

I'm a strange here myself

Bill Bryson

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Content Introduction	<p>After living in Britain for two decades, Bill Bryson recently moved back to the United States with his English wife and four children. They were greeted by a new and improved America that boasts microwave pancakes, twenty-four-hour dental-floss hotlines, and the staunch conviction that ice is not a luxury item. Delivering the brilliant comic musings that are a Bryson hallmark, I'm a Stranger Here Myself recounts his sometimes disconcerting reunion with the land of his birth. The result is a book filled with hysterical scenes of one man's attempt to reacquaint himself with his own country, but it is also an extended if at times bemused love letter to the homeland he has returned to after twenty years away.</p>

Abstract

There are 70 interesting and impressive pieces in the book. Born in America, Bill Bryson returned after living in England for two decades. As a stranger, Bill Bryson was curious about everything beside him. Everything is new for him and he needed to get used to. The following was divided into four aspects from the contents, including eating, living, transportation, and recreation.

I'm a strange here myself

To eat

America is really a junk- food heaven. The diet offers the rich, unrivaled possibilities for greasiness and goo. It's also a land of bounteous variety, and for a long time after we first moved

Obesity is a serious problem in America. Half of all adult Americans are overweight and more than a third are defined as obese (big enough to make you think twice before getting in an elevator with them). Smoking has taken over as the number one health fret in the country. About three hundred thousand Americans die every year from disease related to obesity, and the nation spends \$ 100 billion treating illnesses arising from overeating—diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, and so on.

Bill Bryson observed the British don't expect over- the- counter drugs to change their lives, whereas Americans will settle for nothing less. You have only to watch any television channel for a few minutes, flip through a magazine, or stroll along the groaning shelves of any drugstore to realize that people in this country expect to feel more or less perfect all the time. Even the household shampoo, promises to "change the way you feel". It is odd that American expend huge efforts exhorting themselves to "Say No to Drugs," then go to the drugstore and buy them by the armloads.

Living

Americans are twice as dangerous as British. Every year in New Hampshire a dozen or more people are killed crashing their cars into moose, but this is a fate unlikely to await anyone in the United Kingdom. Another accident is the matter of guns. There are 200 million guns in the United States and we do rather like to pop them off. Each year, 40,000 Americans die from gunshot wounds, the great majority of them by accident. Just to put that in perspective for you, that's a rate of 6.8 gunshot deaths per 100,000 people in America, compared with a decidedly unambitious 0.4 per 100,000 in the United Kingdom. Much the same sort of statistical illogic applies to guns. Forty percent of Americans keep guns in their homes, typically in a drawer beside the bed. The odds that one of those guns will ever be used to shoot a criminal are comfortably under one in a million.

The average American uses twice as much energy to get through life as the average

European. With just 5 percent of the world's population, we consume 20 percent of its resources. A recent survey of twenty-seven thousand people around the globe by a Canadian group called Environics International found that in virtually every advanced nation people were willing to sacrifice at least a small measure of economic growth for cleaner air and a healthier environment. The one exception: the United States. It seems madness to think that a society would rate marginal economic growth above a livable earth, but there you are. Bill Bryson had always assumed that the reason to build a bigger economy was to make the world a better place. In fact, it appears, the reason to build a bigger economy is, to build a bigger economy. In England, we had something called an off-peak energy plan. The idea was to encourage users to shift some of their electricity consumption to nighttime hours, thus spreading demand. So we bought timer devices and ran our washing machine, dryer, and dishwasher in the middle of the night and were rewarded for this small inconvenience with big savings on the electricity consumed during those hours.

Americans, as it was well known, will sue at the drop of a hat. Every year over ninety million lawsuits are filed in this extravagantly litigious country—that's one for every two and half people—and many of these are what might charitably be called ambitious. Example 1: two parents in Texas are suing a high school baseball coach for benching their son during a game, claiming humiliation and extreme mental anguish.

Example 2: In Washington State, a man with heart problem sued local dairies "because their milk cartons did not warn him about cholesterol."

Allied with the idea that lawsuits are a quick way to a fortune, whether deserved or not, is the interesting and uniquely American notion that no matter what happens, someone else must be responsible. You smoke eighty cigarettes a day for fifty years and eventually get cancer, then it must be everyone else's fault but your own, and you sue not only the manufacturer of your cigarettes, but the wholesaler, the retailers, the delivery company that delivered the cigarettes to the retailer, and so on. One of the most extraordinary features of the American legal systems is that it allows plaintiffs to sue people and enterprises only tangentially connected to the alleged complaint. Because of the way the system works, it is often less expensive for a company or institution to settle out of court than to let the matter proceed to trial.

Transportation

Bill Bryson thinks American highways are dull. Part of the problem is that they are so very long—it is 850 miles from New Hampshire to central Ohio. There is so little to get excited about along the way. When the author was a boy, the highways of America were scattered with diversions. And his particular interest is the slogans—"Land of Lincoln" for Illinois, "Vacationland" for Maine, the zippily inane "Shore Thing" for New Jersey. But now, how boring it is to make a long car journey.

Recreation

Shopping is an important part of American life is like saying that fish appreciate water. Apart from working, sleeping, watching TV, and accumulating fatty tissue, American devote more time in this country to shopping than to any other pastime. Indeed, according to the Travel Industry Association of America, shopping is now the number one holiday activity of Americans. People actually plan their activity around shopping trips. Hundreds of thousands of people a year travel to Niagara Falls, it transpires, not to see the falls but to wander through its two megamalls. Bill Bryson secured definite proof that America is the ultimate shopping paradise. It came in a video catalog that arrived unsolicited with the morning mail. Besides that, by telemarketing, outlet malls, and catalogs, business try to dazzle you with its exotic pedigree and technical complexity. Bill Bryson confess I have sometimes been briefly tempted by these seductive blandishments to make a purchase.

Bill Bryson was a so considerate person that he can recognized the little changes after living in the two different countries. The readers can realize what is differences between America life and English life. A systematic portrait of America was filled everyone's mind, such as the fat of land, so sue me, and drug culture. He accepted and respects America and England cultures. Even if the life was not what Bill Bryson imagined when he came back to America , he regarded as the usual. It is inconvenient for Bill Bryson to get accustomed to the living around him, the most of all, America is a land of his birth, he loved it.