

I would like to write a response to this personal experience report of Luciana. She writes a cautionary tale, depicting America as a land of boredom, monotony, ugliness, carbon copied, logo-infested cities, populated by uncultured, uninformed, egocentric, unfriendly, uninteresting large Americans driving large cars in a large country. Some readers noticed that her report was biased¹, and Luciana responded to them that she meant her report to be controversial to generate people's thinking and start a conversation on the topic.² I am reproducing her report in quotes in its entirety with my rebuttals in red. While Luciana's intent was to inflame and incite controversy to make people think, my intention is to offer unbiased information and helpful tips to people who are looking to understand America as a travel or study destination.

"After some weeks of participating in EE, I have noticed that many of the readers are considering studying English abroad for a period of time, be it a short course or a longer exchange programme. I have been lucky to have lived and worked in both countries and, as I sit here tonight sipping on my glass of wine and reflecting on my own personal experiences, I have decided to write a short article on how the cultural and social differences between American and Britain may have an impact on your overall/total experience during the length of your course in either country."

"What is a total experience? Well, when you are considering a destination to study English, I believe it is important that you consider all aspects of life of what will be your host city or country. You should take the opportunity not just to learn English but also to take this travel opportunity to expand your horizons and experience a way of life, a different reality, than the one that you know today. So, from my perspective destination matters as much as the quality of the school where you will study. After all, variety is the spice of life so I urge you to strive for the

¹ "Luciana, acho um tanto injusto você fazer uma "American vs British perspective", quando você mesmo já define antecipadamente o placar e o vencedor. Ficou claro e evidente que você conhece muito melhor o Reino Unido do que os EUA e mais uma vez foi totalmente parcial. Não estou defendendo nenhum nem outro aqui, porém, acho que o seu papel seria expor os pontos positivos e negativos de ambos. Ok, você tem todo o direito de ter sua preferência, mas me pareceu mais um artigo do seu blog pessoal do que um artigo voltado para estudantes precisando de algumas dicas.

" Entretanto, continuo a concordar com o Paulo Monteiro ao julgar injusta sua comparação "American vs British perspective". Me parece até uma comparação inapropriada, uma vez que os EUA, assim como o Brasil, formam um país continental com muita diversidade cultural."

" The article is good and well-written, but don't expose the US way of life. Only say that americans don't have any value and all in England is perfect."

² In the comment section to Part One of her article she said, "Articles should spark debate and maybe even controversy, this is how we develop views and opinions." Further she added in the comment section of Part Two " If the article did any of the above, then it has done its job. The intention is to present an alternative, maybe controversial, point of view that should spark a personal analysis of one's own views on a given subject and create a desire to learn more by your own research. If it has done this then it is mission accomplished... I am sorry you felt upset reading the article, it was certainly not my intention to upset anyone. However, it was my intention to spark debate and for readers to question convention."

best possible experience when you choose a destination." I think one's primary and overriding consideration in choosing a language program should be first and foremost the quality of the program and its cost. One should look for an accredited program with proven results. It is not a bad idea to choose a city that offers you an interesting cultural experience, as well, as Luciana suggests, but it is a fallacy to believe that there are no cultural offerings or interesting entertainment in America, as she states.

"Following is a very personal perspective of America vs Britain from a view point of a foreign student who will stay in the country 1 to 6 months. It is only my opinion but one that is based on several years of living in each of the countries and having travelled extensively in both regions. Of course, as any opinion it is biased towards my own preferences in life so I give you the material and let you make up your own mind."

Cities

The USA is a vast country with sprawling cities that feel like carbon copies of each other with little, if any, in terms of interest. I am very surprised at such a statement. The difference between cultural life in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Houston, or Austin, is tremendous and documented by surveys in the quality of life, cost of living, and media descriptions.³ Each one of the cities is an exciting place to live with many different opportunities. Each city is as unique as a fingerprint with its own rhythm and cultural offerings.

Compare these videos of American cities and it will be apparent that they are not carbon copies of each other. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Yy2JravONE&NR=1&feature=fvwp> shows Miami. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXsZqXYmJQ8> shows San Francisco from a tourist perspective, and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hA-wlUIEgfA&feature=related> shows San Francisco from a foreigner's perspective. He mentions cultural events, parks, attractions, international parties, and informs us that San Francisco has the most restaurants per capita in the world. This video shows the neighborhoods in San Francisco <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sHtEzceTTlY&feature=related> . I lived a year in Berkeley, just across the San Francisco Bay and I never found life there boring. I found the people friendly and welcoming, the climate agreeable. When you travel to another country, you should know what kinds of things and activities make you feel happy and sustain your interest. Check out the city and its surrounding areas first before choosing a study destination to see if it has the kinds of amenities that you need to feel comfortable. If you are looking for an immersion experience in America, choose a homestay or stay in an international house on an American university campus. If staying in shape is important to you, join the YMCA or a gym to work out or use the parks and beaches to get exercise.

