

## Reflective Portfolio Letter

My first semester of college has been one of major growth for me. I never expected to excel the way I have in many of my classes, English especially, as I find that I am weakest at writing than almost anything else. This semester in English 181 has been so much fun and I have learned so much that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. Each learning outcome has made me a stronger I've ever been at writing and analyzing all genres and using these analyses for making a strong argument.

Outcome 1 was represented early in the semester. Our very first paper was a rhetorical analysis. Analyzing the hoax in my own point of view allowed me to use my own style and really give myself a purpose for what I was writing. In the conclusion of my paper on the existence of fairies I draw on the fact that if fairies were real, that other should have seen them and been able to photograph them as well (screenshot 1). It gave the paper a purpose, as it was meant to open the eyes of the reader to see that no matter what they originally thought when they had started reading the paper. It was clearly showing that the entire occasion was fake and my analysis shows the signs of hoax-like qualities and talents that were used by the girls to make the fairies seem real.

Outcome 2 came about when it was time to start our research papers. I went through many drafts before I was completely happy with what I was turning in. It also reflects our weekly blog posts because they were a different form of writing. It was informal and usually reflective on what we had in our readings or what we had discussed in class (screenshot 2). In this blog post I am reflecting and analyzing one of our readings from the night before. I pulled relevant information from the text to get my point across to the audience. In my research paper, I did multiple drafts before the final submission at the end of the semester. It started with an idea and an outline, then a couple drafts with self-revision and then a final big revision after many conversations with my peers and the Writing Center about how I could make my paper better. Through these conversations and revisions I was able to incorporate the thought and reviews of my peers into my revisions. I was also able to see when something was not working and successfully made it stronger (screenshot 3). In this screenshot the green lettering represents my new and stronger topic sentence and the square green box represents the deleted old sentences that were there before. A smoother flow and better representation can clearly be seen in the two different versions of this paragraph.

Outcome 3 can be best seen, or in this case heard, in my podcast. As it is a different genre, I was able to think critically about my audience and I incorporated different sound effects according to the audience I expected to reach with my topic. I had to think in a way that catered especially to my audience and not specifically what I wanted to do. Another place outcome 3 can be seen is in my rhetorical analysis. As I analyzed 5 pictures instead of a text, I had to learn the proper way to analyze a piece of work like that and incorporate relevant information. This took copious amounts of time and I spent quite a bit of time staring at the five photos of fake fairies (screenshot 4). I learned how to develop a well thought out argument with minimal text as a source. It was a fun and interesting way to do my first paper, and my ambitiousness paid off in the end.

The last outcome was hoax-related expertise. I learned so much about hoaxes and what they actually mean. On the very first day we were told to write a blog post on what a hoax was and looking back at that first post, I can see how far I have come. Selections from Barnum and Poe pushed my boundaries of what a hoax was. After a few readings by Barnum, I was

beginning to easily point out if he was telling a lie and the ultimate purpose for his lies- money. Terry Eagleton's "What is Literature" really made me see how much the lines blurred between literature and a hoax. Even now, there is no way to see or read something and decide right there on the spot if that is a piece of literature, or a hoax, or a strange mixture of the two.

Overall, I really enjoyed this freshman-writing course and I am glad I picked it. I looked forward to going to this class every day and it was always intriguing. The entire class was engaging and entertaining and I have a lot of skills that I can take away from that class that I will continue to use in the future.

#### Screenshot 1

The audience was willing to find any way to unearth the final picture as credible because they wanted something to believe in. That brings it back to the when we were young children. Just because we grow up and are told that something is not real, does not actually mean that we ever stop believing that something like fairies could exist in this world. That is essentially what makes this a convincing and seemingly credible hoax. In comparison to the other photos taken, it is mainly the mystery surrounding the fifth photo and the fact that it seemed to be effortlessly ethereal in a way that cannot be faked, whether it was purposely done that way or accidental. This mysterious case was never solved, for Frances went to her grave claiming that the fifth photo was real. There is no way to know for sure, not even today, if the photo was actually authentic or not. But if it was, should there not have been other pictures taken by other photographers of these same creatures?

## Screenshot 2

## Deception At Its Finest

Posted on [September 3, 2015](#) by [Kyra Watson](#)

When it comes to convincing the general public that a hoax is real, con-men would go through anything to ensure a profit that kept the people coming back. Many people would create anything that looks even remotely real to persuade their audience that it is the real deal. Barnum did this with Joice Heth, who he presented to the world as an 160 year old woman who once served as a nurse to our first president of the United States, George Washington. To further convince his audience that the poor, blind, old woman was George's nurse, he falsified many certificates and records written by people of no importance, most of which stated that Joice was the greatest of all nurses and servants and slaves, ever since she was first brought over to America in the late 1800s. Joice's deformities also played a large role in the belief of her age. Her condition that caused her to be almost sickly and frail in appearance riled the crowd further into Barnum's deception. He even had a fake birth certificate made for her. So many people were quite curious to the age of Joice Heth, and in her death thousands gathered to witness the autopsy that proved she was merely and 80 year old woman. That is what makes for a successful hoax. It must be so unbelievable that it cannot be proven real or otherwise. Some may also say a hoax is successful if a profit is made off of the product or event, but the really successful hoaxes are the ones that are still mysteries to this day. They've got everyone skeptical, but no one will ever know for sure, sometimes not even the person who brought the event to life.

## Screenshot 3

Despite all the things that they did right to seem credible, Elsie and Frances's photos have many flaws that any observer would see if they looked closely enough. A closer look fifty years later makes it almost comical that the pictures were ever believed to be real in the first place; the photos have many flaws. In the first photo containing Frances and a few fairies on a tree stump in front of her, Frances is staring straight ahead at the camera instead of observing the fairies' behaviors, which is strange thing to do with such a rare occurrence in front of her. In this same photo, one of the "fairies" does not have wings, and merely plays an instrument as the others flit around her. If one has wings, should they not all have wings? And although they are fairies, fantastical beings, they should still give off shadows on the ground, which they do not. All of the great things that Elsie did to make the figures appear three-dimensional and realistic became less than extraordinary when the truth about the photos started to come out. Despite these findings decades later, the girls were able to get their audience to look past the little things they did not understand, and caused a riot by convincing them that the fifth photo was, in fact, real.

