



CREATIVE WRITING

# PORTFOLIO

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# Optus Mock Naming Task:

(This was inspired by a brief my colleagues at M&C Saatchi were once working on)

Optus is developing a new program bringing together 20 or so millennials with significant online influence. Think Instagram identities, fashion & food bloggers, and social media celebrities. They will be given free access to things like internet, new technology and events and in return, will become brand advocates for Optus. We need a name for the group of influencers that feels exclusive and cool – something they would want to be a part of.

*Shortlist 3 name options, with a brief rationale for each:*

## **Yes Masters**

Focuses on reinforcing Optus' brand through their well-established declaration of 'yes' slogan. This is clearly stated in the influencer group's title to link them firmly to the brand, helping potential customers to immediately recognise Optus and the influencers as a collective. Pairing this with the 'Master' title aids in the influencer group appearing slick, youthful and in a position of authority - effectively, with the 'influence' intended.

## **Optu-rators**

A play on words inferring the Operators of Optus, which appears quirky in an attempt to reinforce Optus' brand equity in the eyes of millennials. The title focuses on aligning Optus 'selling great value, great network' (implying a smooth operating service), with the influencers operating smoothly with their posts.

## **Flexer Connectors**

The simplistic use of 'connectors' in the group title immediately reinforces both Optus' and the influencer's sole and indistinguishable aim - influencers aim to connect potential customers to Optus, Optus aims to connect customers to great networks. The half rhyme of 'flexer' and 'connector' aids in the title appearing youthful and quirky, with 'flex[ing]', being to stunt, show off and ultimately be proud of what they are promoting. The influencers connecting and flexing as one team to promote the brand, embodies the attitude and essence of what a great Optus network represents.



## Optus Mini Instagram Video Advert Idea:

**Instagram caption:** Get great networks anywhere, anytime, Only with Optus! #YesMasters #OptusToday Because why would you want to be with anyone else?

*[A group of young adults have just finished hiking a mountain. They appear tired, but ultimately proud to have reached the top. They all begin getting their phones out to take photos and capture the moment. The actors are overly hyperbolic for effect. The scene is narrated by 'Dramatic Voice' which signifies the male hiker's inner monologue]*

**Dramatic Voice:** You've just reached the peak of the mountain, sweat beads are rolling down your forehead and across your face. You fling them off and meagrely attempt a half-squinted grin for the camera as the sun beams through your grey-tinted glasses. You click the button and immediately press upload, proudly watching as the loading screen circles and circles, waiting for your accomplishments to be projected for all to see. But you wait and wait until suddenly, giant letters fill your screen.

*['Upload Failed' reads across the boy's mobile]*

**Dramatic Voice:** Upload failed. For you. And the person next to you. And the person next to them. There's sheer panic! Everyone is walking around, arms levitating in the air towards space, with wavering wrists to find just a scrap of signal. Nothing's uploading. How will anyone ever know you hiked a mountain if you can't let everyone know RIGHT here RIGHT now?! The girl to your left starts smiling at her phone, smiling at the responses that have surely just come flooding in. She has reached the outer world. But how can this be?

*[Camera zooms in on her phone showing Optus having helped fully upload her video in seconds, even in such a remote destination].*

**Girl:** I'm with Optus *[she is beaming, holding her phone to the others]*.

*[Screen moves to Optus title page].*

**Narrator 2:** Join the millions of Optus enthusiasts today & say YES to great networks ANY where, ANY time. Because why would you want to be with anyone else?

### **Rationale for the advert:**

The idea for this was to create the epitome of a typically cheesy advert, with viewer's immediately anticipating exactly what this advert is trying to sell them and thus creating a sense of understanding and belonging to Optus from the offset. The advert evokes an emotional response to the frustration of having a poor phone signal, recognising this as an issue amongst many phone users. The cheesy undertone then almost mocks cringe-worthy adverts, but does so cleverly to induce laughter and an understanding that Optus is offering something so simple, that they don't need clever gimmicks to gain attention. The last line further heightens the benefits of Optus' super fast signal even in remote locations, leaving the viewer with no ambiguity or need to even consider who is the clear provider of the best phone network in Australia.



