

Schoenfeld, Bethe, and Robert Schoenfeld

The Grateful Dead Subculture in Israeli Society: A Preliminary Study

CITATION INFORMATION

Bethe Schoenfeld and Robert Schoenfeld

The Grateful Dead Subculture in Israeli Society: A Preliminary Study

Grateful Dead Studies

Volume 4 (2019/2020)

Pages: 127–143

URL: http://gratefuldeadstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/GDSv4_Schoenfeld.pdf

LICENSE

Download of this Grateful Dead Studies Licensed Content (hereafter Content) constitutes acceptance of the following terms and conditions: Provided they abide by the restrictions below, users may search, view, reproduce, display, download, print, perform, and distribute Content for the following Permitted Uses: research activities; classroom or organizational instruction and related classroom or organizational activities; student assignments; as part of a scholarly, cultural, educational or organizational presentation or workshop, if such use conforms to the customary and usual practice in the field; authors or other Content creators may at their discretion incorporate their Content into unrestricted databases or websites with prior written permission from Grateful Dead Studies.

The portions of Content that have been downloaded or printed out by a User may continue to be used in compliance with these Terms and Conditions even if such license should later terminate or expire.

Users may not: use or authorize the use of the Grateful Dead Studies Licensed Content for commercial purposes or gains, including charging a fee-for-service; undertake any activity such as the use of computer programs that automatically download or export Content, commonly known as web robots, spiders, crawlers, wanderers or accelerators that may interfere with, disrupt or otherwise burden the Grateful Dead Studies server(s) or any third-party server(s) being used or accessed in connection with Grateful Dead Studies; or undertake coordinated or systematic activity between or among two or more individuals and/or entities that, in the aggregate, constitutes downloading and/or distributing a significant portion of the Content; or make any use, display, performance, reproduction, or distribution that exceeds or violates these Terms and Conditions of Use.

Additionally, users may not: modify, obscure, or remove any copyright notice or other attribution included in the Content; incorporate Content into an unrestricted database or website; systematically print out or download Content to stock or replace print holdings; download or print, or attempt to download or print, an entire issue; reproduce or distribute Content in bulk, such as the inclusion of Content in course packs, electronic reserves, repositories, or organizational intranets.

Grateful Dead Studies encourages the use of links to facilitate access to the Content.

The Grateful Dead Subculture in Israeli Society: A Preliminary Study

BETHE SCHOENFELD AND ROBERT SCHOENFELD

This article discusses the preliminary findings of a study of the emergence of a subculture in Israeli society dedicated to the Grateful Dead. In the past twenty-five years, much academic research has been done on the Grateful Dead phenomenon, investigating its nature and significance using a variety of disciplines: sociology, anthropology, literature, musicology, philosophy, and many more. Even more surprising is the phenomenon's continued existence: the band retired the name in 1995 after the death of cofounder Jerry Garcia, although various combinations of the surviving band members have continued to tour under different names since then, such as the Other Ones, The Dead, Furthur, and most recently, Dead and Company. Critics find the persistence of the Deadhead subculture in America surprising; that it shows no sign of abating, and indeed seems to continue to grow, is all the more remarkable.

Yet it is even more surprising that a subculture of Deadheads has been slowly growing over the past eleven years in Israel, far removed from the band's origins. This study explores the similarities and differ-

ences between the American and Israeli Deadhead subcultures and traces the reasons for the growth of this specific subculture in Israeli society, especially how it structures and maintains specific social realities. We utilized an ethnographical methodology with anonymous questionnaires and personal interviews as well as a participant-observation methodology. While this report is part of a continuing study, already the results merit discussion, and the findings here suggest useful insights into the nature of the Grateful Dead phenomenon and its continued vitality.

The Grateful Dead was a rock band working in a popular idiom, and in that sense can be considered a part of popular culture. Yet the broader cultural phenomenon catalyzed around the band is hard to qualify. Even the terms invite debate, beginning with the band's fans, the Deadheads. For the purposes of this article, a Deadhead is defined as someone who enjoys listening to the music of the Grateful Dead and who identifies himself or herself as part of a larger community of people with similar tastes. David Shenk and Steve Silberman define a Deadhead as "Someone who loves—and draws meaning from—the music of the Grateful Dead and the experience of Dead shows, and builds community with others who feel the same way" (1994, 60). Deadheads have been called a "cult culture" (Lehman 2001, 45) or a "niche culture" (Pearson 1987, 418), yet the Dead continue to sell millions of dollars of recordings and merchandise every year, and the surviving members continue to sell out concerts. One researcher referred to the Dead as "ubiquitous" since they could be seen as part of a "familiar subcultural phenomenon of, once you had heard of them, or perhaps gone to a show or three, they were everywhere" (Lehman 2001, 47).

