Lawrence Michel

Intro into Journalism

 What do you know about the truth? The reality is we know nothing about it because it simply doesn’t exist until we try to find it. It is often described as a fact or belief that is accepted and then considered to be true, but by what or whom? What we consider to be true starts off as a simple construction of an idea, mindset, or thought that is supported by factual beliefs molded by the accuracy of details. Truth to me can be developed over time by adding accuracy to whatever it is that is to be proven true, but then again what do I know about the truth of it all? When it comes to the world of Journalism the truth, is often times bent or withdrawn in attempt to either enhance the written material or to protect the writer’s art form. However, when does it begin?…..when is it suppose to stop? That’s where the grey line exist in the following passage, we are tasked to find the origin, and then the integrity of the words, both of which may not exist in the first place.

 The Passage given in the assignment paints a somewhat vivid scene, where a team of editors are having problems editing the work of one of their colleagues. They seem to ramble about how sensitive the colleague is or isn’t, and how he may or may not take kindly to criticism. Wolcott Gibbs is quoted saying “ W. cuts easy man”, the lack of content in the passage doesn’t point us in the direction of who “W” is. With some research done by google I was able to find out that “W”, can stand for Alexander WoollCott , who was an American Critic and commentator for The New Yorker magazine. He was also a member of the Algonquin Round Table, but that is for later discussion. Doing research on snippets from the passage I am able to find out more and more on the select group of people involved, rather than where the actual passage came from. My second search lead me to The Seeing Eye organization website, where they train dogs for people with special needs. Like most organizations that have been around for a long time, they have a origin story about how they got started, and where they were featured in a article that was published by The Saturday Evening Post.

 The article explains and describes some of the challenges that blind people face and how society may view them as pathetic, which creates the first connection this directly relates to how the editors viewed the article, ironically pathetic as well. This creates a little curiosity in my mind, I had to search further. Adding the peculiar phrase to google books, I was able to actually find the book. Turns out it is in relation to the famed critic for The New Yorker, Alexander WoolCott. It is his autobiography slash biography written by Samuel Hopkins Adams, the book has a straight forward title “ Alexander WoolCott, His life and his world”. Already some alarms are ringing when it comes to authenticity, the title itself implies some intricate plotting by author. His life and His world, already causes my imagination to run wild, with thoughts of lying and deceit. I tread carefully as I prepare myself to analyze the title further, if the reader knows that this is a biography why emphasize the fact that it is about his life. It seems that the author may be trying already to consume the reader in web of lies before the book is even opened. That could be the ultimate deceit of the whole thing, however we can not jump to conclusion we still have to continue the search, because the truth is the truth may still exist. As I actually dive deeper and try to read the book, I find out that I may have to pay. I can not judge a writer for wanting to paid for his work, but this creates an obstacle that seems too coincidental. Is the price of this book a means to block people from questioning the authenticity of his work. Instead of supporting someone who may be a liar, I take the safer route and read up on reviews from a book community called good reads, while looking through this website and doing some research of my own again I come across several websites that indicate that this autobiography seems novelistic. Which of course raises some eyebrows, but I still dig deeper to find the truth of it all.

 Continuing with the research, there is no direct answer that says out loud: “This guy is a con artist”. However there is overwhelming evidence that proves that the two were friends. The author, Samuel Hopkins Adams and the subject at hand Alexander WoolCott. This creates a two new dynamic possibilities. Who better than to write an autobiography of Alexander WoolCott, than a close friend? But then again, who would be most likely to bend the truth more for Alexander WoolCott, than a close friend. The book has no citations which cause the reliability of sources to seem rudimentary, very undeveloped as if the author himself had free reign to fill in the blanks with what he feels would be the best fit regardless if he had to bend the truth a little or not. One thing that can be said to support the claim that the truth may be non-existent when it comes to certain facts of the book, is that conversations that are said to have happened were not documented or recorded so there is no proof to say that they even happened at all. Shockingly to my surprise they are claims that WoolCott may have been gay. Though I feel personally that there is nothing wrong with that, I feel that could have brought shame to WoolCott’s legacy thus giving reasonable cause for a friend to bend the truth for his late friend as a way to clear the air and sort of redeem his name.