## **An exploration of trolling in response to feminist activism on social media using a critical discourse analysis of trolling tweets that used parody in response to a sexist branding complaint on Twitter:**

(A snippet from the intro of a university study I conducted)

### **Introduction:**

Trolling refers to a certain type of 'malicious behaviour' intended to 'aggravate, annoy or otherwise disrupt online interactions and communication' (Binns 2012; Bishop 2012). Trolling is pervasive throughout digital contexts due to the emergence of Web 2.0 and the interactivity associated with it, which has allowed mass communication across networking and social media sites such as Twitter. Feminist activism is activity advocating women's rights and is aimed at ending patriarchy, sexism and misogyny; and whilst the Web 2.0 allows feminist activism to disseminate through the apt provision of social media platforms, trolling has become a vastly problematic aspect of this also.

The predominant drive for this study was to understand how Trolls use language to present themselves as threatening to feminist activism, specifically through the implementation of parodic responses, rather than solely negative trolling. My study focused on the parodic trolling tweets which ensued in response to a complaint concerning Kleenex's overtly sexist branding of 'Mansize' Tissues on Twitter. I discuss the explicit political agenda of Trolls in attempting to discredit feminist activism, as well as the linguistic implementation of parody as predominantly a way of generating communicative bonds and popularity amongst other Twitter users online, with the result of this being the perpetuation of sexism.



## **Short story sample:**

### **Unfortunate encounters**

The rest of the occupants had been out; she had made sure of it when she arrived. The place was littered with dirty laundry and the smell of sweat and cheap vino swam in the air. It was warm. There were bottles discarded in a heap amongst the kitchen rubbish where the flies lingered, and more against the wall near the front door. She flung one at the floor, spraying tiny glass shards across it. She pushed over the television set in the corner of the room, then rummaged through the draws and cupboards flinging things erratically across the room. At the kitchen sink, she turned on the tap letting the cloudy water flow. She placed the tips of her fingers underneath and watched the red trickle off, spiral around the sink and into the drain. She took a thick blue cloth from the rucksack on her back and wiped onto it, the remaining flickers from her hands, then rumpled it up and shoved it back in. Her phone buzzed harshly in the left breast of her blazer like lightning striking her chest. She sighed and reached for it, not noticing the damp speck that still clung to her palm and accidentally brushing it against her blouse. She tutted and sighed louder, then flung her phone onto the side of the kitchen work top buried with empty takeaway boxes and grubby napkins. She rubbed at her shirt with a thumb, meagrely attempting to remove the speck, but instead causing it to smudge more. So she quickly gave up and resorted to tugging her jacket further over her breast to conceal it. From her bag, she took a cropped wig in a dark brown shade, and delicately positioned it over her own hair, shoving any remaining blonde tufts beneath it. She glared at her phone which was still flashing, then flicked it off and placed it back into her pocket. She stared at herself in the mirror on the wall, fleetingly, as not to crack it. She was the image of destruction; a terminator in the flesh. She carried herself to the same rear door from which she had entered through, leaving a scene of anarchy behind. She stepped carefully over the young male, splayed out unmoving in the centre of the floor, then departed leaving the door open and swaying in the wind behind her.



## **TV Advertisement Idea:**

*[Setting: A back garden on a typical sunny day. 2 girls are seen on the grass from a wide angle, wrestling over something. The camera zooms into the girls who are trying to put together their new grass trimmer]*

***{insert appropriate short dialogue here}***

*[The girls continue wrestling as the camera zooms back out and into the sky. The Strims-eez mascot appears and the girls are faded out.]*

**Mascot voice:** No time for unnecessary niggling, should've got a Strims-eez.

*[Pause. The Strims-eez logo and image of the product appears]*

Landlord nagging you about your ugly overgrown grass? Busy with work, kids or just not so great at the whole DIY thing? With summer coming in fast, you don't have time to be faffing around with flat pack garden tools. And that's why we've made sure that our Strims-eez comes ready-to-use for your ultimate convenience. I'm sure you've dealt with enough tools in your life, so why waste your time on any more? Our range will have you covered for the whole summer season, so you can wave flat-packs goodbye and ready-to-use technology hello. And although we're sure you could find a cheaper trimmer elsewhere; we think our deal still comes out on top. If our quick-fix doesn't work out for you, because not all quick-fix tools do, then we guarantee you your money back within 30 days of purchase. Now that's a Strims-eez promise! So what are you waiting for? Get yourself down to Bunnings, Big W & other major retailers today and pick up your Strims-eez whilst summer stocks last.