If you have a special interest or hobby, look for a club or organization where you can continue to participate in it. It will ground you and help you have a meaningful experience in your study abroad trip.

³ <http://www.bestplaces.net/col/> cost of living calculator comparing cities
<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0883960.html> cost of living index comparisons
<http://money.cnn.com/magazines/moneymag/bplive/2009/index.html> the best places to live in the US

"They tend to be filled with endless rows of fast food places where???, large shops and even larger shopping centres, and oh yes, some very large people in some very large cars ??? as well.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lc8gLJWZS3o&NR=1> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aR14UxpyGpo&NR=1> show shots of Pittsburgh and no rows of shopping centers and fast food chains, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2iN9_NZAIHA&NR=1 how many *large cars* do you see here? Most Americans have compact cars to save money. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bFGAXDg-fw&feature=related> also shows Pittsburgh and is a fairer video tour of an American city than the caricature video that Luciana tried to pass off as a typical American city. I didn't see many logos in the tour of Pittsburgh.

In my experience the shopping malls are off the beaten track in separate areas usually in the suburbs. But you can get to the malls via bus. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJEg0i-QsCI&feature=related>

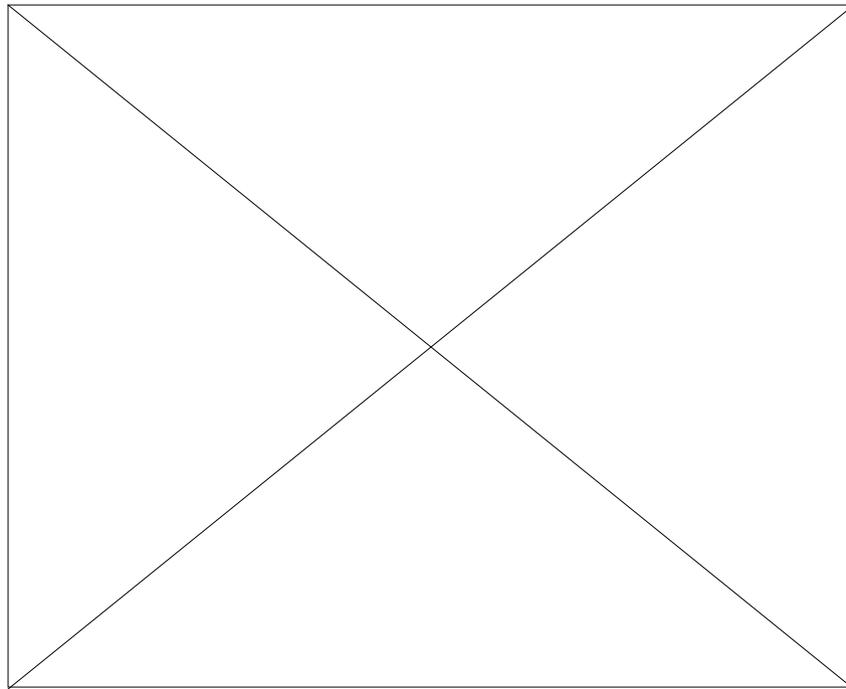
"After you get over the initial amazement at the size of it all, most cities have very little to keep a foreign student entertained or engaged."???. Any travel website or travel video will easily offer a different perspective. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NwL78GBI3A4&NR=1>

This is a far more accurate representation of what an American city has to offer. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MyetAs8efEA&NR=1>

