

Hunter s. thompson's fear and loathing in las vegas: hippie generation portrayal

[Literature](#), [Books](#)



In The United States during the 60's and 70's, many U. S. citizens opposed the U. S involvement in the Vietnam war, as well as domestic issues that included racial discrimination. These lead to the counterculture movement, where younger generation of Americans rejected societal norms by taking large amounts of drugs,, indulging in lots of sexual intercourse, and listening to psychedelic rock. These americas later became known as the hippie generation. This generation created many works of art and literature, such as Hunter S. Thompson's 1971 novel Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas: A Savage Journey into the Heart of the American Dream. The semi-fictional novel is a firsthand account of what the Hippie Generation was all about, and is an accurate story of the Hippie generation,

Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas: A Savage Journey into the Heart of the American Dream follows the life of journalist Raoul Duke and his Attorney Dr. Gonzo as they go to Las Vegas to cover the Mint 400, an off road racing event. The characters are supposed to represent the author Hunter S. Thompson and his friend Oscar Zeta Acosta, and the events that take place in the novel are the true experiences of his young self. The main characters in this story are always in constant pursuit of drug-induced euphoria, and take any kind of drugs when they can. As a result, the story, told from Raoul Duke's point of view, is a mixture of real events and drug-induced hallucinations, The novel tells of their stay in Las Vegas as Raoul Duke covers the Mint 400 as well as a seminar that is ironically about illegal drug use. Throughout the story, duke constantly mentions the pursuit of " the American dream" which he attempts to interpret. This " American dream" seems to be lost in all the wildness of the drug induced Las Vegas trip. The

two's' trip to Vegas is an example of the behavior and mindset of the Hippie generation.

The timeframe for this novel is in the early 70's, right as the Vietnam war was coming to an end, the civil rights movement had begun, and counterculture was everywhere. At some points, the novel quickly speaks about current events regarding the Vietnam war, which was one of the biggest causes for the movement. " WASHINGTON (AP) - A House Subcommittee report says illegal drugs killed 160 American GI's last year - 40 of them in Vietnam" (25). Actually, the Vietnam War was opposed by the public due to the media criticism on the issue of U. S military brutality towards the civilians.. The passage is in reference to the issue of drug abuse by soldiers during the war, which killed many of them. The use of drugs by soldiers was coincidental with hippies in the counterculture movement, much like Duke and Gonzo. Soldiers used the drugs to help relieve them of the immense pain, on the other hand, the hippies just wanted to have fun. Nonetheless, article pieces like this and the massive amount of drug use throughout the book accurately reference the time period of the Vietnam war. Another example of historical accuracy can be found in Raoul Duke's pursuit of understanding " The American Dream".

Throughout his journey, Raoul Duke mentions the American dream pretty cynically. He said, " You have no faith in the essential decency of the white man's culture. Jesus, just one hour ago we were sitting over there in that stinking baiginio, stone broke and paralyzed for the weekend, when a call comes through from some total stranger in New York, telling me to go to Las

Vegas...and then he sends me over to some strange office in Beverly Hills where another total stranger gives me \$300 raw cash for no reason at all . . . I tell you, my man, this is the American dream in action! We'd be fools not to ride this strange torpedo all the way out to the end" (11). The " American dream" that Duke talks about are the great things, which he critiques. when, he criticises the ideal of American capitalism, as he finds out how crazy it is for a potential employer to give him large amounts of cash. This shows of the counterculture movement during the 1970s. Hippies hated normal American ideas such as capitalism, as shown by the character. This is normal from several counterculture developments in history. One of those movements was the " new left" movement. " where college students criticized things such as pression, corruption and racism as basic flaws in the structure of America. They were called the " new left", to show both the similarities and differences of their ideas with older socialist and communist ones" (ucdavis.edu: " New Left"). The New Left movement advocated for social equality, and was slightly communist, and always was against American capitalism. Raoul Duke also shows the counterculture theme of social equality. Throughout the book, Dr. Gonzo is harassed and attacked wherever the two go due to his Samoan heritage. Duke finds the racism to be just a part of American culture, the same idea the hippies of the time had.

I enjoyed reading this book and had already watched the movie beforehand. It is very interesting the way Hunter S. Thompson incorporates graphic drug hallucinations into reality, as it gives a real feel to what it is like to be on drugs. It was interesting to read a firsthand account of the counterculture

movement. Hunter s. Thompson invented Gonzo journalism, so that also made it an interesting read. I liked watching the movie but reading the book made it a lot better. The way he described being high on drugs was very entertaining. Even if you don't have time to watch the movie, the way the book was written is still very good and draws the scenes into your mind. Overall, i do recommend that people read and enjoy this book