David Meltzer once referred to Deadheads as a "secret society without secrets" (qtd. in Meriwether 2006a, 5) because anyone could join—you just had to love the music. Yet there is something much deeper to the Grateful Dead phenomenon than "just" the music, or an affinity for it. As this study revealed, there is a cultural connection between Deadheads that crosses geographical and linguistic boundaries. Understanding how this American subculture has been so welcomed in the vastly different Israeli society provides insights into that deeper connection.

Context

The resettlement of Eretz Yisroel (The Land of Israel) in the end of the nineteenth century and the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 brought many changes to both the people and the place. Immigrants wanted to create a new type of person that was different from the Jew of the Holocaust—the sabra, a Jew born in Israel. The sabra is identified with the Zionist movement and more specifically the *kibbutzim* and *moshavim* (different types of socialist communities). In its early years, Israeli society was economically challenged, so the collective became the easiest way to survive. Citing Oz Almog (2000, 226–33), Yural Karniel and Amit Lavie-Dinur note that, “In its nascent stage, Israeli society was harnessed to a cause and marked by a strong official ideology emphasizing the collective and nationalist values of pioneering, Zionism, collectivism, and personal sacrifice for the greater good” (2012, 298).

The influx of rock music from America and England in the 1970s was one of many social forces that fostered change in Israeli society. One of those changes was a weakening of the commitment to the collectivistic values of Zionist ideology and an increase in more individualistic and capitalistic values (Karniel and Lavie-Dinur 2012, 298). Another change was hairstyle. The long hippie locks replaced the sabra hairstyle of the *blorit* (unruly forelock), which “represented the first crack in the culture of the Zionist youth movements,” as Almog argued: “In essence, long and disheveled hair was but one of the many indications of youthful rebellion against the establishment; some of the others were tight jeans, French kisses and overt sexuality, wire-rimmed glasses and music with a strong beat, backpacking and smoking marijuana” (2003, 97).

The sabra today is characterized as having “complementary traits or values that characterize a complex culture swinging between the needs of the collective and the needs of the individual” as well as “between innovation and institutionalization,” among other things (Almog 2000, 256). Many Israelis today are more concerned with capitalist materialism and individual achievement than in the past, as Israeli “culture has been transformed from public to individual and the hold of the united fellowship over the individual has weakened” (Almog 1993, viii). Despite this

transition, critics such as Tamar Katriel still find a “focus on the positive aura of the collective, on the weaving of shared communal bonds in both casual and formal encounters” that they believe remains “a central part of the Israeli experience” (1991, 5).

Rock Music In Israel

From the earliest beginnings of Zionism in Europe in the late nineteenth century, songs expressing a yearning for the land of Israel were a central part of the movement. In the 1930s, composers started writing songs that forged the core of “Israeliness,” songs that directly reflected the experience of building the new Hebrew nation as well as the identity of the new Jew, the sabra. These folk songs are called *shirei eretz yisrael* (songs of the land of Israel) and were standard fare for radio broadcasts and cultural events called *shira b'tzibour* (singing in public or communal singing). One scholar described such performances as “an oral ritual, the audience being the performer, and its central value is that of communal and emotional unity—much like a prayer” (Regev 2010, 231).

As international influences have infused Israeli culture and society, new forms of art and music have been adopted by and adapted to the local culture, among them rock music. Rock music by both non-native and local bands can be heard in Israel in several languages, not just Hebrew and English. This reflects the experience of other cultures’ adaptation to rock, as Motti Regev has argued: “rock music has been presented and conceived as the music which reflects and expresses the feelings and spirit of a specific generational group” (1994, 91). As in the West, rock music in Israel expresses the feelings and spirit of the generation that grew up after World War II, but the difference is that it is part of a worldwide pattern of the genre’s adaptation and assimilation outside of the United States and the United Kingdom. However, the local context still defines that adaptation. As Regev explains, “At its core, rock music expresses the group’s negation of and resistance to its conditions of existence, against anything which is ‘square’: routine, expected, normative, and conformist” (1994, 91). Yet, when considering the adaptation of rock in Israeli society, the “ideology of native-ness interprets the adoption of cultural materials previously perceived as ‘foreign’ and ‘not fitting’ local culture, as an

accomplishment of the ‘normalization’ theme of Zionist ideology. That is, making Israeli-Jewish culture stand in one line with the ‘enlightened’ national cultures of the world” (Regev 2010, 231).