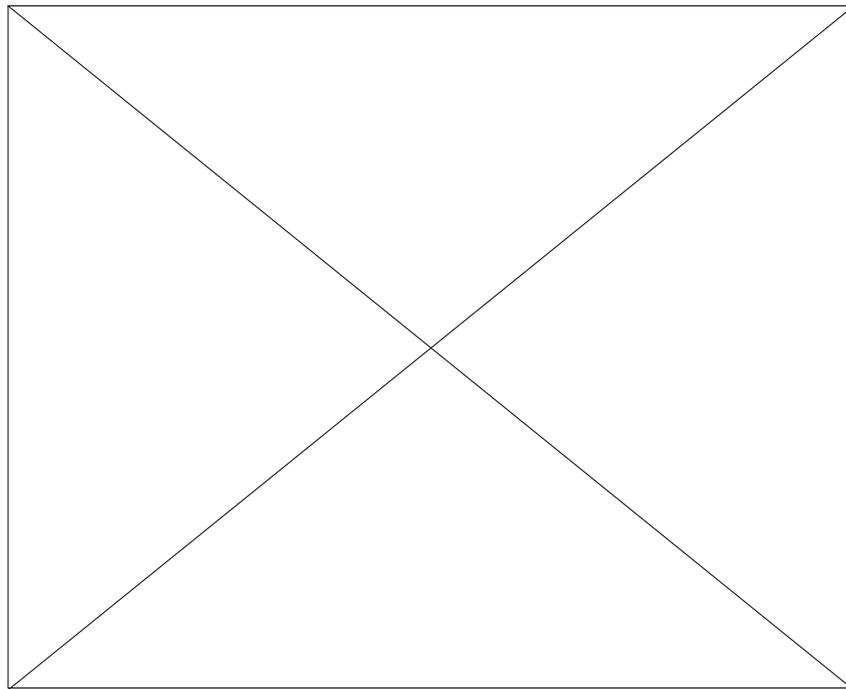
"This is of course a generalisation as cities in the north-east and north-west coast do tend to have a lot more to offer. If you don't have a car, it is simply impossible to see American cities, again, with a few exceptions in the regions previously mentioned."??? <http://www.usatourist.com/english/tips/train.html> offers trains as a way to see the sights in the US, if you don't want to rent a car. Busses are also available. <http://www.gotobus.com/> "As a foreign student, unless you have the money to travel far and wide, you will be confined to a very narrow set of experiences." ??? This need not be true. If you plan your trip in advance taking into consideration what you want to do, and do your research to find out where it is offered, America is diverse enough to provide most people with the kind of experience they are seeking. <http://www.usa-vs-uk.com/lifestyle.html> compares the US and the UK and has many entertainment suggestions such as boating, fishing, clubbing.

"I saw this film on the internet the other day, it won the Oscar for best short film last year. To me, it is a pretty good representation of American cities where everything is branded and logos and large corporations dominate the landscape. If you have ever been to America – this film will make lot of sense. ??? It is brilliant in its capture of a certain, but large, aspect of American cities. Actually, in my opinion, no, it isn't an accurate representation of American cities. It is a caricature.

Part of the film



Official trailer



"The UK in contrast is a tiny and very crowded place but with an amazing variety of experiences to be found by travelling only a few kilometres away from wherever you may be staying. You don't ever need a car to enjoy the UK and if you know where to find the right deals you can travel across the county for a few pounds." <http://vacation.away.com/united-states/travel-v1-cid62-united-states-cid400173-travel.html> is a site that may be a starting point to research prices

for traveling to various destinations in the US. <http://gobudgettravel.com/category/usa> suggests some unusual ways of minimizing travel costs to see America on a budget. I would recommend sticking to public transportation or renting a vehicle, and staying in moderately priced motels or camping, if you need to save money. <http://www.gadling.com/2010/04/14/new-york-city-on-a-budget-is-it-worth-staying-in-new-jersey/> suggests staying in New Jersey to see New York, a 20 minute commute away, but with a savings of 30% in hotel bills, for example. And we camped with our children at a camp site near Disney World to save money. Our children liked it and we built good memories.

"In some of the cities like York, Bath or the small towns of the Cotswolds you just simply feel transported in time. My husband and I particularly enjoy the old pubs, specially those in the countryside where one can have a good beer after a good brisk walk while sitting in a beautiful stone building, surrounded by ancient wood and with a roaring fireplace – what a great British experience..!! There is an old pub just outside Oxford that has been an Inn or Pub for over 1,000 years. It is located next to the river, close to where the River Thames is born. It is said that Lewis Carroll would frequently stay there while writing Alice in Wonderland (1865) and, if you have read the book, when you walk in the surrounding countryside you can see the relationship." European cities unquestionably have more history, since the US is a comparatively younger nation. Still, there are some tourist attractions dedicated to American history, for those who are interested. Colonial Williamsburg <http://www.history.org/>, Valley Forge http://www.nps.gov/vafo/photosmultimedia/historyphotos.htm?eid=118728&root_aId=99#e_118728 , and Gettysburg <http://www.nps.gov/gett/index.htm> to name a few that I have personally enjoyed.

"Why does all this matter? I certainly hope that if you made the effort and expense of travelling abroad to study you will not be confined to your room and your classroom. Your chances of having much more interesting city experiences are grater in the UK than the USA, or so I believe from my own experiences." ??? I think it would be more balanced to admit that travelers can have interesting experiences in both European and American cities.

