (Budnick 208). As an attempt to include all of the music styles String Cheese Incident plays, this phrase does not suffice. Because jambands, and many other bands that are playing today, borrow from many different styles, a good deal of music has become a pastiche of many types of music, making it difficult to identify a genre. Nershi explains, “We never worried that it’s not right to have a percussion player in bluegrass music because we never tried to label our music as anything but going-out-and-having-fun-music” (qtd. in Budnick 208).²⁸ Isaac Josephson says, “Like most good jambands, they cannot adequately be categorized” (39). But the band is currently categorized as a jamband. The String Cheese Incident’s repertoire includes rock, bluegrass, jazz, Celtic, samba, son, cha-cha, trance, and more, which “swirled seamlessly together with bright melodic phrasings and set against [a] percussive groove that’s eminently danceable” (Josephson 36). Improvisation, as with all jambands, is very important to the String

²⁸The String Cheese Incident’s musical philosophy is much like the Grateful Dead’s refusal to take a political stance.

Cheese Incident. Rather than using a jam to prove their musical virtuosity to their fans, String Cheese showed patience in their jams. Mandolinist Kang says, “Improvisation is not about kiss-ass chops. . . . It’s also about getting into a space together where you’re creating good cohesive music as a group, and that’s what we try to accomplish on a nightly basis” (qtd. in Josephson 38).

The String Cheese Incident had a do-it-yourself ethos when it came to the management of their business, which set them apart from other bands. Rather than go to big corporate record labels, they started their own: SCI Fidelity. Many smaller jambands and artists use this label, such as Umphrey’s McGee, Keller Williams, and Tea Leaf Green (*String Cheese Incident Fidelity Records*). Along with their own independent record label, they have their own ticketing agency, SCI Ticketing. This agency, as stated in the introduction, did not like the way Ticketmaster did business, which led to a lawsuit. SCI Ticketing took up smaller jamband acts and festivals (Budnick 209). In 2002, String Cheese decided to start their own travel agency for their fans: Madison House Travel. The band scheduled a concert in Hawaii and wanted their fans to be there, so they started this agency to offer travel packages for their fans. Mosely said, “Selling tours directly to fans allows us to take the music to different places and cultures. Without it, there’s no way we could do it” (qtd. in Kanter 21). With this agency, there have been “incidents” in Mexico, Jamaica, and Costa Rica. And of course, other bands have taken advantage of this agency for their fans (Kanter 21).

Fans of String Cheese referred to their shows as incidents, and many of the larger incidents had themes, which included audience participatory events based on what the band called “mythic play” (Budnick 207). In August 2000, they had an “incident” called the Full Moon Dream Dance. The band themed this incident with the four elements, which represented four different art forms. Air represented fools and thespians; fire represented “heroic arts,” like hooping and fire dancing; water represented the “flowing” arts, like music and dance; and earth represented sculptural art. Interactive and visual art installations filled the venue for the audience to join by participating in dance, music, hooping, or creating their own sculpture. Audience members were encouraged not only to participate in these activities, but also to act as characters from fairy lore. In the tradition of Phish festivals, these incidents successfully changed the normal concert experience into something that includes fans (Budnick 207).

One of these audience-participatory activities at String Cheese shows is hula-hooping, which also became a subculture in itself and a fitness craze. It is now known simply as hooping. People made their own giant hula hoops out of irrigation tubing and decorated them with electric tape. This started at the Telluride Bluegrass Festival in 1996, when the band tossed giant hula hoops with instructions into the audiences and the fans began hooping (Budnick 207). Soon, fans began making hoops themselves and bringing them to concerts (“Hula Hooping Gets Groovy Again”). The String Cheese Incident usually roped off a place especially for hoopers at their concerts and made sure the venue allowed hoops within its gates (Budnick 207). These are not children’s hoops,

but larger and heavier, a size that makes them easier to use. On NPR in October of 2005, Sean Cole described this new form of hooping in an interview with some members of the band: “This is not ‘Brady Bunch’-era Hula-Hooping we’re talking about. It’s sexy and gymnastic and mystical-looking, the *hoop* floating from the knees up to the neck and back” (“Hula Hooping Gets Groovy Again”). String Cheese Incident road manager Chewy Smith claims there are “professional hoopers”: people who are available as entertainment for parties and festivals. Hoop Troops, such as Groove Hoops, actually performed with the String Cheese Incident during the summer of 2004 (“Hula Hooping Gets Groovy Again”). These Hoop Troops now perform outside of the String Cheese Incident concerts in independent variety and burlesque shows. There are online message boards on which hoopers, many not associated with String Cheese Incident, discuss everything from building hoops, to how to dress when hooping, and International Hooping Day (*Hooping.org Magazine*).

Finally, I will discuss the last band featured in this study: Widespread Panic. Even though Widespread Panic does not offer the spectacle of audience-participatory events such as Phish’s festivals and String Cheese’s incidents, they have been together for over twenty years and show no signs of breaking up. Much like Phish, Widespread Panic began in a college environment. University of Georgia students John Bell and Michael Houser (nicknamed “Panic” because he had panic attacks) met in Athens, Georgia, in 1982 and began as a duo, playing various bars and clubs in the Athens area. They added bassist David Schools in 1985 and went through several drummers until

they chose Todd Nance in the first incarnation of the band. In 1989, they added percussionist Sunny Ortiz, and in 1991, keyboardist John Hermann. At first, they had a difficult time acquiring an audience. Schools said, ““People would see: “From Athens, Georgia, Widespread Panic,” and they were showing up in white linen shirts and black vests wanting to hear REM type music”” (qtd. in Budnick 226). Regardless of this early difficulty, it did not take long for them to find their audience. In the early 1990s, the band averaged 150 shows a year, moving from Southern tours to tours of New England and California (Budnick 227-28). According to their documentary, *The Earth Will Swallow You*, Widespread Panic made sure they played the entire rotation of songs, never playing the same song within three shows, and never playing the same set list, encouraging a following of fans.

Widespread Panic is a jamband with a clear debt to Southern Rock, but they also pursue eclecticism typical of other jambands. Musically, they probably have more in common with the Grateful Dead than the other two jambands discussed in this study. In *The Earth Will Swallow You*, solo artist Jerry Joseph compares their musical style with the Grateful Dead: “What I always liked about the Grateful Dead was that there was a lot of darkness. . . . It was the dark and the light that made that band so interesting. Panic is the only band that has those joyous moments and those dark moments.” Being from the Southern part of the United States, Widespread Panic takes its inspiration from the music born there: jazz, Southern Rock, and country blues, among others. While their music is not as “genre-blending” as Phish and the String Cheese Incident, they do a

good deal of musical collaborations with musicians of many different genres: gospel, jazz, bluegrass, folk, punk, and progressive rock. And they take pride in their frequent musical guests. *The Earth Will Swallow You* lists and includes the many artists with whom Widespread Panic plays in concert: Merl Saunders, Taj Mahal, Cecil Daniels, Vic Chestnut, and the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, to name only a few.

Widespread Panic pleases its fan base, not only with guest appearances at shows and new set lists every night, but in April of 1998 they threw the world's largest CD release party, according to the band and jamband critic Dean Budnick (228). In order to celebrate the release of their first live album, *Light Fuse, Get Away*, they hosted a huge block party in Athens, Georgia, for which the city closed down thirteen blocks. After a speech by Athens mayor Gwen O'Looney, Widespread Panic performed a show that spanned their entire career. Documented in a film called *Panic in the Streets* and directed by Hollywood actor Billy Bob Thornton, this event hosted over 100,000 Panic fans partying and dancing in the streets (Budnick 228).

In summer 2002, Widespread Panic lost guitarist Michael Houser to pancreatic cancer. At first, he continued to play with the band but then stopped in July when his illness worsened. But he wanted the band to continue touring without him. After his death in August, they started touring again in April of 2003 with a new guitarist, George McConnell, who had been a long-time friend of the band. Fans criticized McConnell's playing, as they felt it did not mesh with the band's style (Budnick 228). But McConnell was the logical choice. As a leader of a band with Mississippi roots, he often

sat in with Panic at concerts. With a new guitarist, they finished that year's tour with an announcement of an indefinite sabbatical. They agreed that each needed time to mourn Houser's death, to spend time with friends and family, and to work on side projects. After returning in March 2005, Jimmy Herring joined as the band's latest guitarist after McConnell left in summer 2006 ("Widespread Panic"). Since then, they have been vigorously touring.

After the Grateful Dead broke up, Phish, the String Cheese Incident, and Widespread Panic picked up the Dead's momentum. Phish and Widespread Panic began in the 1980s and began to play arena-sized shows in the 1990s. The String Cheese Incident, on the other hand, formed in the early 1990s and quickly began playing arena-sized shows before the end of the decade. Even though Widespread Panic is the only arena jamband left, many jambands tour nationally in small to midsized venues. Also, the festival circuit is becoming as big as arena jambands. Summer Camp in Chillicothe, Illinois, began as a small weekend-long festival with eleven bands and a little over a hundred people. Now it has grown to a three-day festival with forty-five bands and attendance well into the thousands (*Summer Camp Music Festival*). The Ten Thousand Lakes Festival in Minnesota had similar humble beginnings, but has grown from a smaller festival of 6,500 in attendance to become a four-day festival with over 60 bands and four stages with 18,500 in attendance (*Ten Thousand Lakes Music Festival*). Perhaps the most telling example of the growth of the festival scene is Bonnaroo, started in 2002 with 60,000 in attendance and 50 bands—now doubled in size, and offering

movie tents, comedy tents, workshops, and yoga classes (*Bonnaroo Music Festival*).

The jamband scene is evolving from large arena bands on tour to large festivals collecting a wider array of jambands, a return to the festival spirit present in the 1960s.

Since the Grateful Dead, the jamband has changed considerably. The Grateful Dead was part of a movement and a counterculture. Even though they claim they had nothing political to say with their music, their presence at countercultural events made them part of that movement. They based their music on the psychedelic experience and helped in the birth of the Acid Test with Ken Kesey. The Grateful Dead phenomenon included political movements, and it continued as the Grateful Dead toured. The first Deadheads were also a part of that political movement. But jambands today are part of no counterculture or political movement and their fans are not hippies, as they are too young to be of that generation (although many of them may think they are as they borrow the hippie ethos and style). Current jambands are very much disparate from current social and economic politics. Members may be political activists as individuals, but the bands claim no political stance, and their music is very much apolitical, music-for-music's-sake that is about experimentation and pushing musical boundaries. Some current jambands, such as the String Cheese Incident, try to resist American capitalist consumerism by offering mail-order tickets and forming their own ticketing and traveling agencies, but they are still very much a part of it. Ticketmaster still sells the majority of the tickets (many of which go to ticket scalpers and brokers), media corporate giant Clear Channel still owns the majority of venues in which these bands

play,²⁹ and huge amounts of money go into tours and fan merchandise. These bands' small attempts at resisting major corporations are futile, for the most part. The social and economic environment is much different for these new jambands than it was for the Grateful Dead. And the same can be said for the fans.

Another major difference between jamband fans and Grateful Dead fans is technology, a major part of the jamband experience. The Internet is an important virtual community center for jamband fans. Jamband fans communicate with mobile phones and laptops with wireless Internet. Fans travel in expensive Jeep Cherokees and spend a great deal of money on the tour experience. Grateful Dead fans had none of these. The Deadheads of the 1960s were part of a spontaneous counterculture, while jamband fans today imagine themselves as "subversive" or "counter" while they circulate great amounts of money in the parking lots. The jamband fan today is a much different person than the fan of the Grateful Dead during the 1960s, or even the Deadhead of the 1970s and 1980s.

²⁹Not only does this corporation own the majority of venues, but venues have been changing their names after corporate sponsors, such as the Verizon Wireless Music Center, and the Post-Gazette Pavilion. However, many fans still call the venues by their original names: Deer Creek and Star Lake.

The Subculture

The jamband subculture today is a hybrid of different subcultures. Although rooted in the hippy subculture of the Deadheads and the Haight-Ashbury, as well as the resistant movements of the 1960s, today's jamband fans borrow from several other subcultures to form their own: most prominently the Beats, bohemians, Rastafarians, and ravers. Postsubculture studies scholars argue there is no foundational subculture any more: each subculture borrows several other styles from subcultures that came before (Hodkinson 17). Group identities are no longer formed along clear lines between race, class, and gender (Muggleton 12). No stable boundary exists between the subculture and the mainstream. Members of the jamband subculture are not all working class (as with the punks), nor all middle class (as with the hippies), but come from various walks of life. Like Mikhail Bahktin's notion of carnival, an ethos of "free and familiar contact" (10) attracts people of many different classes, ages, and genders. Like the music to which these fans listen, their subculture is one that has become an eclectic mix of many others.

One can find the roots of the hippy, as well as the jamband fan, subcultures as far back as the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Henry Miller, in *On the Fringe: The Dispossessed in America*, discusses the hippies and argues the roots of their subcultures can be found in the Middle Ages. Groups like the Gnostics, a sect of Christianity, rejected the Church and their worldly life to form utopian communes (Miller 80). The Diggers of 1650, named for the digging needed to cultivate food, lived as a part of a

commune in which private property, class, and authority did not exist. The countercultural Diggers, named after the Diggers of 1650, brought free food to people in the Haight-Ashbury during the late 1960s (Graña and Marigay 248). Early subcultures, such as the Diggers and the Gnostics, paved the way for bohemianism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Although bohemianism's peak was in nineteenth-century France, it has always been a state of mind for youth, according to bohemian scholar Cesar Graña. Each bohemian group has its own characteristics, but all share one characteristic: an "attitude of dissent from prevailing values of middle class society, expressed through lifestyle and art" (Graña and Marigay vii). Bohemians lived a communal lifestyle and their art expressed their politics. However, in order for this to happen, the bohemians need a "shocked mainstream" for their protest to be effective.

The rebellious and impoverished young men in Paris of the 1830s represented bohemianism's peak. In his 1861 essay "A New Theory on Bohemians," Charles Astor defined the bohemian as "a man with literary or artistic tastes and an incurable proclivity towards debt" (79). These young middle-class men chose to live in poverty as a protest against society. They were unconventional in their art, music, intellectualism, and their styles as well as unconventional in the use of drugs, such as absinthe or opium. Congregating in cafés, the center of bohemian life, bohemians shared their literature and art, as well as intellectual thoughts. Constant transients, bohemians lived in communal boarding houses in certain neighborhoods in Paris (not unlike the crash pads of the

Haight-Ashbury). In fact, the word “bohemian” derives its meaning from the French word for gypsy or vagabond (Astor 61).

As with other movements that offer idealistic resistance against the mainstream, bohemianism became fashionable. Living the poverty-stricken life of the artist became the thing to do in Paris, as well as in New York City, Chicago, and other large cities in the Western world. This lifestyle became the one to live while on the way to a successful life (Graña and Marigay 19). During the late nineteenth century, bohemian neighborhoods became gentrified, which weakened the movement and forced bohemians to disperse throughout the cities in which they lived (Graña and Marigay 27).

In the United States, the Beats were one famous example of such bohemian dispersal. There is a good deal of dispute regarding the origin of the term “beat.” Beat poet Jack Kerouac claims in his essay “On the Origin of the Beat Generation” that he invented the term (195). Supposedly, he and another author, John Clellon Holmes, had a discussion regarding their lost generation. Kerouac said, “You know, this is really a beat generation” (Kerouac 195). And the term was born, according to Kerouac. Beats were generally disgruntled with society, and society in turn, beat them down, so they were called “Beats.” Scholar James Campbell has another theory. He claims the jive talk of African American jazz musicians of the 1920s and 1930s is responsible for the term. Originally short for “skin-beater,” meaning drummer, this shortened version of the word also meant a drug user (Campbell 39). Mezz Mezzrow, a Jewish musician involved with

the Black American jazz movement, wrote *Really the Blues*, the first book in which a white man used the jive speech of Blacks seriously.³⁰ His book contained a glossary in which “beat” is defined as “exhausted, broke” (Campbell 38). The Beats of the 1950s and 1960s looked to these black jazz musicians, called hipsters, as inspiration.³¹ These hipsters parodied white “coolness” as a way for them to escape the stereotype of the happy, subservient black American. The Beats, all white, copied the hipsters’ coolness, becoming a parody of a parody (Kerouac 204). Another beat poet, William Burroughs, had another definition that carried with it criminal overtones, rather than musical ones. He saw the word “beat” as deriving from the phrase “off-beat”: those who were a part of the criminal underbelly of society (Campbell 40).