This process of ideological change underlies the development of a variety of musical subcultures in Israel in recent years, including *mizraheat* (Eastern-influenced music from North African countries), klezmer (from Yiddish-speaking Eastern Europeans), as well as rock, rap, and the Grateful Dead.

The Grateful Dead in Israel

Israeli affection for the Grateful Dead is not a new phenomenon. David Brinn, a journalist for the *Jerusalem Post*, has written on the Grateful Dead for many years as well as covering Dead-inspired bands and the recent Mickey Hart show. Beginning in the 1960s, Uri Lotan, an announcer for the GaliTzahal radio station (the official Israel Defense Forces station), was extremely influential in introducing rock music in general, and the Grateful Dead specifically, to Israeli audiences; he is credited with converting the station into the first rock station in the Middle East (Holzer 2005). Even as a soldier, Lotan had a radio show; he claimed that he “played the Dead on the radio [in Israel] probably before they were even played on the radio in the US” (Brinn 1995, B2). In the 1990s, Lotan had a two-hour radio show once a week at midnight on Tuesdays called “Night Birds,” in which he “dedicated” one hour as the “Dead Hour,” featuring music from a single Grateful Dead concert (Ben Porat n.d.). In Lotan’s view, “There’s a following in Israel for the Dead. There have always been Deadheads here—and not just Americans living here. There are lots of Israelis who have gotten into them” (Brinn 2014). Lotan himself saw hundreds of Dead concerts. His friends considered him Israel’s most outstanding Deadhead representative, with a personal collection of approximately 3,000 recordings of the band (Holzer 2005), and he was widely viewed as the leader of the country’s Deadheads (*NRG, Ma’ariv* 2005).

In the 1980s, a band named Beggars and Thieves played Grateful Dead songs in a few Jerusalem clubs, and Ein Safeq (“No Doubt”) played numerous Dead songs from 1992 to 1997, though never an entire concert.

Still, Ein Safeq was the only Israeli band performing Grateful Dead music until 2007. When Ein Safeq reorganized into The Elevators in late 2007, they started playing Grateful Dead music on a regular basis. Today, Jokers and Thieves include a number of Dead songs in their repertoire, but they do not consider themselves a Dead cover band.

The Elevators sometimes call themselves “a Dead cover band” and sometimes “a band that plays Dead.” When queried about the difference, Aryeh Naftaly, the band leader quipped, “The Elevators are just like any Jews—four people, five opinions—which may cause some confusion.” Rob Steiner, the keyboardist, believes that The Elevators are not a Grateful Dead cover band because they do not “cover” the Dead, which he defines as playing the songs note for note in the way that cover bands devoted to the Beatles, Pink Floyd, and other bands do. In his view, there is no single definitive way to perform the Dead’s songs, but even if there were definitive versions or arrangements, The Elevators would not perform those, because the band members need their own musical freedom.

Naftaly uses the term “cover band” less strictly than Steiner. When Naftaly refers to The Elevators as a Dead cover band, he means that they perform some of the Dead’s songs, though not exclusively. For instance, when The Elevators play the Yellow Submarine venue in Jerusalem, they are booked and promoted as a Dead cover band. Yet, at other shows, they may or may not perform any Grateful Dead music. In Naftaly’s view, the different names do not mean much except for purposes of PR or clarification: “People like things to be neatly defined,” he explained (2013).

Naftali believes that “There’s a feeling of something happening” as well as a “growing interest” in the Dead in Israel (2013). To date, there have been five annual Grateful Dead gatherings, all organized voluntarily by a few people who love the Dead. Each year, the number of participants has steadily increased. The ticket price has remained affordable because the organizers have sought only to cover expenses. These are similar values to those of the Deadhead community in the United States. When this study commenced at the fourth Israeli Deadhead gathering on September 19, 2013, there was a strong feeling in the crowd that things were changing in Israel. Since then, our research has uncovered many more people who are interested in the Dead, to varying degrees. When interested

Israelis hear about the gatherings and the Israel Grateful Dead Facebook page, they express enthusiasm and a desire to participate.