Kyra Watson 12/13/2015 7:20 PM

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Kyra Watson 12/13/2015 7:24 PM

**Deleted:** The seemingly three-dimensional qualities are moot as the two-dimensional qualities in the first two photos come about and show clear distinctions of inauthenticity.

Screenshot 4



Kyra Watson

Lindsey Grubbs

English 181.000

14 December 2015

### The Curious Case of The Cottingley Photos

As a child, everyone wanted to believe that fairies and mythical creatures were real. It wasn't until we grew to be more knowledgeable that we realized it was all fantasy. But what if it wasn't? The fairy phenomenon that occurred in England in the late 1910s and the early 1920s is considered one of the greatest hoaxes of that time. Two cousins, Elsie Wright, age 16, and Frances Griffiths, age 10, claimed to have taken photos with fairies in the gardens around their home to give Elsie's gullible mother a valid reason for coming in wet and muddy from playing outside most days. These photos spiraled out into the community and took society by storm. They especially caught the eye of Arthur Conan Doyle, a book writer who just so happened to be starting a book on fairies at this time. A series of five photos, all taken with fairies clearly in view, were analyzed by professionals in the field, and without evidence to disprove their authenticity, were declared real. This caused an uproar, and the debate of credibility between spiritualists and skeptics which still continues to this day, almost 100 years later. These two young girls used the nation's gullibility, genuine artistic ability, and vague claims about the last photograph taken to effectively establish a substantial argument that fairies were real to their early 20<sup>th</sup> century audience.

The Cottingley pictures became a national mystery because the community, like Sir Arthur Doyle was so easily deceived. The audience, which consisted of many disbelievers, skeptics, and fans of the idea, did not know what to believe when five fantasy-like photos came

about with no explanations from the photographers. With no reason to think differently, the general public went along with the idea that these fairies were indeed real. According to the *Museum of Hoaxes*, “Photographic experts examined the pictures and declared them genuine . . . the pictures became among the most widely recognized photos in the world.” In the early 1920s, technology was not made available to effectively analyze the five photos with fairy figures in them, which led experts in the field to believe that the photos were authentic. Since the experts were the ones who were declaring the truth, the general public had no reason to question the pictures any longer, and the skeptics had no solid argument to dispute. As the photographers, Elsie and Frances had very little to say when the photos first rose to fame, letting the conversation and ideas about their authenticity build into a hoax that fooled a countless number of citizens in England, and even more people in the world as years passed. The world was naïve to voluntarily believe in the credibility of the photos presented to them.

Elsie's knowledge of photography and artistic ability mixed with limitations of photography in the 1920s are essential to the girls' success in presenting the first photos of fairies to the world. Through skillful use of cardboard and hatpins, Elsie was able to create small life-like images of fairies that would go on to mystify many generations of people. These photos could not be discredited, not only due to the skillful hiding spots of the hatpins that were used to hold the cutouts up (see photo 1 and 3), placed by Elsie and Frances, but also because of Elsie's ability to make the faces of the fairies look like actual people in a three-dimensional form through the use of shading (see photo 4). Because of the quality of photos in the early 20th century, the picture did not come out as clear as any modern photo would have. Instead it was blemished with blurred spots and small indeterminable specs, which cannot be efficiently analyzed as anything other than that. Those small spots were indeterminable objects or specs,

such as in the second photo containing a gnome-like fairy. The specs were brushed off as a symptom of dark room overexposure. In all actuality, pertaining to the second photo, it looked as if it could have been the tip of the hatpin poking past the waistline of the cardboard cutout. Elsie was a skilled artist, not only in drawing but also in portraying slipups as dark room mistakes instead of human error mistakes, which was yet another convincing argument for hoaxing the world.

Despite all the things that they did right to seem credible, Elsie and Frances's photos have many flaws that any observer would see if they looked closely enough. A closer look fifty years later makes it almost comical that the pictures were ever believed to be real in the first place; the photos have many flaws. In the first photo containing Frances and a few fairies on a tree stump in front of her, Frances is staring straight ahead at the camera instead of observing the fairies' behaviors, which is strange thing to do with such a rare occurrence in front of her. In this same photo, one of the "fairies" does not have wings, and merely plays an instrument as the others flit around her. If one has wings, should they not all have wings? And although they are fairies, fantastical beings, they should still give off shadows on the ground, which they do not. All of the great things that Elsie did to make the figures appear three-dimensional and realistic became less than extraordinary when the truth about the photos started to come out. Despite these findings decades later, the girls were able to get their audience to look past the little things they did not understand, and caused a riot by convincing them that the fifth photo was, in fact, real.

A new "truth" was fabricated by these women and it sparked another flame of debates world wide about the existence of fairies. In interviews with magazines, both girls agreed that four of the five photos were indeed faked. But there was still the fifth photo that was said to be real by Frances and fake by Elsie. In my opinion, this was a planned ploy between the two. Fifty