Society

"Britain, as most of Europe, is a far more gentler society than the USA. This stems from the basis of socialism where egalitarianism is seen as desired goal and not as an evil political ideology ??? as it is seen in America." I think that Luciana's thinking is misguided here and untrue since she is saying that the majority of Americans are like conservative Rush Limbaugh. The majority voted for progressive Obama and progressive Hillary Clinton, and progressive Al Gore. The majority welcome fairness in healthcare, housing, law enforcement, and life.

"It is a far from perfect system but it does provide for better social integration. Many of the new property developments include social or low cost housing that is government subsidised so you end up with fancy and expensive apartments next to apartments for people that are on government benefits. This means that people of different economic classes may play in the same playgrounds, take the same tube to work or simply drink a beer in the same pub – all of this helps in the social integration. As a foreign student this also means that your opportunities for meet different peoples and integrate to your local neighbourhood are much greater than in America

where, relatively speaking, the sense of community is practically absent and the rich and poor live very far apart.

Again, in my experience, Luciana is misinformed. Most communities have community organizations such as Neighborhood Watch, Community Civic Associations, churches and civic organizations such as the YMCA that perform outreach to the communities. Libraries and schools and cities have boards where people can participate in the government of these bodies. It is possible to be involved in community life, if one is interested.

It is also not true that the rich and poor live far apart in Philadelphia. Chestnut Hill, one of the affluent areas in Philadelphia is close to the city. Visiting the renowned Art Museum, cafés, amusement parks, or the Zoo is accessible to poor and rich alike.

"One thing that pleasantly surprised me the first time we went for a walk in the British county side was the concept of "right of way". This is an ancient law that allows walkers or horse riders to pass through private land on what used to be ancient trails, some of them dating back to the Romans. The fields may be planted or full of cattle or sheep but you still have the right to walk through them as long as you don't disturb the crops or animals. This allows people access to any coast or places of natural beauty that are held in private land. In America if you enter a private farm, well, it is highly likely you will get shot at." **Luciana is spreading misinformation again, as Mili pointed out in the comments section⁴. It is against the law to shoot people in the United States.**

"If the bull attacks you or you fall of the cliff because the trail was not well maintained, well, in Britain that is your own problem, as it should be.!!! In America, no, you blame others and you sue for lots of money. It is not the norm to sue in the United States. Luciana is probably thinking of sensational, exceptional cases that have made the news headlines. There is a court system in Britain, too, and it is likely that people use the courts to sue for injuries. One can always find negative press coverage for either country, if one looks. This article reports abuse by National Health Service nurses in the UK <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/healthnews/6092658/Cruel-and-neglectful-care-of-one-million-NHS-patients-exposed.html> .

"How will this matter to your experience? I believe that it is, relatively speaking, a lot easier too integrate into UK society due to the socialist nature of the society which puts a much higher emphases on communal living than American society which is based more on individualism YMCAs, churches, company outings, community events are all places to meet people and socialize. The school or university where you enroll in a language course will also provide outings and social activities, if you do your research and pick a good program. I wonder what Luciana is basing her view on, claiming that American society is based on individualism and excludes communal living. I grew up here and that is not my impression at all. My husband is foreign and he is well respected, and successful and involved in his work and the university life in the United States, Brazil and Europe. He likes living here and said that it is a better place for him to work than his native Europe. He finds Americans to be less narrow minded than Europeans, in general, in his experience. It probably depends on one's educational level and the

⁴ "I was so disgusting when I read about the society and you said that people who visit private farms can get shot at. That is so untrue that I asked myself how could she says such a bulshit!"

circles that one travels in. My husband has a lot to offer and is in demand internationally. Maybe if Luciana had more to offer, she would have had a different experience. It is hard to imagine her finding much of a following in the United States, as a teacher of English, who makes such glaring mistakes in English as were found in her article.⁵ Also it is conceivable that her negativism was contagious and nice Americans were put off by her obvious bias, like a self-fulfilling prophesy. Who would want to be friends with a person who hates everything American and does not give America an objective view? In contrast to Luciana's negative experiences, my foreign colleague's son had a great experience at an American college⁶.