### **Rationale:**

The idea was to turn a mundane item (a garden trimmer) into something desirable, through the relatability of struggling to either put together the tools or find the time and enthusiasm to use them. It highlights the struggle of not owning an already-put-together, state-of-the-art gardening tool, and uses this to pinpoint exactly why viewers need to buy one now. By further exhibiting the frustrations associated with expectations of tyrannical landlords, or the effort it takes in literally physically completing gardening tasks, the Strims-eez promises to make life easier in general, and easier than if using other tools. Instead of aiming the product at the typical DIY male protagonist like so many gardening tool adverts do, this advert targets busy women – for example, due to being mothers or young professionals. It empowers predominantly women to take charge of their garden's with ease, yet still encourages anyone in need of gardening tools to purchase the product also. It then ends cleverly with a call to action and a line convincing viewers that the product is potentially scarce, reinforcing its desirability and edging viewer's into wanting to buy the product even more.



## Representing Irish Culture in Modern Theatre.

A snippet of my play & accompanying critical essay:

### SCENE 1:

*The living room/kitchen of a small house in Dublin, Ireland, present day. An armchair, TV and side table with a glass and two bottles front stage left, and a front door back stage just right of this. Along the back right, a kitchen worktop area including a kettle, microwave, a loaf of Brennan's bread and some other kitchen utensils, it curves around to the right. There is a large window next to the front door looking out onto the street where it is dark and rainy, and a dinner table front stage right surrounded by five chairs. Inside, the house is lit up brightly. MRS KELLY, an elderly slim woman with cropped hair of a blonde-grey colour, dressed in a long skirt and knitted jumper, is sitting in the armchair watching the weather channel on TV which can be heard faintly.*

*The front door opens and sounds of strong winds and rain can be heard. Enter PAT KELLY, a fairly tall man of slim build with slightly ginger hair and pale skin. He is wearing a dark coat with a black suit and tie visible underneath, carrying two shopping bags. His hair is wet and whipped messily from the winds outside. He shuts the door behind him so the weather channel can be heard faintly again.*

PAT: Y'alright mam?

MRS KELLY: Y'alright Pat? D'you need a hand with those?

*(She switches off the TV)*

PAT: No you're grand, don't be bothering yourself there, now.

MRS KELLY: Right you are.

*PAT puts the bags at his feet and takes off his shoes and coat. He walks to the kitchen area loosening his tie and top shirt buttons, and begins to unload his shopping.*

MRS KELLY: How was the funeral?

PAT: Was a dull one really; you should've come still.

MRS KELLY: You know I won't be going if it's that church they do be insisting on having it at. *(Pause)* Anyone I'd know there?

PAT: I saw Niamh. She sang with the choir again.

MRS KELLY: Brilliant voice hasn't she. Hope she got a good tip off your man there for that.

PAT: I doubt that very much, bit stingy that one.

MRS KELLY: Well your man won't be going to heaven if he isn't even giving little Niamh a tip there.

PAT: That's not a very nice thing to say.

MRS KELLY: Jesus would've tipped.

PAT: What do you mean Jesus would've tipped?

MRS KELLY: Good Catholic man, would've tipped. All I'm saying.

*(Pat laughs, shaking his head)*

So did you speak to Niamh much there? Haven't seen her in a while.

PAT: I think she said she'd pop around in a bit.

MRS KELLY: And did you not give her a lift back with you then no?

PAT: She was chatting to some lad, Timmy, Tommy I don't know. Didn't want to be the old fella embarrassing her like.

MRS KELLY: Why?

PAT: And did you not hear? Oh mam I heard she's gotten herself pregnant again. Doesn't even know the lad's name this time, god help her.