years of unrest and dishonesty surrounding the credibility of these photos began to fade away, so to instigate the dying situation, the two old women gave opposing public statements with regards to the last photo. It is a successful way of making their audiences think about those pictures again, giving them a chance to better analyze the photos now that they have better technology. The quality of this fifth photo is seemingly different, as if the fairies are actually moving. Small faces can be observed in the right corner of the photo, and there are also fairies with their backs to the camera, all of which are dissimilar to the first four pictures (see photo 5). It could almost be thought that a completely different photographer took it. Are they differences planned or just a lucky coincidence? The public, not knowing whom to believe, once again debated about the photos' credibility. This was the idea all along, to draw more attention to the photos and give the people something new to think about as another examination of the pictures start again. Could the fifth photo actually be real? The fact that there are no girls posing in the photo is something to think about; it could be claimed that the photos were a spur of the moment, a spotting of fairies cocooning something in a meadow, moving and flowing naturally. The coloring is also different, but that could just be from complications in the dark room. The statement about the authenticity of the photos by the girls only seemed to create more confusion that does not answer the plethora of questions that had been circulating for many decades. These vague claims continued to convince the general public that fairies were real, even after disclaiming the credibility of the first four photos.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the writer of the Sherlock Holmes, first got involved with the girls' photos as an interest for a book he was writing about fairies. He was skeptical, like the rest of society, but nevertheless used the young girl's photos as evidence for an article he wrote before publishing his story (see second source). Doyle plays a key role in why the hoax went on



as long as it did because he is the reason they waited to tell the truth. The girls were very good at convincing Doyle that the photos were real, and after the publication of his paper, they were in too deep to take it all back, if only for the fact that they did not want to embarrass Doyle for naïvely believing that the fairies were real (see source). This ties in the huge time gap between the hoax and the revelation, but it does not quite explain the division on the quality of the fifth photo...

The audience was willing to find any way to unearth the final picture as credible because they wanted something to believe in. That brings it back to the when we were young children. Just because we grow up and are told that something is not real, does not actually mean that we ever stop believing that something like fairies could exist in this world. That is essentially what makes this a convincing and seemingly credible hoax. In comparison to the other photos taken, it is mainly the mystery surrounding the fifth photo and the fact that it seemed to be effortlessly ethereal in a way that cannot be faked, whether it was purposely done that way or accidental. This mysterious case was never solved, for Frances went to her grave claiming that the fifth photo was real. There is no way to know for sure, not even today, if the photo was actually authentic or not. But if it was, should there not have been other pictures taken by other photographers of these same creatures?

PHOTOS

#1



#2



#3



#4



#5



([http://hoaxes.org/photo\\_database/image/the\\_cottingley\\_fairies/](http://hoaxes.org/photo_database/image/the_cottingley_fairies/))

(<http://www.prairieghosts.com/fairies.html>)

## 1<sup>st</sup> Paper Revision Report

As this is the first paper to write in my college career, I was very skeptical about the scale of work to be done and how I might go about having a good start to the semester. It was interesting to write a paper on such a different topic; in high school we all wrote papers on the same thing and used the same sources. It was all very boring. The same could not be said for this paper. I learned a lot about college and my writing abilities through this assignment.

To start my revisions for this paper, I read through it again and then looked at the comments left on the graded assignment portion sent back to me through email. I took every suggestion given to me to make my paper better and stronger than it was before. I began with all of my topic sentences, using what we worked on in class- making sure that the topic sentences match with what is said. The fourth and fifth paragraph topic changes were made to better represent the thesis and I believe that it was the best decision because now the paper is more cohesive through that small change (screenshot 1 and 2). I changed to wording and the structure and now it gives a stronger argument to start off each paragraph and they better reflect what is going to be said in the following paragraph. In the first and second screenshot you can see the comparison between the first topic sentence and what I changed it to and how the new sentence fits tightly with the following sentences.

You can see I also made a few adjustments structurally in the body paragraphs, making a few sentences easier for the audience to read, such as in the fourth paragraph (see screenshot 1). To make the argument stronger for the second submission of this essay, I did some research on the background of the girls and the photos and in the end decided that adding a paragraph about the entire story would make my argument stronger. Because of this I had to go back and introduce Doyle in my introduction paragraph so that it would not seem as if the paragraph was random and that pointless information was not included (screenshot 4). After writing the paragraph about this man and his influence on the girl's lie and the longevity of it all, I found that the right place for it was at the very end of the paper to tie it all in to one central reasoning, and the conclusion would make it feel complete and then ask the question of why the fifth photo was still a topic of debate even after all of the revelations (screenshot 3).

This first paper was the stepping-stone for how the semester was going to go for me. It really helped build my analytical skills and I began to think about why what I was saying about the topic was important. It also helped develop my writing skills because I wrote four drafts before turning it in for the first time. I learned through the class that there is no need writing a paper if it is not for a purpose, and that is what the conclusion is for. I always used to think the conclusion was just supposed to reiterate the intro and the information presented in the body paragraphs. But now I know that it should include the big picture and why people should take the time to read the paper.

## Screenshot 1

Despite all the things that they did right to seem credible, Elsie and Frances's photos have many flaws that any observer would see if they looked closely enough. A closer look fifty years later makes it almost comical that the pictures were ever believed to be real in the first place; the photos have many flaws. In the first photo containing Frances and a few fairies on a tree stump in front of her, Frances is staring straight ahead at the camera instead of observing the fairies' behaviors, which is strange thing to do with such a rare occurrence in front of her. In this same photo, one of the "fairies" does not have wings, and merely plays an instrument as the others flit around her. If one has wings, should they not all have wings? And although they are fairies, fantastical beings, they should still give off shadows on the ground, which they do not. All of the great things that Elsie did to make the figures appear three-dimensional and realistic became less than extraordinary when the truth about the photos started to come out. Despite these findings decades later, the girls were able to get their audience to look past the little things they did not understand, and caused a riot by convincing them that the fifth photo was, in fact, real.

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A new "truth" was fabricated by these women and it sparked another flame of debates world wide about the existence of fairies. In interviews with magazines, both girls agreed that four of the five photos were indeed faked. But there was still the fifth photo that was said to be real by Frances and fake by Elsie. In my opinion, this was a planned ploy between the two. Fifty

Kyra Watson 12/15/2015 11:43 PM  
**Deleted:** Now that the truth was out, the new mystery became that of the credibility of the fifth photo. Elsie claimed it was fake, while Frances claimed it the only real photo taken.

