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English 110 I
4/11/2019*

The Identity

For thousands of years the human life has been expressed by stories. From caveman drawings and scrolls to intricately constructed narratives and autobiographies. These methods of communication always have a deeper meaning to them that can tell you a lot about a person. The



experiences that a person exhibits can teach you the values and morals that they hold. The controversy behind this is that some believe that we stray away from a narrative as not all of life's experiences have a fairy tale ending. Having and creating a narrative can help derive **meaning** and

purposes, ultimately giving rise to your identity. Narratives help people see their own **personalities** and **characteristics** through life experiences.

Our lives are narratives, and this is seen through the way we express our stories to each other. This can be seen through movies, cartoons, books, or even sitting at a coffee shop spewing out what we are thinking. Constantly, every experience, whether it be at work or sitting at home, tells us about our identity. Julie Beck writes about how our lives are a narrative and how that lets us perceive the world in the article “[Life Stories](#).” She is apart of the organization, *The Atlantic*, where she is a senior editor focusing on family and education. She writes, “This narrative becomes a form of identity, in which the things someone chooses to include in the story, and the way she tells it, can both reflect and shape who she is. *A life story doesn't just say what happened, it says why it was important, what it means for who the person is, for who they'll become, and for what happens next.*” The old saying that **everything happens for a reason** is true. We, as humans, tend to express ourselves through these stories. We include various aspects of the story to make sure that the listener is instantly hooked. Through this, the meaning behind the story can be found. *The answer as to why we tell stories is to learn more about ourselves and share that with others.* This way of communication is very **liberating** as all of your insecurities can be presented, lifting the burden off your shoulders. *Your natural self is expressed,* resulting in new findings about who you are each story. Yet, with this, some still believe that humans are not made to express themselves as a narrative.

Others claim that it is logically impossible to be a narrative society. They state that this could be due to life being full of unexpected moments where **catastrophe** can put a hole in the “perfect story” setting. This idea is seen



in Galen Strawson's article "[I am not a Story](#)" where he says that life is full of mishaps and is **too messy** to be constructed into a narrative. He claims that people remember false pieces of a narrative and it is **too difficult** to trace one's identity along the narrative. Galen Strawson is an analytic philosopher and literary critic who graduated from Oxford and Cambridge University. He states, "We're anti-Narrative by fundamental constitution. It's not just that the deliverances of memory are, for us, **hopelessly** piecemeal and **disordered**, even when we're trying to remember a temporally extended sequence of events. The point is more general. It concerns all parts of life,



life's '**great shambles**', in the American novelist Henry James's expression...*life simply never assumes a story-like shape for us. And neither, from a moral point of view, should it.*" A narrative doesn't always consist of a perfect setting with ideal conditions. It is a *journey*

through which a person experiences various situations and reacts to them. *Excluding every key detail from a story does not take away from the larger picture of who we are. Rather, interprets as how the story teller sees themselves.* You can understand more about a person by the parts they leave out and keep in a narrative. This leads to the conclusion of the personality of a person and who they are. Personal life experiences are the best way of **understanding** and **knowing** your identity.

Having been through a situation and knowing how you reacted tells you a lot about yourself. *Life is*



full of surprises and knowing what to do and not to do tells you about your character. An [interview](#) of Brady Lamontagne, a first year college student, conducted by myself and Nolan Cabral, focused on the importance a life story has had on him. Lamontagne expressed the story of losing a loved one and how that shaped him to be the person he is today. He says, “In the end it made me stronger and I knew that I wanted to work hard and achieve my goals to be successful because she was never able to do that....It has made be **stronger**, made me **tougher**, more **determined**.” *Each individuals hold different and unique experiences from others.* These experiences, such as Lamontagne’s, hold a special place in their heart. His character is driven and determined to live the legacy of his loved one. A narrative shapes a person by what occurs in life. Whether life is difficult or easy, your personality and character is affected. *Narratives hold this aspect of interpreting life stories into the people we are.*



The evolution of storytelling will continue on. Whether sitting by the campfire on a summer night or snowed in during a blizzard, our true selves are revealed. We learn more and more about ourselves as these stories are communicated to each other. These little details directly connect to our personalities and morals. What is important to us is

translated through a narrative. *Life is a long and bumpy journey, yet we, as human, seem to survive the challenging obstacles and become better people because of it.*

Works Cited

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Strawson, Galen. "Let's Ditch the Dangerous Idea That Life Is a Story – Galen Strawson | Aeon Essays." *Aeon*, Aeon, 10 Apr. 2019, aeon.co/essays/let-s-ditch-the-dangerous-idea-that-life-is-a-story.

Image #1:

<https://pixabay.com/illustrations/book-of-life-book-live-life-history-718654/>

Image #2:

https://aminoapps.com/c/girls-animo/page/blog/post-war-cavemen-drawings/3W72_J2ktBu0EYkoBJooLxajGBJo3R73YxG

Image #3:

<https://www.patheos.com/blogs/ashleywillis/2017/04/feel-hopeless-remember/>

Image #4:

<https://www.success.com/why-curiosity-is-the-greatest-leadership-trait-of-all/>

Image #5:

<https://stock.adobe.com/search?k=%22you+can+do+it%22>

Image #6:

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/family/parenting/best-app-enhanced-board-games-family/>

Multimodal Statement

Three important modes I incorporated into my essay are visual, spatial, and audio. Visual will required me to use pictures and other visual aspects to connect my essay together. I focused on life pictures that have special meaning. This will allowed the reader to read my life story and the importance of it and connect it with visual representations. I want to evoke the feelings of the reader so that my essay has more meaning to them. This will allow for a stronger message to be translated. I want my reader to feel as if they are in my life. This can be done through proper images that give perspective. Keeping with the same theme of my pictures also adds to the meaning by evoking the curiosity of the reader. This also creates a flow within my paper. Spatial mode is a very important part of this essay. The way words, sentences, and pictures are arranged within the paper can drive home the meaning of my essay. Having text wrapped around a picture or organizing my paragraphs in a certain way will add meaning. The layout and position of phrases and specific words can show the reader that this part is important and should not be glanced over. Audio mode is going to be a more difficult mode to translate in my paper. This could involve providing hyperlinks, such as the narrative podcast, so that the reader can follow important parts within the essay. I want this mode to provide emphasis on certain words or phrases so that the reader stays interested yet informed.