Healthcare

The UK has the NHS which is a socialised health care system. The quality of this varies from hospital to hospital but you can get obtain some of the best health care in the world and it is 100% free. As a foreign student with a student visa you qualify for any type of treatment while you are in the country. Actually, even illegal people can't be denied treatment. **Everyone gets free emergency care in the United states regardless of his ability to pay. They cannot be turned away including illegal aliens.**

In contrast, if you go to the USA, you better make sure you have some good insurance in Brazil that will cover you during your trip. In America you can, and will, be refused treatment if you can't prove you can pay the exorbitant prices. **For non-emergency doctor visits this is true. However, by law, emergency rooms cannot refuse you service, and must treat you whether you can pay or not. In addition, there are clinics that offer medical care on a sliding scale. That means they offer medical care at a discount if you cannot pay because you have a low income. Exorbitant compared to which country? I lived a semester in Paris and had to pay \$400 dollars for doctor visits for well baby visits. I lived a year in Rio and had to pay \$100 per doctor visit, \$200 for specialist visits.**

⁵ "Hi Luciana. Here is a list of some of your writing errors in English:

1. "There is a particular lack of interest on world news that don't affect the USA directly."
 2. "Furthermore, rarely are news presented from an unbiased standpoint,"
 3. "that supports some of these news "
 4. "the news are presented"
 5. "while integrations pushes"
 6. "I just know that I feel far more accepted in Britain that I ever was in the USA."
 7. "British also tend to be great internationalist"
 8. "are out of the beaten path."
 9. "However, if you ask me where I would like to live, American or Britain,"
- These were the more obvious ones. Leo"

⁶ "The advice is the same as for the domestic students who change/transition from home like life to a college life — be open to new adventures, join student clubs, be open to share home traditions with other people, be yourself, make friends, participate in the college events... Attend the orientation meetings, become a tour guide of those orientation tours — *that's what my son did and became famous and made friends.*" — Dr. Ludmila Smirnova
begin_of_the_skype_highlighting end_of_the_skype_highlighting — Associate Professor, Mount Saint Mary College

"It is interesting how the policies that Obama is now introducing in America, and that so many on the political right so fervently oppose, no Conservative Party of any European nation would even consider them as they would be seen as too right-wing, too uncaring and inappropriate for civilised modern European society. Is free quality healthcare a human right or a benefit? Well, I am sure we all have our opinion, but regardless, it is something that you should carefully take into consideration." **I agree that you should get health insurance from Brazil to use in the US, but if you have an emergency you can get health care in an emergency room at the hospital and if you cannot pay, you are still entitled to treatment.**

This is now getting to long for one post so we will divided into two sections. The second part will discuss:

- Newspapers & Evening News;
- Music;
- Safety;
- Diversity and Internationalism;
- and some conclusions.

See you soon !

Newspapers & Evening News

The first time I watched the "World News" programmes on American TV I was dismayed and amazed by the incredibly narrow view of the world and absolute lack of interest in what happens outside a very caricatured perspective of the world. There is a particular lack of interest on world news that don't affect the USA directly. I found the title "World News Tonight" rather funny as they spend less than 20% (maybe only 10%) of the time talking about world news and the rest about American issues. Furthermore, rarely are news presented from an unbiased standpoint, with few exceptions, of course." **In which country is the news unbiased? Every country that I have visited provides news coverage from the perspective of their country, in general. In Brazil my teacher pointed out the varying political viewpoints expressed by the different newspapers. In the US there are also varying political viewpoints expressed in different news papers and TV stations. For good global coverage Americans have access to CNN, the New York Times, Times magazine, Newsweek, the Washington Post, The Financial Times, the Wallstreet Journal, etc. Some of these publications are also seen in other countries worldwide. Some American journalists are Nobel prize winners. I would say that the quality of their reporting is first class. News coverage can be roughly compared at Newseum, a website that archives the front pages of newspapers worldwide. <http://www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages/flash/>**

"This prevailing attitude illustrates and partly explains the inward looking nature that defines American life and attitudes towards the rest of the world." I don't know how she would support such an opinion, which she states as fact. In my opinion, Americans are not inward looking, but rather view America as a world leader, and themselves as world citizens. Americans donated more than any other country to the Haiti disaster, and Americans are known for their generosity in helping other countries economically and in times of distress.

"In contrast news reporting in the UK is truly global, probably the most global perspective anywhere in the world, from political problems in Fiji, to women rights in Mauritania, to child labour in the cocoa plantations in Ghana and Ivory Coast, to indigenous people's rights in the Amazon, or the effects of deforestation by the palm oil industry on the populations of Orangutans, or the horrible site of child prostitution in Recife in our own country – it is all on the news regularly." Luciana seems to think that these news stories are not reported in the US, but she is wrong.