Since this study began, the Israeli Deadhead community has become increasingly active. A few of the organizers of the Grateful Dead Gatherings noted that there was a desire from the community for more than just an annual event. In January 2014, an event took place at the pub in Kibbutz Givat Haim Meuchad called the Winter Gathering, which has now become an annual event of its own. It is noteworthy that the subgroup of people attending these Winter Gatherings is slightly different from those seen at the Fall Gatherings. However, the increased interest has not spilled over to the airwaves. Rarely will a Dead song be played on any major radio station. There are a few smaller radio stations that do play the Dead, but these are usually connected to one of the college campuses or alternative stations. Gil Matus, of radio station 106 Kol Hacampus (The Voice of the Campus), has a program called “Dead Set” that features the Dead, the Jerry Garcia Band, or related music. He also hosts another show that features a wider variety of music but includes one or two songs by the Dead. These programs can be heard throughout Israel on the radio or via the Internet or a satellite station. In addition to the Israel Grateful Dead Facebook page, Matus emails his listeners to let them know when specific shows will be broadcast. He has also archived his programs so listeners can listen to older shows.

The Study

There are a number of issues that make Israeli Deadheads an interesting subculture to study, especially given their emergence in a society that is very different from the United States. Israel is the only truly Westernized country in the Middle East today. In addition to known aspects of the Middle East’s indigenous culture (pita, humus, *matkot* paddles, hiking, beach fun, etc.), other aspects of Israeli life, such as styles of dress, movies, and cuisine, are intricately connected to Europe and North America. Israel has a democratic form of government, a free market economic system, a high standard of living, and its scholars have made major contributions to science and the humanities. To assess Israeli Deadheads, we developed two identical anonymous surveys that were made avail-

able in both English and Hebrew and posted on the Israel Grateful Dead Facebook page, as well as via QR codes that were distributed on paper at a cover band concert and at the Winter Gathering in January 2014. We received eighteen responses in English and twenty-one in Hebrew. With 280 members of the Israel Grateful Dead Facebook page, we initially thought that we would garner at least 100 responses. Concerted efforts to secure participation from attendees at the recent Winter Gathering—The Pub at Kibbutz Givat Haim Meuhad, January 23, 2014—only generated two additional responses. Although recipients received a page with the QR codes to the questionnaires and a business card (so people could write directly to get the link), and those who provided email addresses received the links directly, few responded. This reflects the experience of other researchers (Pearce 2000, 74). While Israeli Deadheads are quite willing to give interviews on the spot, they are less willing to make the effort to fill out a survey. This parallels the taper experience of the post-show deluge of people asking for a copy of the show, only to have no one actually send blank tapes.

We also sought to measure the socioeconomic status, age, and education level of Israeli Deadheads, and to compare those with their American counterparts. Researchers have found that American Deadheads cross “traditional barriers of age, class, gender, occupation, and religion” (Pearce 2000, 74; Wilgoren 1999, 193), and that “being a Deadhead is more than a declaration of musical preference” (Pelovitz 1999, 56). Deadheads are often recognized by physical appearance or clothing style, such as long hair, tie-dyed T-shirts, or accouterments emblazoned with one of the band’s symbols (the dancing bear, the Steal Your Face logo, or a red rose). However, not all Deadheads are externally identifiable, nor do they fit the generally negative stereotype of the subculture promulgated by American mainstream society. One researcher found that Deadheads tended to be “older, more educated, with careers in a variety of fields, and are often married or parents” (Pearce 2000, 77–8).

The demographic statistics found in our study are comparable, suggesting that the Israeli Deadhead is quite similar to the “average” American Deadhead. According to one 2003 study, the average age of American Deadheads was 32 and older, with close to 25% being more

than 40 years old (Adams 2003, 3). For our study, the group of questions dealing with demographics could easily be considered cross-cultural, allowing the results of the two versions of the survey to be combined. The majority of respondents were in their 40s (38.5%), followed by those in their 20s and 30s (23.1% and 20.5%, respectively). An overwhelming 82% were male. More than half—56.7%—had completed at least a bachelor's degree and 38.5% were employed as professionals. More than three-fourths (76.9%) considered themselves Deadheads.