Like the bohemians, the Beats chose voluntary poverty to make a social statement by withdrawing from the wealth that the United States had suddenly experienced in the post-World War II era. They were against societal pressures to have families, jobs, and any notion of upstanding or wholesome behavior. The Beats also rejected middle-class American values, choosing a life on the road, hitchhiking across the country, drinking alcohol, and meditating on narcotics (Gitlin 46-47). Drugs were another important part of the beat subculture. For disgruntled young people, drugs

³⁰Previously, white writers used black jive as a form of condescension (Campbell 37).

³¹This black jive term comes from the term “hip cat,” which came from the West African Wolof language, “hipikat,” a term for a sage or wiseman. Of course, this evolved into hipster (Campbell 36).

proved to be an excellent escape from 1950s America, the most popular being marijuana, peyote, mescaline, and sometimes heroin.

Their subculture had a unique language and literature. Using jazz as an influence, their literature flowed freely and rejected grammatical rules (Gitlin 42). In doing this, the Beats also rejected their traditional college educations. According to Kerouac, college was ““nothing but grooming schools for the middle class non-identity”” (qtd. in Gitlin 49). This disgruntled beat attitude led to an apolitical philosophy. They were already “beaten down,” so why bother changing society? By 1960, popular markets already recuperated the beat subculture, illustrating the Beats as comic characters. For example, a New York entrepreneur started a “Rent-a-Beatnik” business for parties. College students, folk singers, and rebels donned the flannel, black turtleneck, and jeans (the staple clothing for the Beat), meeting in cafés to discuss poetry and foreign films (Gitlin 52).

Elements of the bohemians and the Beats are prevalent in jamband fan subculture. An important aspect of the jamband fan subculture is travel and transience, like the Beats and bohemians. Some fans travel to just one or a small handful of shows, while more enthusiastic fans will travel to all the shows on one tour. In the case of the Grateful Dead, fans traveled for months. Some fans, in the case of the String Cheese Incident, traveled to shows all over the world. Being on the road is a part of the subculture, as with the Beats and later the Merry Pranksters. Large numbers of fans choose camping, and they form huge tent cities at festivals and in fields owned by

farmers near amphitheaters. This emulates the voluntary poverty and communal living in boarding houses of the Beats and bohemians. This also is an important part of community-building within the subculture. While many fans are not living the life of voluntary poverty, they emulate it through camping. The traveling in which jamband fans take part also took on the ethos of travel and transience of the Beats and bohemians, who often lived in boarding houses (which became the crash pads of the San Francisco hippy movement) and met in cafés and community centers. Traveling also inhabited the Beats' lives, as encouraged by Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*. Since many were homeless and chose poverty, traveling proved a romantic option.

In San Francisco, as the Beat movement grew strong, the hippies sowed the seeds of their movement (Miller 90). North Beach, the Beat neighborhood of the city, had become full of tourists, and topless bars and clubs, so some Beats moved to the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood because of the inexpensive rent. Beat poets were present at countercultural events, such as the Human Be-In. Miller even claims that the Beats gave the hippies their name, a condescending nickname for "hipster" (90). Ephraim Mizruchi believes that the name came from Yippies, a nickname of the Youth International Party, a group of young people known for their political protests (Graña and Marigay 17). Much like the bohemians, the hippies were mostly middle-class youth who, in protest of middle-class American values, dropped out of society and formed their own urban communal living situation within the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood. Hippies used recreational drugs to free their mind of middle-class thinking (Miller 91).

As stated above, the Diggers offered free food, and there were free places to stay (crash pads, the extension of the boarding houses of the bohemians), a free medical clinic, and free concerts. There were also free stores, where people could take what they needed (Graña and Marigay 248). While sharing the ideal of communal living, the hippy movement did not have the art and literature that made for a large part of the Beats' and bohemians' lifestyles.

Although the hippies were somewhat influenced by the Beat movement, they had some unique differences. As stated before, the hippy lifestyle did not place importance on intellectualism, art, and literature. Hippies tried to create a new community with a common purpose and identity. The decision to drop out of society in order to change it expressed a radical extreme. The Beats, on the other hand, were somewhat apolitical. They removed themselves from society because of the hopelessness they felt. If the Beats had community, it was not utopian or communal. Beats idealized their own dispersal; hippies idealized the collective. After the Haight-Ashbury stopped being the community the hippies wanted, they tried something different, moving their communal living situations into rural areas to try their experiment again. Perhaps it is because of these differences that John Robert Howard said in his 1969 article "The Flowering of the Hippie Movement," "Hippies will probably survive longer than the Beats, and should have a more profound impact on society" (259).

Hand-in-hand with the hippy movement was the antiwar movement of the Vietnam Era. These two movements fueled much of the political turmoil of the 1960s, but were very different. Whereas the hippies dropped out of society to make a point about the middle-class society from which they came, the antiwar demonstrators were active in society in order to change it. Hippies, although their movement made a mark on this country, never really attained their goal. The antiwar movement of the Vietnam Era affected the politicians in power to change the United States' involvement with Vietnam. President Richard Nixon even admitted dropping plans for escalating the war because of antiwar protesters (Zinn 501). The antiwar movement of the 1960s was extremely resistant, and according to historian Howard Zinn, was also the beginning of many antiwar and resistance movements to follow in the twentieth century. Anti-war sentiment grew out of the civil rights movement as black Americans refused to fight, as one leaflet stated, “so that the White American can get richer” (Zinn 484). Resistance grew as young men burned their draft cards, students marched and protested, and GIs in Vietnam added their energy to the antiwar effort. As this movement began with Blacks and lower-class Americans, it soon grew to include the middle class and professionals. Lawyers, economists, and clergy all joined the resistance movement, many of whom were arrested and imprisoned for their protests. The energy of the antiwar movement during the Vietnam Era agitated other groups to start their own resistance movements, including women, Native Americans, and prisoners. Resistance continued on into the 1980s and 1990s with protests regarding the United State's involvement with South

America, the Gulf War, and the World Trade Organization. This spirit of resistance left over from the 1960s is found in the jamband fan subculture, however watered down it might be. Zinn also argues that a good deal of our nation's distrust of government and of big business came out of the Vietnam Era (Zinn 542). Again, this philosophy is also present in the jamband fan subculture. The political movements since the 1960s and 1970s have fed the jamband fans' performances of a resistance identity. Jamband fans are both resistant to society, much like the hippies and anti-Vietnam War demonstrators, yet are a part of American capitalist consumerism as it exists today.

Jamband fans perform their identity as a mix of the philosophies from the bohemians, the hippies, the Beats, and the Vietnam Era antiwar movement, resisting normative American values. Beats, hippies, bohemians, and antiwar activists also protested such values, as they lived lives that did not conform to societal standards. Fans, while on tour, have appropriated hippy values such as communal living, sharing, living in poverty. Although many fans are not living in poverty, they want to appear as if they are: living in tents, dressed in handmade clothing, selling food etc. They also want to appear equal in terms of class and gender, although this is only apparent on the surface of the subculture. These fans live a collective lifestyle, like the hippies, while on tour. They promote peace and equality like 1960s activists, as well as distrust for big business and government. Yet, when there is no tour, they are dispersed like the Beats. The Internet is their metaphorical café or City Lights Bookstore, creating a community online.

Recreational drugs are also a large part of this subculture, as they were with the hippies. Many fans do not use drugs, but many different types are found in the lots before shows. If you look like an “authentic” fan, someone may offer you drugs in the lot or at the concert. While the hippies used recreational drugs as a means of self-reflection and expanding their minds past normative values, jamband fans use them for various other reasons, which could be spiritual or for leisure. Recreational drugs and alcohol have become such a force in the jamband subculture that some fans have created sober organizations at shows.³² Drugs are a large part of this subculture, as with the bohemians, Beats, and hippies.

Rastafarianism is another subculture that places importance on recreational drugs. This subculture is a religion from which the jamband fans of today have appropriated style and philosophy. Rastafarianism grew as a messianic movement in Jamaica, which saw Haille Sallasie I of Ethiopia as their messiah. Rastafarianism began with Marcus Garvey’s Back to Africa movement in the early twentieth century. In 1916, he told Blacks in North America to “look to Africa where a black king shall be crowned” (Murrell 16). When Ethiopia crowned Sallasie in 1930, the Rastafarians believed Sallasie was the messiah and that Garvey was a prophet. Growing groups of Blacks in Jamaica rejected their society and government, wanting to return to Africa. Rastafarians began to see themselves as captives in Babylon (which is white oppressive

³²This will be explained further in the next chapter.

society), waiting for Jah (their God) to deliver them back to their homeland (Murrell 25).

Although there is not universal agreement among Rastas about specific religious practices, there are three that are consistent with every Rastafarian: ganja (marijuana) as a sacrament, dreadlocks as a hair style symbolic of resistance, and Reggae music. Using marijuana, Rastafarians believe, allows them to reach a righteous state (Murrell 18). Rastafarians look to the Bible when it comes to using marijuana as their sacrament, translating verses such as Exodus 10:12, which says “eat every herb of the land,” and Psalms 104: 13, which says “herb for the service of man,” as telling them to smoke marijuana. But as marijuana is also illegal, the smoking of it can be an act of protest (Barrett 129).

Another consistency in this religion is the dreadlocks hairstyle, rolled up sections of hair that instill dread on the white oppressors of Babylon, thus the name and symbolic resistance. The hairstyle is a protest of social codes of hygiene and grooming (Murrell 31). Dreadlocks are also an expression of African identity, as Rastas believe it is a natural way for blacks to wear their hair (Barrett 129). Dreads are sometimes worn under knit caps that are made with yarn of the religion’s colors: red, the blood of martyrs; gold, the color of Jamaica’s flag; black, the color of Africa; and green, symbolic of the Back to Africa movement (Barrett 143).

Finally, reggae is the musical expression of the religion. As Rastas see themselves responsible for overturning Babylon, they use their music as their weapon in

spreading the word. A main theme of reggae is telling the African Diaspora that they need not follow European standards and they can be proud of their African heritage. It also educates them about Babylon (Murrell 29). Bob Marley, one of the most famous reggae artists in the world, used his fame to spread the philosophy of the religion. Even today, there are many Rastafarians all over the world, and of many different races (Barrett 3).

Although Rastafarianism is a black religion, jamband fans,³³ who are overwhelmingly white, appropriate the style and music of Rastas.³⁴ Dreadlocks are common among many white fans in the jamband scene. However, they are worn as either a stylistic choice, or as a protest against normative American values regarding hygiene, rather than as a religious choice or protest against Babylon. Dreadlocks are usually not a religious symbol to a touring jamband fan, but more of a convenient way to wear the hair while on tour. Jamband fans also wear the colors of Rastafarianism. Anyone who goes to a jamband show will notice the large number of fans wearing Rasta colors. Gypsy Rose catalogue³⁵ has a section titled “Marley Rasta Swag,” which contains dreadlock wax, dreadlock soap, and a “Supa Dupa Dread Kit” to help you

³³This is more prevalent among jamband fans today and less common with Deadheads in the past.

³⁴Marijuana is one of the drugs that many jamband fans use, but I believe it is not used as an appropriation of the Rastafarian sacrament.

³⁵Two Deadheads started this catalogue, which sells jamband attire and hippie styles.

fashion your own dreadlocks, as well as white models wearing Rasta-colored clothing (Gypsy Rose, *Spring/Summer Catalogue* 2007).

Reggae music is also very popular among jamband fans. Jambands themselves cover Bob Marley songs, as well as write their own reggae songs, which usually have no religious significance. For example, a popular song in the Phish repertoire is a reggae tune entitled “Makisupa Policeman,” which is about a drug bust. While many jamband fans appear to resist societal values and appropriate Rastafarian styles, fans erase the religion itself. Jamband fans grossly appropriate the Jamaican religion’s style for their own expression. Although the fans believe their style is one that is resistant—and in its original context it is—the fact that they borrow from another culture, erasing this context, is grossly imperialistic and mirrors the culture they sought to resist.

Another subculture that influences the jamband scene today is raver culture. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, this culture began to flourish among youth in Great Britain. The first raves were secretive and held in warehouses, fields, and underground clubs. Organizers educated their potential ravers by word of mouth or flyers, but police officers discovered these first parties. As the authorities learned more about this rising scene, the organizers soon recorded on a phone line information about where parties took place. If officers showed up, organizers changed the phone line. In order to know when and where the parties were, one had to be in the social circle. But soon, these parties found their way into legal clubs and evolved into the “rave scene” (Crichter and Clarke 147).

As with the other subcultures described in this chapter, dancing, music, and recreational drugs form the cornerstones of this subculture. Electronic techno music, in its many forms, inspired ravers. American music called acid house, associated with the drug LSD, was the first incarnation being “bass-driven, repetitive, hypnotic, and psychedelic” (Crichter and Clarke 146). White, working-class youth culture appropriated the electronic music of the American black and gay club culture in both the United States and Great Britain. Soon, the music evolved into the many different types of techno, such as hardcore, drums and bass, and house. The drug ecstasy went hand-in-hand with the music, supposedly adding to the “oceanic,” utopian experience to which the music is said to lead (Malbon 496). Ecstasy is the popular name for the drug 3-4-methylenedioxy-N-methamphetamine and sometimes called “E” in popular discussion. The whole idea of this drug mixing with this specific type of music first began in the resort of Ibiza in 1988. Mostly hippies and working-class youth experienced this new subculture, and it soon made its way to Great Britain and on to the United States (Crichter and Clarke 146).

In going with the hippy and antiwar ethos, the raver culture believed in peace, love, and utopianism (Redhead, Wynne, and O’Conner 102). These feelings are those mostly associated with the drug ecstasy as well. The drug ecstasy is taken orally as a pill and causes feelings of euphoria and benevolence. Whereas people outside the subculture commonly believe that this drug enhances sexual experiences, cultural studies scholar Simon Reynolds claims this is not true. Rave instead inhabits a childlike innocent love,

a “pre-Oedipal infancy” (Redhead, Wynne, and O’Conner 106). Ravers suck on lollipop candies and pacifiers, play with toys and props, wear clothing that is very childlike and which often features characters from childhood cartoons, and their music many times samples nursery rhymes and children’s television themes (Redhead, Wynne, and O’Conner 106).

Ecstasy became part of the jamband scene in the early 1990s when its use grew. Jamband fans appropriated the childlike style of raver culture in their handmade clothes, which feature children’s characters, many of which are made from old childhood bedding. They seem to be a combination of handmade clothes common in the jamband culture with the childhood theme of raver culture. Lollipops, glitter, bubbles, and glowsticks are other rave “toys” commonly seen at jamband shows. The popular glowstick or glowing war is an event at most festivals and began during long jams at Phish shows. Fans began to throw glowsticks or glowrings across the venue, appearing to move in time with a jam. *The Phish Net*, a fan website, cites the first glowstick war as happening in November of 1994 during a “Harpua” jam. Guitarist Trey Anastasio asked his light technician to turn the lights off so everyone could watch the glowsticks get tossed around the audience. Soon, this became a regular event at shows, and the band feeds off the energy of the audience’s participatory act. Many people do not cite the glowstick wars as a result of the infiltration of the raver culture and the drug ecstasy in the jamband subculture, but I believe it is. Glowstick and glowing wars were not

present at any jamband concerts before the 1990s, when raver culture had been in the United States for a number of years (*The Phish Net*).

Jamband culture embraces the music of the rave subculture. At jamband festivals, DJs often play during breaks between bands, and some bands even invite DJs to play with them. Many jambands also experiment with technology and electronic-sounding music. The technology of rock music sounds a good deal like electronic music with synthesizers, looping, and guitar pedals. The Disco Biscuits, another jamband, emulates the electronic music popular at raves. These sorts of phenomena were not present during the tenure of the Grateful Dead, but became a presence in the jamband culture today. Interestingly enough, it seems that raver culture borrowed music from American black and gay culture, borrowed the ethos of peace and love from the hippies, and borrowed recreational use of drugs from both. The raver culture, as well as hippy, bohemian, and Rastafarian cultures, inspired the jamband subculture in its styles and ethos, making it an interesting pastiche of several styles, philosophies, and music.

A huge shift appears in jamband fan subculture from the predecessors of the subculture, the Deadheads, to jamband fans today. Deadheads played a part in a counterculture that was a huge part of the social history of the United States. As the hippy subculture dispersed in San Francisco, Deadheads continued the lifestyle on tour with the band. This kernel is still with jamband fans today; however, the subculture evolved into something very different from the hippies and Deadheads. Jamband fans today are part of a subculture in which the ethos and styles of many different

subcultures are contained. Believing they are subversive and political, they are actually a necessary cog in capitalist society. Jamband fans make money on tour, spend money on tour, yet perform a seemingly anticapitalist, antimainstream identity. Whereas a good deal of resistance movements in the twentieth century were able to bring about change through direct protest, jamband fans are unable to bring about any form of change, although they appear to be living a resistant lifestyle borrowing other subcultures' resistant styles. Much like imperialist cultures, jamband fans steal and manipulate styles and beliefs of other subcultures, erasing the original intent of those subcultures. Does this make the performance of subversive ideals by the Deadheads more "authentic" than the performance of ideals of jamband fans today? Can a performance of subversive ideals even happen within this subculture, which borrows and steals from others? Perhaps the subculture of the Deadheads never was subversive in the first place. Individualism and rebellion are necessary parts of society. The mainstream is necessary for subversive subcultures, so there is an audience to shock with their performance.