MRS KELLY: And what's that to you now?

PAT: Pregnant again.

MRS KELLY: You don't be knowing whether she was pregnant or not before Pat, don't be saying pregnant again. Idle gossip is all.

PAT: Girl's just turned 15.

MRS KELLY: Well you should be minding your own business.

PAT: So you don't have any problem at all with young girls getting pregnant, no? Wouldn't be embarrassed if that was your kid like?

MRS KELLY: It's her choice what she's to be doing with her body, nobody else's choice and nobody else's business.

PAT: Really? So you wouldn't—

MRS KELLY: *(Shouts)* Stop Pat.



PAT: Christ, I was only asking.

MRS KELLY: Well don't be.

PAT: *(Under his breath)*

I wasn't getting anyone pregnant now was I?

*(MRS KELLY is still. PAT unpacks the last of his shopping. It is silent)*

PAT: Here, I got you some more Brennan's.

*(He holds up the loaf of bread to show her)*

Cos if you do be hearing what your man on the telly's been saying, you'll be glad of the extra ey?

*(MRS KELLY has turned her back to him, she doesn't respond)*

Snowed in we're going to be, proper heavy they said it's coming didn't they?

*(Pause)*

Come on mam, I know you've been watching that weather channel there all morning.

MRS KELLY: You going to start giving me your opinions about what telly I'm to be watching now and all?

PAT: Come on I'm only messing, I got your bread didn't I?

MRS KELLY: Did you get me Taytos?

*(PAT holds a packet up to show her).*

*(She nods; pause)*

So is it only the one bag you got then?

PAT: It is actually yes. And 85c they cost me too, bastard country.

MRS KELLY: Least this country is better than them over in England now.

PAT: Probably haven't got any winter blizzards coming over in England.

MRS KELLY: Yeah no blizzards, but full of them English.

PAT: Be able to buy 5 bags of Taytos over there for the same price as here so you would.

MRS KELLY: Sure Taytos are Irish you stupid get.

PAT: Can buy them anywhere Taytos, they're a global crisp now.

MRS KELLY: Global crisp me arse.

PAT: *(Jesting)* Ay watch that mouth.

MRS KELLY: Well when you do be talking all about global crisps I'll be saying what I like.

*(Pause)*

PAT: Brendan was there and all today, asking about you.

MRS KELLY: What Fat Brendan? Lovely fella.

PAT: And he was telling me how he's single again, bless him.

MRS KELLY: Misses cheat on him did she?

PAT: His misses didn't cheat on him.

MRS KELLY: Was she the lesbian one then? You do get an awful lot of lesbians these days.

## **Critical essay response:**

Much of Irish culture has been represented in modern theatre with a specific, clichéd version of what 'Irishness' is, tending to revolve around questions of identity in relation to the nation. Ireland is a profoundly patriotic society with cultural identity relying on two core institutions – the Catholic Church and the family. Martin McDonagh in his Leenane Trilogy, exploits characteristics of Irish cultural archetypes, drawing on the negative aspects of the 'Paddy Stereotype' to craft his characters and plots. He focuses on the dysfunctionality of Irish family culture, with a strong focus on religion and a particular attention to impairments and disability as the norm. My play responds to McDonagh's work, centring specifically around Catholicism and dysfunctional family relationships as stimuli for the negative cultural stigmas specifically surrounding teenage pregnancy. I will explore, through discussing McDonagh's work and my own, whether there is a notion of what Irish culture is in modern theatre, and whether it is crafted as a celebratory or negative portrayal.

In modern theatre, Irish culture is symbolised by a strong notion of family whereby character relationships, whilst cohesive, are predominantly intertwined with jesting, mockery and dysfunctionality. McDonagh's *The Lonesome West* details the violent disputes of two brothers on the most ordinary of topics, which exhibits that in Irish family culture, verbal abuse is obviously an act of violence. However, by overstressing this social issue as a means of mockery, McDonagh evokes laughter, presenting a bizarrely celebratory portrayal of expectedly negative cultural stereotypes. One of the brothers Coleman claims 'I do like a good fight. It does show you care' further exhibiting a dichotomised notion of the term family, with the warped understanding of what it is to 'care' presenting McDonagh's Irish characters as flawed in the sense that pride is aligned with dysfunctionality.



