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Samples and Stories

This document showcases a curated selection of my writing samples, offering a glimpse into my versatility and expertise across various fields. It includes Academic Research, PR & Communications writing, and Travel writing, each selected to demonstrate my ability to communicate complex ideas clearly, engage diverse audiences, and craft compelling narratives. Whether it's academic rigor, strategic public relations, or immersive travel storytelling, these samples reflect the depth of my experience and my commitment to delivering high-quality work.

For employers, this PDF serves as a direct reflection of my skills in research, communication, and creative writing. It highlights my capacity to adapt tone and style to suit different mediums, whether writing for academic purposes, creating engaging PR content, or producing content that connects with readers on a personal level. By reviewing these samples, you'll get a sense of my writing proficiency, attention to detail, and ability to create content that resonates with target audiences.

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Academic Research

These essays were all awarded the highest score of “Distinction” from the independent grading committee of the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Writing Sample No. 1: Travel Blogs & Identity

During my time at the London School of Economics, I took a course on how identity could be navigated and represented in modern media. I wrote the paper from which the following excerpt originated as part of a study on travel blogs. Specifically, I presented an argument outlining how travel blogging utilized cosmopolitan values in order to represent travel as a rewarding, though exclusive, experience. This excerpt includes the introduction and conclusion of the essay, and it demonstrates my ability to analyze a piece of digital media, present my findings, and make a recommendation for how it can be improved.

Nomadic Matt represents himself as a traveler, rather than a tourist, and draws on the cosmopolitan values of diversity and newness as rewarding in themselves in order to present the life of a full-time traveler as preferable to a stable, permanent lifestyle. In doing so, Matt’s site makes several key assumptions about his audience of current or aspiring digital nomads: that they have the transnational agency gifted by a privileged passport, that they too view travel for the sake of personal enrichment a worthwhile pursuit, and that they have the economic and social status to spend time and money on said pursuit.

The significance of drawing a distinction between being a “tourist” and a “traveler” was clearly not lost on Nomadic Matt as he went about branding his identity for public consumption. “Travel, unlike tourism, takes the individual off the beaten path, and the journey itself is a ‘process of exploration’,” (Azariah, 2016, p. 941), and, as I will present in this paper, Matt demonstrates a belief in the process of exploration as a good thing. In the modern world, where globalization “is based on ICT, which renders distances between countries irrelevant,” (Castells, 2006, p. 60), Nomadic Matt assigns an inherent value to mobility and cultural enrichment, arguing through his very lifestyle that movement and change leads to fulfillment. However, he largely ignores *forced* movement, and instead offers travel as “more to do with a quest for meaning than with economic or political factors. . . which [he] consider[s] favorable for experiencing alternative life arrangements and gaining a deeper sense of self,” (Mancinelli, 2020, p. 418). Nomadic Matt strongly suggests that traveling as a digital nomad is a positive practice born of a cosmopolitan and diversity-seeking sensibility, while those who are forced into migration (and thus are not in pursuit of personal growth for its own sake) are left out of the privileged world of travel for fun.

In this essay I will inspect *Nomadic Matt's Travel Site* as a project of identity in order to illustrate how Matt's presentation of himself on this website represents a community of travel bloggers that work as or want to work as digital nomads in our globalized world. The ultimate goal of such an analysis is to determine the strengths and limitations of a digital project of identity, which I will do in several steps: first, I will analyze Nomadic Matt as the mouthpiece of a community that chooses to dedicate their life to traveling the world. I will delve into Matt's identity and how it achieves the goal of representing the ideal traveler. Next, I will contextualize Matt's project within broader society to argue that travel blogging as a practice is dependent on inherently cosmopolitan values and the presentation of a desired and carefully constructed identity, rather than a real one. Given all of this information, I will conclude with suggestions for how Nomadic Matt, and travel bloggers in general, can become more inclusive of all identities. This essay will demonstrate that the identity represented in this travel blog's digital project both portrays an archetype of the mobile cosmopolitan in modern society and assumes an economic and passport privilege that furthers the problematic view that "not for a long time has the world been made up of 'haves' who move and 'have nots' who stay put," (Hannerz, 2004, p. 76).

