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Education is a ticket, or it should be, but sometimes it feels as if the benefits of travelling are nowhere in sight and just the hassles are present. If there wasn't a destination printed on the back of the ticket I often wonder if I would stick it out. Like a never ending trip on the circle line, lots of bumps, crazies, swerves and an occasional glimpse of light - only no return of your 50p.

No immediate return is the catch. College is a phase - a stepping stone to a part of life which is considered the 'real' bit - the life of a working woman. A working whatever. College is not real. We are not preparing to be adults here - simply whiling the time away - learning how not to get our work done, spending our psychic energies devising ways not to be responsible. This is more the phenomenon in England than in America - although there is definitely an element in both.

It has been quite a shock, this year I've spent in England. The students are much more politically aware than any I know in America. My eyes have been opened up a good bit to things not made particularly visible in American society. But along with this awareness also comes the conclusion that they can do nothing to change the fact that college is in fact a futile effort. So, as the typical American student doesn't mind what's going on in the world around him unless it affects his allowance - he also has the knowledge that he will graduate and get a job. This creates a feeling of competitiveness not present in the British system.

For me - I've found the competitiveness of my university at home was an integral part of my education, and also an invisible part - unfortunately, one I can't do without. True, I feel no pressure here, but I also find I don't do anything academic until the last possible minute and then it's a half-assed attempt. But I don't mind because all around me, my peers are doing the same thing. So, I find I do not learn for the simple joy of learning. In fact, I find material covered boring and unmotivating. I'm not surprised the English students I've met are as uninterested as I am.

I have learned enough about myself and others to make this year here worthwhile. But the real kicks is the exorbitant amount of money I pay to remain in the education system here. I often feel that since I gain nothing from my classes here and have learned mostly from my contacts with other people and travel that the #1000 a term that comes from my pocket is very ill spent. It almost makes me sick how they feed off foreign students and offer nothing academically exciting in return. Surely, they must realise that the attitude of the average British student will eventually be recognised and assimilated, creating an environment where little work or anything productive in relation to the future is being done. I am glad that I will be returning to the American system after this year, where I will resume the effort not to be unemployed rather than extending the years until I am.