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## Screenshot 3

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the writer of the Sherlock Holmes, first got involved with the girls' photos as an interest for a book he was writing about fairies. He was skeptical, like the rest of society, but nevertheless used the young girl's photos as evidence for an article he wrote before publishing his story (see second source). Doyle plays a key role in why the hoax went on

Watson 5

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## Screenshot 4

home to give Elsie's gullible mother a valid reason for coming in wet and muddy from playing outside most days. These photos spiraled out into the community and took society by storm.

They especially caught the eye of Arthur Conan Doyle, a book writer who just so happened to be starting a book on fairies at this time. A series of five photos, all taken with fairies clearly in view, were analyzed by professionals in the field, and without evidence to disprove their authenticity, were declared real. This caused an uproar, and the debate of credibility between

### Hypothetical Podcast Revision

I enjoyed doing the podcasts the most this semester. It was a whole new genre I had never explored before this class and it was surprisingly my favorite part. The ability to create something that wasn't formal or written and used other forms to attract the audience like sounds and humor and horror intrigued me.

If I could revise my podcasts I would make it so much longer. It was difficult to trim it all down to about 5 minutes. I would also add Betty into my podcast. She would be there to discredit everything Bart says and to add humor to the interview. It would also make the podcast longer; here is a snippet of a hypothetical scenario:

Host: Bart and Betty! How are you doing this fine evening?

Bart: I'm wishing I wasn't missing the football game tonight. My wife made me do this.

Betty: Oh hush, Bart. You don't even know what teams are playing tonight you old fool!

Host: ... So. Tell us. After 2 decades of working on that base in Area 51, do you believe that aliens exist?

Bart: (very vaguely) what I believe and what I see are two very different things.

Host: Are you saying that your eyesight isn't good or..?

Bart: My eyesight is just fine young lady! All I know is that I don't actually know if I believe what I saw.

Betty: You've been wearing extra strength glasses since the day I met you, honey..

Host: Betty, do YOU have any second hand accounts of the night in 1961?

Betty: All I can remember is-

Bart: Let me tell the story! Ask me the questions ma'am.

I think I would also change it to make Betty a more credible source on what happened that night and have her debunk what happened as a hoax to the public. She would say that they just build aircraft out there. I really liked making it comical, but I think I would include a second interview if I had time that was completely serious and deep about alien encounters.

This podcast was reflective of all of the outcomes. It made me rhetorically aware of how my audience would analyze it and how I could cater to them through my audio and sound effects. It reflects the writing as a process because it takes many drafts to make the script for a podcast. Even as I was recording I was editing things in and out that I thought would make it sound better as a whole. The third outcome was shown through critical thinking. It was a long thought process, as I said before in my strong blog posts area where so many ideas were going through my head. It would have been interesting to try it all out and see what would have become of everything. I wonder what I would have liked the best. The fourth outcome reflects on my hoax expertise because I created an entire hoax to talk about. I based it on real suspicions of people and made up an alien encounter because a lot of people will believe anything that is said by a public speaker is true. It was fun to make up a story based on what I already knew and learned about hoaxes and I think it made it more successful as a podcast because it was hard to sit and analyze my own hoax that I had made up, although I should have been able to spot right off the top of my head what needed to be analyzed. It was such a complex process but it was super fun and worth it. I would definitely do this again.

Kyra Watson

Lindsey Grubbs

English 181-000

15 December 2015

### Tim Barrus: Reinvented or Guilt Stricken?

What makes a story seem authentic? More often than not it is the aspects that are realistic, the ones that *could* be true, but are in fact fictitious. This is the case with the story of Tommy Nothing Fancy, written by a Native American man, Nasdijj. This piece submitted to Esquire magazine, starts off with the death of Tommy from fetal alcohol syndrome, then goes on to explain his short but happy life with his father, Nasdijj, who loved and cared for him until the very end. They would go fishing together and Nasdijj boasted about how smart Tommy was despite his condition. Nasdijj blames everyone but himself, and in a dramatic ending Tommy dies doing what he enjoys most, fishing. Nasdijj would always have the heartfelt memories. This emotional and endearing story is also a lie that many people trusted. This memoir was written by Tim Barrus, a white man posing as a Native American. Tim Barrus actually did adopt a son who had fetal alcohol syndrome. But instead of being a loving and caring parent until the very end, when the going got rough, sent Tommy back into the system to be taken care of by someone else (Chaikivsky). The entire story shown to the world is a work of fiction, as he fabricated the story to seemingly ease his guilt of being a terrible father to a little boy who put his trust in him. It goes to raise the question: why this story was so successful at being seemingly authentic and why did the author write this piece in the first place? Barrus' deceitful portrayal of Navajo Native Americans through his background and stereotypes seemingly helped him successfully pose as a Native American writer, and eased his guilt of giving up his adopted son.



Tim Barrus was a man who was unsuccessful in most things in life, moving from job to job before picking up everything and moving out west. He jumpstarted his life as Nasdijj not shortly after hearing a young Native American mention the word nasdijj. Tim Barrus looked into it and claimed, “It was an old Navajo text from back in the 1890s...[he] found the word *nasdijj*, and it meant ‘to become again.’ And that confirmed it for [him]” (Chaikivsky). It was through this chance encounter with that young man, that Tim Barrus became a well-known author, but this time as a Native American father who watched his son suffer from fetal alcohol syndrome. This was Tim’s way of reinventing himself, starting over and becoming someone completely new with a story of his own. It was a way to erase his old life and mistakes, where he put a young struggling boy back into the federal system to be bounced around from foster home to foster home. Even after the scandal of his fake story had come about, Tim Barrus carried on as Nasdijj, the fictional character he had created, and continued to write inauthentic literature for the masses to read. *Esquire* magazine writer, Andrew Chaikivsky, informed his audience: “As Nasdijj, he greeted people, posed for photographs, gave readings at bookstores, and granted interviews that allowed him to speak, at length, about his impossibly difficult but heroically redemptive Navajo life.” Barrus had become the character in his story. He was living as though he had actually been raised as a Native American on a reservation and was self-proclaiming himself to be some great hero who powered through to become a better man. It was almost like the truth had never come out at all. Through his references to the Native American culture with the use of words such as “Navajo *hataalii*” and “hogan” he can be presented as a credible author who could write honestly about Native American life (Nasdijj). By using jargon exclusive to Native Americans, Tim Barrus was able to woo the majority of his audience and pretend like he was really a Native American telling a true story. This portrayal of his own background was one

of the significant reasons why he was so seemingly successful in portraying a Native American author.

