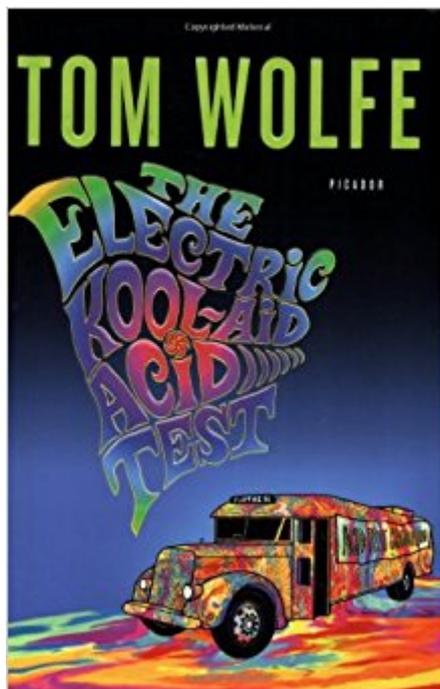


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The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test



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

Paperback: 432 pages

Publisher: Picador; Sixth Printing edition (August 19, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 031242759X

ISBN-13: 978-0312427597

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.7 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (353 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Regardless of one's ultimate attitudes about the permissive atmosphere that prevailed during the Pandora's Box that became the 1960's, Thomas Wolfe's detailed, passionate and fascinating portrait of Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters makes for required reading. Whether for ill or well, Kesey and the Pranksters are responsible for creating much of what the popular masses call "The 60's". While reading this book, that mere (and ironic) fact becomes ever so clear. When I recently visited Kesey at his ranch in Oregon, I asked him if Wolfe "got it right". Kesey's response? "Yes he did. But understand that he (Wolfe) gives a real East Coast version of what was essentially a West Coast phenomenon." What I think that means essentially validates many of the other positive reviews of this book: Wolfe uncannily possesses the ability to be "in the Prankster's world, but not of it". This means that while Wolfe is fully willing and able to passionately incorporate the unique linguistic acrobatics of Kesey and the Pranksters in relating the narrative, he maintains somehow a cool, objective distance from all the proceedings. Kesey might be saying that while Wolfe was certainly "on the bus", he was never "ON THE BUS!". This distance is communicated and maintained by Wolfe's refusal to judge the shenanigans. He never really says "yay" or "nay" to the invention of

the "counter culture" (whatever in the hell that means). He relates the consequences both natural and man-made that befalls on such behavior, but never comes out from behind the page and says "booh!" He wisely leaves all moral judgement in the place where it rightly belongs: in the hearts and minds of the readers.

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