The median age at which respondents discovered the Grateful Dead was 18. This finding is noteworthy, given that this is the typical age that American children leave home for college, whereas this is the age when Israeli children leave home and join the army. In both societies, this is the age where people are no longer under the influence of their parents and are able to begin exploring their likes and dislikes independently.

Because the Winter Gathering was held in a small, local pub, it was not surprising to find that the average age of the participants was mid- to late 20s, with a range from age 16 (who came with her father) to a man in his mid-70s, with quite a few participants in their mid-50s. Participants came from all over Israel. There were only a few people wearing tie-dye and a few with Grateful Dead T-shirts, but the predominant attire was typical kibbutz dress for males: jeans, T-shirt, flannel shirt. The audience was principally male, but some families attended—one avid fan had successfully shared his affection for the Dead's music with his brothers and nieces, as well as his close friends.

That successful transmission of Deadhead passion merits discussion. Many Deadheads, especially younger ones, became attracted to the band because “they sense[d] the peacefulness, camaraderie, and sharing” that defined this community, ideals that directly contrasted with “the materialism and competition endemic to mainstream American society” (Pearson 1987, 428). Israeli Deadheads, on the other hand, live in a socialist-democratic culture, where these values remain motivating factors in the overall ethos. Thus, the subcultural values of “kindness, friendship, generosity, flexibility and open-minded acceptance of difference” (Pearce 2000, 79) that many American Deadheads find so appealing are mainstream values in Israeli society. While Israeli society has become

increasingly materialistic and capitalistic, it is still based on socialistic and collectivistic norms. Sharing, for example, is an engrained ideal in Israeli society. David Habbel notes that American Deadheads “were looking for a greater sense of community, a more sophisticated aesthetic experience, and a form of spirituality which goes well beyond what mainstream America has to offer” (2001, 81). Collectivistic Israeli society is built on a sense of community, religion (primarily Judaism), and mutual assistance. This means that Israeli Deadheads have the *communitas* sought by their American counterparts, but they are connecting to a different kind of spirituality and togetherness—one that occurs when a group of people gather to experience the music of the Dead—and not because they feel a lack of those ideals in their lives. The sense of community expressed by Israeli Deadheads was quite strong, with 84.6% responding that they felt themselves to be part of a special community with other Deadheads. More than a third (34.3%) stated that they had many Deadhead friends, while 8.6% stated that most of their friends were Deadheads. Deadheads in both countries see themselves as a subcultural community.

The Israel Grateful Dead Gatherings are organized by volunteers from the Deadhead community. The Gatherings have taken place in a variety of venues ranging from a clearing in a forest to a kibbutz pub to an open-air site. The music played consists of Grateful Dead concert recordings. Like Israeli communal singing and the interactive experience of Deadhead audiences at live shows, the audience at an Israel Grateful Dead Gathering becomes an integral part of the performance. In both cases, the effect is same. At the Winter Gathering held January 23, 2014, a young Israeli man explained at the beginning of the evening that he came because he lived nearby. He had a degree of affinity for the Dead, but he did not consider himself a fan. Later he was seen dancing intensely, and when queried about the music, he replied that he thought he needed to reconnect with the Dead, because he did not remember enjoying himself so much in the past while listening to the music.

One of the survey questions asked if being a Deadhead is “something you are” or “something you do.” We felt this question important because it asked where respondents placed themselves within the world of the subculture. Interestingly, 70.6% answered “something you are.”

This suggests that they identify with the term “Deadhead” and feel that they belong to a larger community. American Deadheads seem to want to “try to construct and implement a system of cultural values different from and in opposition to those of Western culture” (Kolker 2006, 12). Israeli Deadheads are not interested in adopting a different set of cultural values, but they do want to gather with like-minded people to enjoy the music of the band and create an atmosphere of communal enjoyment. This can be seen as *communitas* (Dollar 2006, 41).

Another issue we explored is the stigma that the American mainstream attaches to Deadheads, often for their “hippie” dress and appearance (tie-dye, loose-fitting pants, sandals, long hair), use of drugs, different standards of personal hygiene (especially while on tour), and lack of stable employment. According to one sociologist, the general American public perceives Deadheads as a negative subculture not only “because of their musical taste, but also because of their acceptance of psychedelic drug use and the way they dress” (Adams 1998, 3). However, in Israel there is no negative stereotype. There are no concerts, nor is there coverage in the popular press about either the band or its audience. In short, the subculture is not recognized by the Israeli mainstream at all. While American Deadheads feel alienated from mainstream culture, 94.9% of respondents in this study consider being a Deadhead a positive part of Israeli identity.

