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Revisiting Foucauldian Discourse Analysis Approach: Surveillance and Individuality in Tom Wolfe's *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*

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Abstract
This study attempts to examine Tom Wolfe's *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* in the light of the ideas of Michel Foucault, specifically the notions of normalization, institutions, and surveillance that tackle the relationships among power, institutions, and literature. The analysis posits that, in the context of the 1960s, the American government took advantage of all the institutions which were supposed to guarantee the freedom of individuals to curtail their freedom. Seeking to create a normal, ordinary, and homogeneous society, these administrations have employed the police, law, prison, and other overlapping institutions that work in tandem to create circuits of institutions which guarantee to reduce human beings to simpletons who are docile, meek, and ready to fit in place properly. The normality and ordinariness favored by the authorities are also implemented since the novel starts by depicting free individuals whose identities hinge on their being abnormal while it ends when their movement is shattered, and the protagonist is seen as a simpleton serving the forced labor sentence of the judges of both the government and normality. Freedom emerges as a mirage than truth as there seems to be no outside through which individuals can live outside the domination of controlling apparatuses.

Keywords
Abnormality; Individuality; Institutions; Michel Foucault; Normalization; Surveillance.

1. Introduction
Dividing the 1960s into two different political arenas with each having its own characteristics, Morris Dickstein, contends, in his *Gates of Eden: American Culture in the Sixties*, that American society experienced two distinct and radically different climates that accurately reflected the political context of the 1960s. On the one hand, there were some ordinary political movements, the most important of which was the Civil Rights Movement, which sought to promote American democracy by making it accept different views and races. The majority of these movements did not resort to violence as they deemed democracy was attainable through political activism and movements.

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The second part of the sixties was characterized by "frustration", to use Dickstein's concept: "For too many of them America became Amerika: a hopeless racist, repressive, and imperialist power. The influence on Ghandi gave way to the ideas of Frantz Fanon, who had evolved a theology of violence for the third-world intellectuals" (xi). While the early years of the decade followed the path paved by Mahatma Ghandi (1869-1948) with his nonviolent resistance so as to protect their political rights, the latter years of the period started with acts of violence and revolt, aiming at toppling down the suppressive government and shattering its establishment. It is no coincidence that the 1960s has scores of writers who had put their effort in depicting these groups, movements, individuals, students, and their causes.

One of the most prominent writers of the late 1960s, Tom Wolfe (1930-2018) was the luminary whose books have been trailblazers in terms of unearthing the contemporary countercultural movements of his time. With the publication of his magnum opus *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (1968), he delineates the emergence of what was called the psychedelic movement in the 1960s in which he recounts the story of Ken Kesey's life and career as a prospective writer whose life was preoccupied with Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD). Using the techniques of New Journalism, Wolfe tells the story of Ken Kesey (1935-2001) whose *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975) coupled with his later novels are scathing criticisms of the suppressing institutions running in American society. Wolfe grapples with Kesey's involvement with LSD, going back to his time as a university student in the early 1960s when he volunteered for using LSD which was supposed to be used by war veterans as a remedy for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Realizing the power of LSD in creating another world far from the real one for its consumers, he made a lot of other people familiar with the drug and its reality-altering features, ending up becoming the unrivaled leader of the group called Merry Pranksters. The book depicts the life of the group from its conception to its fragmentation near the end of the book.

Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters stop taking LSD and doing many other things that had made them different from the other walks of society due to the pressures of the American government wielded through distinct but overlapping institutions; their aims, in essence, have been making people conform to the norms the government has set purposefully in an attempt to create a kind of normalized and ordinary community by establishing a kind of judiciary, disciplinary, panopticon system in which all individuals are normal. In such a one-dimensional society, the 'abnormal' individuals are chosen and put under the spotlight in a matrix of institutions so as to shatter their individuality either in prisons or other prisonlike slots such as forced labor sites. Reading the book from the

point of view of Michel Foucault (1926-1084) will make a big difference in terms of the questions raised and the topics addressed by Wolfe's non-fiction novel. Adopting the theory of Michel Foucault, specifically his notions of normality, institutions, and surveillance, this study seeks to bring into light the question of freedom in the United States reflected in the novel in the context of the 1960s. To that end, almost all the things done by the American government are held to a freedom standard in order to pinpoint the true value of liberty valorized, apparently only on the surface, by the American government.