"The variety of topics in the evening news is amazing and the investigative reporting that supports some of these news is of a quality not matched by any other news organisation in the world. Best of all, the news are presented in an impartial manner (as much as possible) as this is the remit of the BBC. I particularly like newspapers like The Guardian and the BBC TV News and investigative reporting programmes." American Nobel prize winning reporters are also very good at investigative reporting.

"Why does it matter and what might it mean to you as a foreign student? We are first and foremost citizens of the world" While it is true that we all live in a global economy, every person has a passport and rights to vote only in the countries where he is a citizen. Most people have a sense of national identity and identify more closely and personally with their own culture than with any foreign culture, so I would say that Luciana is incorrect in her assessment that people are first and foremost citizens of the world in their own minds. On the contrary, most people think of their identity first and foremost as their nationality: Brazilian, British, or American.

"and information and awareness mark our vision of the world and as a consequence defines a society and its people. As a foreign student, the fact that a larger proportion of the population is more aware of global issues" This is an unproven assumption, which I do not agree with.

"means that it is more likely that you will be understood and/or find more things in common with people that you meet. In my opinion, it is more likely that you will meet people who share your interests, if you actively seek out activities with organizations that share your interests such as soccer clubs, rowing clubs, tennis clubs, chess clubs, walking clubs, biking clubs, YMCAs, etc. You can take night classes in cooking, dancing, yoga, karate, spinning, foreign languages, computers, flower arranging, or any number of interesting activities and make friends with people who share your interests.

Music

"America is certainly the centre of mass produced music in the world," and there are many types of artists and musicians who are not defined by mass produced music. "however, I tend to like the British independent bands. When it comes to variety nothing really beats what you can get on BBC radio as you can hear music from all over the world, from obscure islands in the pacific like Vanuatu to modern music from Mozambique and Gabon or even from different regions of Brazil. Just this afternoon I was listening to some fusion of Mexican and Irish music – very nice, where else but BBC radio could you listen to stuff like this?"

"If you love live music, the the UK is a great place for this, from large summer festivals to just some music down the local pub – there is something for everyone in a great variety of styles and cultures. Summer festivals are a part of many cities in the US. They are not unique to Britain. The coffee houses and small public bars that cater to university audiences in America may be comparable to the music performed in British pubs. There are original performers in the coffee houses and bars, and also open mics, where any musician can sign up to perform. There are also musicians performing in parks and public places outdoors. There are organized concerts such as in the Mann music center in Fairmont Park and informal concerts put on by bands in Love Park, Philadelphia or in libraries or shopping malls.

"And if you love great acoustic rock, modern or classic – what can I say, some of the world's greats, past and present, have come from Britain." True. America also has a strong and varied musical history in rock and roll and other genres. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_rock

"Some of my favourite recent rock bands in the best of the British acoustic rock tradition:

- [Stereophonics](#)
- [Snow Patrol](#)
- [Razorlight](#)
- [Travis](#)
- [The Kooks](#)

Plus many others like Arctic Monkeys, Keiser Chiefs, Oasis, Franz Ferdinand, Feeder, The Fratellis, etc, etc – if you don't know them, look them up, see what you think."

Safety

"All things are related and consequence of one another and safety within the country or city are a by-product of the society. American cities are aggressive and can be dangerous, " It is true that American cities have dangerous parts. Many cities are dangerous throughout the world. You should research the language school or university you want to study at, and be sure that it is in a safe part of town. "even small towns" No evidence was provided to support this opinion about small towns. "– you certainly would not find me walking at night in an American city. Of course, nothing like Brazil, but I am talking in relative terms." Some urban centers have dangerous spots. It is best to steer clear of run down places as are seen in parts of this video. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4z2DtNW79sQ> In addition, it is safer to travel in a group of

people at night. There is safety in numbers and you will also probably have more fun if you go out and enjoy the nightlife with friends.

"In contrast London, with a metropolitan area with a population on of around 11 million is a fairly safe city. As a woman I never felt threatened even when riding the tube at night or walking home late in the evening. Yes, you have to take precautions but in general terms you are far safer than in most American cities. No evidence was provided to support this opinion. In fact, London is not crime free: <http://www.met.police.uk/crimefigures/> , <http://spotcrime.com/uk/london> , and <http://www.insight-security.com/facts-knife-crime-stats.htm> . "If you are a woman thinking of an exchange, this should be a big consideration in selecting where to go." Everyone, not only women should take crime into consideration when choosing a study destination. People should take the normal precautions of staying away from dangerous parts of the city, going out in groups, not wearing expensive jewelry to attract thieves, not flashing money around, and using common sense such as staying in well lighted and populated places.