The jamband fan subculture reaffirms what the postsubculturists say: that there is no foundational subculture; all subcultures borrow from those they follow. The jamband subculture borrows styles from subcultures originally resistant to the mainstream. However, when fans borrow other subcultural styles, such as the Rastafarian dreadlock, without the original intent, is the act still resistant? Are jamband fans really protesting the society in which they live or are they merely giving in to imperialist ideas of cultural borrowing? Are their acts of resistance really working or are

they merely looking for a party and group acceptance outside traditional society? Are they resisting or mirroring culture, or both?

This history of the bands follows the history of the subculture—from a band and subculture that were part of a subversive counterculture, to bands that are corporations in themselves and a subculture that thinks itself subversive through borrowing styles and philosophies. The original jamband, the Grateful Dead, was part of a countercultural revolution in San Francisco. Their fans, being hippies, lived in an urban, communal, drug-induced experiment, which later dispersed from an urban environment to a rural one. The Deadheads took this philosophy with them when on tour with the Grateful Dead. Jambands followed the tradition of the Grateful Dead, still playing long, ambient jams, but their music was more of a hybrid of many different styles than the Grateful Dead's music. These new jambands are not part of a movement and were not present at any countercultural events. Likewise, their fans are not part of a larger movement, but merely fans of the music. While the resistance movements of the 1960s were successful in working for change, the jamband fan subculture is not. Jamband fans weaken their performance of resistance by borrowing from many other subcultures, erasing and corrupting the original subversive quality of the original styles and behavior. The next chapter examines how the mainstream recuperates and weakens jamband fans' subversive behaviors. If jamband subculture, as we know it today, merely borrows objects and styles of resistance from other subcultures, are the fans really resisting mainstream capitalistic culture? And if not, what are they “resisting”?

CHAPTER III

JAMBAND FANS' RESISTANCE, RECUPERATION, AND REITERATION

Performances of identity at jamband shows simultaneously resist and affirm what fans call “mainstream” social values. Fans cannot totally subvert outside society but believe they have found small ways to resist the system and open the possibility of protest. Many jamband fans believe they resist the normative values of society in which they live through their style, music preferences, anticorporate jargon, inattentiveness to hygiene, and use of drugs. The act of going to a jamband concert is rebellion for many fans, but they display many contradictory behaviors that call such rebellion into question. Rebellious individuality is a traditional value of American youth. Jamband fans believe they resist outside culture, but they need the accoutrements of mainstream capitalist culture in order for their subculture to exist—e.g., money, commodities, and a “shocked mainstream.” Furthermore, the subculture replicates the outside culture it attacks: hierarchy and consumerism are both important aspects of the subculture. The majority of jamband fans are white, heterosexual males, so minority fans form groups in which to express their identity, reiterating marginalizations that exist in mainstream culture. Jamband fans perform a resistance against mainstream society; however the resistance they perform is an imagined one, teaching us something about identity

performances in their own cycle of performing a subversive identity without completely resisting mainstream society. Through their performance, jamband fans may also demonstrate the possibility of actual resistance. Scholars often analyze subcultures in terms of their polarity with society: a subculture is against society or maintains society's values. But the jamband fan subculture is both. In examining different ways to understand how the jamband fan uses tools from within capitalist culture as protest, this study seeks to question the oppositional assumptions associated with the concept "subculture."

Carnavalesque Attitudes in Jamband Fan Subculture

Pre- and postconcert fan behavior tends to invert some of society's rules. The show provides fans with an opportunity to break rules regarding drugs, alcohol, hygiene, and consumerism. Members resist the laws and values of an imagined "mainstream" society by creating their own rules. Or perhaps jamband events are an objective of this mainstream society, providing people with momentary freedom from society's rules when actually becoming an integral part of the society in which they live through their rebellion.

This is the purpose of carnival, as Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin describes it. Within the carnival, we liberate ourselves from the stress of daily life and allow ourselves to transgress traditional mores. Even though Bakhtin's theory discusses Medieval social behavior, it seems readily applicable to jamband fan values: "Carnival

celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth of the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions” (10). Bakhtin’s carnival represents a moment that is either revolutionary or illusory: it is the moment in which those people whom society oppresses are able to act a performative transgressively but only within a temporary period of time and a certain frame. Power elites, however, may see these carnivalesque performances as a potential threat. Popular culture scholar John Fiske describes carnival as a “constant reminder of both how fragile social control is and how it is resented” (69). It is in the carnival spirit of “no rules” that jamband fans begin to define their identity in opposition to the dominant norm, or “mainstream.”

A jamband show or festival has other similarities to carnival, as Bakhtin and Fiske describe it. Whereas public inebriation is generally taboo, as it upsets the Western work ethic, it is an important element of the festivity fans create before and after the jamband show. Ingestion of alcohol and illegal drugs happens at all times of the day during tours. The “grotesque body,” another important aspect of carnival, is also present in jamband fan subculture. Since most jamband fans camp while on tour, they ignore typical American rules of hygiene, such as bathing and combing their hair, and encourage and reward nudity (see Figure 1). Another aspect of carnival that jamband fans exhibit is their choice of clothing. By dressing in outrageous, often handmade costumes usually restricted to holidays, such as Halloween or New Year’s Eve (see Figures 2 and 3; *The Phish Net*), the jamband fan subculture deploys carnivalesque

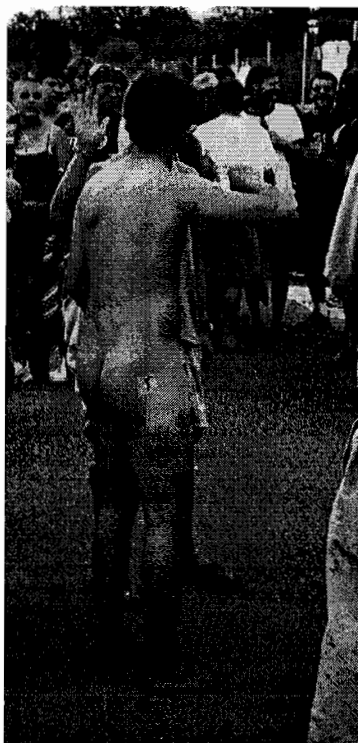


FIGURE 1. Nude fan at Deer Creek Music Center in Noblesville, Indiana, July 2003. As an example of rebellious, carnivalesque behavior, he is trying to find a ticket on Shakedown Street.

costume conventions. The Wizard, a common Phish-tour character who also runs the statistics website *The International House of ZZYXZ*, dresses as a stereotypical cartoon-type wizard, complete with pointed hat and cape on which sequined stars are sewn.

Lawn Boy is another character at Phish shows; he wears a green superhero outfit and carries a bucket of Tootsie Rolls, which he passes out to audience members. Choosing to break gendered rules regarding clothing, some males wear skirts, such as a fan named Freedom (see Figure 4), whom I met on many occasions on Phish tour. Cross-gendered

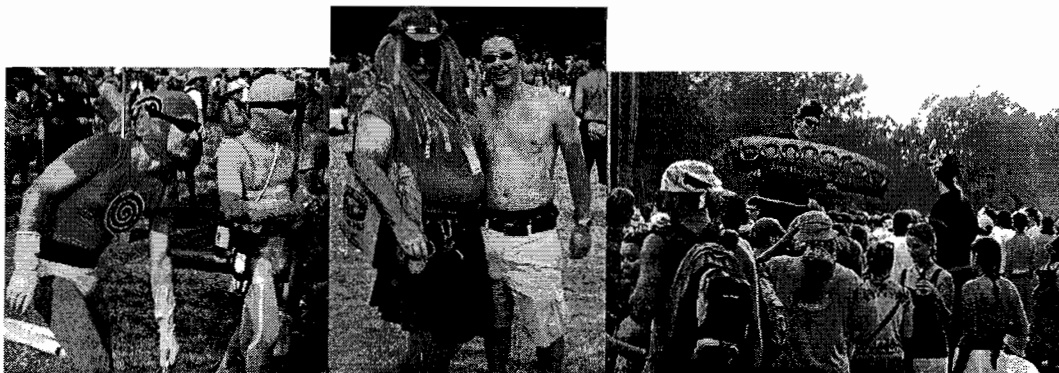


FIGURE 2. Costumed fans at the 2007 Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival. The festival features jamband music, and these photos demonstrate how some fans dress at jamband shows and festivals. Source: “Bonnaroo Music Festival,” *Digital Media* 27 July 2007 <www.dmwmedia.com>.

costuming is key in carnival, according to author Barbara Ehrenreich (93). Fairy wings are a common accessory at the String Cheese Incident’s shows.³⁶ At Phish’s IT festival, the band hosted the “Runaway Jim 5K Memorial Run.” Some fans chose to run the race in the nude or dressed as pimps and clowns. One fan dressed in a suit of black and yellow stripes. All these outrageous acts are safe, and indeed are the norm, within the jamband community. Part of the liberating experience in jamband festivity is to mock traditional society and reality, thus invoking a new identity, resistant to the “outside” world.

³⁶The wearing of fairy wings at shows supposedly started at String Cheese shows, according to Dean Budnick. But one can see a handful of fans wearing fairy wings at any jamband show or festival (Budnick 207).

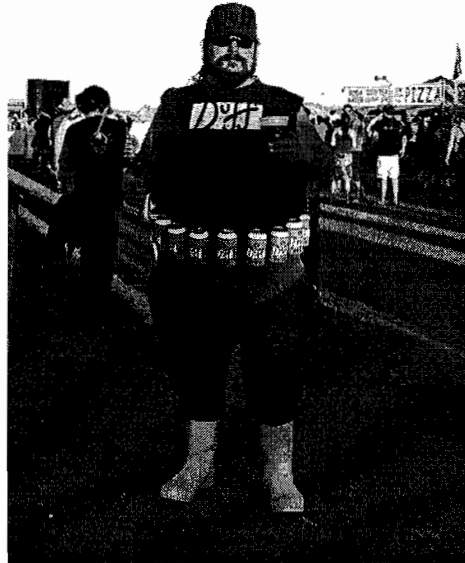
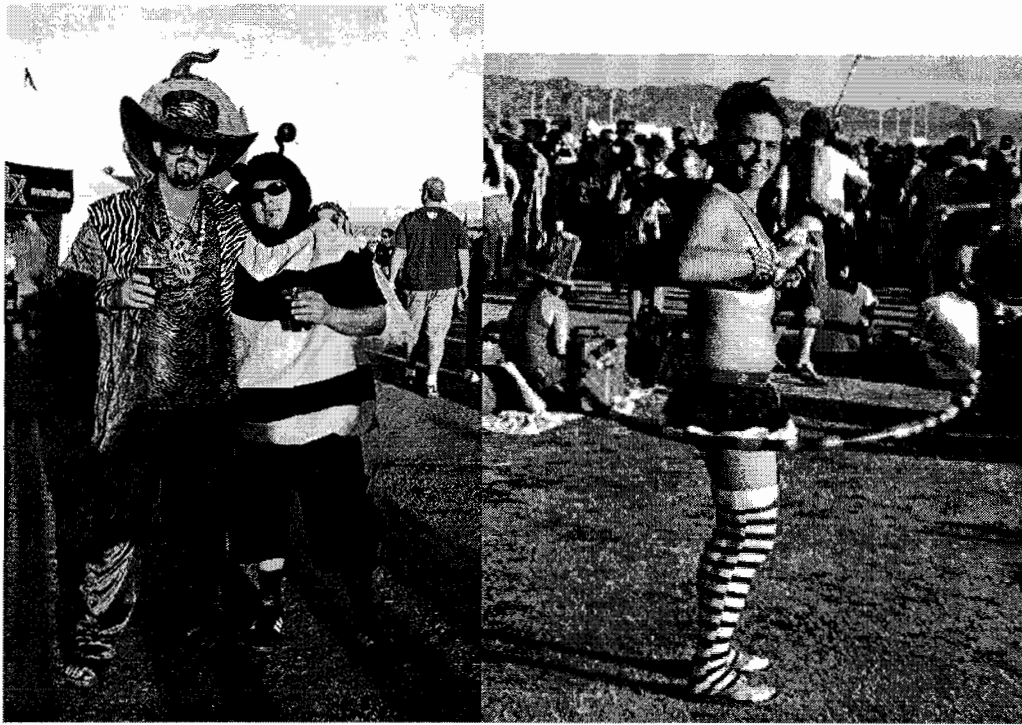


FIGURE 3. Costumed fans at Vegoose Music Festival in Las Vegas. Source: "The Vegoose Music Festival," *Vegoose Blog* 25 September 2008 <www.vegooseblog.com>.

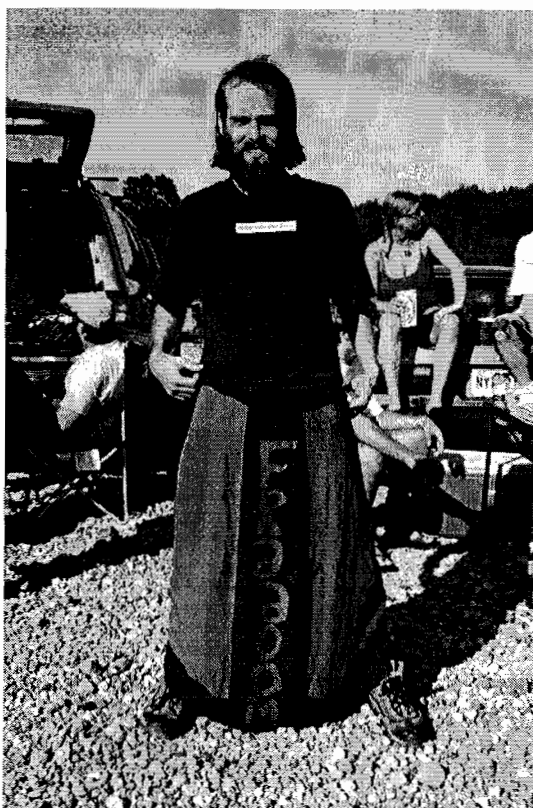


FIGURE 4. A Phish fan named Freedom, who wears handmade skirts to shows. His shirt says, “Hippies make the best lovers,” showing how a member of this subculture borrows the ethos of the hippy and even calls himself a hippy. Photographed at the Star Lake Pavillion in Burgettstown, Pennsylvania in 2003.

Within carnival, the people involved are willingly subject to an inversion of law and order (Bakhtin 7). The jamband fan subculture ignores laws regarding vending, drug use, and nudity, as such rules have little power in the community. Even though there is security at these shows and festivals, oftentimes there are so many infringements of the law, security either ignores it or chooses to enforce either at random or only in serious cases. For example, it is illegal to vend at the venues without

a license, but there are so many fans who vend in parking lots, security does not enforce this particular law. In some cases, when security or police decide to enforce laws, fans often warn other fans that officers are near by uttering the phrase “6 up.” This phrase, according to the online Urban Dictionary, began at Phish shows as a way to say “Heads up” in order to warn that law or drug enforcement is near or warn that an undercover police officer is on Shakedown Street. The “6” supposedly stands for the six lights atop old police cars. Upon hearing this call, fans stop any illegal activity. “It is a way to warn others without implicating oneself” (*Urban Dictionary*).

Fans reward other fans who break laws or display carnivalesque behavior, cheering someone getting nude in the middle of the parking lot and perhaps giving gifts of beer or other intoxicants to such fans. While I was not breaking any law, I have personally been rewarded with alcoholic beverages for my own outrageous handmade costumes worn to shows and festivals, such as silver alien costumes and go-go dresses. Illegal and carnivalesque activities seem to codify this resistant identity. Such behavior suggests that fans protest certain laws as unnecessary, such as drug and nudity laws, for example. Fans do have their own set of unwritten rules that they follow. “Deadhead Vigilantism” is the way heads and fans enforce their own rules and laws as separate from mainstream society’s rules and laws (*Deadheads: An American Subculture*). Heads watch out for each other and make sure everyone follows these unwritten rules of the lot—a sort of self-policing. The fact that fans follow their own code of behavior creates

a communal feeling on tour. Because of this feeling, there appears to be no distinction between people of different classes.

Bakhtin argues a key element of carnival is that everyone participating in the carnival experience feels equal, even if this is not true. People form “free and familiar contact” with others who usually are divided by class, rank, and gender (Bakhtin 8). It is this aspect of carnival that makes it a sort of utopian experience, a “second world.”