To represent the Irish family culture in my own play, I emulated McDonagh's execution of mockery as a means of family bonding, with the elderly Mrs Kelly and her son Pat constantly bickering and jeering one another but reconciling immediately afterwards. Scene 1 exhibits Mrs Kelly having just quarrelled with Pat and thus refusing to speak to him, being drawn out of her mood by his offering of a packet of Taytos as a means of rapprochement. The absence of dialogue at this moment indicates that Pat is so accustomed to family disputes that his holding up the packet is sufficient enough to establish his gesture of peace, which the audience can infer through the principle of subtext. Here, I exaggerated the overtly petty nature of Irish families as a means of evoking humour, rather than negatively portraying the culture. When Pat then complains about the price of the crisps (depicting the economic concern in Ireland also), Mrs Kelly claims that the country is still 'better than them over in England'. This demonstrates an overt nationalism which I purposely integrated to highlight Ireland's patriotic society as a prominent feature of Irish cultural distinctiveness.

To further demonstrate nationalism, I crafted the title 'Mammy's Boy' to reflect the closeness of family relationships, emphasising the spelling of 'Mammy' as a specific representation of Irish culture. The title however, also serves as an ironic declaration, since it later becomes apparent that Pat's supposed mum (Mrs Kelly) is not his real mum – thus depicting a dysfunctional rather than congenial representation. I also incorporated a subtle Irish accent in my play, reinforcing Irish nationalism and emphasising this as an explicit expression of culture in modern theatre. I used a few conventional expressions, inverted sentences and used strange inflections to create a natural dialogue style. I also altered the diction of stereotypical Irish dialect features such as the perpetual euphemistic crudity 'feck' and idioms like 'eld' to signify 'old'. Irish nationalism is thus represented in modern theatre through the deliberate caricature of accent exhibiting a humorous depiction of the culture.

Furthermore, my work responds specifically to the notions of Catholicism in McDonagh's Leenane Trilogy, which establishes religion as a prominent and stereotypical feature of Irish culture. In *A Skull in Connemara* when Mick jeers with Mairtin 'Isn't it illegal in the Catholic faith to bury a body, the willy still attached?' religious law is ridiculed and associated with impertinent stupidity in an attempt to evoke laughter. Like McDonagh's plays which through this, subject the pieties of Irish Catholicism and nationalism to imprudent satire, I incorporated similar moments in my own play such as Mrs Kelly joking about how 'Jesus would've tipped, good Catholic man'. This presents a dichotomized understanding of Catholicism as seeming celebratory, yet through associating it with humour again undermining its seriousness.

I also sought to exhibit religion as a catalyst for other social problems, specifically in regards to stigmas surrounding teenage pregnancy. Since exposition in plays should be driven out by the force of a character's action, when Mick in scene 3 finally exposes 'that church' as the location in which him and Mary got caught having sex, it is finally comprehensible that Mrs Kelly's refusal to visit the church (repeatedly mentioned in scene 1), was due to a religiously induced humiliation. Comic relief is provided through this exposition as the church is illuminated as an ironic symbol for errant behaviours, thus undermining stereotypical religious attitudes and instead presenting a declaration of iconoclasm. This is because not only is an issue of pre-marital conception which in the Catholic Church demonstrates as disrespect to traditional religious values prevalent, but the sexual act having occurred in the church itself induces a mockery of religion on an extreme scale. Modern theatre is thus used to represent Irish religious culture as a source of hilarity, exhibiting the stigmas surrounding teenage pregnancy as resulting from dysfunctional societies.

