



indirectly commandeering the positive sheet Mobius, of course, the journey on the river pleasant and exciting. **ARTICLE NAVIGATION**  
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Volume 24, Issue 1  
Robert Hunter's Oral Poetry: Mind Metaphor, and Community  
Spring 2003



[Brent Wood](#)

Poetics Today (2003) 24 (1): 35-63.

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This essay takes an oral poetics approach to the analysis of the song

lyrics of Robert Hunter as performed by the Grateful Dead from the late 1960s to the early 1990s. Hunter's work is treated as an exemplary case for the study of the use of oral poetry within the contemporary electronic communication milieu. The reception of the poetry by the specific listening audience is considered, with special attention given to the functioning of metaphor in relation to states of mind brought about by the use of psychedelics, such as LSD. The poetry itself is situated as both contribution to and commentary on American folk poetry and its accompanying mythology. Reference points include Ruth Finnegan on oral poetics, George Lakoff on the contemporary theory of metaphor, and Aldous Huxley on the nature of altered states of consciousness.

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