"This ability to move around at will, specially when you are finding your way about your host city, and to feel safe using public transport, well, I would consider this of great value to your overall experience."

Diversity and Internationalism

There is also a marked difference in how both countries approach their leading role in the world. While the USA society pushes for integration of immigrants into a conformed way of life, the American way This is incorrect. That was a policy in the 1950s, shortly after WWII, but multiculturalism is currently promoted in all school classrooms, and the United States has many faiths and ethnicities: Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhists, agnostics, etc. This website talks about multiculturalism in the classroom:

<http://www.diversityweb.org/digest/F97/curriculum.html> If Luciana had bothered to do her research, she would have found that the predominant pedagogy is now preserving students' cultural heritage while fostering tolerance and inclusion in the multicultural classroom. Non-American cultures are valued and celebrated in American education nowadays. "Promoting 'Inclusion' in a Multicultural Classroom through Structured Learning Exercises" is one example from the literature http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&&ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED387850&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED387850 ;

"British society practices a policy of multiculturalism.

<http://www.globalissues.org/article/165/racism> says differently: "In 1997, *Human Rights Watch* noted that, "The U.K. has one of the highest levels of racially-motivated violence and harassment in Western Europe, and the problem is getting worse." In April 1999, London saw two bombs explode in predominantly ethnic minority areas, in the space of one week, where a Nazi group has claimed responsibility. The summer of 2001 saw many race-related riots in various parts of northern England. For over a decade, immigration issues have been headlines in the UK. The nature of the discussions bear a clear racial dimension as well as hostility to Eastern Europeans, such as those from Poland. Anti-immigrant rhetoric has also contributed to increasing interest in racist political parties such as the British

National Party. This also, predictably, has increased as the global financial crisis impacts more of Britain's population."

"There are, of course, advantages and disadvantages to both of these approaches. However, as a foreigner coming into a new country, I feel in the UK there is much more acceptance of your cultural differences without a pressure to conform to a given way of life. Multiculturalism accepts and thrives on the differences while integrations pushes for immigrants to quickly adapt to their host country. I don't know which one is best, I just know that I feel far more accepted in Britain than I ever was in the USA." **I wonder how old Luciana was when she had her experiences? I wonder if she was doing comparable things in both countries? Was she involved with people in one country, but not the other? Was one experience more recent than the other? did she have more money when she lived in the UK than when she lived in the US? There are so many factors that influence how well a person acclimates to a new culture. Luciana didn't really give us much information to go on in order for us to understand what she tried and what she did to make her way in the US. I wonder why she failed to feel accepted. My husband and his international colleagues and students feel at home here.**

"British also tend to be great internationalist, this means that they have a broad outlook of the world." **This stereotype is not held by everyone. It is likely that one will find both broad-minded and narrow minded people in Britain, just as in every country. Open-mindedness is a function of education and experience.**

"I was amazed how many young people take a gap year and go travel around the world." **This is anecdotal evidence not backed up by any statistics. Many Americans also take a semester abroad or travel after they graduate. http://www.vistawide.com/studyabroad/study_abroad_statistics.htm**

"It is not just for those that are wealthy, but all sorts of people do it, even if it is later in life, even if it is just trips across Europe or to north Africa. They frequently travel to destinations that are off the beaten path and you can find them travelling through the rice fields of Laos or the jungles of Africa." **Many college students take a junior year abroad, many churches sponsor programs where their youth do public service in other countries. Some graduates take part in the peace corps or other programs like these <http://www.goabroad.com/> .**

"Yes, of course not everyone and not all levels of society could afford to do it but it is very normal to find people that have been to places one has hardly heard off. This is much more difficult to find in America where most people have never left the country or even own a passport." **Many people do not own passports, but it is possible to find people who have travelled abroad, if you concentrate on making friends at a language school or university. Luciana has not supplied any statistics or facts to back up her assertions.**

"What does this all mean to you as a foreign student? In my opinion, it is more likely that you will feel more accepted quicker and also there is a good chance that people in the UK will have a better understanding of your culture or, at the very least, an interest about it." **That is too broad a statement to be useful. One has to take into consideration what the goal of your trip abroad is. If you match your destination school with your goals, you are sure to have a good experience where you feel welcomed and happy with your study situation. It is in your best interest to**

research your destination rather than take at face value the highly prejudiced and unresearched opinions of someone whose intent was to inflame and cause controversy, rather than be objective and provide useful tips and a balanced report to help students decide on a study destination.