Jamband fans of all different ages and classes come together for such a utopian experience at a show. Fans often perform their identity when they join in the community at a show, even though they may not act like “heads” in their “normal” lives. One Widespread Panic fan, Stephanie Powers, said this of Panic fans in the parking lot: “You can't tell who's who out in the parking lot . . . teachers and lawyers . . . everyone is kind of one big family at the show” (Nelson). Powers added that she sometimes sees fans scrounge for change to get a ticket to the next concert, and she meets others who have doctoral degrees. Once in the environment of the show, “free and familiar contact” with people of different classes can take place.

Contradictions in the Shakedown Street Economy

Another form of mockery in the subculture takes place in the Shakedown Street economy that occurs in the parking lot during the afternoon before the jamband or festival starts. Along with generally the same activities seen at any concert—drinking beer, tailgating, or listening to music—fans create a unique marketplace to earn money

to continue touring, which started in parking lots at Grateful Dead venues. Fans turned to vending as a way to pay for their tickets and travel. “Shakedown Street,” or simply “Shakedown” (after the Grateful Dead song), forms in every venue parking lot where a jamband plays. This space is generally a row between parked cars where vendors set up makeshift booths to sell food, beer, T-shirts, handmade clothing, communal shots of liquor,³⁷ or anything that someone can think of selling (see Figures 5 and 6). Some vendors may lay a tarp down to exhibit their goods or set up a tent or booth while others walk up and down the strip, holding what they sell or pulling a cooler of beverages to sell. Getting to the parking lots much earlier than the rest of the fans, the vendors decide where the Shakedown is located: usually in the first part of the parking lot opened before the show. Most vending takes place about two hours before the show starts, when local fans, who do most of the buying, arrive. Vendors set up as they arrive in the parking lot, usually quite early to choose the best spot for their booths. As sellers do not have licenses, this vending is technically illegal, but the vending is so rampant that security cannot prevent it. Of course, some venues are more vendor-friendly than others, and this knowledge is passed on from fan to fan by word of mouth (Sheptoski 157-81). There are also fan publications—e.g., *Surrender to the Flow*, a magazine for Phish fans on tour—that publish information about the different venues in which Phish plays, allowing vendors to know which venues are more vendor-friendly than others. Vendors

³⁷Many times fans sell shots of liquor out of communal glasses rather than selling shots individually in disposable glasses. I have seen fans sell shots of liquor out of such things as drinking horns as well.



FIGURE 5. Shakedown Street vendors at Deer Creek Music Center, July 2003.



FIGURE 6. Fans walking down Shakedown Street at Deer Creek Music Center, July 2003.

often believe they subvert consumerist establishments in part because the bands or venues do not sanction their vending and it is considered illegal use of the parking lot. Fans urge everyone to buy what they need from the vendors in the parking lot, rather than from inside the venue, which, to them, represents American corporate consumerism. Resisting contemporary consumerism, fans are, at the same time, very much a part of it, although the vendors in the parking lot represent an alternative marketplace.

Through their alternative economy, fans see Shakedown Street as a critique of consumerist capitalism as it occurs in the United States today. By selling various products, vendors present various forms of resistance. There are four types of vendors in the Shakedown Street economy: the vendor of handmade goods, such as clothing and food; the vendor of premade goods, such as T-shirts and beer; the drug and drug paraphernalia vendor; and the wookie, who vends to make a profit and is not present for the concert.

The fans who make their own products present a Marxist critique of contemporary American consumerist capitalism. Although most fans would not consciously call their critique a Marxist one, from my experience with fans and vending, and my analysis of their activities, I argue Marxist ideas apply here. Indeed, fans make products that have what Marx calls use-value in the jamband fan subculture. Certain vendors might make dresses or clothing designed for the hot weather of summer tour, while others make food and desserts, all of which have use-value for the fans in the

subculture. Fans sell products with surplus value due to labor and the price of the original materials. In creating this oppositional marketplace by selling their handmade goods, fans believe they neither exploit the worker nor the consumer, because the worker and the consumer are one and the same person: the jamband fan. The Shakedown Street economy benefits the fans and the subculture, but no other part of society. Again, this presents a contradiction. Vendors do not take into account the workers needed prior to their process. Other workers outside of the subculture are exploited for these vendors to have their products. Seamstresses who sell handmade clothing need to get their material from fabric shops outside the subculture. Vendors who make food also need to get their ingredients from markets outside the subculture. These original materials are part of American consumerist capitalism, the very thing these vendors try to critique using their own form of capitalism. The vendors are capitalistic, but at the same time they critique and protest contemporary capitalist institutions. But their Shakedown Street is also a classic example of a microeconomy at work.

According to Marx, the capitalist employs and controls laborers to manufacture commodities and “the freedom and independence of the worker during the labor process do not exist” (Marx 39). Further, the division of labor in industrialized society is how a capitalist can mass produce for the highest profit (Marx 63). Simplifying and separating workers for repeated tasks as part of a mass organization, the division of labor produces greater quantities with less expense. This alienates workers because they neither own

their labor nor have a sense of completing the product. Mass production also alienates the consumer, as cheaper products are identical and not made for individual need or taste.

In tour subculture, fans believe nobody is alienated from their work. The capitalist, the laborer, the merchant, and the consumer are all part of the community of fandom. Every vendor who makes his or her own product does his or her own work, for the most part. Those who sell handmade clothing made it themselves; those who sell food make it and serve it. However, fans usually do not take into consideration the resources for making their products and the labor that produced the products. But there are some vendors who take basic materials into account: fans sell a good deal of organic and vegetarian food, and a small amount of ecological clothing and jewelry made from hemp fabric and twine. However, these products may not be produced outside the mainstream capitalist system that oppresses workers, even if these fans think so.

Another vendor present in the Shakedown Street economy is the vendor of premade goods. Some vendors may sell beer, bottled water, and other beverages, or cigarettes, all of which fans themselves do not make. Other fans buy bulk printed T-shirts and sell them with surplus value. Each of these vendors is a sort of fan-middleman, who goes out and buys beer or cigarettes in bulk and sells them in the parking lot with surplus value. How can they make a protest out of a product they purchased themselves? Are these fans simply emulating the contemporary corporate capitalist system they protest? Mathew Sheptoski, in *Deadhead Social Science*, argues those who

vend believe they sell to their own community, so they are not going to sell something overpriced (163). Through selling premade goods at a price lower than inside the corporate-owned venue, some vendors believe they resist those inflated prices. Many of these vendors boast to prospective buyers that their items are better than the same found on the “outside.” By purchasing items in bulk for less money, then selling them with surplus value, they are still able to sell their products for less money than outside the subculture and inside the corporate-owned venue in which the concert takes place. For example, during summer tour, bottled water is a very valuable commodity for which venues usually charge over four dollars. Therefore, Shakedown vendors want to sell their products inexpensively in defiance of the venue’s prices: most water in the parking lot is one dollar per bottle. But the products vendors sell (beverages, cigarettes, T-shirts), and the products vendors use to sell (coolers, tents, tables) are all produced by businesses of some sort, and some may be major institutions that fans believe they are resisting. Some of these major institutions may even exploit workers so these fans can purchase their items cheaper to sell them with more surplus value. Even though they need outside products for their marketplace to exist, their reiteration of capitalism opens the possibility of a critique of current consumerist capitalism.

Gender theorist Judith Butler’s theory on repetition and critique is useful in an analysis of Shakedown Street, where jamband fans perform a type of capitalism in order to critique it. Performativity, according to Butler in *Bodies That Matter*, is not a “singular or deliberate act, but, rather, a reiterative and citational practice” (2). The

repetition of gestures, acts, and behavior reinstates social norms and qualifies as “performance” of gender: “Performance acts must be repeated to become efficacious” (107). When a person performs gender, he or she performs a set of norms that society assigns to their gender. As he or she repeats these performances, the “norm” is “natural” and the performance becomes a critique when shown as a construction (Butler, *Bodies That Matter* 124). Butler gives the example of the drag queen, who repeats feminine attributes to show that gender is a social construction. As drag critiques the “naturalness” of gender through the imitation of gender, jamband fans critique the “naturalness” of the mainstream consumerist culture through their imitation of capitalism. Jamband fans create the economy of Shakedown Street, which is a replica of a capitalist economy, but is quite a bit different than the American consumerist capitalism that we know in everyday life; trading and bartering take place, vendors give products away, and the economy benefits only the subculture. Shakedown Street shows that there are alternatives to contemporary consumerist capitalism, performing it in a slightly different way in order to critique it. In this way, it is very much like drag, repeating the norms of consumerist culture through copying the consumerist marketplace.

It is impossible to completely escape the current capitalist mainstream culture in order to truly critique it, but a person might use capitalism itself to criticize corporate or consumerist capitalism. Indeed, Situationist theory suggests the only possible resistance must be made from within and with the tools of that which is resisted. Jamband fans are

doing this with their Shakedown Street economy. They use a form of capitalism to critique the current form of consumerist capitalism in the United States. The Situationists theorized that societies based on consumerist capitalism, such as the United States, present life as a series of spectacles that in turn prevent authentic experience: people merely become passive spectators or tourists of their own society. The spectacle, a key term for the Situationists' theory, represents the "dominant model of life. . . . It is not a collection of images, but a social relation between people that is mediated by images" (Debord 4, 7). The spectacle shows people images of commodities through mass media, commodities which consumers strive to acquire. As the spectacle fills leisure time, these images can be commodities such as products, lifestyles, or ways to spend extra time. Expressing itself through news, propaganda, advertising, and entertainment, the spectacle cannot be understood only as mass media's deceit, for it is also a "world view that has actually been materialized, a view of a world that has become objective" (Debord 7). The spectacle creates an unreal unity within society and proposes this unity, which obscures class and power differences and produces societies in the name of "freedom to choose" (Debord 35). Shakedown Street is, in a way, a critique of the spectacle, although most fans would not be aware of it as such. Jamband fans are fighting that which makes us consume commodities, by selling their own. They are fighting the spectacle's unreal unity by creating their own unity within their subculture. Shakedown Street vendors, through their repetition and use of capitalism, are, in a small way, showing opposition to this outside force of the spectacle.

The drug and drug paraphernalia vendor demonstrates another form of opposition in the Shakedown Street economy. Theirs is not so much a critique of consumerist capitalism, but rather a critique of the illegalization of certain recreational drugs. Recreational drugs are not a part of American consumerist capitalism that we know of in everyday life, but they are a vital part of the Shakedown Street economy. As I stated before, many fans use recreational drugs either as a way to enhance their experience of the music or as a way to reach an altered state. As a rebellious act, using illegal drugs is a way fans protest the rules and restrictions of everyday life and a way to protest laws from mainstream society that fans see as useless. At another level, through the sale of drug and drug paraphernalia, vendors protest the absence of recreational drugs in the everyday capitalist marketplace. However, through the selling and buying of illegal recreational drugs, fans resist the consumerist capitalist system that lies outside the subculture.

Another small way fans critique contemporary capitalism is through their business philosophies, which are very different from mainstream society, mirroring an earlier form of capitalism. Bartering and trading are other ways that the community tries to subvert American consumerism. If you need something in the parking lot, you will probably be able to buy it or trade for it. Sometimes, trading does not always take place between customers and vendors. Vendors trade with vendors and fans with fans. Shakedown Street also encourages bartering, not commonly accepted in American consumerist culture, especially for products like food, beer, and clothing. It is quite easy

to talk prices down for something if you do not have enough money. As a Phish head on tour, I sold handmade clothes and jewelry, much of which I traded for food, other clothing, souvenir T-shirts, and tickets. I typically sold a good deal of my goods for less than their worth in labor and materials. With the amount of time I put into my goods, I should have charged more. I never made a large profit, but the money I took in from selling my goods provided me with enough to continue touring, breaking even at the end, at best.

Generally, vending at shows is not about making a profit, but rather to keep touring. Fans generally use the money they make at shows to buy tickets, provisions, gas, and accommodations, rather than making a profit from their products. On Trio's series *Parking Lot*, one fan, selling grilled-cheese sandwiches and handmade clothing, describes why she vends at shows: "Trying to sell stuff to get to the next show. Make enough for some gas money, something to eat, next ticket." The interviewer asks if she makes a good deal of money and she replies, "No" ("Phish Parking Lot"). She then proceeds to give away her last four grilled-cheese sandwiches. One fan decides to give her a dollar for one. Through such practices and allowing bartering and trading, the Shakedown Street economy displays alternative ways to conduct business. One Deadhead said, "Be fair. Always be open to a fair bargain. Sell quality and kick down a freebie every so often to a needy brother or sister. Look in their eyes and heart and you'll know the ones. Sit down and visit with folks when it feels good. It's a show, not a

nine to five” (Sheptoski 175). Another Deadhead said, ““Karma. Be kind”” (Sheptoski 175).

The trading that takes place at shows is most prevalent in the search for extra tickets. If you walk down Shakedown, you will see a number of index fingers pointing to the sky at any given time. These are people searching for a ticket for the night’s show. Fans call out the phrase “Cash or trade for your extra” throughout the parking lot. Many ticketless fans look for a “miracle”—drawn from the Grateful Dead song “I Need a Miracle”—which is a free ticket (or any ticket at those hopelessly sold-out shows where the chance of finding a ticket is very slim). To be “miracled,” means to be given a free ticket. For fans, rather than buying tickets from corporations such as Ticketmaster, or buying tickets from scalpers for sold-out shows at outrageous prices, trading for tickets, trying to get a free ticket, or buying a ticket in the parking lot is a viable option.³⁸ For the most part, fans practice trading as a common way to get tickets on Shakedown Street. So through trading, fans believe they resist consumerist capitalism, as trading is not allowed in the American economic system; however, as Marx writes, “In all pre-capitalistic times, trade appears as the function par excellence of capital” (259). Members of the subculture see trading as a small act of resistance because it is an alternative to present-day capitalism.

³⁸In 2005, the ticket broker lobby weakened ticket-scalping laws, making it much harder for fans to buy tickets at face value (Sisario). For Phish’s most recent summer tour, ticket-trading message boards and websites started popping up such as Phriendlytrades.com and the Phish Thoughts Ticket Exchanges.

Fans created Shakedown Street in reaction to economic exploitation they felt from the large corporate venues in which the bands play. These venues charge large amounts for tickets, food, beverages, and other necessities. In large arena-sized venues, licensed vendors sell food, beverages, and band merchandise at inflated prices. In the film, *Deadheads: An American Subculture*, one Deadhead says, “I support small business [in the parking lot], not the tie-dyed concessions over there.” Vendors express their dissatisfaction by calling out pitches or hanging signs of protest. “We’re Taking a Stand Against Corporate America” is one example of a vendor’s sign from Sean Gibbon’s published Phish tour diary *Run Like an Antelope* (97). The call of “Keep your money in the lot” reminds fans to keep the economy in their community, rather than giving money to corporate venues. Fans adorn their cars and booths with stickers that have this phrase written on them. At a Phish show that took place at the Deer Creek Music Center in the summer of 2003, I heard a woman selling bottles of water for one dollar each give this pitch: “Keep your money in the lot where it belongs! Don’t pay four dollars for water to someone who doesn’t love you! Keep your money in the lot with your brothers and sisters who love you!”

Much like this woman selling water, many vendors choose to pitch their wares by calling out catchy phrases or slogans. The pitch can be quite entertaining in the Shakedown marketplace and while vendors think they are acting in protest of the so-called “capitalist system,” their pitches are a form of capitalist competition. Looking at the pitch as something fun and entertaining, fans do not see it as capitalistic. One

Deadhead vendor said, “I definitely fit in the outgoing group of vendors. The parking lot is a great place to express oneself. I liked to come up with new raps just to joke with other vendors. . . . The buying public seemed to get a kick from the unusual schtick . . . I was here to have fun, so what the hell” (Sheptoski 177). Shakedown provides an interesting contradiction in its use of capitalistic strategies to protest the alienation fans feel from similar, larger corporate strategies. Fans use an earlier form of capitalism to critique current consumerist capitalism.

