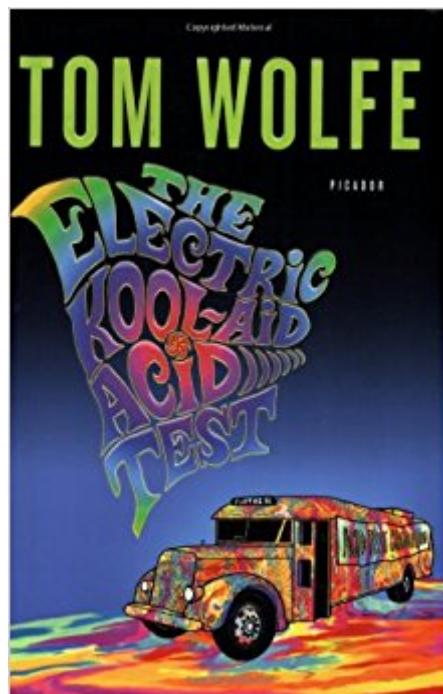


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# The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test



## Synopsis

Tom Wolfe's *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* ushered in an era of New Journalism, "An American classic" (Newsweek) that defined a generation. "An astonishing book" (The New York Times Book Review) and an unflinching portrait of Ken Kesey, his Merry Pranksters, LSD, and the 1960s.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

They say if you remember the '60s, you weren't there. But, fortunately, Tom Wolfe was there, notebook in hand, politely declining LSD while Ken Kesey and his Merry Pranksters fomented revolution, turning America on to a dangerously playful way of thinking as their Day-Glo conveyance, Further, made the most influential bus ride since Rosa Parks's. By taking *On the Road*'s hero Neal Cassady as his driver on the cross-country revival tour and drawing on his own training as a magician, Kesey made *Further* into a bully pulpit, and linked the beat epoch with hippiedom. Paul McCartney's *Many Years from Now* cites Kesey as a key influence on his trippy *Magical Mystery Tour* film. Kesey temporarily renounced his literary magic for the cause of "tootling the multitudes"--making a spectacle of himself--and Prankster Robert Stone had to flee Kesey's wild party to get his life's work done. But in those years, Kesey's life was his work, and Wolfe infinitely multiplied the multitudes who got tootled by writing this major literary-journalistic monument to a resonant pop-culture moment. Kesey's theatrical metamorphosis from the distinguished author of *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* to the abominable shaman of the "Acid Test" soirees that launched The Grateful Dead required Wolfe's Day-Glo prose account to endure (though Kesey's

own musings in Demon Box are no slouch either). Even now, Wolfe's book gives what Wolfe clearly got from Kesey: a contact high. --Tim Appelo --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Ã¢ "Tom Wolfe is a groove and a gas. Everyone should send him money and other fine things. Hats off to Tom Wolfe!"Ã¢ "Terry SouthernÃ¢ "The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test is not simply the best book on the hippies, it is the essential book . . . the pushing, ballooning heart of the matter . . . Vibrating dazzle!"Ã¢ "The New York TimesÃ¢ "Some consider Mailer our greatest journalist; my candidate is Wolfe."Ã¢ "Studs Terkel, Book WeekÃ¢ "A Day-Glo book, illuminating, merry, surreal!"Ã¢ "The Washington PostÃ¢ "Electrifying."Ã¢ "San Francisco ChronicleÃ¢ "An amazing book . . . A book that definitely gives Wolfe the edge on the nonfiction novel."Ã¢ "The Village VoiceÃ¢ "Among journalists, Wolfe is a genuine poet; what makes him so good is his ability to get inside, to not merely describe (although he is a superb reporter), but to get under the skin of a phenomenon and transmit its metabolic rhythm."Ã¢ "Newsweek

A great book, one of my favorites. Fascinating subject, fun to read, and extremely well written, especially since it's narrative non-fiction. Given that half of the action occurs in the characters' minds, and given that three fourths of that is neither real nor readily describable, it has to be said that Wolfe did a truly expert job.

Interesting read about a historical time I grew up in, but did not realize the huge effects this subculture had on the culture at large at that time. Looking back, it is rather mind blowing (no pun intended) to read about Further and its occupants. Well written by the author.

LSD Jesus and his disciples cross the land making mischief . Their wildly unconventional ways of living and creating directly lead to the Grateful Dead, Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Heart Club Band and Apple Computer.

Get on the bus and dig the vibes,a great read especially if you love the hippies and Tom wolfe

A favorite of mine. Good to have it and read it again.