Dominating the literary and political arena of the 1950s and 1960s, the countercultural movements, such as the Beat Generation and the psychedelics, along with their literary works were known almost worldwide. Reflecting the lives of the minorities who did not fit in the normal American society, the writings of these countercultural figures really lend themselves to being analyzed from numerous critical approaches. However, as these countercultural figures and literary pieces were considered to reflect the power of the individuals, groups, and movements that had started to go against the grains, most scholars had focused on their ability to resist the domineering ideologies, structures, and norms imposed by the American governments.

Gary Konas rather sees Ken Kesey in Tom Wolfe's book as a villain and outlaw from the point of view of the society in "Travelling "Further" with Tom Wolfe's Heroes". He uses the name of their bus, Further, in the title of the article as he analyzes three books by Tom Wolfe which represent heroes that reflect the culture and subculture of the 1960s. Konas contends that there is one impetus pushing all the heroes of the three novels forward or "further" which is the desire to push the envelope of the normal writing for Wolfe and normal life and thinking for his heroes.

Axel Carl Bredhal follows the same pattern where he accentuates the importance of New Journalism and contends that *The Electric Cool-Aid Acid Test* is open in using the medium, along with the language, and the syntax in his "An Exploration of Power: Tom Wolfe's Acid Test". For Bredhal, the book:

> [I]s an expression of a narrative imagination that sees the possibilities of the twentieth century embodied in the Pranksters. That imagination has discovered the need and ability to integrate both the exuberance and the structure if it is to function in a world characterized by electric energies. (73)

Bredhal also maintains that Kesey and the Pranksters do not succeed in finding themselves as individuals as they see their collected power as a juggernaut to resist rather than comply, a kind of power which has made all the individuals in the group reach for something original in the face of limitations and barriers.

Ana Sobral embarks on a historical analysis of the 1960s, focusing on the concept of deviance which, she argues, is contingent on the society, and that it creates a sense of generational identity among individuals in the wider society in "'Edge City': Deviance in Tom Wolfe's *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*". After mapping the cultural and political arena of the sixties, she draws on a historical analysis to argue that the novel was the manifestation of the frustrations of the young generation who saw their being silent and "by making Kesey the hero of his novel, Wolfe managed to give voice to an important segment of American culture that had still not been addressed by writers of fiction – the Hippie movement" (130).

In "Revolutionary Writing: The Symbiosis of Social and Literary Conflict and Aesthetic Production in Tom Wolfe's *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*", Bryn Skibo-Birney argues that the kind of writing practiced by Tom Wolfe is revolutionary as it blends the conflicts of the society and that of literature with aesthetic production. For him, Wolfe has written a book about a revolutionary era with revolutionary heroes employing a groundbreaking approach to writing called New Journalism. He also maintains that the book, about a revolutionary era with revolutionary heroes employing the groundbreaking New Journalism, reflects the spirit of the age of the 1960s as it demonstrates the social, cultural, and literary problematic changes brought about by the government and individuals in a competing atmosphere.

Other pieces, however, represent the opposite end of the spectrum and rather accentuate the way Wolfe depicts Kesey and other Pranksters' final defeat in becoming real heroes. In "The Cultural Gamesmanship of Tom Wolfe", James N. Stull maintains that there is some sort of game involved in the novel *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* "between the Merry Pranksters and certain members of mainstream culture". Stull overemphasizes the importance of culture and the cultural games between subjects and the government as ways through which governments determine the identity of the subjects. Stull concludes that although he Wolf was not hired directly by the government to write about the subjects' not having any chance to question the superiority of the dominant culture, he was aligned with them in the conceptions and ideologies he promoted in his works as he is a member of the affluent white male that has incorporated numerous clichés, untrue depictions, and status group generalizations.