"Ok, the wine is almost finished so I shall stop writing, although there is a lot more to discuss. In the end it is a matter of choice as to where you study, but it is a choice that you should make by informing yourself about all aspects that will affect your overall experience of your host county and city." **Yes, one should inform oneself about the country and area one wants to visit by doing research and finding success stories of students who had positive experiences to find out what works and how to have a successful experience, not blindly following the negative, biased, and unsupported opinions of someone who failed to acclimate herself.**

"Lots of nice places in America, it is after all an amazing country," **Finally she tells the truth. America can be an amazing experience.**

"but I would say that if you have limited time and funds, you may be better off choosing Britain as your destination." **It costs more to live in Britain and the airfare is more expensive to get there. How is that a bargain?** <http://www.edreams.com/flights/sao+paulo-london/>

Sao Paulo, Brazil to Philadelphia, PA

Wed, May 19, 2010 - Wed, May 26, 2010 | 1 Adult

[\\$1,061](#) from São Paulo to Philadelphia.

<http://travel.travelocity.com/flights/AirSearch.do?intl=true&SEQ=12737411982744132010>

Sao Paulo, Brazil to Miami, FL

Wed, May 19, 2010 - Wed, May 26, 2010 | 1 Adult

[\\$871](#) from São Paulo to Miami

<http://travel.travelocity.com/flights/AirSearch.do?SEQ=12737420093634132010>

Sao Paulo, Brazil to London, Great Britain

Wed, May 19, 2010 - Wed, May 26, 2010 | 1 Adult

[\\$1,222](#) from São Paulo to London

<http://travel.travelocity.com/flights/AirSearch.do?SEQ=12737415761384132010>

<http://www.usa-vs-uk.com/howfarus.html> shows how far your dollar goes.

<http://www.usa-vs-uk.com/howfaruk.html> shows how far a pound goes.

<http://www.usa-vs-uk.com/entertainment.html> compares clubbing costs.

<http://www.webmasterworld.com/foo/3523805.htm> compares movie prices.

<http://www.natoonline.org/statisticstickets.htm>

<http://www.usa-vs-uk.com/petrol.html> compares the cost of gasoline.

<http://www.usa-vs-uk.com/cars.html> the cost of cars.

<http://www.usa-vs-uk.com/electronics.html> compares the cost of electronics.

<http://www.walmart.com/cp/Top-100-CDs/14542>

The cost to see Avatar in New York City is about \$20 or 12.7 GBP.

It costs £8.75-£15.00 in London.

<http://www.nydailynews.com/entertainment/movies/2010/03/27/2010-03-27>

[see wallet shrink in 3d ticket prices soar to 20 bucks for movies.html](http://www.nydailynews.com/entertainment/movies/2010/03/27/2010-03-27)

<http://www.usa-vs-uk.com/houses.html> compares the cost of housing

"If you are open minded and you seek the experiences and variety that the country has to offer in a relatively small and accessible space, then I can assure you that you will have an amazingly good time.

But before I end, a few words about London:

“Why, Sir, you find no man, at all intellectual, who is willing to leave London. No, Sir, when a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford.” – Samuel Johnson

Well, what could I add to the quote above. Simply one of the greatest cities in the world. A great place to visit and and even greater place to live.

In the next articles I will write about some of the things to do and places to visit in London that are out of the beaten path.

And, oh yes, if you get tired of London all things British you can always take the fast speed train (300 km/hr) from St Pancras station in central London and in be in central Paris in a few hours.

However, if you ask me where I would like to live, American or Britain, I would have to say France... ;-) but that is a different article!

Remember, variety is the spice of life!

See you soon !"

Luciana's prejudice has caused her to exaggerate and warp the truth, so that her perceptions should not be trusted as a basis on which to seriously base your decisions on visiting the US on a study or pleasure trip, in my opinion. The unfounded opinions that she puts forth in this article are meant to sound like facts, but they are unsupported. It is a frivolous, sensationalist article at best. It is perhaps even justified to say that it is unjust, unverified, full of falsehoods and misconceptions and misinformation. One can only speculate as to her ulterior motives for such a prejudicial article promoted as a helpful comparison between the UK and US to help students decide on the best travel destination. She refers to a school website that she is promoting in her bio. Should we view her exposé as an advertisement for her British English based website?

"Olá ! Sou Luciana, professora de Inglês e resolvi criar o **Inglês Interact** com a colaboração de parceiros em Londres-Inglaterra." <http://www.inglesinteract.com/>

For a more evenhanded treatment of preparation for studying abroad please read <http://www.englishexperts.com.br/2010/04/26/how-to-prepare-to-study-abroad/> .