In summary, Nomadic Matt's positionality as a white American man who escaped the so-called rat race in order to journey around the world is underscored by a passport, gender, and racial privilege that presents challenges to true inclusivity. The man behind the site is clearly an example of a modern-day cosmopolitan, as he represents the "new universal cosmopolitan culture of the global tier of the world system, [where] your ancestry and skin color are far less important than your education, your values, and your travel plans," (Hannerz, 2004, p. 69). It is the recommendation of this paper that Matt could become a more inclusive project of identity by using his platform to uplift both other creators with different focus and encourage local engagement in the destinations he recommends, which would be a great step towards widening the target audience of his travel site and representing identity as intersectional and varied. Finally, in taking *Nomadic Matt's Travel Site* as an example of a digital project of identity, we can see that these projects are a great thing because they allow for identification and broaden representation options for consumers, but they are also inherently narrow in their perspective and must work to balance their performative nature with an authenticity that is all too often difficult to achieve.

Travel blogging about the digital nomad lifestyle presents a fascinating case as a digital project of identity because "like the lottery winner who says, 'It won't change my life' one social function of the blogger is to reassure the reader that it is possible to remain true to an unremarkable identity while living a remarkable life," (Duffy & Kang, 2020, p. 180). These bloggers must perform a relatable ordinariness and simultaneously remind readers that their life is worth reading about, which opens these blogs up to being studied for how exactly they represent their own identity – and what identities are reflected and abandoned in the process. As an example of this type of project, *Nomadic Matt's Travel Site* exemplifies the transnational agency and mobility, cosmopolitan ideology, and performance of fulfillment that are the foundation of the "traveler" identity in a globalized world.

Academic Research

Writing Sample No. 2: Feminism in Media Campaigns

The following is an excerpt from an essay on the impact of visually representing feminism in media campaigns. I argued in this essay that our neoliberal (or individualist) society had begun viewing the female body as a site for demonstrating success or failure. This is the introductory section of the essay.

From housewife-turned-hero “Rosie the Riveter”’s wartime posters (History.com Editors, 2010) to Always’ famous equality-affirming “#likeagirl” campaign (CampaignUK, 2016), female empowerment has long been an advertising subject. In fact, I would argue that there is no better place to view what the current zeitgeist demands of women than the advertisements that sell a lifestyle; in our current society, everything from gym memberships to clothing, and even diets are designed to promise the power that comes from improvement. “Unfortunately, in this image-bedazzled culture, we have increasing difficulty discriminating between parodies and possibilities for the self,” (Bordo, p. 212), and it is in this difficulty that the visual representations of femininity begin to have dangerous political and personal implications for feminists and their cause. Modern feminism undoubtedly involves outward representations of femininity – or their lack – and is therefore a visual practice. More specifically, the appearance of the female body itself has come to act as a site of empowerment for women in our neoliberal economy of visibility.

The way that feminism – or, powerful women – look has come to matter more and more as we have moved into a neoliberal society. The norms of such a society demand an emphasis on self-branding and a shift of the responsibility for success and growth onto the self, while aesthetically pleasurable things are consistently given priority in our economy of visibility. Or, in the words of feminist scholars: “Self-confidence can be seen; in an economy of visibility, it is articulated through the strong, earnest body,” (Banet-Weiser, 2020, p. 4) so much that “the body becomes the site of a struggle for control,” (Joy & Venkatesh, 1994, p. 346). The female body has become a factor in visual representations of feminism, as the female empowerment that the movement seeks is presented as possible through the shaping of the body to fit an ideal of health or beauty. Feminism as a visual practice creates a paradox that this essay will dig into in more detail, that is, that sexism is often understood to involve objectification and yet our economy of visibility has made it so that “female liberation is now seemingly being played out through the very spectacle of ‘being gorgeous,’” (Willson, 2015, p. 2). By considering all of these factors, I will make the argument that it matters what feminism looks like because society has begun to treat the female body as a place to either embrace or dismiss femininity as an act of empowerment.

In this essay I will intertwine theories of neoliberal and popular feminism in order to demonstrate that our society still highly values beauty and the “ideal” female body (though the definition of it is always changing), and

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that this preference directly impacts how women perceive themselves as either empowered or constrained by social norms. Simply put: visual representations of feminism often tell women that mastering their bodies or appearances will allow them to master other aspects of their life. This essay will reckon with that idea through the lens of feminist theory in several steps: first, I will dissect a fitness advertisement for *Equinox* – a gym known for its exclusivity and elite clientele – to explore how the ad takes the neoliberal value of self-branding onto the bodily figure itself. Next, I will discuss the connection our society has built between empowerment and physical beauty or strength. I will bring together several prolific feminist scholars in order to investigate how a clothing ad for *Sweaty Betty* capitalizes on this connection in order to sell the idea that the feminist goal of power and improved well-being can be found through mastering the way one looks. Finally, I will dive into the personal and political implications of treating the body as a site for empowerment and feminist change. Throughout this essay, I will continually consider the ways in which these advertisements engage with feminism by referencing its promises of power in order to tap into the female market seeking just that.