Many of the stereotypes of Native American literature are widely accepted and believed by Barrus' audience. This is clear through their thoughts of authenticity even after the debunking of his actual ethnicity and the truth about his son. Much of his audience also believes that Native Americans are a dying race because of their drinking problems and lack of ability to take care of their kids. Even Barrus fed into the stereotype by stating that most American Indian women claim that because men can consume alcohol whenever, they can too (Nasdijj). This myth that all women drink copious amounts of alcohol is stereotypical and not realistic. This is yet another example of a generalization of a race based on a few women in the society; these alcoholic women can essentially be a part of any society. Any number of women who drink and put the lives of their babies at risk do not overshadow the countless numbers of babies born healthy and that live long lives. Just because a baby is born with a disability does not mean that they will not survive childhood, much unlike Barrus claims in his story. Even if Barrus had the right intentions with his story, which is not likely, any false representation of their culture is conceived as authentic by the audience. These stereotypes are common in many Native American literature works written by inauthentic authors.

Barrus is not the first author to pose as a writer of another race or ethnicity, nor is he the first to use common stereotypes to seem authentic. It is because he's not the first to stereotype that everything he says seems to be true. Native American fiction writers often get criticized for writing stories about Native Americans and stereotyping them without checking the facts for a sense of truth in what they are saying. Native American writer Elias Boudinot converted from his tribal culture to the colonial one and wrote stories about how savage the tribes were compared to

the colonies. His bias of his own culture was perceived as the norm for all Native Americans by his audience (Peyer). Common stereotypes and myths about Native Americans are used in fiction stories and many of the earliest referred to Native Americans as Indians (Peyer). Calling them this falls in reference of Christopher Columbus's "discovery" of America, which can be seen as disrespectful to many of them because he was not a discoverer of a New World but an invader on their lands. This history and the colonial view of Natives as savages sparked the interest in using them as mascots, another stereotype that Native Americans hardly appreciate (Peyer). Red faced and feather wearing costumes and mascots used nationwide imitate the stereotypical view that no Native American lives modernly, which is not the case at all. Through the use of these generalizations, audiences reading these fictional stories written by these kinds of authors are lead to believe that these are actual things done by Native Americans, when it most likely is a small section of the entire population. Tim's use of this type of writing is most likely another part of lessening his guilt of the real Tommy that he abandoned. By claiming that all Native American children are one way, he would feel less guilty about being a part of the problem instead of the solution because in the story he is a part of the solution by taking the best care of fictional Tommy possible. Barrus, when speaking of fetal alcohol syndrome makes this stereotypical claim: "When People Who Should Know make the point that fetal alcohol syndrome is a racial epidemic on Indian reservations, they are not exaggerating" (Nasdiijj). Yet they are in fact exaggerating. Fetal alcohol syndrome is not a disease exclusive to only Native Americans, any mother who consumes drugs or alcohol while pregnant can cause they child to get FAS, no matter what race they are. Barrus uses this claim to further dissociate himself from the situation that brought him to write this story. Because Tommy was Native American, it was only accurate that he would have FAS coming off of a Native American reservation. Instead of

believing that it could happen to anyone Tim Barrus stereotypes it to one group of people to once again ease his guilt. It is as if he is saying that no one else would even think to adopt a young boy on a reservation, yet he did. He quickly makes himself the hero of this fictional story by giving Tommy a great life before he died, which is not the case in real life. Barrus uses these many stereotypes to pose as a Native American author and to win the hearts of his audience.

Not only are the stereotypes prevalent in their everyday life, but some Native Americans deal with stereotypes about their health and privileges, and Tim's story does not help to dispel the rumors. According to the paper "Challenges to Native American Health Care", by journalist Jay Noren, Native Americans have restricted programs that revolve around their healthcare including "limited access, limited availability of specialty consultation, culturally insensitive services, inadequate data systems, confusion... inadequate funding, poor health status" and the list goes on and on. These factors contribute to the poor quality at which they receive aid for their health problems, including alcoholism and pregnancy. Tim Barrus mentions their lack of good healthcare only briefly enough to feed into the audience's stereotypes that Native Americans have special privileges when it comes to healthcare. For example the federal government gives them healthcare at no cost (Peyer). While assistance may be offered, cultural complications with medical techniques makes this assumption untrue. In the case of fetal alcohol syndrome, Barrus claims that it affects everyone in different levels of extremity (Nasdiij). While this may be true, this is not the entire story. Fetal alcohol syndrome can disrupt the "absorption of many nutrients, and thus causes deficiencies... [which can] damage the fetus irreversibly" (Luke). Fetal alcohol syndrome is not a thing such that everyone has the same symptoms, just some more severe than others, it is merely the cause of brain diseases and mental health issues that occur after birth. Tim Barrus recalls how he has FAS, but not as severely as Tommy had it

(Nasdiij). This generalized portrayal shows how misinformed he is about FAS. Had he done more research, he would have been able to better explain to audience what fetal alcohol syndrome was and how it affected children born with it. It is once again possible, he avoided the details of fetal alcohol syndrome because the story is made up. His guilt of abandoning Tommy could have caused him to write that he had FAS as well to try to understand where Tommy's mindset was at and to give himself an excuse for not having a solid, steady job for the last couple of years. It makes Tim look more like a good guy, a "hero", instead of the treacherous man he was. Tim Barrus was successful at posing as an authentic writer in this way. But what are the actual characteristics of a Native American author who writes or speaks authentically?