There have been innumerable attempts at analyzing the novel as realistically as possible on two fronts which view the novel from two distinct perspectives. However, there remains the lacuna regarding the question of how and why the Pranksters are treated in such a way that their whole identity is daily called into question. In order to answer these kinds of questions, the context needs to be restaged with Foucault being

the backdrop against which the novel should be reconceptualized. A Foucauldian reading of the novel fills the gap that has existed regarding a true representation of the novel in its proper historical, social, and political context.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study adopts a thematic analysis of the novel in investigating the text so as to expose the real America in reference to both the general cultural, political, and social climate and the lives of the individuals in such cases. In this undertaking, the researchers aim at representing the real working and operation of power relations and the fate of individual that needs to be dealt with in a profound way that wrestles with both what the text exposes and what it intends to cover.

One of the most significant themes of *Madness and Civilization* (1960) and *The Birth of Clinic* (1963) is the question of the relationship between the subjects and the way they are administered by the government's use various institutions; Foucault's books are, therefore, scathing criticisms of the modern institutions, such as hospitals, prisons, the military, and schools that have proved immensely powerful in creating simpletons whose sole role becomes furthering the needs of the government.

For Foucault, the rise of the individuals has had a direct offshoot which is the reduction of freedom of the subjects; in other words, as Foucault portrays in a chapter of *Discipline and Punish* (1995) entitled "The Carceral", the history of individuality has experienced a downfall from the 1740s by the institutions that, utterly surprising, had aimed at serving the same individuals that now they have kept in different prison-like institutions with the aim of "the accumulation and useful administration of men" (303). Therefore, Foucault opines, power has been highly active in individualizing so as to be able to control and regulate the same individuals it has created, leading to rendering them simpletons with no conceptions of freedom:

> Compulsory schooling, public health measures, passports, employment records, family counseling, and the like are all very recent social practices…. In each case, an institution molds behavior according to a norm, subordinates individuals to institutional demands, examines and watches over all subjects, and punishes deviants….The institutions that administer individuals (schools, factories, the army) use the same strategies and techniques of control that prisons employ. The modern state focuses its energies on "governmentality"—that is, on rendering citizens governable. (Leitch 1471)

The institutions, therefore, become norm inducing in that they seek to find and categorize what is not normal. The individuals, Foucault argues, stop being individuals and become rather cases by which they first become objects and enter the nexus of power

relations. The nexus of power relations is widespread into the society by the institutions that the government has employed in order for the individuals "to be trained or corrected, categorized, classified, normalized, excluded, etc." (Foucault, *Discipline* 191). The functions of so many institutions which have haunted the whole society are manifold, with normalizing and making individuals ordinary being their main commission:

> The existence of a whole set of techniques and institutions for measuring, supervising and correcting the abnormal brings into play the disciplinary mechanisms to which the fear of the plague gave rise. All the mechanisms of power . . . are disposed around the abnormal individual, to brand him and to alter him . . .. (Foucault, *Discipline* 199-200)

In order to make individuals normal and ordinary, Foucault contends, governments use a lot of techniques and strategies, institutions and their collective power, and cultural and political ideologies and structures, all of which will be detailed and analyzed in this study.

3. Analysis and Discussion

3.1. The Abnormal Prankster's Normalization by Police and Law

The novel *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* opens with characterizing Ken Kesey and his followers, Merry Pranksters, as people who are abnormal and hostile towards the standards of the American normal society. Being abnormal is their defining feature in reference to their identity which dominates not only their mentality and beliefs, but also exhibits differences in their clothing, their whereabouts, and elsewhere.