Fun ride. I read this book in 2015, decades after it was written. Takes you back in time, great insight into the drug culture and hippie hedonism. You feel like you know these people, although I would never invite any of them to my house!

This book is around 400 pages and a very detailed history, many stories, and it's hard to remember all the facts, you'll have to read the book yourself for that. The story is of the "Intrepid Travelers," Ken Kesey and The Merry Pranksters, a communal group of acid ingestors who were the progenitors of the acid consciousness in the California, in the US, in the world's consciousness of awareness . . . "your either on the bus or off the bus." It was the influential chemists, Al Hubbard, Dr. Spaulding and the psychologists, Timothy Leary and Richard Albert, the Harvard psychology professors, who discovered for themselves psilocybin and with Michael Hollingshead and Albert Hoffman, LSD and subsequently held experiments using the right set and setting with experienced psychedelic guides. Yet to this the Merry Pranksters would say, "f\*\*k that!" because they were from a different movie of living; in the now, the unseene and lurid art, your brain being your only guide, not some experienced taker and specific setting for a safe non-freak-out trip (and there were a lot of "freak-outs" from many young, emotionally inexperienced). And the acid influenced cultural movement they began in the early 1960's. It was Leary and Albert who endorsed the "set and setting," the intellectual approach or non-organizational religious approach, the religious experience of the mystics, in their dialogue with acid and mushrooms. With Kesey and the Pranksters it was spontaneous, wild party kind of living in Day-Glow colors, in the multimedia sound and movie. The Pranksters account starts in North Beach on Perry Lane, which becomes a major hang out for all sorts and eventually ends up in a cottage near La Honda, where the loud party of outlandish, Day-Glo painted woods - rigged with microphones and massive sound equipment, in the communal life takes on a new meaning. The Hell's Angels befriend the Pranksters and there are stories of personalities, telepathic and psychic connections and synchronicity in new fields of human life, the overmind, the collective unspoken mind of the psychedelic group. The religious realm of mystical awareness as in the game of I-Ching and dream wars. The Jungian "synchronicity" seemed to occur uncannily many times, as their bus out of gas in the middle of nowhere only to have a tanker pull up and fuel them from nowhere. The sign on their door welcoming the Hell's Angels to end up having them and succeeding in their prankster madness. The sign on their door welcoming the Beatles, did not synchronize them to appear, but what did was having Oswey appear, the famous acid maker, who in the ways of synchronistic noncausal effect, was responsible for the finest acid which spread to England, the acid that brought the Beatles to experience the unspoken mind which

ended them up traveling by bus across the English countryside with cameras and microphones. Imagine a Day-Glo painted bus, the magic bus, with Day-Glo painted people and clothes, tripping on acid traveling from California to the New York World's Faire with music blasting, a freak show on wheels, all in the year 1964! And Neil Cassidy (Jack Kerouac's buddy and drive from *On The Road*) driving the bus!! And their trip to the legendary Millbrook, thinking it would be some historic meeting with Leary and the Pranksters, but instead it was the mystical religious and intellectuals versus the wild party, American flag draped, painted, loud blaring music, party animals of psychedelic madness. I think it relates to the age and the introvert and/or extrovert type personalities that played the large part. It was actually Stewart Brand who thought up the great Trip Festival of January 1966. The series of acid test parties held by Kesey and the Pranksters helped spawn the movement of higher consciousness, all held at the last minute, the same day notification was put, and the Pranksters playing their instruments, then finding a local band, the warlocks - later known as the Grateful Dead - to play and Roy Seburn's light shows at the acid tests. It was the acid test held in a Unitarian church where the Kool-Aid was spiked, unknowingly to those attending. It was not teachings in the stiff, reverent language and texts of scholarly limnings found in various religions being taught but instead an aura, a religious experience, an awareness that flashed deeper than cerebration, the tradition of the great prophets. People like the beats Allen Ginsberg and his entourage and Neil Cassidy were there. As this spread, so the acid tests, later without Kesey and Haight Ashbury became the scene. Later on Kesey gets busted twice for weed and is on the run from the law, to Mexico and back until caught - he was in their movie that time, fortunately most charges dropped. A lot to read of the characters and generally a great book to get an idea of a unique and special time and place in history where a much larger degree of freedom existed for the white middle class with the ability to gain other realms of consciousness available for the taking. A great pictorial book on this is "On The Bus" by Paul Perry, Michael Schwartz, Neil Ortenberg & Ken Babbs.

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