The truth is that there is no such thing as "authentic" writing. Every piece of work is written through the eyes of the author, and every author has their own bias whether they know it or not. Henry Gates Jr., a book reviewer stated "Even real people...are never quite real" (Gates). Every writer has a way of writing that is more so for their audience, even if that means fabricating a little bit of the truth about a person in their writing to keep the audiences interested. This is exactly what Barrus did as he wrote the fictional story about the son he did not care for properly in real life. According to the "Authenticity" article, "When Dan McCall published 'The Man Says Yes' in 1969...many critics assumed [because the main character was black that] the author was black, too" (Gates). This same assumption was made after the publication of "The Blood Runs Like A River Through My Dreams" and the author's name was published as Nasdiij. Just because a man can change his name to resemble that of a different ethnicity, does not mean that they become a part of that ethnicity. With this to think about, how can we assume that any piece of work is truly authentic and 100% real? Anyone can change their name and claim a different race and audiences will continue to make assumptions about anything that they read,

and this is why no piece of literature should be taken as completely true. Authors like Barrus will exclude pieces of the truth and blur the details with flashy words to disguise the falsities in this story he has written for his audience. He should no longer be claiming this work as a piece of non-fiction, but as a piece of fiction that will sit alongside many other false Native American writers looking for money and attention. Tim Barrus could never be authentic writer because unfortunately, they could not exist in the world we live in.

Native Americans are not the only race that can be imitated. This personal essay by Nasdijj/Tim Barrus is just one of many that represent the stereotypes falsities that go around when it comes to writing stories about other races that they are not a part of. How many other ethnicities and races do the general population stereotype based on the stories and fictitious stories written by white men trying to make quick cash? Although it seems that Tim Barrus was just trying to ease his guilty conscious, it may go so much deeper than that and it goes way past anything that only he could have done. The society and audiences of these writers are the fuel to the fire that makes these stories seem authentic and easy to believe for the reader and the rest of the community. Who knows how many other authors can be discredited through a closer analysis of their texts?

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### Research Paper Revision Report

Research papers are always hard for me to write, I want to write about every idea I get in my head and have a difficult time narrowing it down to just a few specifics for a strong paper. I knew with my first submission that it was not as good a paper as it could have been. However this revision process has been the best revision in my portfolio. I did not like my paper at all before my revision, but now I can see what it is that I really wanted to talk about the first time around.

I started the revisions for this paper based on the peer reviews I got in class and I went back and changed a few small sentence structure things, such as in the first screenshot. The wording of those sentences was confusing and it did not make much sense with the context, but now it flows nicely with the surrounding sentences. I soon went into the heavy editing, which took me some hours as I knew it would because my paper need a lot of work. I pulled a few things from the fourth paragraph and then realized that with those pieces of information no longer there, that the paragraph would fit much better before the paragraph it was currently following (screenshot 3 and 2). After adjusting the paragraph, I could clearly see how introducing Barrus' audience before going into the many stereotypes they believed to be true made for a better flow of the paper. I could also tell that I made the right decision moving the paragraph because the topic and conclusion sentences fit better in the different order than they did before, where I would've had to change them.

Some of my peer reviews talked about cohesiveness and confusion so I really worked on making sure it all made sense in the order in went in and fixed the contradiction I made later on in the paper by changing it completely (see screenshots 3 and 2). In the original paragraph I took a firm stand on authenticity and it did not quite work out the way I wanted it to. I ended up deleting the entire paragraph and taking on a stand that was not so black and white, but claiming that there was no such thing as an authentic writer, and it suddenly made sense why I was struggling so much to figure out what an authentic writer was like (screenshot 4 and 5). After rereading Gates' article on authenticity, I added it to my work cited list and used it to describe why nothing could really be 100% real and true. The first draft, you could not get the feel of what I was going for, but in the second draft it is clear that even if someone had every intention of being authentic, bias usually gets in the way of that.

After this major edit, I could see how different the approach of the entire paper was, so I went back and fixed up the introduction structurally to better show the fake authenticity Tim Barrus had.



## Screenshot 1

their health problems, including alcoholism and pregnancy. Tim Barrus mentions their lack of good healthcare, only briefly enough to feed into the audience's stereotypes that Native Americans have special privileges when it comes to healthcare. For example the federal government gives them healthcare at no cost (Peyer Reconsidering). While assistance may be offered, cultural complications with medical techniques makes this assumption untrue. In the case of fetal alcohol syndrome, Barrus claims that it affects everyone in different levels of extremity (Nasdjii). While this may be true, this is not the entire story. Fetal alcohol syndrome

## Screenshot 2

Many of the stereotypes of Native American literature are widely accepted and believed by Barrus' audience. This is clear through their thoughts of authenticity even after the debunking of his actual ethnicity and the truth about his son. Much of his audience also believes that Native Americans are a dying race because of their drinking problems and lack of ability to take care of their kids. Even Barrus fed into the stereotype by stating that most American Indian women claim that because men can consume alcohol whenever, they can too (Nasdjii). This myth that all women drink copious amounts of alcohol is stereotypical and not realistic. This is yet another example of a generalization of a race based on a few women in the society; these alcoholic women can essentially be a part of any society. Any number of women who drink and put the lives of their babies at risk do not overshadow the countless numbers of babies born healthy and that live long lives. Just because a baby is born with a disability does not mean that they will not survive childhood, much unlike Barrus claims in his story. Even if Barrus had the right intentions with his story, which is not likely, any false representation of their culture is conceived as authentic by the audience. These stereotypes are common in many Native American literature works written by inauthentic authors.