In delineating the unfolding of the events in the novel, Wolfe compares and contrasts Merry Prankster with other common people; he argues that Merry Pranksters wear boots since they disliked wearing shoes which were low-cut as they were worn by FBI agents and all other authorities. Almost all the clothes they are wearing are strange as well as weird categories such as "in serapes and mandala beads and Indian headbands and Indian beads", gnome hats, and "jesuschrist strung-out hair" (Wolfe, *Electric* 256). Furthermore, the other thing that had made Merry Pranksters different from others is the fact that they have been using a drug called LSD which was something new in terms of its function in transcending reality into the state of intersubjectivity. While Wolfe describes the neighborhood of former countercultural movements as changed or cast away by them which makes them no different from other normal neighborhoods of California, he contends that the whereabouts of the Merry Pranksters is something completely distinct and different; Merry Pranksters inhabit a warehouse which is originally a converted parking garage. The gloomy place is replete with people who are wearing American flags, painting, and writing some mottos on an old bus, later becoming their spiritual site.

Almost all the Merry Pranksters have attributes that make their personality unlike other normal people, just like Ken Kesey himself; Babbs is a Vietnam veteran, has served as a helicopter pilot, and is also a passionate writer whose typewritten manuscript of about four or five hundred pages of his experiences in war is kept in a cardboard box in the warehouse; Neal Cassady who has spent almost all of his life on the road; Owsley who is himself a chemist and the manufacturer of LSD; Black Maria who is a fugitive taken by Kesey from Mexico during his escape from the police; the Hermit who is a kid living in the woods who joins Kesey at his house; and, finally, Stark Naked who is almost always naked. Merry Pranksters, their leader, their clothes, their personalities, and their ideas all demonstrate the fact that they are abnormal people whose identity and existence hinge on their being radically different in every mode and not to fit in.

Being different and combating the administering regime, however, become burdensome and complicated as the group encounters a regime which has been strategically planning to neutralize such pursuits of abnormality and resistance. Pre-modern power used to exercise power on the lives of the individuals only sporadically without being noticed by them; however, Foucault opines, modern power operates on another level in which they exercise power on all individuals in society from the day they are born, searching out to shape, train, and normalize them. Schools, law, police, hospitals, factories, and the army are sites where Foucault accentuates as institutions that are highly conducive to subordinating individuals to institutionally-pinpointed conduct which also examine and punish deviants, following the paradigm of prisons (Foucault, *Discipline* 295-296).

Ken Kesey's life, along with those of all other Mary Pranksters, is unavoidably and unstoppably intervened by the innumerous institutions that are at work in society. One of the master words of the novel which preoccupies a threatening position throughout the novel is the word law. Law does not mean taking measures to protect the freedom of individuals nor does it make individuals believe in their freedom to be endorsed by the government; on the contrary, law becomes a site through which individuals feel the grip of the government on them. Throughout Ken Kesey's life pictured in the novel, he is all the time hiding from something, running away from something, and finally housed in La Honda by the end of the novel by something, and the something that is haunting him and finally takes complete control of his life is law.

Serving the interests of the government in rendering people all the more conform to the standards set for them, the first act of the institution of the law is to penalize the deviants. In essence, the novel opens with Kesey being in San Francisco jail waiting for bail as he has been running away from the law. In January 1966, the Pranksters throw a

party called the Trips Festival. Steward Brand came up with the idea of the party as he thought it was their best choice to have a party with all the previous characteristics and experiences except that they did not use LSD. A couple of days before the Trips Festival, Kesey and Mountain Girl go to Steward Brand's apartment to discuss the arrangements. They, then, go to the roof of Brand's building and talk over the details of the party and there they throw small stones into the alley below just for fun. They do not know that, however, one of the neighbors in the building has called the police on them for being loud and noisy. When the police officers arrive, they insist that they have seen Kesey throw a small bag of drugs onto the roof of another building. Utterly obsessed about the consequences, Kesey fights one of the officers; however, the bag that the police find contains marijuana, and this becomes the cause of the majority of Kesey's complications. Although he is allowed to attend the Trips Festival and bailed out of jail, he is approached by law but in a more structured way: first of all, he is made to sell his house and leave San Mateo County; as he has violated the law at the Trips Festival, there has been a warrant put out for his arrest; and, finally, as he has violated his parole, it leads to five years of prison for possessing marijuana.

