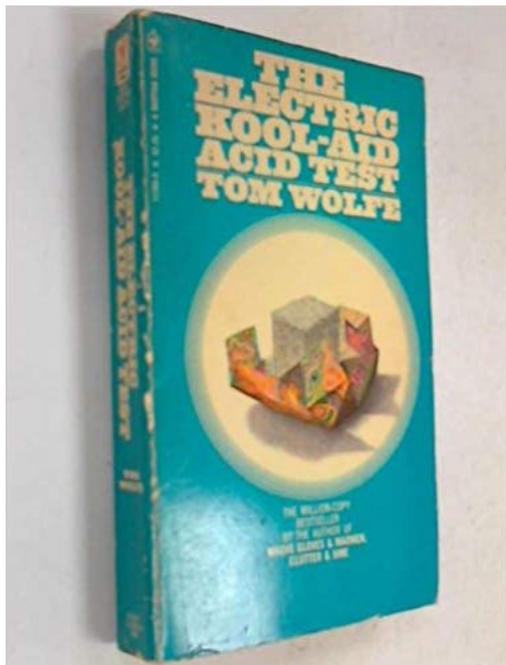


The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test *by* Tom Wolf



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Reviews of the *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* *by* Tom Wolf

Tehn

As I approach 80 years of age, I have always wondered about those days and how it came about.

This book really sets it all in perspective.

An interesting part of world history

Zugar

A one-of-a-kind document, stylistically daring and lovingly researched, that shows at once everything appealing and everything appalling about the 60s with a remarkably neutral eye, neither idolizing nor demonizing any of the figures that it shines its piercing light on.

Jeb

The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test. I'd been meaning to read this book for years. Like all things of expectation, it wasn't what I thought it would be. What ever is, really?

I struggled early with Wolfe's prose. He came off as incredibly ranty, and needlessly verbose, in a sometimes distracting way. He used a lot of hyphens, ellipses, and strange punctuation. (ex: "the lime:::::light:::::"). After some time however I realized that this wasn't how he writes all the time, but rather an attempt to fit his writing to the subject at hand. At first I thought this was somewhat obnoxious, but as I went on I grew more used to it. And besides getting used to it, there were flashes of genuine brilliance in there as well. I mean, some situations were described with such accuracy, insight, and understanding that I was really blown away. These particular portions of the book were, I'm sure, heavily influenced by interviewing primary sources, but regardless Wolfe penned it well.

I was appreciative of the fact that throughout the book Wolfe didn't focus solely on the positive and made it clear that there were conflicting interests among even the Pranksters. When in situations like this not everything is happy happy joy joy let's eat acid and mellow out. Interests don't ALWAYS run in the same direction, and when you have someone like Kesey (who is basically a lodestone of the psychedelic variety) running the show there are bound to be rifts and doubts between people. This is a natural thing and I'm glad Wolfe addressed it.

I think the best thing to say about this book is that it made me think. Long and hard, sometimes. I found myself reading passages from it and then gazing into the distance in some deep contemplation about anything and everything. The book would spark a thought in me that would turn into a full fledged reflection, maybe even far beyond the points that the book brought up in the first place. Good writing does that I suppose.

I will say that I didn't like the way the book ended. It was somewhat anti-climactic in that it sort of just fizzled and went out. Though, I guess you could say the same thing of the Merry Pranksters. There is allegory in that, like so much else in that long, strange trip to go Furthur. COSMO!

Mmsa

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.

Ventelone

I thought this was a great book. Getting the inside scoop on this historical piece of history and wild guys and gals that made up The Merry Pranksters was extremely valuable to me personally. After reading many books of both the Beat Generation as well as the Hippie Era including a lot of works focusing on the bands, the signature artists of those times, this book is so important regarding the gap between the Beats and the Hippies. This book isn't sugar coated too much, so it's raw, honest and exploratory. Learning in good detail about the Pranksters main/notable people, their ties to society and in contrast, their anti-establishment attitudes and spontaneous actions and unspoken rules, is to say the least entertainingly exciting. These folks were a large part in making the mid to late 60's what they were. As a Grateful Dead lover/DeadHead, it was more than enthusiastic learning about their late entry in this story, along with some amazing figures of the times including Allen Ginsberg, Timothy Leary, Ramrod, Neil Cassidy and of course, Ken Kesey (among many other critical historical persons who all had their part in shaping the counterculture gapping generations). A very quick read, and interesting for me to read about the pioneering psychedelic warriors, how they were "Turned On" and how they spread the message to the masses in such unusual form. The rebels of their time, along with some truly EPIC pranks, parties and perseverance. What I really enjoyed about this book is that it doesn't highlight a bunch of happy go luck good times. It shows the truly raw side of the bunch. It has some incredibly gloomy details that emerge as a result of being together as a wild "family", with some eye opening realizations that are important for readers to know. That point being that even in best of times follows the worst of times. There is no light without darkness, "Art is not Eternal", and a surreal vacation from the normal realm will at some point have you realize that sometimes a normal vacation from the never ending trip is important! So, I found this book to be a fun read, an important piece of literature linking the beats to the hippies, an incredible cast of real life people, and how far some rebels have to go to truly make their mark on society to push what they believe in without resorting to extreme violence.

Corgustari

This book is a "must read"! It is the the key book defining the history of the intelligentsia of the best parts of the emerging psychedelic movement in the 60's. Its Main character is Ken Kelsey, famous for writing "One Flew Over the Cook-coo's Nest". One of Tom Wolfe's best, and clearly his most significant work.

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