## Screenshot 3

Many of the stereotypes of Native American literature are widely accepted and believed by Barrus' audience. This is clear through their thoughts of authenticity even after the debunking of his actual ethnicity and the truth about his son. Much of his audience also believes that Native Americans are a dying race because of their drinking problems and lack of ability to take care of their kids. Despite this mythical belief, Native Americans are not a dying race. Even Barrus fed into the stereotype by stating that most American Indian women claim that because men can consume alcohol whenever, they can too (Nasdiiji). This myth that all women drink copious amounts of alcohol is stereotypical and not realistic. This is yet another example of a generalization of a race based on a few women in the society; these alcoholic women can essentially be a part of any society. Any number of women who drink and put the lives of their babies at risk do not overshadow the countless numbers of babies born healthy and that live long lives. Just because a baby is born with a disability does not mean that they will not survive childhood, much unlike Barrus claims in his story. Another common myth revolves around the spirituality of all Native American people. Even stereotypes such as these that seem good on the outside may not be perceived that way by all people in that way. Professor Walter C. Fleming makes a good statement about seemingly positive stereotypes, stating, "the stereotype of all American Indians as "spiritual" — even though this may be perceived as a positive image — does not encompass the beliefs or practices of all individuals" (Fleming). Therefore even if the author has the best intentions with his generalization about a group of people, it does not necessarily mean that it is representative of the entire race. Even if Barrus had the right

Native American literature will never be even remotely authentic because although it is usually based off of realities and stereotypes, it is never the full, completely true story originally told. Any old legends and myths told orally by Native Americans can be interpreted in many ways and therefore when translated into English by a translator can mean something different to the translator than to the Native American storyteller (~~Peyer~~ *Authentic*). These interpretations are stereotyped instantaneously to generalize the entire race or group of people because it is the only information known about Native Americans for a long time, before Native Americans can learn to read and write. A characteristic of a reliable Native American writer is that a Native American man by birth can speak and write in his native language, but usually can also read and write in English to translate to the rest of the world. Another characteristic is that Native Americans would not give away all of their secret details to their lives because they like tradition and would like to keep some things to themselves unless they were writing an exposé on the life of an average Native American. These Native American writers often write about their folklore and spirituality, but not all writers lived their entire lives on reservations and therefore would write just as any other writer would, yet they still have that background to go back to and know about that a white man posing as a Native American would never have. And that is the difference

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between Tim ~~Barrus~~ and real Native American authors. How can he still claim that his story of Tommy is true when he not really a Native American? This is proof that he should no longer be claiming this work as a piece of non-fiction, but as a piece of fiction that will sit alongside many other false Native American writers looking for money and attention. Tim ~~Barrus~~ would not be successful as a Native American writer if more of his audience knew the truth and could compare his writing to that of a reliable source.

## Screenshot 5

The truth is that there is no such thing as "authentic" writing. Every piece of work is written through the eyes of the author, and every author has their own bias whether they know it or not. Henry Gates Jr., a book reviewer ~~stated~~ "Even real people...are never quite real" (Gates). Every writer has a way of writing that is more so for their audience, even if that means fabricating a little bit of the truth about a person in their writing to keep the audiences interested. This is exactly what ~~Barrus~~ did as he wrote the fictional story about the son he did not care for properly in real life. According to the "Authenticity" article, "When Dan McCall published 'The Man Says Yes' in 1969, many critics assumed [because the main character was black that] the author was black, too" (Gates). This same assumption was made after the publication of "The Blood Runs Like A River Through My Dreams" and the author's name was published as ~~Nasdjii~~. Just because a man can change his name to resemble that of a different ethnicity, does not mean that they become a part of that ethnicity. With this to think about, how can we assume that any

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piece of work is truly authentic and 100% real? Anyone can change their name and claim a different race and audiences will continue to make assumptions about anything that they read, and this is why no piece of literature should be taken as completely true. Authors like ~~Barrus~~ will exclude pieces of the truth and blur the details with flashy words to disguise the falsities in this story he has written for his audience. ~~He~~ should no longer be claiming this work as a piece of non-fiction, but as a piece of fiction that will sit alongside many other false Native American writers looking for money and attention. ~~Tim Barrus~~ could never be authentic writer because unfortunately, they could not exist in the world we live in.

### Weakest Blog Post

A hoax is deception meant to convince an audience of people that a false event or statement is actually true. The difference between this and literature is that literature is meant to be fictitious. It is not to be perceived as falsely real, even if it may have realistic qualities. In many instances, hoaxes are seen as credible because many communities want to believe in the impossible. These audiences of people are convinced that what is being said is true because it's always more interesting to say that an impossible event occurred than to discredit the event altogether. An example of a hoax is one that recently passed. There was talk going around Facebook and other social media sites that Mars would be visible and nearly as close as the moon on August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and wouldn't be as visible for another 200 years. Because it was such a *rare* phenomenon, a once in a lifetime experience some would say, many people easily believed it to be true when a photo-shopped picture was posted with "Mars" and the moon side by side in the sky. Had this story been posted in a novel or a similar work of literature, the readers would enjoy the fictitious story, yet would never quite believe it to be true.

This was my weakest blog post in my opinion because it is my first blog post ever. I did not know at the time what was meant to go in a blog post or the formality of it. My sentences are choppy and do not flow as well as the blog posts that came later on. I also had no idea what a hoax was at this time or how it related to literature. I did not know that literature could have hoax-like qualities. I actually looked up the definition of a hoax on Google, as I'm sure a lot of my classmates did as well during this first week of classes. This blog post could be made better just by the sheer amount of knowledge I know have on hoaxes and the plethora of genres that they come in. I could cite different sources and add pictures and give it the informal quality that a blog post has. I could examples to explain what a hoax is and how it relates to literature. My definition would be my own and not a variation of what I read on Google.