Before we can begin to analyze the female body as a visual site for the feminist cause, we first have to define the terms that will serve as the basis for this argument. For the purpose of this paper, we'll be referring to a conception of feminism that engages with themes of "shame, confidence, and competence," and is a "set of social conditions" that form the sensibility that women's equality is a matter of empowerment and has yet to be fully realized (Banet-Weiser et al., 2020, p. 9). In the context of this argument feminism concerns women finding empowerment through an improvement in confidence and competence. This essay will place this definition of feminism in a neoliberal context, where "dominant political rationality moves to and from the management of the state to the inner workings of the subject," or in feminist theory terms, "construes women not only as entrepreneurial subjects but also as individual enterprises," (Banet-Weiser et al., 2020, p. 8). Basically, this essay understands neoliberalism as the understanding that every person existing and working in society is their own enterprise, responsible for branding themselves in whatever way they feel necessary to find economic and social success. I will make the argument that this phenomenon is currently operating in the context of feminism within an inescapable economy of visibility that supports an emphasis on the surface-level appearance of women as instrumental in making the cause successful. As Bordo says, the bodies of women have come to "offer themselves as an aggressively graphic text for the interpreter – a text that insists, actually demands, it be read as a cultural statement, a statement about gender," (Bordo, 2008, p. 210). With this understanding of what exactly it means for neoliberal feminism to operate in an economy of visibility, we can begin a discussion of how this actually happens, and what it means for women in the real world.

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Writing Sample No. 3: Cosmopolitan Representations of Love

Finally, I am providing a short section of my master's dissertation entitled "Par ce que c'étoit lui; par ce que c'étoit moy:" Cosmopolitan Love in *Call Me By Your Name*. This dissertation examined how romantic love may be represented in a cosmopolitan context, and concluded that media utilized four core themes in order to do so: the universality of love, intellectual connection, ephemeral awareness, and the cosmopolitan canopy. I analyzed how these four themes work together in the film *Call Me By Your Name* to represent cosmopolitan love as natural, intense, and temporary. I am including this final sample because it is a great example of my ability to write creative and engaging material while also providing the necessary information.

Ephemeral Awareness

During the press tour prior for the release of *Call Me By Your Name*, Armie Hammer (who plays Oliver) stated that an aspect that initially drew him to the project was how the "only antagonist in the film is time. Because their time will end and they know it, and that's it," (Duboff, 2017). Hammer speaks here to a key theme in the film that gains new meaning in the context of cosmopolitanism. We must consider Ezra and Rowden's claim that "loneliness is an inevitable outcome of transnationality, and it finds its way into the desolate structures of feeling and lonely diegetic characters," (2006, p. 7) as well as my earlier point (see Literature Review) that transnational narratives inevitably find themselves centered around the concept of longing and loneliness. In doing so, we can see how these characters' performances of visceral cosmopolitanism – an attraction to the Other and a willingness to move around the world with ease – is in part played out through a clear sense of time and fear of the approaching goodbye.

Sense of Time

One of the more straightforward moments of the film comes just after the two men have begun their relationship in earnest. The camera finds Oliver and Elio sitting together outside in the evening. Legs intertwined and hands playing between them, Elio comments: "God we wasted so many days, why didn't you give me a sign?" As the limited frame for their time together has been established earlier in the film as exactly six weeks, the viewer can't help but reconsider all of the earlier, meandering scenes that the two spent hiding their feelings with the new perspective that they could have been together for all of those days. The sense of wasted time is devastating in its own way. Oliver is only in Italy because he is willing to travel and learn, but conversely, he cannot stay both because it is not his home and because we assume he must continue traveling and learning.