One of the negative stereotypes of Deadheads is that they are “unemployed, lazy, drug-users” (Adams 1998, 2). Drug use among the band members and their audience harks back to their origins, beginning with the Acid Tests and the band’s tenure in San Francisco in the 1960s. Yet drug use is by no means a universal characteristic of the Dead phenomenon. As one scholar put it, while drugs could indeed “facilitate the kind of cognitive experiences reported by Deadheads,” many “non-drug using Deadheads report the same kind of experiences” simply from listening to the music (Pearson 1987, 426).

The connections between drug use, the 1960s, and the Deadhead subculture are complex. Researchers have found that for many Deadheads, part of the subculture’s powerful appeal is nostalgia for the hippie era of the 1960s and “the positive value toward drugs held by many older

Deadheads” (Pearson 1987, 428). This survey showed that Israeli Deadheads voice similar feelings in relation to drug use and nostalgia for the 1960s. When asked whether they used drugs while listening to the Dead, 59% of respondents answered “yes” or “sometimes”; 78.9% felt that listening to the Dead had changed their lives somehow. At both of the Israel Grateful Dead Gatherings discussed here, as well as the concert by The Elevators, marijuana use was rampant. Deadheads at these venues described marijuana as an integral part of enjoying the music and the atmosphere. While marijuana is still considered an illegal drug in Israel, it has been recognized by the medical community as legitimate, so much so that the Israeli Ministry of Health has made it available as a medicine for treating a large number of diseases.

There is no one specific aspect of the Grateful Dead that connects Deadheads to the band. For some fans, the key to their enjoyment is the lyrics; for others it is the music, and for some it is the sense of connectedness or *communitas* that comes from being a part of the audience. There is no single, definitive performance of a Dead song—the band’s improvisatory approach to performance meant that lyrics took on different meanings, depending on the concert context. This is true of lyrics in general: as one scholar has observed, “the prevailing approach among producers of meaning is that isolating rock lyrics from their performance and subjecting them to any form of content analysis, reduces their compoundness of meaning” (Regev 1994, 96). The goal of the Dead was to play *with* the song, so that the audience was caught up in the performance, thereby becoming an intricate part of the process (Habbel 2001, 88).

Another issue we explored is how Israeli Deadheads experience the music and lyrics of the band and what that experience means to them spiritually or emotionally. When asked how many hours they spent listening to the Dead, respondents described a range from a few hours per month to all of the time. One factor we incorporated into the study was whether English comprehension affected enjoyment of the Grateful Dead’s music. An overwhelming majority of respondents in both languages stated that they found the lyrics interesting (88% of English respondents and 84% of Hebrew respondents). The question, “Since the lyrics are in English, do you feel that you lack certain cultural connections to understand the

songs?”, generated a predictable response of “no” from 100% of respondents to the English survey, while 50% of respondents to the Hebrew survey said yes, suggesting that some Israelis do not understand the lyrics but do not consider it a barrier to enjoying the music; 47% of respondents to the Hebrew survey stated that they look for translations for assistance. Given that the lyrics of the songs are, in Lisa Eaton’s words, “the primary way in which the band speaks to its followers” (2006, 82), it is interesting that 53% of Israelis who answered the Hebrew survey do not seek out translations, preferring to try to understand them within the context of the music. Despite the fact that English is the dominant language of communication in this subculture, it is not a necessary to be a native English speaker in order to join. As Eaton concluded, “it is clear that the Grateful Dead had and continue to have a unique communication with their fans, based on an interconnectedness that surpasses that of any other self-formulated speech community in modern American [or global] history” (2006, 83).

The Grateful Dead has been called a “guy’s band,” as numerous songs deal with masculine topics. This assertion is consistent with the generally male demographic of the Deadhead community. While there are a few love songs that demonstrate cross-gender appeal (e.g., “Looks Like Rain”), many of the Dead’s songs recount stories that seem to be rooted in a masculine world of pre-industrial times and the Wild West. One Israeli musician described the band’s instrumentation, dominated by guitars and drums, as more masculine, with only the keyboards as a more feminine role (Naftali 2013).