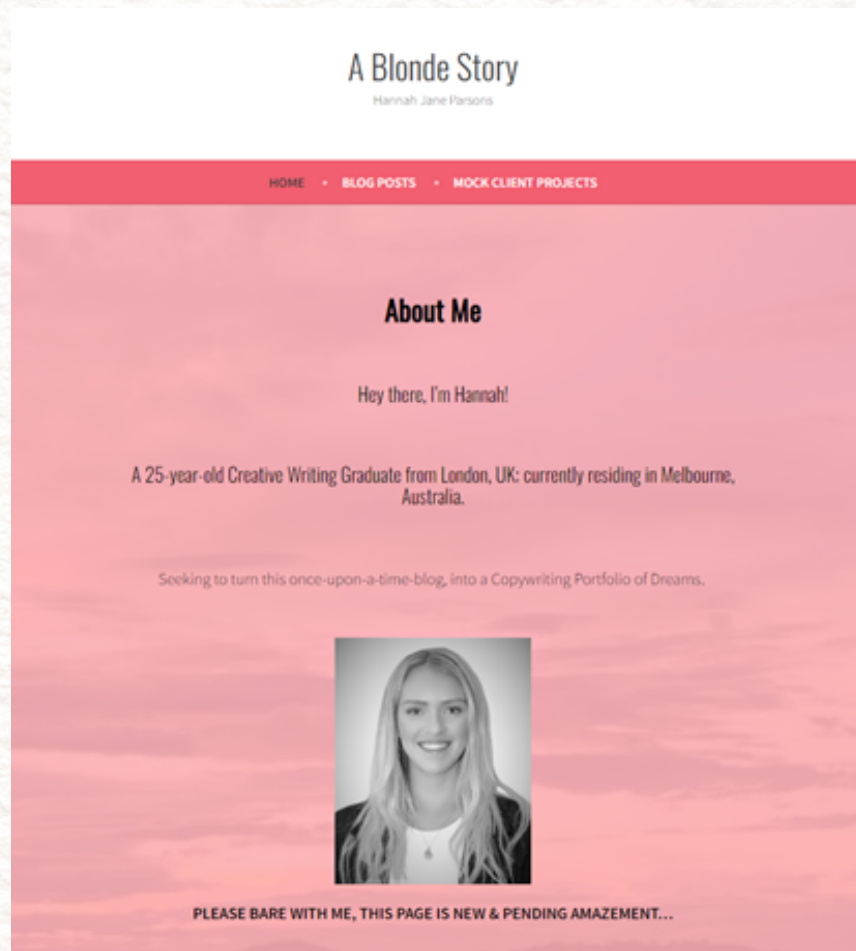
To emphasise comparisons between Irish attitudes regarding teenage pregnancy during different time periods, I explicitly introduced the sub-plot of Niamh's pregnancy to my play, presenting Mary and Niamh as foil characters. In an attempt to evoke an understanding of both the current and historical social context, I crafted Mrs Kelly's character as a product of this dysfunctional historical society through allusions of her having sent her own pregnant daughter to England for an abortion in the 1980s. Whilst Ireland have supposedly modernised their outlooks since this period, clear stigmas surrounding teenage pregnancy are still evaded to in modern society as Niamh claims she is 'embarrassed' about being pregnant. This is reinforced when she enters scene 1 drunk singing 'Wild Rover', which initially appeared to exploit the humorous Irish alcoholic stereotype, but later becomes ostensible that this more likely was due to her having just discovered she was pregnant. The supposedly jolly Irish alcoholic archetype is thus inverted, instead evoking a sardonic representation of Irish culture as evaded by archaic cultural enigmas, whereby the comedy negatively presents the underlying resistance to modernity.

In conclusion, it appears that modern theatre often intertwines the seriousness of Irish cultural issues with comedy, recognising notorious cultural clichés and exaggerating them as a form of humour. I purposely implemented Pat's final line in my play 'What a feckin day', to encapsulate this, representing a conventionally recognisable perception of Irish culture in modern theatre as dysfunctional, but with the blasé attitudes towards these topics lessening the negative depiction of the culture. Both mine and McDonagh's work present Irish cultural elements as undoubtedly flawed. Nevertheless, a relishing of comedy is exhibited as a distinctive part of Irish culture also – thus presenting an entertaining and arguably celebratory notion of Irish culture in modern theatre.



## My Personal Website:

<https://hannjaneblog.wordpress.com>



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