The second technique that the institution of law employs is separating the group members, specifically the leader and the members of the group. When one of the judges had agreed to his parole, he had imposed the condition that he must stop his communicating, spending time, and even talking to the members of the Pranksters, "as one of the judge's conditions had been that he no longer associate with the Pranksters"(Wolfe, *Electric* 256). This condition casts more light on the strategic nature of the institution of law, which works in tandem with other institutions so as to isolate, alienate, and create "others" who need to be stigmatized and deprived of their own individuality.

The third technique that the institution of law employs is what Foucault calls panopticon—a term he borrowed from the nineteenth century English political philosopher Jeremy Bentham suggesting a kind of circular prison system in which the prisoners are under the constant surveillance of a guard in the tower located in in the center of the structure – – which strives to foster a feeling in the inmates or individuals that they are inexorably visible which, in turn, leads to the automatic functioning of administration by the way of silent coercion (Foucault, *Discipline* 201). Panopticism, he propounds, is an underlying characteristic of all mental hospitals, educational institutions, and factories, and that it has conceptualized a kind of administration through power that is exercised by visibility and silence. In the same vein, the American government follows the strategy of inducing the feeling of unavoidable visibility of all countercultural movements conducive to silence. During his time in Mexico as a fugitive,

Kesey is invariably concerned about his being watched and arrested by the police that creates a kind of paranoia in him. One evening when they are driving on the highway, the police stop them and find marijuana in their car and before arresting them, Kesey manages to run into the jungle and get on a passing train. He ends up in Guadalajara and there he goes to the American consulate and, by introducing himself as a fisherman, makes them send him to where other Pranksters are staying. On his return, he is told that Hagen and Ram Rod are in jail. This incident puts even more pressure on him when his sense of paranoia is accentuated and he feels he is perennially under the gaze of the police. Although Kesey is in Mexico and must be unconcerned about the interruptions by the police, the idea of police watching him constantly haunts him, creating some sort of fear that leads him to stop acting normally:

> In any case, Kesey began to feel like it was only a matter of time before they closed in. It wasn't so much the Mexicans he was worried about. . . . [I]t was the Stateside zealots. The FBI bodysnatchers worried him. He knew about Morton Sobell, the atom spy, who suddenly turned up one day at a border town in the custody of an FBI agent, walking across the border with the Feds. If the FBI can grab you in Mexico, physically, the Mexicans will play along with that, too. And the zealous head-buff San Mateo County cops. Word was that San Mateo cops were taking their vacations in Mexico for no other reason than to go Kesey-hunting and make more fat headlines. (Wolfe, *Electric* 328)

One of the most important claims made by Foucault in terms of the ubiquity of institutions and the way they have filled everywhere is that there is no outside to these institutional systems of surveillance; they have not left any space for secrets, and there are no hiding places for individuals. Foucault argues that there is nowhere outside discourse and, thus, there is nowhere for the individuals to escape as it is under the unavoidable monitoring of discourse fulfilled with the police and other authorities (Foucault, *Discipline* 301). After he arrives in Mexico, Kesey hires an apartment near the jungle and now he has an aid called Black Maria on her way to Mexico. Kesey, although frightened of being captured by the authorities, police, and law from the day he arrived in Mexico, is now completely afraid of being arrested and, therefore, devises an escape plan which is arranged like this: when he notices he is being followed or watched, he will run into the jungle near his apartment and after spending a couple of days there, he will return when Black Maria gives him a signal. Developing paranoia from early in his encounters with police, the circuits of the institution have performed their roles so well that there has remained almost no hiding place that individuals can resort to. Neither in America nor Mexico is he outside the purview of the institutions that have proved ubiquitous to the people who do not fit in.