The Space for Wookies in the Subculture

The final type of vendor in the Shakedown Street economy is the wookie. In a community like this one, where a marketplace exists that allows opportunities to make money, there will naturally be those few who try to take advantage of it. The term “wookie”³⁹ or “wook” appeared in the jamband community within recent years. I first heard this term used at a String Cheese Incident show during the summer of 2000. Now fans use it quite often when referring to anyone who tours with bands for reasons besides the music—either for money, excessive abuse of drugs or alcohol, or for free tickets or goods. The wookie sees jamband shows as a chance to make money or get something for free. Although no fan, fan zine, or fan website seems to know the source of the word, I speculate this term comes from the movie *Star Wars*, in which Han Solo

³⁹The correct spelling of the term is “Wookiee” from the *Star Wars* films; however, jamband fans spell the term “Wookie.” For the purposes of this project, I will spell the term without the second “e.”

and Chewbacca the wookiee were vagabonds always looking for a fast dollar and many times getting in trouble because of it. When looking at the use of the term “wookiee,” we see the vagabond looking for a fast buck, but we also see danger. In the movie *Star Wars*, Chewbacca is a furry, whimsical creature who appears to be your friend, but if you get on his bad side, he could easily rip off your arms. The wookies at a show look like fans, but are not, which is dangerous to fans because wookies manipulate those around them. As over-eager sellers on Shakedown Street, some wookies sell as if in a high-pressure business situation. Others may be those who always want to be “miracled,” or given something for free. A show reviewer from *The Phish Net* tells of his experience with a wookiee at a show at the Gorge Amphitheatre in Washington in the summer of 2003:

As we are exiting the campgrounds there are three people in front of us walking with index fingers in the air. Chris says he has a couple extras to get rid of. They ask how much. He says I will give them to you for 25 dollars, 15 under face value. They say forget you, we will wait and get tickets for free. After that it just got ugly. To make a long story short, there was a relatively brief, intense verbal altercation. They were shouting things at us like, "Ever heard of the family? Where's the family?" (*The Phish Net*)⁴⁰

He adds later in the story, “This is the one and only time in 81 Phish shows where I have ever been in a situation like this, it was really . . . strange. I'm not one to use the wookiee stereotype but when the shoe fits. . . .” (*The Phish Net*). In Gypsy Rose’s

⁴⁰I believe that the person in this story is referring to the subculture as “the family”—from the popular T-shirt: “Be Good Family”—not the Family, as in the religious group that toured with the Grateful Dead.

Fall/Winter 2007 catalogue, a character known only as “The Healthy Hippie” gives bits of advice throughout the catalogue, one of which is a wookie warning: “Be a good festival neighbor. Always offer your neighbors food, drink. . . . This way if a wookie tries to steal your tent or cooler, your neighbor will have your back” (7). This statement expresses the idea of the wookie as not only wanting free goods, but as a danger to the subculture; in this case, wookies are thieves.

There are several incarnations of the wookie, but the most dominant one is the over-eager businessman, present from the beginning of the subculture. In *Deadhead Social Science*, Matthew Sheptoski gives an example of what fans today would call a wookie, but in the context of a Grateful Dead tour, before fans started using the term. He tells a story of friends looking at a table of crystal, which the vendor chipped out of rock to sell on Dead tours. Being over-eager to make a sale, this particular vendor told them right away how much each crystal cost, then offered them deals. They did not buy any, as they said it did not feel right to buy anything from him: ““He wasn’t a Deadhead. He was just doing it to make money. . . . He probably heard about the parking lot scene and said, “Hey, this is a money-maker.” His social skills were a little off. He stood out in the crowd because they [vendors who are Deadheads] aren’t so pushy” (Sheptoski 177). This behavior presents us with a contradiction in the so-called “utopian” philosophy of jamband tours. Some fans try to discourage this exploitation of the jamband scene by not buying products from high-pressure vendors. Although fans

use consumerism and perhaps even need it, they, in a small way, also resist it in their rejection of the wookie.

The seller of nitrous oxide is another incarnation of the wookie. Common parlance refers to this gas as “laughing gas,” or “hippy crack.”⁴¹ Often in parking lots and most often in campgrounds, drug dealers sell nitrous oxide to fans by filling balloons out of a large tank. Fans often discourage buying nitrous oxide by word of mouth, pamphlets, and by banning its purchase. As it takes a lot of money from community members who need it to tour, the sale of nitrous oxide delivers money to drug dealers, whose primary concern is to profit from “the scene.” This may at first appear to be an interesting contradiction within a subculture that encourages the use of drugs. But their rejection of nitrous oxide is more a rejection of the wookie and of something that harms the subculture than a rejection of the drug. Of course, fans still buy nitrous oxide and drug dealers still sell it in the parking lots and campgrounds, proving that a certain number of people are more interested in ingesting drugs than in keeping the wookies out of the jamband scene.

The jamband Phish actively discouraged the use of nitrous oxide at their shows. At many venues, volunteers for Phish handed out pamphlets that gave important details about places to stay and restaurants in the area, driving directions, and information about the venue. Many of these pamphlets have information on nitrous oxide. A July 29,

⁴¹I found no information explaining the origin of this term or how long it has been part of the subculture.

2003, pamphlet from the *Post-Gazette Pavilion* in Burgettstown, Pennsylvania, lists the dangers of nitrous oxide. Stating that nitrous cuts the flow of oxygen to the brain, the pamphlet warns of the many medical emergencies that occur because of ingestion, such as passing out, concussions from passing out, and death in some cases. The pamphlet concludes by saying, “Remember, if you purchase nitrous oxide you are likely to be supporting people who care nothing about, and contribute nothing to the Phish community” (“Phish Information”). Jamband fans want to support each other—the people who care about the subculture—rather than those who are interested in making money off the subculture. This last warning on the pamphlet probably would have more impact on a Phish fan than the warnings about the drug’s danger to health.

By labeling these profiteers with the identity of the wookiee, jamband fans created a group identity for themselves. The wookiee angers fans in the jamband community because of the deception the wookiee creates, as he or she acts and dresses like a fan, but in actuality is not one. Fans punish the wookies indirectly for their behavior in many ways and create a marginalized and negative identity for this type of person. A website, *Passedoutwookies.com*, encourages fans to send embarrassing pictures of drunk, passed-out wookies. Jokes circulate in the subculture about wookies. “How does a wookiee shower? He wakes up and rolls over on his deodorant” (*Pholktales*). Most of these jokes deal with out-of-control hair, uncleanliness, and drunkenness. Interestingly enough, fans themselves do not generally value hygiene and sobriety. Perhaps these jokes reveal some unwritten restrictions on jamband culture.

Wookies may drink, take drugs, and ignore hygiene to an extent so extreme that most jamband fans are uncomfortable. When the tour is done, most fans return to the norms of society regarding hygiene and sobriety, whereas fans depict the wookie as always dirty and drunk. Jamband fans seem to impose some mainstream values through their critique of the wookie. Through their critique of the wookie, they weaken their own critique of mainstream society.

It may be useful to remember here that the Haight-Ashbury scene began to die when too many people arrived, expecting free services and free food, and increasing drug-abuse problems. Garcia said of this time, “[There were] too many people to take care of, and not enough people willing to do something. There were a lot of people looking for a free ride. That’s the death of any scene, when you have more drag energy than you have forward-going energy” (Jackson 132). This statement may support jamband fans’ fear of or disdain for wookies. Representing the “drag energy” in a way similar to what Garcia describes, the wookie may illustrate or symbolize the end of the jamband fan subculture. But the character of the wookie also points to a couple of interesting contradictions within the subculture. The wookie appears to make the subculture rethink its attitudes about drugs and hygiene. How can a subculture that prides itself on disregard for “outside” rules attack a character in their subculture for ignoring the same rules? Jamband fans may replicate the mainstream they seem to resist. With the breakup of three of the four major arena jambands, and as the fans get

older and more affluent, such contradictions become apparent and the boundaries blur between “subculture” and “mainstream.”

Culturally Resistant Clothing at Shows

Another critique of contemporary consumerism takes place in the form of parody shirts and handmade clothes sold in the Shakedown marketplace. Parody shirts and handmade clothing provide jamband fans with the tools of protesting the outside mainstream society. In jamband subculture, the parody T-shirt is uniquely popular. Fans appropriate corporate logo designs, but instead of the company’s name, the logo promotes a song title or something dealing with the subculture: for example, drug use. Some shirts carry a logo that says “Firstube” instead of the “Firestone” logo, “Tela” instead of the “Fila” logo, and “Morning Dew” instead of the “Mountain Dew” logo (see Figure 7). Of course, fans sell these shirts illegally in show parking lots without any permission from the corporations whose logos the fans use, or from the bands. In a way, through making, selling, and buying these shirts, fans mock mainstream corporations in their defiance of trademark and copyright laws and in this mockery, make the carnivalesque inversion of perceived corporate power.

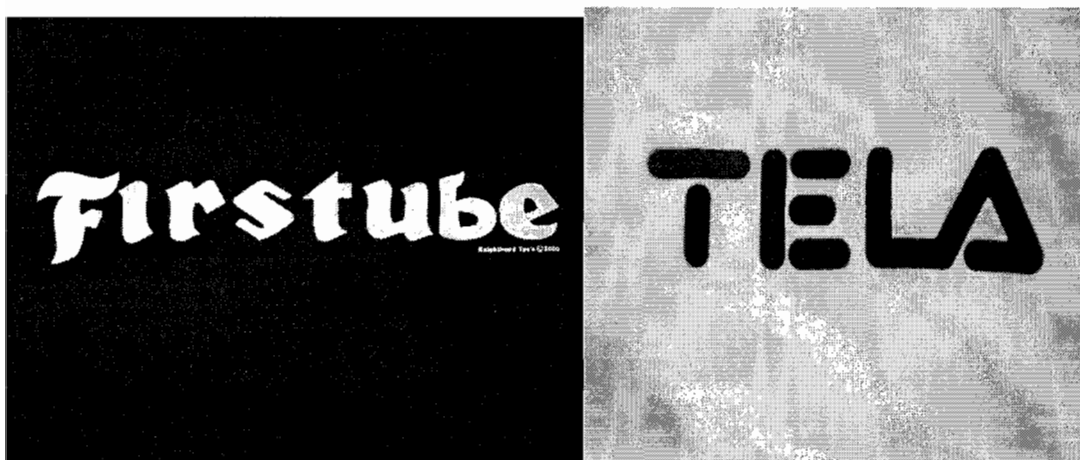


FIGURE 7. Phish parody shirts.

At most jamband events, fans wear an array of handmade clothing: spinner dresses, apron shirts, and patchwork clothing. Handmade clothes are another product the subculture believes is a protest against “mainstream culture.” This protest is slightly different than the protest the parody shirts present. Rather than buying clothing made in countries that exploit workers or clothing from large department stores, jamband fans buy and wear handmade clothing that other fans make. Many fans purchase handmade clothing in opposition to buying brand-name, mass-market clothing. Making a more versatile garment than a specific-sized garment bought in a department store, vendors who make and sell clothes make them adjustable so as to fit a wide variety of people. By wearing handmade clothing, jamband fans resist fashion codes that coerce and restrict gender expectations, especially commodification of feminine images. Women’s fashion is often restrictive physically in order to emphasize parts of a woman’s body.

However, styles of the subculture are feminine without being sexual and restrictive.

Sean Gibbon, in his published tour diary *Run Like An Antelope*, describes the women on tour as “oddly sexless” (47). He describes the apron top: “the front has different designs patched together in squares, like a quilt, and the back is just a piece of string tied like a shoelace. It may sound like a sexy top, but it’s not. Kind of goofy. It looks sort of like a smock” (22). Women wear these types of clothing to make a statement about their sexuality in a male-dominated subculture and as a protest of restrictive women’s clothes.

These handmade clothes began as a subversive form of clothing within the Grateful Dead touring community during the early 1980s. A group on tour known as the Family of Unlimited Devotion invented “spinner dresses” and skirts to wear while “spinning,”⁴² a meditative technique used to focus on the music of the Grateful Dead and to feel closer to God (see Figure 8). The Family was a group of 15 to 20 people who toured with the Grateful Dead (Hartley 131). Renouncing worldly possessions, the Family shared what they owned. After purchasing land in Northern California, the Family officially became the Church of Unlimited Devotion and rather than just a tour community, they became a religious one as well. Combining Catholicism and Vasinava Hinduism, the Church attended a Grateful Dead concert as a religious service, fasting the day of the show and praying, meditating, and spinning during the show to bring

⁴²This spinning imitates the spinning of the Whirling Dervishes.

them closer to God,⁴³ who spoke to them through Jerry Garcia and his music. The Church followed the Grateful Dead and disbanded in 1992 because of unnamed circumstances (Hartley 131).



FIGURE 8. Spinners at the Greek Theatre, Berkeley, California, August 19, 1989. Source: Jennifer Hartley, “We Were Given This Dance: Music and Meaning in the Early Unlimited Devotion Family,” *Deadhead Social Science* (New York: Altamira, 2000) 128.

In the late 1980s, in order to make money to keep touring, the Church began to produce and sell their handmade dresses and skirts (Clay 5). Spinner dresses, worn by “spinner girls,” are made of alternating strips of cloth that are cut thin at the top and

⁴³There is no reference in this article as to whether this is a God in the Judeo-Christian or Hindu sense.

thick at the bottom in order to get the most “spin” out of the skirt. Much like a whirling dervish, spinner girls spin, rather than dance, to the music at a concert. These dresses and spinning lost their religious significance as fans who were not part of the religion appropriated the styles. In order to use leftover cloth, the Church also designed and created patchwork clothing, another style jamband fans appropriated. In this way, fans have used recycled cloth to make their own clothes, which can be resistant. Members of the Church once wore these clothes that they made, and even brought sewing machines with them on tour so they could keep making the clothes and selling them. As they became more devout and religious, and these styles became popular in the tour subculture, their own clothes became very simple and colorless, looking more like nun’s habits (Clay 5). But jamband fans still wear and sell the clothes they created (see Figures 9 and 10).

The Church of Unlimited Devotion is a subculture within the subculture in which protest might be considered authentic and not contradictory. This is a group of people who literally divided themselves from the subculture of Deadheads, as well as the mainstream culture. They lived a lifestyle oppositional from mainstream culture, especially when they created their own Church and bought their own land. However, even though their protest might be construed as more “authentic” than other Deadheads, the Church of Unlimited Devotion did take part in capitalism in order to tour and keep itself afloat. When the jamband fan subculture grew and appropriated these styles, the



FIGURE 9. Examples of handmade clothing: patchwork skirt, apron shirt, patchwork-insert pants, and spinner dresses from the online store Threadhead Creations. Source: *Threadhead Creations Online Store* 20 September 2008 <threadheadcreations.com>.

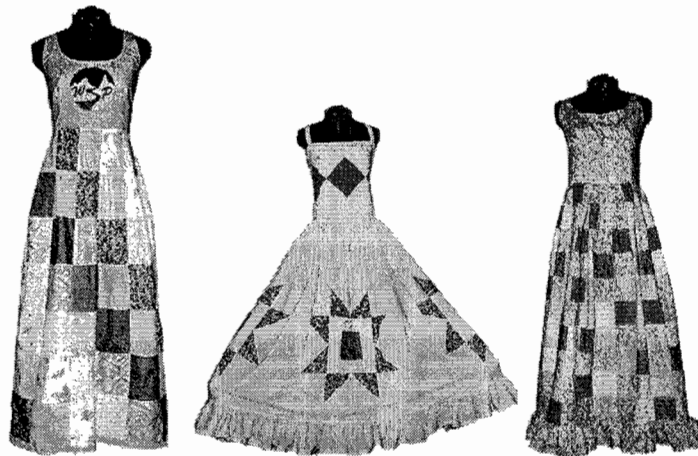


FIGURE 10. Examples of spinner dresses from Sugaree Stiches. Note the first dress has “WSP” appliquéd on it, standing for Widespread Panic. Source: *Sugaree Stiches*, 20 September 2008 <www.sugareestiches.com>.

fans erased the original religious intent of the clothing. Not only did jamband fan subculture appropriate these styles, but mainstream capitalism did as well, erasing even more of the intent and removing any original resistance. It is a small-scale example of what happens in the jamband subculture. Pieces of clothing meant to resist mainstream ideas of fashion became a commodity.

According to the Situationists, everything within the spectacle becomes a commodity: time, roles, and ideals. Situationist scholar Sadie Plant notes how Situationists saw that “every conceivable aspect of life is reproduced as a commodity, packaged and sold back to the consumer” (11). Members of society find it difficult to resist, protest, or rebel against the spectacle, as its ability to commodify can quickly multiply and sell out the revolutionary gesture by turning critique into trend or fashion statement. Recuperation, a term coined by Debord, is the process in which the spectacle takes criticism and revolution from the people and uses it for its own purposes: “Criticism is turned against itself . . . the most corrosive concepts are emptied of their content and put back into circulation in the service of maintaining alienation” (Plant 76). A phrase from the 1968 rebellion became an advertising slogan for a French bank on its ten-year anniversary. Seven-Up soda and Levi jeans took images from the countercultural movement of the hippies for their commercials, as shown on VH-1’s four-hour documentary *The Drug Years: Feed Your Head*. Seventies punk style quickly became runway fashion and images on London postcards. Those that pose a threat to the

spectacle are taken back into it and lose their power. Resistance loses its meaning with the appropriation of style, language, and thought by the spectacle.