Both men express their fear of losing each other throughout the film. In a particularly emotional scene, Elio breaks down in tears after Oliver finds him sleeping in the attic. Oliver is teasing Elio, amused, when the

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playfulness of the scene comes to an abrupt halt as Elio falls into his lover's lap, crying "I don't want you to go." The idea that their separation is inevitable but will be heartbreaking is self-evident throughout the film, but never more so than in this moment of emotional vulnerability. Later, on the morning of the day that Oliver will board the train and leave Italy behind, we see him from behind as he looks out the window of the two men's hotel room in Bergamo. He turns towards us in the morning light to look down at a sleeping Elio in the bed, where his gaze lingers with a melancholy expression. It is not the explosive confession of feelings that we received from Elio regarding their goodbye, but it is in its own way a sign of Oliver's awareness of the loss that this separation will mean for him.

In these examples of the emphasis that the film places on the sense of time – both wasted and limited – we are led to understand *Call Me By Your Name*'s presentation of love as one that is temporary by nature and held back by an awareness of its own ephemerality. The romance between Oliver and Elio appears unique in a once-in-a-lifetime sort of way, and it allows the film to explore how, despite its great strength in creating interesting people, cosmopolitanism can lead to a certain level of loneliness and fear of loss that may not be present in a more stable environment.

The Approaching Goodbye

From a filmmaking standpoint, the build up to the approaching goodbye between Elio and Oliver is done quite masterfully. The pacing of the film is particularly interesting. In the beginning, the shots are long and drawn out with minimal dialogue. The camera lingers on the countryside and the architecture of the villa as much as it does the two main characters. However, the pacing picks up in time with the development of Elio and Oliver's relationship. They begin talking more as the scenes grow shorter and the shots quicker, with less and less attention given to just the setting and more and more time to the two of them interacting within it. This has several key effects: first, it plays with the viewer's sense of time so that we truly *feel* both the wasted time of the weeks before they found each other and the pressure of the limited time they actually have together. The film moves quickly through their moments together and we are made keenly aware of just how fleeting their time together really is.

Second, the intentional pacing also positions their romance in the context of Elio's life. When Oliver arrived and began staying at the villa, life appeared slow; a routine where nobody and nothing was rushed or dreadful of a deadline. This was made evident by those long, unhurried shots of his daily comings and goings. The change of pace when he becomes intimate with Oliver gives the distinct impression that, for lack of a better way of putting it, life seems to move faster when you have something to lose. This is in agreement with Giddens' assessment of

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intimacy in modern societies, that “passionate love is marked by an urgency which sets it apart from the routines of everyday life with which, indeed, it tends to come into conflict,” (1993, p. 37).

From the moment we meet Oliver, we are reminded that he is an impermanent fixture in Elio’s life. This is evident in his catchphrase: a casual “later!” every time he decides to exit a room or conversation. This small choice in the dialogue may appear to be simply a part of building his character as a confident, uncaring American; however, when viewed through the lens of the two men’s eventual goodbye it becomes clear that the word is being used as a device to set them up for their separation. Speaking to his parents about this habit of Oliver’s, Elio jokes “just watch, this is how he’ll say goodbye to us when the time comes: Later.” Here is making a point of his own sureness that Oliver does not particularly care about Elio or the Perlman’s. Indeed, Oliver does say goodbye to Professor Perlman and Annella before heading off to Bergamo with Elio towards the end of the film with a casual, though undoubtedly fond, “later Perlman’s!” It is notable, then, that he says absolutely nothing upon leaving Elio for the final time. The scene takes place on a train station platform where the two hug one last time before Oliver boards. Oliver does not say “later,” nor does he say anything regarding their relationship. They simply hug and look each other in the eye, and then separate. Whether this is because Oliver does in fact care for Elio in a more than casual way, or because he is aware that there won’t be a later for them, the choice not to incorporate the term into their goodbye is an intentional one that points to cosmopolitan love’s complicated relationship with time.

The representation of love in *Call Me By Your Name* is in part characterized by the cliché that love is fleeting, but it recontextualizes this idea in the context of a transnational romance wherein love is fleeting *because* the world is big. In doing so, it incorporates a strong understanding of ephemeral awareness in its characters and their conceptions of love.

PR & Comms Writing

Writing Samples No. 4: Media Pitch for the “New Pizza Roll” (Exercise)

The following content was produced as part of an exercise in a certificate course on Public Relations. We were asked to identify a food, beverage or wellness brand of your choosing and develop a pitch introducing the product to the media. This was a fun and unique exercise because we were told to be creative and assume a high budget, so I chose to create a scenario in which Totino’s Pizza Rolls wanted to launch a more Gen-Z friendly product.