One of the major offshoots of the panopticon is silence which is, for Foucault, the other feature of modern American society in which people will automatically learn that they should keep quiet as they are under the influence of the panopticon. The leader of the group, however, has developed a kind of perspective that prefers silence over provoking action and he stops fighting. At issue is the representative, a remarkable example of Kesey's speaking for provoking the public; a group known as the Vietnam Day Committee organizes a rally against the war in Berkely and Kesey is invited to be the keynote speaker. They plan to gather 15000 young people across all the West and the organizers seek to make the crowd angry and instigate a violent struggle between themselves and the National Guard. They arrange to have 20 to 30 speakers to make the crowd angry and to march through the streets. Although Kesey was meant to be one of the speakers who could prove highly effective through his clout of character, instead he plans a great prank. On the day, Kesey is arranged to be the next-to-last speaker and the crowd is very much engaged and interested when he starts speaking. However, instead of continuing the anti-war theme, he tells the audience that they are simply playing "the game":

> You know, you're not gonna stop this war with this rally, by marching. . . . [T]hat's what they do. . . . [T]hey hold rallies and they march. . . . [T]hey've been having wars for ten thousand years and you're not gonna stop it this way. . . . [T]en thousand years, and this is the game they play to do it . . . holding rallies and having marches . . . and that's the same game you're playing . . . their game . . . . (Wolfe, *Electric* 222)

Following that, he takes out a harmonica and starts to play and sing "Home On the Range" along with other Pranksters playing their instruments. Instead of making people ready to attend a protest rally, Kesey decides to dampen their enthusiasm. Aware of the judges and guardians of normality by now that have undertaken taking their individuality away from them, Kesey tells them that people are not important. While their march was meant to disseminate the credo that individuals can bring about change together, Kesey declares that they are fighting a losing battle and that their best alternative is to stop fighting and keep silent.

The fourth technique that the institution of law, along with its satellite institution, the police institution, employs is appointing guardians, which are at the same time appointed supervising judges, to accompany almost all people, specifically those who are deemed a potential danger to the order of the society. One of the greatest statements made by Foucault regarding the question of normality is "the judges of normality are present everywhere. We are in the society of the teacher-judge, the doctor-judge, the

educator-judge, the 'social worker'-judge; it is on them that the universal reign of the normative is based" (Foucault, *Discipline* 304); that is to say, there are no sites and no stints from which individuals manage not to feel the ubiquity of what is called the judges of normality. On different occasions and across different roads, the police, which are nominated by the institution of law, are present everywhere the Pranksters go; in other words, whether they are on the road, having parties, inviting other movements to their whereabouts where they throw parties, being invited by others, and inside the country or in the neighboring one, they are being watched and are under constant surveillance. In a specific case, the Pranksters use their bus, Further, which they had made ready to travel to New York for a fair and what happens during their trip to different places characterizes their being constantly under the eyes of the judges of normality as well as their spite against the kind of conformity and homogeneity that used to dominate American culture in the immediate decades after the war. There is a confrontation between the Pranksters in the bus and an officer in California State Highway where the officer pulls the bus over to inspect it; the officer is nonplussed regarding who these people are and what they are doing as the Pranksters are on LSD and this state is not something that can be recognized by the officer or any other authority; what is important to the police officer judges is that they are not normal which suffices making the Pranksters suspect of being guilty. Although he has to allow them to go as for he is not sure what is wrong with them and what illegal act they are committing, it signals the group's control by their being perennially judged by the police force regarding their every action that seem to be characteristic of evincing resistance.