Very similar to recuperation is Dick Hebdige's theory of incorporation. Hebdige says that with every subculture comes a certain amount of hysteria in the media, including "dread and fascination, outrage and amusement" (Hebdige 93). Because of this panic, dominant society tries to bring these subcultures back under its control. There are two ways in which mainstream society does this. Through adapting subcultural music, style, and philosophy, society diffuses or incorporates criticism. Hebdige calls this the commodity form of incorporation. The other way society incorporates subcultures is through the subtraction of supposed threat from a subculture. The media shows members of a subculture as normal and domesticated or as clowns and objects. Examples of this ideological form of incorporation are photos of punks with their mothers, or playing with the family dog juxtaposed with text such as "Punk is a family affair" (Hebdige 98).

Like the incorporation of punks, society incorporates the jamband fan, both ideologically and as a commodity, in many newscasts and documentaries. Through creating film and video about the jamband fan subculture, consumers are able to view the once-underground subculture, judge it, and make it a commodity. The media often portrays these fans as Others, not so much as domesticated, normalized members of a subculture, but rather as fanatical clowns. News about the bands concentrates on their fans. For example, an April 2, 1987, newscast about the Grateful Dead performing at the

Worcester Centrum focused on the Deadheads, and the news reporter chose the more fanatical Deadheads to interview. A young man with a large, golden earring described how he moved out of his apartment and sold his car in order to go on Dead tour. An obviously inebriated young man in a rainbow hat slurred, "I think Jerry saves" (*Grateful Dead Wooster Centrum Vintage News*). These fans were the object of ridicule by the news anchors after the report. Todd Phillips, director of Phish documentary *Bittersweet Motel*, interviewed a good number of Phish fans for his film. In one interview, two fans, Justin and Brian, explain marijuana to the documentary crew and openly smoke marijuana and drink beer for the camera. The young men use poor grammar and slur their speech, showing the fan as an unintelligent drug user (*Phish: Bittersweet Motel*). The Trio television series *Parking Lot* depicts the Phish parking lot as an immoral playground where people get drunk, openly use and sell drugs, sell drug paraphernalia, and even sell handmade glass sex toys. However, the director also interviewed many Phish fans who were very articulate and sober. One young parent at the Phish show attended with his two-year-old son on his shoulders, whom the fan claimed was a "phish fan all the way." This short interview shows the domestic ideological incorporation of the fan as father and the Phish experience as one a family could enjoy. The media incorporates jamband fans ideologically by joking about them or showing them as stoned, drunk, ignorant fools, but also by humanizing them as fathers and members of families. Not only are these fans being ideologically incorporated, but by making films

and television documentaries about them, society also incorporates them as commodities for viewers to consume.

Much more obvious and more prevalent to this study is the commodity form of incorporation, which is similar to the Situationists' concept of recuperation. Many of the styles jamband fans use, such as patchwork and spinner dresses, and parody shirts, became commodities. The jamband fan subculture first recuperated these styles from the Church of Unlimited Devotion, then popular markets recuperated the styles from the jamband fan subculture through mass production of backless apron shirts and patchwork. Styles of lingerie and dresses imitate styles that originated on Grateful Dead tours (see Figures 11 and 12).

Popular style also recuperates parody shirts. Once fans made these shirts and sold them as a way to earn money for tours. Soon, fans created their own websites in order to make a profit from their parody shirts. *Knighthoodtees.com* is one such site that suffered legal action by the Phish corporation for their parodied designs. After the popularity of parody shirts grew, the corporations that create shirts for the band took this idea and made their own parody shirts. For example, on their Internet store and at shows, Phish sold parody shirts very similar to the shirts fans make. One features the name of a song, "Bathtub Gin," on what looks like a gin label. Not only companies related to the bands do this, but other companies took the idea of the parody shirt and used it in order to make comic shirts or to market to other subcultures. Comic shirts are



FIGURE 11. Examples of recuperated clothing from online catalogues. The leather apron top is from online lingerie catalogue Double Exposure. The butterfly apron top is from the online catalogue Raun Harman. The patchwork dress is from a J. Crew catalogue. Sources: *Double Exposure* 27 July 2007 <www.doubleexposure.co.nz>; *Raun Harman Online Catalogue* 27 July 2007 <www.raunharman.com>; *J. Crew Spring Catalogue* (Lynchburg: n.p., 2007) 27.



FIGURE 12. Examples of mass-produced patchwork clothing from the Gypsy Rose catalogue. Source: Gypsy Rose, *Spring/Summer Catalogue* (Richboro: n.p., 2007) 27.

in specialty stores and in online catalogues. “Freak,” in the place of “Ford,” or “Evil” written as the logo of Levis Jeans are examples of shirts sold in novelty stores (see Figure 13).

Relix magazine is another example of the occurrence of incorporation or recuperation. Deadheads founded this magazine in 1974 as *Dead Relix*, originally a hand-stapled, photocopied newsletter. The Grateful Dead was the only topic of discussion in the first issue, but as early as the second issue the magazine began to cover other bands. Dropping *Dead* from its title, *Relix* began covering “Bay Area Psychedelic Rock.” After Garcia’s death in 1995, the magazine focused on other jambands, such as



FIGURE 13. Recuperated parody shirts from the T-Shirt Bordello. Source: *The T-Shirt Bordello Online Store* 27 July 2007 <www.tshirtbordello.com>.

Phish. In 2000, an independent publisher and Phish head Steve Bernstein bought the magazine from Leslie Kippel and changed the format. Eventually, it became the equivalent of a mainstream music magazine. While focusing on jambands, it now covers all types of music that are fashionable with jamband fans, even music from popular markets and their advertisers. It now has a nationwide subscription base and publishes eight issues per year (“Relix”).

Jamband fans seem to believe they resist mainstream capitalist culture, yet strategies of consumerist cultures make it possible for them to tour with their bands. In their resistance, they affirm both rebellion and free enterprise. The Situationists theorize the spectacle generates roles such as the rebel and the revolutionary as a commodified necessity to the system. As these roles appear to threaten the spectacle, it can further

justify other roles and strategies of control (Plant 69). “One cannot be a real rebel, but one can consume the image of rebellion, most obviously manifest in material commodities—badges, T-shirts, posters, haircuts—to the advantage of the system as a whole” (Plant 69). The jamband fan’s expression of resistance through carnivalesque style fulfills a needed role in the spectacle’s process, a process that appears inescapable.

But Situationists propose that the spectacle is open for attack. It is through daily acts of resistance that the Situationists believed people could challenge the spectacle. They saw the possibility of a new society already engrained within the spectacle through such daily acts. This would not take us back to a precapitalist society, but rather one in which creations of capitalism, such as new technology and knowledge, would abolish work, solve problems, and fulfill desire. Examples of such small acts of resistance are rife in the jamband subculture—e.g., the phrase “keep your money in the lot.” Calling out this phrase and posting stickers with this phrase on it, fans urge each other not to spend money inside the venue, but rather keep it circulating in their micro-economy. It is an inversion of the capitalist strategy of advertising and competition. They protest consumerism, while taking part in consumerism through their pitches. Vendors urge people to avoid giving money to the venues owned by corporations; however, all fans give a good deal of money to these corporations by purchasing their tickets. Parody shirts, which are discussed above, are another example of a daily act of resistance; the shirts mock the consumerist system, yet are a part of it. Jamband fans use and invert consumerist expectation to make their own statement.

Subcultural Capital in the Jamband Fan Subculture

Subculturist Sarah Thorton maintains that subcultures often uphold values of the larger culture they criticize. Most subculture scholars inadequately take this into account in their analyses of subcultures, Thorton argues. The Birmingham School concentrated on resistance and critique but ignored the interesting ways in which the subculture copies the culture they resist and the part that power plays within the subculture. Claiming that there are “subcultural ideologies” that copy “dominant ideologies,” Thorton argues subcultures mirror “outside” culture, but on a smaller, slightly different scale (184). A subculture still maintains hierarchy, although in a different way. Subcultures have power relationships much like those in the outside culture. Thorton uses Pierre Bourdieu’s theory on cultural capital to make this point. In Bourdieu’s theories on taste in his book *Distinction*, he describes three main types of capital in society: economic, cultural, and social (114). Material goods and money make up economic capital. Cultural capital is nontangible, attained through education and upbringing, and gives social status. Social capital is obtained not by what someone owns or knows, but by the network of social connections: who you know and who knows you (Bourdieu 114). Bourdieu believes that all society is structured from these three forms of capital, which can be symmetrical or asymmetrical. Economic capital may be equal to cultural capital, as in some professions requiring higher education that

have high salaries. Cultural capital might be high for a person whose economic capital is low, as is the case for most public school teachers (Bourdieu 114).

Sarah Thorton takes the idea of capital and applies it to her studies on Great Britain's nightclub subcultures. Club enthusiasts have social and cultural capital, building knowledge, likes and dislikes, and values that are part of the community—or being “in-the-know” (Thorton 184). Thorton believes that subcultures are not political entities always in resistance to society, as the Birmingham scholars believe, but that subcultures have ideological frameworks for building power relationships in much the same way as the dominant or mainstream society might. Thorton uses the term “subcultural capital” to describe the performance of being “in-the-know” or “hip.” This form of capital, much like Bourdieu's cultural capital, gives status to those who have it in the subculture, and takes status away from those who do not. Subcultural capital takes the form of fashion, slang, or record collections. Interestingly, fans must not overuse it because their subcultural capital will diminish (Thorton 186). For example, the person who is “headier-than-thou,” a phrase I explain later, has little status in the subculture because that individual overperforms his or her subcultural capital. Subcultural capital creates an alternative hierarchy within a subculture, but it is still a hierarchy working in a similar way to outside culture's hierarchy.

Thorton's notion about subculture capital explains contradictions in jamband subculture. Although jamband fans try to pursue a carnivalesque erasure of hierarchies, through performance of subcultural capital, some fans place themselves above others.

Through speech situations, like those Grateful Dead scholar Natalie Dollar studies, fans use their knowledge of the music and show statistics as subcultural capital. Fans perform their subcultural capital through speech situations such as “calling the opener” (Dollar 91). Before the show begins, a fan predicts the song that will open the show. Another fan responds and makes his or her prediction, which is the result of studying the set lists of the shows prior to that evening’s show or may just be what the fan wants to hear. At times, fans place bets and claim winnings in the lot after the show (Dollar 92). Fans acquire subcultural capital within the group through these small competitions. This is one way fans define “heads” apart from the “newbies.”⁴⁴ It is within these power plays between heads and newbies that the subculture forms a type of class difference that replicates the mainstream hierarchies and creates power relations. Through subcultural capital, subcultures find their sense of worth within a society that devalues them, by imitating similar means (Thorton 188).

Subcultural capital also takes the form of physical items, such as tape collections (or show collections on computers), clothing, rare collectibles, or posters. Posters, or other types of collections, such as showbills, records, or fan art, also may be a source of subcultural capital. Every band has certain artists who work with them to create show posters. Jim Pollack, Phish’s poster designer, now designs posters for many jambands and festivals. Some of his show prints, sold for fifty dollars, reach up to values of seven thousand dollars depending on the show and rarity of the poster (*ExpressoBeans*). The

⁴⁴This is the term used for fans new to the subculture.

artists sign and number their limited-edition posters, creating a higher market value. What begins as subcultural capital often translates into economic capital and social capital.

Even if subcultural capital might give status to someone who knows a good deal, it might also take status away if fans deem themselves superior to others because of this capital. Thornton says that a fine line exists between being in-the-know and a certain level of condescension (187). This person is “Headier-than-thou,” which is a serious insult (*The Phunky Bitches*). The “Headier-than-thou” fan is one who has too much subcultural capital and prefers to flaunt this fact. Such behavior might include bragging about how many shows one has attended, bragging about having an extensive collection of tapes, over-using slang, wearing certain styles to the extreme,⁴⁵ or speaking in excess about show statistics. Sometimes, perhaps they are too elitist or critical of the shows they attend. One Internet fan site said, “Nine times out of 10, I’ll take a ‘duuude’ or a ‘kickass’ or an ‘awesome’ over the headier-than-thou babble critics like to spew” (*Live Music Blog*).

Minority Groups Within the Subculture

While subcultural capital maintains hierarchy within the subculture, marginalization also creates hierarchy. The jamband subculture is an overwhelmingly

⁴⁵Many fans complain about certain fans who believe they are more “real” than others because of their patchwork clothing or dreadlocks (*The Phunky Bitches*).

white, heterosexual male subculture (Gibbon 212).⁴⁶ Because of this, minorities feel the need to create fan clubs and groups. Do minorities form these groups to point the subculture towards furthering its ideal of inclusivity, or do they form them out of protectionist or segregationist necessity? Since there are not many women in the community, some fans founded a fan club for female Phish fans on December 17, 1997. The purpose of this club is to provide a place for women Phish fans to meet, communicate, find travel companions for tours, share information about cities and venues in which Phish plays, and provide a safe forum for women to discuss issues of interest or concern. On the popular online Phish message board *Phish.rec.music*, the women who founded the female Phish group often found themselves the subject of verbal attack for being women and not being knowledgeable enough for the message board. Their idea of an all-women fan club and message board on their website is almost a radical feminist one. This way, they can discuss Phish and music from women's perspectives without male fans there to castigate them. The Phunky Bitches' message board is one that reflects the experiences of the early radical feminists' consciousness-raising groups. These groups gave women a voice and a safe space to express that voice without the presence of men (Case 64). Since Phish broke up, the Phunky Bitches are

⁴⁶There are no statistics published on audience makeup to prove this fact. However, I have been to countless shows, and this is an observation I have made. Merely walking into a parking lot at a concert makes it obvious that this is a white, heterosexual male subculture.

still very active in the jamband and festival circuit and still provide the same support to women who are fans of all jambands.

The Phunky Bitches chose their name from the Phish cover of Sonny Seals' song "Funky Bitch." They changed the "F" to a "Ph" for obvious reasons, but argued about the use of the term "bitch," commonly a derogatory term people use to attack women they deem too opinionated and forward. Much like other minority groups who reclaim derogatory terms to make a political statement, the Phunky Bitches decided to reclaim the term "bitch" as a way of taking back power. Arguing "bitch" means "Being In Total Control of Herself," they re-appropriated the term to give it new meaning. But the song from which they take their name gives us a decidedly negative view of women, telling the story of a woman who steals her ex-boyfriend's money to buy fancy clothes. But the Phunky Bitches have no statement about this contradiction on their website or in their pamphlets. In a way, the Phunky Bitches use their name to make a statement about women, but although the song they use reinforces negative views of women, they are, in a way, taking a stand against these representations.

On tour, they provide outreach through their anchoring program, in which volunteers hand out fliers containing important information and providing first aid and feminine supplies to women fans. These women also wear a laminate tag with the Phunky Bitch logo, which signifies to other women that this woman is willing to help them. The Phunky Bitch bumper sticker is on several cars on tour and signifies to anyone that the car on which it is placed is a safe ride. In this way, they make it known that

women are a part of the tour community. They leave their stamp around the Internet and at shows, from fliers to posters, and lanyards to T-shirts; the Phish fan subculture knows the Phunky Bitches well for helping women fans. Although Phish fans promote their subculture as safe and inclusive, the fact that a women's group created an outreach program to help women in trouble shows that accidents and attacks happen to women within the subculture, as well as outside.

The Phunky Bitches have a website that contains Phish news, group news, and a message board, which serves as a forum for discussion of women's issues, music, or anything else they desire. Women use this message board to trade or sell tickets, find travel companions, find places to stay while on tour, discuss relevant issues, trade recipes, or trade Phish bootlegs with each other. Many women feel uncomfortable in the world of tape trading because it is primarily male dominated. This board also is a way for the members to plan gatherings at and outside Phish shows.⁴⁷

For the most part, the Phunky Bitches seems to be a positive group that allows women to contact other women with similar interests, but they do reinforce a feminine gender identity. Most of their issues on their website deal more with the private sphere:

⁴⁷Although the founding members of the Phunky Bitches claim male fans verbally attacked them and make them feel uncomfortable when trying to trade tapes, I have not experienced this type of discrimination and neither have my female friends who are fans. In the subculture, male fans welcomed me and encouraged me to trade tapes and discuss statistics. I assume discriminatory cases are either in the minority or have not been prevalent since the mid-1990s. I can only speculate that maybe as the subculture grew larger, more women joined and became a greater presence, stifling such behavior. There are no statistics on audience makeup, but the large number of white men compared to women is apparent at every show I have attended.

cooking, sewing, romance and sex, childbearing and child-rearing. The Phunky Bitches sell various domestic products online, such as cookbooks, handmade dolls, and clothing. The anchors, who leave first aid kits in the bathrooms to help fans (male and female), perform a feminine role as nurturer and caretaker. These anchors also watch out for women who might need help—not only creating a safe atmosphere for women at shows, but also creating a sense of community among women in a still predominately male subculture.