Audience Overview

The target audience for this pitch includes health-conscious Millennials and Gen Z consumers who are interested in clean eating and wellness, but are also attracted to familiar products and often nostalgic for the simpler time of childhood. This group typically follows trends via TikTok and Instagram, shops at high-end grocers such as Whole Foods, Trader Joes, and Erewhon, and seeks out alternatives to the convenient snack products that they consider “unhealthy.” They value transparency and clean labels, and are drawn to brands that align with their lifestyle and personal identity. The target audience for the new Pizza Roll will be extremely familiar with the brand, but already has a preconceived notion of it as an unhealthy childhood snack.

Summary

The food and beverage space in 2025 has certainly followed in 2024’s trendy footsteps; keeping a finger on the pulse of modern young consumers’ continued lean towards a more mindful approach to their diets. While the beverage industry has seen a dramatic growth in the demand for non-alcoholic spirits and adaptogenic beverages (think companies like Ritual Zero Proof and Recess), the food industry relies on the TikTok-friendly buzzwords of “gut health,” “mood regulation,” and “clean eating.” In short, the Millennial/Gen Z market wants to feel good about what they put in their bodies. So, for my pitch I am challenging myself to take a highly-recognizable brand that is generally considered to be the type of unhealthy that makes it almost shameful to eat as an adult – Pizza Rolls – and offering a journalist the first look at its extensive rebrand into a nutritionally mindful, nostalgic snack for the Millennial/Gen Z market.

Media Pitch Email

Subject: Reimagining the Pizza Roll for the Modern Consumer

Dear Mr. Sterling,

I hope New York City is treating you well and that you’re enjoying this beautiful weather! I’m reaching out with a thrilling new story for your audience over at Bon Appétit – the fresh reinvention of the nostalgic Pizza Roll for today’s wellness-driven young consumer.

PR & Comms Writing

The Millennial and Gen Z market likely remembers Pizza Rolls as a staple of childhood play dates and after-school snack sessions, but the savory treat has come to be considered an “unhealthy kid food” as they’ve matured into adults. Well, Gatsby PR has been working closely with Totino’s to change that narrative and meet consumers where they are: capitalizing on their nostalgic memories of the childhood snack while recognizing their desire for cleaner, healthier snack options.

Starting in late July, Totino’s will begin rolling out a new line of Pizza Rolls designed specifically for the mindful adult. The snack our consumers have grown up with is ready to grow up with them, presenting itself as an air-fryer friendly, protein-packed snack choice in a revamped packaging that reflects the clean and modern aesthetic of today’s consumers. New products will include the option for gluten-free crusts, plant-based fillings, and exciting new flavors such as “spinach and feta” and “mushroom pesto,” and Totino’s is setting a fresh course with complete transparency and a focus on real food.

I would like to extend an invitation to you and your editorial team to attend our exclusive launch party: a Snack & Sip event that will offer snack stations with all of the new (and a peek at some rare, not ready for market) flavors of Pizza Rolls, a mixologist curating non-alcoholic pairings for guests, and cooking demos of how to pair these savory snacks for a balanced diet. We have a chic, nostalgic theme designed for the space, and can’t wait to host you and your guests!

Why it might be a fit for your coverage:

- ‘The global healthy snack market is projected to nearly double by 2034, and Totino’s choice to refresh its image is likely only the beginning of nostalgia-based companies staking their claim in the market.
- The Millennial/Gen Z audience has proven its desire for familiarity over and over – the resurgence of Cosmic Brownies and Dunkaroos is a testament to this – but remain intent on mindful eating. The makeover of the Pizza Roll is the perfect example of this unique market niche.
- The launch of this new product aligns with the start of dorm-living, tailgates, and watch parties, so searches for healthy, convenient snacks will be on the rise just as the new Pizza Roll hits the shelves.

I would also be happy to connect you with the team behind the rebranding to give you a front-row perspective on how Totino’s is going to change the snacking game by blending nostalgia with a mindful approach to food.

Thank you so much and I hope to hear from you!

Warmly,
Anna Long

Coming Soon!

Additional PR & Comms Samples: Branding Kits, Media Pitches, etc.

Travel Writing: Destination Guides, Op-Eds, & Reviews