While freedom has been defined as the ultimate goal of many movements and groups which were supposed to materialize in the second half of the twentieth century and it has been applauded by many scholars that such a freedom has been achieved by many individuals and movements, a Foucauldian analysis discloses fully that freedom and nonconformity will be reduced to surface instead of substance, and are viewed more as forms of entertainment as they are under complete control of the different institutions from their inception to the point that they lose their full potential in bringing about any manner of change, let alone freedom.

3.2. The United Institutions of America: Matrix

Matrix was another term used by Foucault to delineate a close-knit structure of different materials to enforce and induce, forging ways to exercise control over individuals, leading to rendering them unaware and retaining them under the control of all pervasive powers which account for "the elaboration of a whole range of techniques and practices for the discipline, surveillance, administration and formation of populations of human

individuals" (Foucault, *Power-Knowledge* 329). There are numerous institutions engaged in making Kesey and the Pranksters conform to the norms set by the government. Law has almost been the main force behind keeping the group in control, coupled with police force and the authorities which are meant to be the guardians of the law. The police, the law, the judges, and all the authorities that are designated to normalize almost everyone are absolutely active in tightening the circle of control which has been influenced by other institutions in this matrix.

All the institutions in this society imbricate, are directly coupled with other satellite institutions, and, consequently, bring about a matrix which connects all the institutions in exerting more intense pressure so as to make the society an open-air prison that "with its systems of insertion, distribution, surveillance, observation, has been the greatest support, in modern society, of the normalizing power" (Foucault, *Discipline*, 304). The police, the system of law, the courts, and judges, and officials all overlap in starting to inspect and scrutinize the private lives of abnormal people, each leading to the other which ends up individuals getting stuck in a system that seeks to condition, indoctrinate, conform, and normalize.

To illustrate what matrix is like in the novel, investigating the way Pranksters held parties and were later stopped by numerous institutions, each giving way to the other after wielding power makes the case particularly evident. Built on the idea that he must be an active agent in disseminating the idea that the identity of individuals is based on their being unique selves and not meek subjects made by the dominant ideologies, Kesey founds the group and develops it step by step through different and continuously more advanced parties they held. However, his group encounters obstacles when Kesey holds his biggest Acid Test party at the Fillmore Auditoruim in San Francisco, and then the place is shut down by the police. The police seem to be the first institution that strives to take control of all normal and abnormal, overt or covert, and good or bad activities of all. Afterwards, Babbs and later all of the Pranksters are arrested but Kesey's lawyers can bail them out in the end. Kesey has still legal problems as he had had a fight with a police officer when they had raided his house in La Honda. The police are also insisting that Kesey is guilty of dealing drugs to minors. Eventually, Kesey makes a deal with a judge and gets three years' probation and six months on a work team.

Nonetheless, the institution of law plays the determining role in framing what the Prankster are required to do. When they have thrown the four-day-long party the day after he was arrested for possessing marijuana, Kesey has to start all over again; he needs to sell his house and leave the neighborhood where he used to live in just because one of the terms of the fiat of one of the judges, after which he moves to Babb's home in Los

Angeles. As he has violated his parole at the Trips Festival, he is put under arrest by another warrant and the prison sentence is mandatory and he must go to prison which makes him leave for Mexico where he will continue his life along with some other Pranksters that accompany him.

American society's institutions tasks are to create bodies that are both docile and capable brought about by innumerable institutions in the matrix through which "we are promised normalization and happiness" (Dreyfus & Rainbow 196). These institutions seek to make educated, refined, cured individuals who are also docile and manageable. They must also be strong to do what the society makes them do. The aftermath of the final party that they throw puts the working of matrix on display; at the end, Kesey becomes a perfect example of a docile body, and he does what the law and its agents, such as the police officers, authorities, and judges tell him to do for a couple of years. A couple of weeks after the disastrous graduation, Kesey's trials start for his carrying Marijuana, resisting the police, giving drugs to the minors, and violating his parole. The proceedings finished by Kesey being sentenced to three months' prison, six months' forced work on a farm near where he formerly lived in La Honda, and fined 1500 dollars. He spent the time in prison and then went to La Honda to serve his sentence of forced labor where he continued writing and the bus, Further, was also parked near his house, one of the dreariest depictions in all literature.