### Strongest Blog Posts

#### Successful Podcasts:

Overall the podcasts were very entertaining to listen to. There were many aspects of others podcasts that I liked because they were unique, which is amazing all in its own how very differently everyone went about making their podcasts. No two podcasts were the same. I really enjoyed how comical and satirical many of the podcasts were, and I also liked the news -like ones too because many of the interviewees were funny to hear telling their first hand account. I'm not sure if it was always intentional or not, but it made it very enticing and pulled me in deeper to the topic at hand.

I really enjoyed Maya's tone of voice in her podcast. It was extremely lively and interesting to listen to. The way she pulled together her information and the commentary in her own warped voice (which was absolutely hilarious) kept me hooked from the beginning until the end. I also really enjoyed Kristin's intro and outro! I was crazily obsessed with Law & Order: SVU a couple years ago, so personally I got really excited when I heard the intro. She even had the transitions from scene to scene the same as in the show. That was a very unique way of going about doing it.

If I could I would steal actual voice actors that were invested in the role they were portraying. The podcasts were always more interesting when the actors got deep into a role. Someone had a entire crowd of people all giving their views on the rhinoceros prints in the snow and I thought that was very interesting how they were able to pull in a bunch of different views within a few seconds by just having them all talk conversationally with the host. I actually kind of wish we could do another one! They were so much fun.

This is a strong blog post because it is a close analysis of my peers' works and how much I liked what they did. They were all so different and this post represents all of the things I wish I would have done like they did because what they did in their podcast was so strong and made it really spectacular to listen to. This highlights outcome 1 and my awareness of word choice and how it fits well with some genres more than others.

#### Smirky Situation:





Who doesn't know [Tom Brady](#) and the [whirlwind of drama](#) that has followed him as of late last year? According to [this recent post](#) by The Onion, Tom Brady has been physically unable to stop smirking in response to the overturned suspension call.

The analysis of this article all starts with the audience. The story is meant for everyone able to catch onto the satire present; Brady fans, haters, and even those who know only that he plays football can enjoy this article of pure fiction.

Although at first sight, it may seem very credible, the tone of the article gives a very satirical representation of the actual meaning of the story. It is full of direct quotes and factual evidence, that if one did not know any better, would therefore believe the entire article to be true. An example of fake credibility comes from a Tom Brady quote, which states that, "I was obviously really happy when I heard the judge's decision, but it's seven days later and all the muscles in my face are still just stuck like this." It is almost humorous when the article describes the panicked look in his eyes and fear in his words, all the while still smirking. Is it even possible to smirk non-stop for seven days straight?

The text also is a good analysis of this sarcastic article. It is realistic in its apparent reactions by Tom Brady and speaks of actions that he could have possibly done. "Brady had finally fallen asleep with a pained smirk still frozen on his face". The article's manner is as if it had been right there in front of Brady as he slept, giving a first person account of his complicated sleeping arrangement. All-in-all, this article is a great representation of a hoax. It is put into a seeming credible online news page, with a plethora of eye-catching headlines all over, drawing in you attention to articles that are nothing more than satirical nonsense.

I think this blog post shows how I became to blossom with my blog posts. The interesting title and an in depth analysis of a hoax-like article make it probably my strongest blog post. I also incorporated audience into the blog post as I remember us talking about it in class and how it relates to our rhetorical triangle. This really reflects on outcome 4 as I believe my hoax expertise has started to show here in this blog post and my understanding only got stronger as the semester went on.

#### Deception at Its Finest:

When it comes to convincing the general public that a hoax is real, con-men would go through anything to ensure a profit that kept the people coming back. Many people would create anything that looks even remotely real to persuade their audience that it is the real deal. Barnum did this with Joice Heth, who he presented to the world as an 160 year old woman who once served as a nurse to our first president of the United States, George Washington. To further convince his audience that the poor, blind, old woman was George's nurse, he falsified many certificates and records written by people of no importance, most of which stated that Joice was the greatest of all nurses and servants and slaves, ever since she was first brought over to America in the late 1800s. Joice's deformities also played a large role in the belief of her age. Her condition that caused her to be almost sickly and frail in appearance riled the crowd further into Barnum's deception. He even had a fake birth certificate made for her. So many people were quite curious to the age of Joice Heth, and in her death thousands gathered to witness the autopsy that proved she was merely and 80 year old woman. That is what makes for a successful hoax. It must be so unbelievable that it cannot be proven real or otherwise. Some may also say a hoax is successful if a profit is made off of the product or event, but the really successful hoaxes are the ones that are

still mysteries to this day. They've got everyone skeptical, but no one will ever know for sure, sometimes not even the person who brought the event to life.

This is a strong blog post because it pulls information straight from a source and tightly analyzes it for why it is successful at being a hoax that the public believed without hesitation. This reflects outcome 3 because it incorporates the works and ideas of others and is showing that I can analyze work that is not mine and make a solid argument about it.

#### Podcasting Brands:

For my extraterrestrial podcast regarding aliens in Area 51, I can approach the situation in one of two ways. I can do a newscast, and use a spooky and realistic form of broadcasting to make the audience feel anxious and on edge. I will take an approach to make the audience believe that that aliens really do exist in area 51 and they just are not telling us. I will use an anonymous insider from area 51, a UFO sighting near the plant and audio evidence. The other way I could go about this is a satirical form that makes fun the information regarding area 51 and extraterrestrial life. This way will (hopefully) get a laugh out of the audience who have relative knowledge about the speculation regarding what actually goes on inside the classified area. For this platform I can use less serious sound effects, a more open tone, and for audio I plan on using witnesses that have seen UFOs, a worker inside of the area under scrutiny. Another idea is to do a sort of mix of the two, such as the way we discussed in class. This may be the most useful way of getting in relevant information, but also putting my own twist in it with my own tone.

This is strong because it shows my thought process for what I wanted to do with the podcast I was creating. This reflects outcome 2, because this is writing as a process. It is not in the traditional sense where it is for a paper, but writing a script for a podcast is a process and it took many drafts before it was ready to be recorded and edited. This podcast shows how I planned to incorporate two different things into one podcast and still make it all cohesive and work together well.