A central part of the American Deadhead experience is going “on tour,” or traveling to shows around the country. Israeli Deadheads do not have these same opportunities. The Grateful Dead and the post-Garcia aggregations have played very few shows outside of the United States, so most Israeli Deadheads do not have the “live” experience of the band unless they traveled. The one exception was Mickey Hart’s performance at a music festival in Jerusalem in August 2013. Our survey revealed that 59.3% of Israelis have traveled abroad to see concerts, giving them a first-hand experience of the *gestalt* of a Dead show. Other Israeli Deadheads

have to rely on online video clips, recorded music, and participation in Gatherings and concerts by Dead cover bands.

This helps to explain one other important finding, which is whether Israeli Deadheads have created their own speech community in their own unique environment. According to the responses from the surveys, 41% of English survey respondents and 80% of Hebrew survey respondents do not engage in the speech community developed by American Deadheads. They do not use terms or phrases such as “on the bus” or “in the zone.” Similarly, only 47.4% Israelis said that they make use of common Dead symbols and insignias such as the Steal Your Face icon to indicate participation in the Deadhead phenomenon. However, many do wear tie-dyed T-shirts at cover band concerts or Israel Grateful Dead gatherings.

We also explored the cultural communication methods employed by Israeli Deadheads, if any. Are they members of the Israel Grateful Dead Facebook page? How do they speak to each other when meeting at an Israel Grateful Dead Gathering? The use of social media in Israel has been growing. By August 2010, there were over 3 million Facebook users in Israel. Compared to the United States, where only 60.4 per cent of Internet users belong to Facebook, an astounding 85.3 per cent of Israeli Internet users are Facebook members (Karniel 2012, 288). We found that 84.6% of respondents are members of the Israel Grateful Dead Facebook site, with 38.9% stating that they post on the website. Of this group, 81.9% posted only about once per month. In addition, 56 % of Israeli Deadheads regularly use the Facebook page to post links to video clips of songs or jams as well posting thoughts related to the band. This behavior is similar to American Deadheads (Pattacini 2000, 8). In fact, by using the Internet and social media to stay in touch, it appears that both American and Israeli Deadheads “are in touch with each other on a more mainstream level than when the band was touring,” as one researcher has suggested (Pattacini 2000, 12).

Conclusion

The subculture of Deadheads in Israel continues to expand and develop rapidly. One of the more interesting facets of this phenomenon

is that many of the people who freely admit to belonging to the Israel Grateful Dead community have never seen a live performance of the band. However, during the Gatherings, where live recordings are played, a special type of atmosphere develops with the music creating a bond with the audience, just as if the performance was live. Our study showed that there are a number of demographic attributes that the Israel Grateful Dead community shares with American Deadheads, and several significant differences. The recent development of an identifiable Israeli Deadhead subculture, in an environment far removed from the Grateful Dead's origins and principal performing territory, has fascinating implications for scholars interested in the Grateful Dead. Despite the death of Jerry Garcia in 1995, and the retirement of the band's name, the legacy of the band and the appeal of its music continue to thrive.

Though some Israeli Deadheads have traveled abroad to see live performances, that is not what sustains the Israeli Deadhead subculture, unlike its American counterpart. The lack of live performances has not prevented Israelis from becoming avid Deadheads, suggesting that scholars may usefully delve more deeply into what has now become a full-fledged international phenomenon. This study provides insights into how a subcultural phenomenon in one country can take root in very different soil, offering insights into that subculture and its broader transmission. Perhaps most of all, for fans, it should be a source of pride, comfort, and validation that Israeli Deadheads have created such a vital, viable, and remarkable subculture.

WORKS CITED

- Adams, Rebecca. 1998. "Inciting Sociological Thought by Studying the Deadhead Community: Engaging Publics in Dialogue." *Social Forces* 77 (1): 1–25.
- . 2003. "Stigma and the Inappropriately Stereotyped: The Deadhead Professional." *Sociation Today* 1 (1). <http://www.ncsociology.org/sociationtoday/deadhead.htm>.
- Almog, Oz. 2003. "From Blorit to Ponytail: Israeli Culture Reflected in Popular Hairstyles." *Israel Studies* 8 (2): 82–117.