Another fan club, Brian and Robert—a club for gay and lesbian Phish fans—presents a similar situation. The founders⁴⁸ of the club (who remain anonymous) started the group when they were on a Phish message board and there was conversation as to whether or not the Phish song “Brian and Robert” was about a gay couple.⁴⁹ This was the first time the founders heard any discussion of gay identity in the Phish community. After meeting other gay and lesbian fans, they realized a need existed for a club in which gay and lesbian fans could connect with each other. The website says the founders all felt the same within the Phish community: “I know I’m not the only one, but sometimes at shows I feel that way” (*Brian and Robert*). The fan club website has profiles and contact information for all its members along with discussion boards on which gay and lesbian fans can discuss music, gay and lesbian issues, find rides to

⁴⁸There is no list of founders on their website, *brianrobert.com*, but the website uses the pronoun “we” when talking about the founders.

⁴⁹The song “Brian and Robert” is actually about musicians Brian Eno and Robert Fripp.

shows, or places to stay after shows. There are also links to music, and gay and lesbian websites, such as HipFaerie, a website for gay hippies. The Brian and Robert website is similar to the Phunky Bitches' website, as it attempts to create a community for a minority, but on a much smaller scale.

Like the Phunky Bitches, the founders recognize they are a small minority at shows and want to create a sense of belonging within the jamband community. Their website opens with "That's what BrianRobert.com is all about—recognizing that we're not alone and that there's no reason to ever feel a disconnect from the community as a whole" (*Brian and Robert*). This statement shows that even though Brian and Robert encourage gay and lesbian fans to avoid feeling disconnected from the jamband community, they obviously feel some disconnection, since they created their own fan club. Quite unlike the Phunky Bitches, who strive to have their name known within the jamband community, Brian and Robert is very difficult to find. I never heard of this club in the eleven years I was a fan and found their website only by accident while conducting preliminary research for this project. Their website is not listed as a link on any Phish fan site that I found and they are not a presence in the community, such as the Phunky Bitches or the sober organizations (which I discuss later). It seems as if this club is protectively marginalizing itself. Because there is a need for a minority club, jamband fan subculture as a whole may actually emulate prejudices apparent in mainstream society. Through forming these groups, members attempt to communicate their presence to the jamband fan subculture at large or to communicate the contradictions within the

subculture. If the subculture is unconscious about its failure to resist the mainstream, perhaps these groups point to an ideal of making the subculture one that demonstrates a sort of utopia to the outside culture.

Another group marginalizing itself in the jamband community is the group of sober fans. Drugs and alcohol are prevalent in the jamband community, so fans recovering from a drug or alcohol addiction have a group to support them in such a community. Each jamband has their own sober organization: the Wharf Rats (Grateful Dead), the Phellowship (Phish), the Jellyfish (the String Cheese Incident), and the Gateway (Widespread Panic).⁵⁰ The Wharf Rats began the tradition of setting up a table at shows and festooning it with yellow balloons to signify a sober support group. Now every major arena jamband, and many of the smaller ones, have a similar group that sets up tables with yellow balloons, offers help to fans who might need it, and distributes pamphlets, glitter, stickers, and bubbles.⁵¹ Members generally meet before and after shows, and during the set break. During this time, they perform a prayer or meditation similar to those of Alcoholics Anonymous, although none of these groups claim to be related to twelve-step programs like Alcoholics Anonymous (*The Wharf Rats*).

⁵⁰Even after their breakups, the sober groups associated with the Grateful Dead, Phish, and the String Cheese Incident are still together. They can be seen at shows that are related to their respective band. For example, Phish's group, the Phellowship, is present at solo shows performed by Phish guitarist Trey Anastasio.

⁵¹These are common "toys" one sees at jamband shows and festivals. Strangely enough, they are generally associated with drug use.

Not only are these groups visually present at jamband shows and festivals, but they have regular meetings outside of shows. Each region of the country has a club for people who live in the vicinity. The Wharf Rats also have a virtual meeting every Sunday and Wednesday on American Online (*The Wharf Rats*), which allows fans who are not in the vicinity of a regional center to meet with others. The Yellow Balloons Board is a public discussion forum for sober fans to meet virtually and discuss relevant issues. These groups act as support groups for sober fans, but try to build a community so sober fans do not feel marginalized like the Phunky Bitches and Brian and Robert. Also, like the fan clubs, the sober organizations reaffirm the fact that the subculture does marginalize minorities, similar to mainstream society. Even though hierarchy within the subculture creates groups of minorities who feel unaccepted in the subculture, perhaps through forming their groups they make others aware of their marginalization. Through their example, perhaps they ask the subculture to be more aware of its internal contradictions.

With the many contradictions in their philosophies, jamband fans provide a performance of resistance, which seems to mirror the culture they seek to resist. The boundaries blur between this subculture and the outside culture. Being overwhelmingly comprised of white, heterosexual males, this subculture even replicates many marginalizations in the society which fans think they critique. Hierarchy and capital are at work and play an important part in this subculture. Even as the jamband fan subculture tries to resist, using clothing and styles which invert consumerist ideas, the

“outside” society recuperates them. Does all this mean resistance is impossible? Perhaps reinforcing some ideas is inescapable while trying to challenge others. Even though resistance seems impossible, these fans perform the hope that it is. As seen in pre- and postconcert behavior, their intended small acts of resistance—such as jokes, inversions, the pitch, vending, clothing—might be small efforts but may show that real resistance is possible.

The rebellion present within the jamband subculture exhibits the rebellion of many subcultures in the past: long hair, odd clothing, buttons, stickers, and a general disregard for societal rules. Past subculture scholars focused on subcultural styles and the rebellion these styles expressed. Now, many scholars examine the performativity of subcultures, how these subcultures are similar to the culture they resist, and how the subversion of past subcultures is lost. These scholars seem to infer that “performance” means “insincere,” in a way: subversion is lost because members of a subculture perform their identity rather than truly embrace it. In his textbook, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, Richard Schechner calls performances “actions”: performance is an active event—illusion or not (1). Just because members of a subculture perform resistance, does that transform their act of resistance into something false? Some subcultures resisted society, such as the punks. Other subcultures reinforced mainstream societal ideas, such as teenyboppers. Jamband fans lie somewhere in the middle, showing us a different way of examining subcultural resistance and subversion. Some jamband fan actions and practices work against dominant culture, while others reinforce

it, and the dominant culture recuperates others. Even with all their contradictions, their performances may create a space in which resistance is possible, even if impossible outside of that space.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Possibilities of Performance

When I was an undergraduate acting student in college, I went to a small party. At this gathering, my friends wanted to play some board-type game and in order to win the game, the contestant had to be the best liar. I had no desire to play, as I thought this game presented ethical problems and I said so to my friends. One friend said she was sure I would win this game because I am an actor: how could an actor be a bad liar? I felt insulted by this, and I tried to explain to her that the actor expresses personal and social truth that lies within the world of the play. At the time, I felt acting was the opposite of lying; however, there are some discrepancies regarding truth in theatrical theory. Truth, to an actor, lies within the play. But to my friends, who were not involved with theater, plays and acting held no truth. An actor stands onstage and performs a certain truth, yet my friends saw something dishonest and imaginary. They did not understand. (In fact, they thought I was out of my mind.) The conversation ended with my friends rolling their eyes at me, and I gave in and played their game, but not without the proper commentary regarding truth and honesty throughout.

Even twelve years later, after many experiences like this one and after six years of graduate study, I still wonder: why is performance something people construe as negative or false? This question is an old one that goes back thousands of years at least to Plato, who fostered hatred and distrust of theater because of the passions it stirred. He forbade theater in his republic because art was thrice removed from the true form of ideas the gods held in heaven. The question also arose in the eighteenth century, when Denis Diderot wrote “The Actor’s Paradox,” one of the most famous essays on acting. Pondering the paradox of acting, Diderot wondered how an actor can appear to be full of feeling when not actually feeling the emotions of the character. These ideas have been ingrained in society for many years. My fellow grad student’s child, at one year of age, faked a cough when she wanted a good deal of attention. Even my dog “performs” and friends call her “drama queen.” Why are actors or performers within our culture seen as untrustworthy or unsavory characters? The purpose of this last chapter is to explore the possibility of performance for personal and social change. Performance, on and off the stage, has the ability to bring people of many different backgrounds together, making people think about our world, and perhaps explore the possibilities of a better world. It might not immediately make the world a better place, but perhaps, as Augusto Boal describes in his book *Theatre of the Oppressed*, performance is a kind of rehearsal for the revolution.

The postsubculture studies theorists look at subcultures as entities that are performative: behavior is inscribed on the surface of the member of the subculture and

has no authenticity. Members of subcultures borrow and wear styles of past subcultures without understanding their meaning. For example, as I explained in the last chapter, jamband fans wear spinner dresses now, though they had once been symbols of a religion. Jamband fans who wear such clothing have erased all the religious meaning attached to this mode of dress. Because of such examples of subcultural borrowing, the postsubculture studies discipline challenges the work of the Birmingham School, which looks at “spectacular subcultures” made of oppressed, disenfranchised youth who resist an Other—the mainstream or the popular. In the introduction of the *Post-Subcultures Reader*, David Muggleton and Rupert Weinzierl say this regarding the Birmingham School: “The era seems long gone of working-class youth subcultures, heroically resisting subordination through semiotic guerilla warfare” (4). Postsubculture studies scholars believe the potential for style to resist society is lost because of this subcultural borrowing. The postsubcultures of today perform the styles and philosophies of past subcultures, and through performance, postsubculture scholars see inauthenticity. There is no longer a differentiated line between a parent culture and subculture. Contemporary subcultures are more fluid and complex, moving to and from the so-called mainstream culture the subculture supposedly opposes. So the postsubculture scholars look for ways to describe this change in subcultures, and even challenge the term “subculture” (Muggleton and Weinzierl 7).

There are two threads of postsubcultural thought. One examines a new approach in analyzing youth culture apart from the Birmingham School, challenging its well-

established and now traditional ideas. The second thread examines new terms that could replace “subculture,” as the term may have lost its efficacy in today’s scholarship. This thread of postsubculture studies struggles to find a concept that can thoroughly describe what subcultures are today, such as neo-tribes, subchannels, temporary autonomous zones, etc. (Muggleton and Weinzierl 5). The first thread looks toward the scholarship of Bourdieu, Butler, and Michael Maffesoli. For the purposes of this conclusion, I am primarily concerned with Butler and Bourdieu. In applying Butler’s concepts of performativity, postsubculture studies scholars look at youth cultures as social constructions, much in the same way Butler looks at gender as a social construction. Postsubculture scholars feel her theory of gender performativity takes into account the fluidity and changing face of subculture, but suggest subcultures perform an identity that is not totally authentic. All identities are unstable, and parody might be the best way to resist the mainstream rather than through extreme subcultural resistant style (Muggleton and Weinzierl 11).

Finally, Bourdieu’s ideas of capital, as I explained in the previous chapter, challenge the Birmingham School’s idea of subcultures being completely resistant. Postsubcultural studies scholars argue that subcultures today have their own hierarchies. Members of a subculture distinguish themselves from other members through their subcultural capital, much in the same way people in society distinguish themselves from others through class, as Sarah Thornton theorizes. Thornton also brought the idea into postsubcultural theory that the Birmingham School excludes the media and

commercialism, which are an undeniable part of subculture today (Muggleton and Weinzierl 8). Paul Hodkinson discusses this in his research on Goth subculture. A large part of this subculture is what he calls “subcultural shopping.” Members shop for clothes, CDs, and other accessories or paraphernalia to perform their subcultural affiliation. Some Goths’ careers are a part of their subcultural affiliation: organizing Goth music festivals and opening stores that sell Goth-related items (Hodkinson 116, 143). Goth subculture is also present in various media—music, zines, online websites—and uses these media in order to “communicate Goth” (Hodkinson 153). The Internet is an increasingly important medium in subcultures today. The jamband Phish even acknowledges the Internet as a primary reason for its fame (Byrne). In these ways, media and consumerism are very much a part of subcultures.

When considering postsubcultural theory, I am primarily concerned with ideas and questions about performativity and authenticity. Postsubculture scholarship often uses the term “performance” as a negative, a falsity, an inauthentic or maybe simply ephemeral “show.” One way in which scholars describe performativity is in applying Bourdieu’s idea of mimesis to describe how subcultures embody norms and tastes. Mimesis infers imitation, but also interpretation. Subcultures today interpret their own style, through imitating styles that have come before them. So their performance is not totally insincere; it is perhaps much like acting, an interpretation of a character from a script. Subcultures today are a veritable pastiche of styles they get from what Muggleton and Weinzierl call the “super market supermarket of style . . . there are no rules . . .

there is no authenticity, no reason for ideological commitment, merely a stylistic game to be played” (Muggleton and Weinzierl 6). Today’s subcultures merely perform identities constructed from past subcultures. As Butler notes in *Bodies That Matter*, “Construction is a process of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary fixity” (9). So while it appears, according to the Birmingham School, that boundaries remain fixed between the parent culture and subcultures, it is much more complicated than that, according to recent theorists. Resistance is impossible because the boundary blurs between subculture and mainstream and both become the same culture. The definition of subculture becomes fuzzy, as members borrow from many different places, and as the media and mainstream become a large part of their lifestyle. The subcultures of today no longer really resist the dominant culture, as the Birmingham School theorized. Subcultures of today become Baudrillard’s simulacra: merely copies of copies.

I find a good deal of postsubcultural theory quite harsh in arguing that subcultures merely play a stylistic game or are copies of previous groups. I cannot agree with conclusions that members of a subculture perform an identity that is not unique to them, or that subcultural affiliation is one that requires no thought. From my research and experience, fans in the jamband subculture, at least, think about the choices they make. They follow bands that challenge mainstream music; not only the music itself, but also the business practices of the bands, as I explained in Chapter II. Most jamband fans, although in a capitalist system, at least are concerned about choosing to whom

they give their money, for the sake of an ideal community. Their performance may borrow from subcultures before, but to argue, as Muggleton and Weinzierl do, that such borrowing is “erasing ideological commitment” ignores an important potential of such subcultural performance.

In Chapter II, I argued that some forms of subcultural borrowing weaken resistance: jamband fans become subcultural imperialists, looking to any subculture from which to appropriate cultural material in order to make their statement against the society of which they are so very much a part. But my studies and experience suggest attending a jamband show or festival is, to a certain extent, a resistant act. Once someone enters the world of the show or festival, there are different rules and values to which he or she must ascribe, and a wide variety of available roles to perform. Barbara Ehrenreich’s book *Dancing in the Streets* gives a useful history, from Greek Dionysian ritual up to contemporary raves, of ecstatic dance or “collective joy.” According to Ehrenreich, with the growth of Christianity and capitalism, ecstatic dance, popular in Ancient Greece through Medieval times, started to disappear, first replaced by carnival and festivals, in which class distinctions were inverted or mocked through “inappropriate” celebration that included drinking, singing, dancing, and social parody. Such celebration eventually became a threat to the ruling classes and the Church. Carnival and festival finally developed into set rules, dates and orders in an institutional attempt to control ecstatic dance and festivity. As a result of this evolution, Ehrenreich argues, spontaneous collective festivity disappeared and an increase in “melancholy,” or

what Ehrenreich argues we might call depression today. According to Ehrenreich, carnival reappears approaching ecstatic experience in rock and roll concerts and in football fan behavior before college and high school sports became large corporations aimed at making a profit. In this way, most in attendance at a jamband show are oppositional, in my view, just by the very act of going to such a carnivalesque spectacle. Even wookies, who represent what is outside the oppositional world, are, in a way, oppositional in the jamband fan subculture. The collective festivity and the ecstatic dance contained within the jamband subculture nears the experience that Ehrenreich describes in her book. However, it is still contained within the space of the jamband concert, but the performance within that confined space still tries to resist that outside culture.

Even though the postsubculture scholars argue that what is now subcultural style erases resistance, some scholarship suggests there is hope in the simple act of transgressive performance via a return to the theories of Judith Butler. Butler, in *Gender Trouble*, first approaches the idea of “performance” as a negative reinscription of gender. The body presents and performs gender on the surface and this provides the illusion that there is an inner identity that defines us as either male or female (Butler 185). She believes gender is performative, in that it has no existence beyond that of the gestures that define gender to each person. Performance to her is citation and signification. Using terms such as “illusion,” “essence,” “fantasy,” and “fabricated,” she

discusses the performance of gender much like the postsubculture scholars discuss subcultures of today, implying it is not authentic.