> In June, Kesey began his stretch on the work farm, which was just a few miles from his old place in La Honda. He worked in the tailor shop. He was let out last November, after serving five months. He went back to Oregon, and he and Faye set up house in a shed on his brother Chuck's farm, up a gravel road south of Springfield. The shed was called the Space Heater House, after a gas heater inside that gave off a jet flame when it lit up. . . . [I]n the spring, various Prankster . . . Babbs and Gretch, George Walker, Mike Hagen, Hassler, Black Maria . . . began finding their way to Oregon from time to time. Kesey was writing again, working on a novel. The bus was there, parked beside the Space Heater House. (Wolfe, *Electric* 414)

This final passage of the book provides a bleak description about the ways almost all the Pranksters were forcefully alienated from each other and their movement with Neal Cassady's boy found dead in Mexico, Kesey's serving his term before working near La Honda for the government, and his final residence in Oregon. Kesey becomes the perfect example of an institutionalized man; although he was an abnormal, healthy, and energized athlete, writer, and leader at first, he ends up being reduced to a kind of simpleton who is serving merely the interests of the government.

Apart from the unity of numerous states in United States of America, there has been formed another unity which does not call for any kind improvement in the circumstances of individuals, yes strives to unite institutions which seem to have some kind of relative autonomy and serve different ends into a structure which centers on stripping Ken Kesey and other Pranksters of the last shreds of freedom they may still have. The administrations, officials, and authorities do not unit people as they may claim; rather, they bring about a circuit of institutions overlapping and connecting with satellite institutions that seek conformity, docility, and homogeneity for the sake of maintaining and reducing the status quo, a fact that seems not to exist, except when a Foucauldian approach is deployed.

4. Conclusion

The impulse toward making individuals normal and ordinary looms large in Foucault's political philosophy, a recurring theme that can be traced in almost all of his works. However, Foucault's focus has been on modern institutions that assist governments in achieving to forge a homogenized community in which conformity is valorized as the most important characteristic of individual's identity. On a similar note, Wolfe portrays the same trend in characterizing the movement launched by Ken Kesey as getting imprisoned through institutions connecting with other satellite institutions in the framework of power in the American society. The findings of this study demonstrate that, similar to the transitioning of individuals into simpletons and subjects that easily and really fit in represented by Foucault, Wolfe tackles the same theme; he starts with the rise of the Merry Pranksters and overemphasizes their credo that abnormality and not to fit in is the major component of their identity and ends it with their disaggregation owing to numerous institutions casting their web of power so as to tangle those who are different. Starting with his taking LSD and the beginning of his and other Pranksters' being under perennial and inevitable surveillance of police institution, to his being convicted by law on different occasions, from his being sent to prison to his being sentenced to a relatively long period of forced labor, all indicate the way the American government has tapped into the clout of its circuits of institutions represented by Tom Wolfe.

The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test is merely one instance of a literary work that aims at exhibiting the political, cultural, and societal structures of the late 1960s; the novel is chosen to illuminate this backdrop although many other works of the same period of time could have served equally well. The novel reflects the spirit of the age of the late 1960s, a time which was critical for the American government as numerous movements and schools were finding their place among an audience which sought change,

difference, and distinctiveness. The ways that governments and people interact with each other is one of the primary concerns for writers and critics and the task of this study has been to open literary studies to political, cultural, and societal disciplines and fields and to engage other scholars to embark on lines of enquiry that grapple with the interconnection of literature and its surrounding and circulating forces in specific political, cultural, and social climates.

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