- . 1993. *The Army Radio Subculture: The Culture of Kibbutz Youth as Mirrored Through its Language*. Translated by Yehuda Riemer. Ramat Efal: Yad Tabenkin.
- . 2000. *The Sabra: The Creation of the New Jew*. Translated by Haim Watzman. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ben Porat, Ehud. n.d. *Memorial To Uri Lotan*. <https://sites.google.com/site/oudylan/home>. Accessed December 1, 2017.
- Brinn, David. 1995. "Tuning in to the Past." *Jerusalem Post*, March 24, 1995: B2.
- . 2014. Telephone interview by Bethe Schoenfeld, January 12, 2014.
- Dollar, Natalie. 2006. "Mapping the Deadhead Social Science Trip." In Meriwether 2006a, 35–49.
- Eaton, Lisa. 2006. "Words Half-Spoken: The Sociolinguistics of the Grateful Dead Phenomenon." In Meriwether 2006a, 71–84.
- Habel, David M. 2001. "Looking at You Looking at Me: A Review of *Deadhead Social Science*." In Meriwether 2001, 80–90.
- Holer, Roi. 2005. *Ynet*. May 5, 2005. <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3082080,00.htm>.
- Karniel, Yuval, and Amit Lavie-Dinur. 2012. "Privacy in New Media in Israel." *Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society* 10 (4): 288–304.
- Katriel, Tamar. 1991. *Communal Webs: Communication and Culture in Contemporary Israel*. New York: SUNY Press.
- Kolker, Alex. 2006. "What Are Deadheads? An Informal Survey." In Meriwether 2006a, 11–23.
- Lehman, Alan. 2001. "The Grateful Dead and Popular Culture: Personal Reflections." In Meriwether 2001, 45–48.
- Meriwether, Nicholas, ed. 2001. *Dead Letters: Essays on the Grateful Dead Phenomenon*. Vol. 1, Oakland, CA: Dead Letters Press.
- Meriwether, Nicholas, ed. 2006a. *Dead Letters: Essays on the Grateful Dead Phenomenon*. Vol. 3, Columbia, SC: Dead Letters Press.
- Meriwether, Nicholas. 2006b. "Introduction." In Meriwether 2006a, 5–8.
- Naftali, Aryeh. 2013. Telephone interview by Bethe Schoenfeld, November 27, 2013.
- Naftali, Aryeh, Rob Steiner, Michael Roth, and Thomas Curran, 2013. Interview by Bethe Schoenfeld, Moshav Mevo Modaim, Israel, December 12, 2013.
- NRG, Ma'ariv*. 2005. <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/15/ART/930/879.html>, May 5, 2005.

- Pattacini, Melissa McCray. 2000. "Deadheads Yesterday and Today: An Audience Study." *Popular Music and Society* 24 (1): 1–14.
- Pearce, Maryanne. 2000. "Is There Life After the Dead? Deadheads and the Death of Jerry Garcia." *Nexus* 14: 73–85.
- Pearson, Anthony. 1987. "The Grateful Dead Phenomenon: An Ethnomethodological Approach." *Youth and Society* 18 (4): 418–32.
- Pelovitz, David L. 1999. "'No, But I've Been to Shows': Accepting the Dead and Rejecting the Deadheads." In Weiner 1999, 55–65.
- Regev, Motti. 1992. "Israeli Rock, or a Study in the Politics of 'Local Authenticity'." *Popular Music* 11 (1): 1–14.
- . 1994. "Producing Artistic Value: The Case of Rock Music." *Sociological Quarterly* 35 (1): 85–102.
- . 2010. "To Have a Culture of Our Own: On Israeliness and Its Variants." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23 (2): 223–47.
- Shenk, David, and Steve Silberman. 1994. *Skeleton Key: A Dictionary for Deadheads*. New York: Doubleday.
- Weiner, Robert G., ed. 1999. *Perspectives on the Grateful Dead: Critical Writings*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Wilgoren, Rachel. 1999. "The Grateful Dead as Community." In Weiner 1999, 191–201.

BETHE SCHOENFELD has been teaching English in Israel at both the secondary and tertiary levels since 1985. She is former Head of English Studies at Western Galilee College and is now Coordinator for Independent English Programs. She has published two books, *Dysfunctional Families in the Wessex Novels of Thomas Hardy* (University Press of America, 2005), and *The Routine of War: How One Northern Israeli Community Coped During the Second Lebanon War* (Devora Publishing, 2007), and has collaborated on three EAP textbooks.

ROBERT SCHOENFELD earned his PhD in Biology from the University of Utah. He got into the Dead after buying an eight-track tape of *Blues for Allah* in 1975, saw his first show in 1979, and began taping in 1982. He lives in Sacramento, CA.