But Butler also offers us the transgressive possibility of performance in the figure of the drag queen. The postsubculture scholars are aware of this possibility, seeing performance as the only possibility of resistance (Muggleton and Weinzierl 10). As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the drag queen performs an exaggerated form of femininity that subverts gendered norms in order to bring attention to the performativity of gender, according to Butler. While some feminists feel the drag queen is misogynistic and degrading to women, Butler examines drag as a means through which one can resist and subvert normative values. In *Bodies that Matter*, she states that “the problem with the analysis of drag as only misogyny is that it figures male to female transsexuality, cross-dressing, and drag as male homosexual activities, which it is not always, and it further diagnoses male homosexuality as rooted in misogyny” (Butler 127). Performance opens the possibility for resistance, even if it is socially inscribed, full of citation.

Jamband fans, although in some ways mirroring the society they resist, perform a resistant position in terms of a complex community. Through Shakedown Street and the goods they sell there, jamband fans use capitalism and free enterprise to feel oppositional to it. Their performance of community, at the very least, rehearses resistance. These may be small events compared with radical protests of the past, but as the Situationists suggest, protest remains most viable in transgressive performance of

everyday life *within* the spectacle. Dada and surrealism inspired the Situationists in their pursuit of revolution in everyday life. The Dadaists looked towards the ready-made in their art, questioning both ownership and authorship. Surrealists tried to challenge the Dadaists in their belief that nothing is new. They realized that shock tactics were limited and strove to use the imagination to find moments of “supreme interaction” (Plant 48). Although these tactics inspired the Situationists, they felt that both these avant-garde movements did not succeed in moving beyond the elite channels of galleries and museums and were too easily recuperated by the spectacle. The Situationists believed everyday life was the correct place for political resistance and that play and spontaneous creativity could open the possibility of a revived desire for change.

The Situationists used an oppositional tactic in everyday life called *detournement*. Sadie Plant translates this as lying somewhere between diversion and subversion, writing: “It is a turning around and reclamation of lost meaning: a way of putting the stasis of the spectacle of motion. It is plagiaristic, because its materials are those which already appear within the spectacle, and subversive since its tactics are those of the reversal of perspective” (86). The May Events of 1968 featured *detournement*. Slogans commonly used in graffiti included “Live without dead time,” “Play without shackles,” “They’re buying your happiness. Steal it!” and “Run for it! The old world is behind you!” (Plant 103). These slogans rework phrases or clichés that then become a sort of subversive joke. One can see jamband fans using *detournement* in their use of parody shirts. Jamband fans use logos that already exist and make the logos

their own by changing them into song titles. The logo that once belonged to a corporation now belongs to the fans. Not only are they subversive, but also very referential: a joke only another jamband fan will get. In this way, the possibility of oppositionality lies in the performance of detournement.

Of course, the Situationists' legacy included many performative events that showed the possibility of resistance and performance. Free radio stations proved that resistance could be expressed through the use of technology, something the Situationists envisioned. Radio Alice, which lasted from 1968-77, and Radio Luxembourg, which lasted for a year in 1968, both broadcast subversive music, poetry, and commentary. Plant describes it as a detournement of radio: oppositional artists using media for new possibilities in creativity and spontaneity.

The punk movement, another Situationist-inspired trend, showed the potential for resistance in performance. Punks resisted the mainstream through their style and music, while attacking British values such as royalty, politics, and the culture industry. These dispossessed working-class youths shocked Great Britain through their ripped jeans, Mohawks, and safety-pin piercings. Punk style began as a critique of style, and the music had a do-it-yourself ethos that echoed the Dadaist critique of art, bringing resistance to everyday life. Two of the punk movement's leaders were well-read in Situationist theory: artist Jamie Reid and Sex Pistols manager Malcolm McLaren. However, as we know now, society almost immediately recuperated aspects of the

movement (Plant 144). Yet some have argued for lasting societal or personal change that punk provided for some (Wójcik 1995).

The Orange Alternative brought Situationist-inspired street performances to Poland in the late 1980s. In order to celebrate International Children's Day in 1987, the Orange Alternative danced in the streets dressed as Smurfs and gnomes while giving away candy. They also celebrated Poland's Official Day of the Police and Security Service by marching in the streets to thank police for their service. They handed out flowers and hugs and police promptly arrested them. Their Christmas march of 1987 consisted of over 2,000 Santas calling for the release of Santa Claus. Their performances hold the Situationists' desire for creativity and spontaneity in everyday life. The Orange Alternative events were successful, as they embarrassed authorities who were accustomed to other forms of direct protest, not something so carnivalesque (Plant 149). This group brought resistance to the everyday by performing in the streets in a way not directly noticeable to the average person. The legacy of the Situationists shows there is the possibility of critique in performance.

Theater scholar Jill Dolan also sees possibilities in performance, not of resistance, but in the utopian performative. In her book *Utopia in Performance: Finding Hope at the Theater*, she argues that performance gives people a place to come together to share experiences, which can give the audience a glimpse of a better world. She uses the term "utopian performative" to describe a moment in which the audience is moved to a hopeful feeling in the theater, making them think critically about the possibility of

utopia. Dolan sees “art as an arena in which an alternative world can be expressed—not in a didactic way . . . but through the communication of an alternative experience” (Dolan 7). Dolan analyzes utopian performatives in the context of theatrical performance, but the idea applies to jamband fan subculture’s performance of resistance.

Dolan extends sociologist Victor Turner’s theory of *communitas* to partially explain the phenomenon of the utopian performative. She says that audiences form *communitas*, or a strong community, while experiencing utopian performatives. This feeling of being part of a strongly bonded community is what gives the audience the feeling of hope that utopia is possible. *Communitas* is a strongly united community that shares a liminal experience and, as a result, forms a tight bond. Turner defines a liminal experience as part of a ritual in which someone is separated from society to temporarily experience an unreal world, or in-between world, that prepares one for a new identity, just as an audience in a theater is separated from the real world (24). Dolan believes theater audiences are separated from society, in the liminal phase of the ritual of attending a theatrical performance, and as they see and experience utopian performatives, the audience forms a bond, creating *communitas*.

As Dolan reminds us, Thomas More defined Utopia as meaning literally “no place” (qtd. in Dolan 36). Another transgressive performer, Oscar Wilde, said, “A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at” (Wilde 34). Utopia is a place separated from society so that members of society may imagine what

they wish it were. Dolan interprets this as meaning that in order for theater to enact a hopeful future, it must move away from reality into a performative (Dolan 38). The utopian performative does not necessarily change the world, but gives us hope that the world can change. It might not provide the audience with the exact means to change the world, but it produces feelings of hope and pleasure, and the possibility of change.

One can criticize jamband fans in stereotypical ways for merely wanting to find a party, but I argue they express a utopian performative, in much the same way Jill Dolan's subjects are performing utopia. Jamband fans separate themselves from society for a period of time, forming a tight bond with each other and creating *communitas*. Maybe they are not changing the world and maybe they are not directly attacking the society from which they are separated, but sometimes they attempt to transform their own personal worlds through their actions, and may envision a better world through going to jamband shows. If they do not truly resist outside mainstream society, they may at least perform a rehearsal of resistance and a sort of utopia. Retreating from society into the performative in order to provide hope as to the possibilities of society, they perform an imagined, ideal world as it should be. They are "feigning what [society] would like to become" (Dolan 36).

Subcultures of the past tried to change society or rebel against society in mass-organized ways, rather than performing an imagined ideal. Jamband fans are not the subcultures of the past that lived their resistance. The hippies dropped out of society as a social experiment and changed the face of American history. The punks lived their

resistance and created new styles and values that challenged the mainstream.

Rastafarians lived in their own world outside of Babylon and followed their own set of rules. Jamband fans today live in a different world than these subcultures and their resistance is a performance of what could be, rather than living their resistance directly and daily. Through the lessons of past subcultures that did not change society but left a mark on history, perhaps jamband fans strive to leave another mark, rather than trying to change society as a whole. This subculture is a bohemian, dropout culture, not an activist culture. Through using capitalism itself, jamband fans try to resist society in a slightly different way. It is nearly impossible to completely resist and change the world, but through small transgressive behaviors, jamband fans show the possibility to others or experience it themselves. As long as jamband fans believe they are “taking a stand against corporate America,” as stated on the poster I described in Chapter III, they at least try. And through their small daily acts of resistance, they may make those around them who are not fully part of the subculture think about the possibility of resistance.

In using styles and philosophies of the past, some knowledgeable jamband fans also pay homage to the subcultures they emulate and they may reinvent the original resistant intent. Jamband fans show us an interpretation of resistance of the past, much like an actor or director shows us an interpretation of a character or a play. The jamband fan subculture copies and reinterprets those previous styles in an attempt to create meaning or to change the world around it, rather than doing exactly what those

subcultures did. Through copying and interpreting, jamband fans may resist mainstream society in some way, although not completely transforming the social order.

Finally, perhaps the potential for authentic action in the jamband subculture is not merely about social change, but also about personal change. Ehrenreich believes that ecstatic dance is something we need to maintain for the health of society. As stated before, there was an outbreak of depression when the Church banned festivity from society as it proved too much of a threat. Perhaps, as a civilization, we need festivity and ecstatic dance to be happy. We need to have *communitas* in which we can express our discontent and desire for change, or we need a space in which we can do whatever we want for a short while and imagine that we are outside the bounds of society. In *A People's History of the United States*, Howard Zinn describes the signs he believes show that citizens of the United States are unhappy and dissatisfied with the economic and governmental systems. Zinn cites surveys since the early 1970s which show that 70 to 80 percent of the population is distrustful of the government (636). He says,

There are other signs: the high rate of alcoholism, the high rate of divorce . . . of drug use and abuse, of nervous breakdowns and mental illness. Millions of people have been looking desperately for solutions to their sense of impotency, their loneliness, their frustration, their estrangement from other people, from the world, from their work, from themselves. They have been adopting new religions, joining self-help groups of all kinds. It is as if a whole nation were going through a critical point in its middle age, a life crisis of self-doubt, self-examination. (Zinn 637)

In response to widespread feelings of estrangement, alienation, or lack of community, the jamband fan subculture fulfills a need for people living in today's society. It is a

place where people find community, satisfaction, alternative ways of living, connection, and happiness. It might not be about changing the world and making political statements at all.

Since Phish announced reunion shows, much discussion regarding what the band means to fans appeared on Internet blogs and forums, suggesting the subculture is partially about personal change. A Phunky Bitch, Tara, said this on a forum message board: “[I remember] feeling so happy. I mean so damn happy . . . and free and content and just *perfect.* And yes I was sober. But that was really amazing to me and absolutely changed me” (*The Phunky Bitch Forums*). In response to Tara, Rosedancer said this:

I remember being at my first show and feeling like I was being given a glimpse into some secret, magical world that I didn't know existed. And feeling that I would LOVE to be part of that world: to know all the songs, to know the phans. . . . So I guess in some ways, the Phish experience gave me a different perspective; an ability to expand my thoughts beyond the world as I knew it, to think about the world as it COULD be; to think about things that may seem off-the-wall, but still be possible; to expand my definition of what is "possible." Seeing Phish also made me more aware of the Unity and Connectedness that IS inherent in the world (and in the Universe), but that many people don't perceive. There's something that happens when Phish plays that, when they're on fire, seems to me to be stronger than any other live musicians I've seen, no matter how talented. And it screams to me of Oneness. And it's really awesome. (*The Phunky Bitches Forum*)

Mr. Miner of *Mr. Miner's Phish Thoughts*, a Phish blog, said this of the community:

You are about to arrive at the greatest place on Earth: Phish. Yes, I speak of it as a place because in many ways it is. In the most literal sense, you must *go to* the show, so it is a concrete location. But more figuratively, Phish is a place inside of you. Phish ultimately has nothing to do with the spectacle and madness of “tour,” and everything to do with what happens

inside of you. Sure, everything else is a blast, but it wouldn't exist without that inner connection. (*Mr. Miner's Phish Thoughts*)

Perhaps at this time in our country's history, imagined communities are able to help people with feelings of disillusionment and loss of community. The jamband fan subculture provides, for those who seek it, some sort of feeling of community, euphoria, or personal change, or fans would not go to the extent they do to attend shows and festivals, or follow bands across the country. But perhaps these fans need to follow their respective bands because there is no way to experience euphoria, community, or personal change outside the space of the jamband show or festival.

Possibilities for Future Research

There are many other facets of the jamband experience that further research could explore. In the November 2006 issue of *Theatre Survey*, Phillip Auslander writes about the musical performance of the Beatles and their fans in his article "Music as Performance: Living in the Immaterial World." In the first paragraph he says, "As a performance scholar and music lover, I find it strange that the fields of theatre and performance studies historically have been reluctant to engage with musical performance" (261). There are many interesting aspects of music as performance, especially in the genre of popular music. Many jambands perform in complex ways that could merit analysis. How does the music express what the fans are expressing? What is it about the music that attracts this type of resistant or oppositional following?

The festival scene—growing mainly in the Midwest, Southeast, and Northeast sections of the country—is another area for future research of this subculture. Since the breakup of Phish, the festival scene has been growing quickly, since there is not a large arena band to pick up Phish's title of arena jamband, like Phish did when the Grateful Dead disbanded. Since there are many more jambands now than after Jerry Garcia died, many fans are touring festivals at which jambands perform. Each weekend during the summer, jamband festivals occur all around the country and are growing in attendance each year (*Jambase*). As I stated in Chapter II, the Ten Thousand Lakes Festival in Minnesota had humble beginnings, but grew from a smaller festival of 6,500 in attendance to become a four-day festival with over 60 bands and four stages with 18,500 in attendance (*Ten Thousand Lakes Music Festival*). Many festivals are experiencing this growth right now, and the subculture is changing because of this new context. The 2008 Grateful Dead Caucus, a panel on the cultural legacy of the Grateful Dead, came to the conclusion that the festival scene will carry the ideals of Deadhead subculture into the future. How will the future of this subculture look? What will be borrowed and what traditions and rituals will be carried on? How will the performance of resistance change?

The jamband fan experience shows us the importance of performance in our social experiences. Through communication, argot, clothing, and behavior, jamband fans experience the vitality of performance within their subculture, demonstrating that performance and theatricality are very much a part of our lives outside the theater.

Performance is the way these fans communicate with each other, even warning fans of others who might be disingenuous, headier-than-thou, or wookies. Maintaining their subcultural values, jamband fans developed a complete and flexible set of performance codes. They know who is who with very little discussion. By maintaining their subculture's values, many of which are positive—peace, freedom, and individualism—jamband fans can experience possibilities through performances that enjoin alternative frames for communication, personal expression, community, and hope.

Jamband fan performance is an expression not only of subcultural identity, but of their dissatisfaction with society and personal conditions outside the subculture. Their resistance is an imagined one that really offers no sociopolitical change except within their microcosm. Through subcultural borrowing, they use philosophies of subcultures that did effect change, but that original resistance is eventually weakened. Their resistance is not a radical, direct one, like many resistance movements in our country's history, such as the Anarchist movement, civil rights movement, and antiwar movements. Jamband fans seem to express a resistance, but are unable to effect change. There is an open, imaginary community rather than one that directly fights the powers-that-be. In a world of recuperation, incorporation, and subcultural borrowing, real resistance seems impossible. Jamband fans continually return to the lifestyle they had before the tour or the festival, showing how our society strictly ingrains its rules within each person. Although our society wants invented communities to reinforce normative American values, I argue our society needs these communities to give its members a

sense of freedom, a place for rebellious expression, and a place to feel a sense of community, even if the freedom is an illusion. As historian Edward Muir stated, subculture is a “safety-valve” (98) to help us feel release from rules and restrictions in our everyday lives. He says that carnivalesque events “allow subjects to express their resentment of authority but do not change anything and, in fact, strengthen the . . . established social order” (Muir 98). We return to the outside culture when the experience is finished, after the “safety-valve” has done its work.

Even though these fans are not truly performing resistance, their performance cannot be dismissed as a failure or as inauthentic. These fans create a community around each other with positive values. As Barbara Ehrenreich theorizes, maybe we need the type of behavior that jamband fans exhibit in our society. If only for a short time, jamband fans are experimenting with a lifestyle that is different, positive, and somewhat utopian. Fans help each other and are kind to each other, even though their subcultural styles and philosophy might not be “authentic” like the styles and philosophies that came before them. In fact, this weakens their resistance, as I have said before, but they pick and choose their styles and philosophies from successful subcultures that *were* able to bring about some sort of change. Jamband fans perform their interpretation of the resistant subcultures that came before them. Is an actor’s interpretation of Hamlet inauthentic because actors have been playing Hamlet for hundreds of years, creating new meaning? As our society keeps evolving, so does the interpretation of Hamlet, and so does personal interpretation of resistant style and

philosophy. An imagined, performative resistance that affects no real change is not necessarily “inauthentic” or a waste. There is a good deal of possibility in performance: possibility in critiquing society, and possibility of imagining a better world.

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