The Stories We Tell About Ourselves: Socially-Constituted Narrativism through Tall Tales and Histories

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ABSTRACT

The stories that we tell have a profound effect on the identity of a group and its members. That is, a group's identity is created by the stories that they tell, whether that is collective history or fictional tales. Largely, this paper is an exploration and combination of Alasdair MacIntyre's concept of socially-constituted narrative identity, as well as Edmund Husserl's generative phenomenology. I use oral histories from the people of the Kickapoo River Valley and Hmoob American students to explore these ideas. When examining these ideas, I find that identity is embedded in a group's tales and that those groups actively adjust and change their identity over time. Underlining this entire discussion is the importance of groups in our daily life and in who we are.

INTRODUCTION

People create story-centric cultures. Consider the stories that shape various cultures around the world. Americans have Thanksgiving or George Washington crossing the Delaware. The British remember King Arthur and the Roundtable or Robin Hood. The Epic of Gilgamesh was a popular story for the ancient Mesopotamians. The Chinese tell a story about the "Tears that Crumbled the Great Wall," while the Japanese recount the story of "The Forty-Seven Rōnin." Finally, the Navajo narrate the "Coyote Kills a Giant" and the Hopi tell stories about the origins of their clans. Also consider the now cross-cultural fairy tales that serve as cautionary or inspirational stories, Cinderella, Snow White and the Seven Dwarves, Aladdin or the Arabian Nights, and Red Riding Hood. All these tales stem from specific cultures and they symbolize specific traits and values of the cultures. My point is that social groups and their members create identities connected to the tales and histories that they tell.

Through this paper, I will primarily be exploring the social ontology of rural groups, as well as Hmoob American youth minimally. Social ontology is concerned with the nature of being in relation to our social lives. I focus on these groups for two simple reasons. First, I grew up in a rural community and am interested in achieving more insight into myself while studying that community. Second, through my work at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Oral History Program, I noticed patterns in the stories told and concepts related to identity in the oral histories. I am seeking a better understanding of how these groups interact with and understand the world around them. This paper considers how a group's identity is formed through their collective history and folk stories.

The concept of socially-constituted individuals was first brought up by Edmund Husserl. He stresses the intersubjectivity of human life and the intersubjective tasks of renewal and the "generative becoming of a culture" acts as a basis for socially constituted individuals.[1] Hegel builds on this by positing that individuals are constituted by the human relationships in their life. Berger and Luckmann argue that constitution comes from the societal roles that we identify with. Alasdair MacIntyre jumps off Berger and Luckmann's societal roles to assert the importance of narrative identity for socially-constituted beings. His central thesis for this idea is that "man is in his actions and practices, as well as in his fictions, essentially a story-telling animal."[2]

This paper builds off MacIntyre to give an example of the narrativism approach to socially-constituted individuals. I assert that a group's identity, and in turn those individuals' identity, is shaped by the stories that we tell about ourselves. I use recorded stories of rural individuals from Kickapoo River Valley, as well as La Crosse Hmoob Americans to bring these theories to reality. I show how the stories of these two groups translate into their identities. These narratives are not only personal stories but cultural history and folk tales. My narrativism is supported by how we discuss the world we live in and the world around us. It also looks at the social nature of humans, especially our desire for community, a community that is built upon a shared identity.

This paper will explore socially-constituted narrativism by explaining three things. First, it follows the importance of social groups and how we form them. Second, I will investigate the stories of the 1960s/2000s Kickapoo River Valley to find how social groups show their identity through their stories. Third, I will explain how

[1] Anthony J. Steinbock, "The Project of Ethical Renewal and Critique: Edmund Husserl's Early Phenomenology of Culture," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* XXXII (1994): 449.
[2] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue Second Edition* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 216.

Hmoob American students were partaking in Husserl's generative phenomenology. Last, this paper will respond to three objections to my concept of socially-constituted narrativism.

CREATION OF SOCIAL GROUPS

First, it may be helpful to explore why and how social groups are formed. Sebastian Junger, a freelance journalist, attempted to explain why we need communities in his book *Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging*. Throughout this book, he describes various examples of our desire for a tribal or communal nature. He references the vast number of white American settlers that decided to live with the Native Americans, while there were very few Native Americans that left to live with the white man. He also references war experiences such as the Battle of Britain, the Bosnian War, and the first Gulf War. In each of these experiences people have seen enormous hardships, but they feel a bit of nostalgia after the dust has settled. As Sebastian Junger describes it, "what people miss presumably isn't danger or loss but the unity that these things often engender."[3] People long for connection with other people and desire those social interactions.

Because we desire these necessary social interactions, we create groups that allow us to interact and connect to others. There is a wide variety of group types that exist in our world. We are involved in cultures, sub-cultures, political organizations, church congregations, cooperatives, clubs, organizations, sports leagues, families, and many others. Some groups we are a part of voluntarily and others are involuntary. But the fact of the matter is that we are all part of many groups that have their own stories and each of them shapes the members' viewpoints.

These groups are created by people that have a shared experience or belief. This is especially evident for groups like rural people in the Kickapoo River Valley. Many rural people in the Kickapoo River Valley were affected by the La Farge Dam Project from 1969 to 1975. This was a Federal construction project, that had the goal of transforming La Farge, Wisconsin into a tourism hotspot by damming the Kickapoo River just north of the city. This project displaced farmers from their homes and land with the use of eminent domain by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. While this may not be the most traumatic of the shared experiences, these rural citizens became connected because of their survival through floods, like the 1959 Kickapoo River Flood or 1978 Kickapoo River Flood, or by simply living in a rural environment, away from the daily conveniences of urban areas.[4] With these, the rural citizens bond over the experiences they live and this creates the beginnings of the group.

The other most important for the creation of a group is the boundaries that they construct. These boundaries can be built through geographic distance/geography, us vs. them mentality, social status, economic barriers, heritage, or other aspects of life. The construction of these boundaries can be found in the use of an us vs. them mentality created by some of the rural folk of the Kickapoo River Valley against wealthier urbanites who were buying up land in the country. Both Juan Widner and Larry and Patty Robinson discuss this movement of wealthy urbanites into the valley.[5] In one clip, the interviewer asked Larry and Patty who was buying the timberland that they were just discussing and they responded with "people from the city" and "people from the cities, Chicago…"[6] While this is not unique to their particular geographic area, the rural folks of the Kickapoo River Valley have created a boundary between themselves and the urbanites. Though not outright saying, they are considering the urbanites as outsiders. Would they speak about those buyers the same way if those buyers were from another rural area?

Fredrik Barth, a Norwegian anthropologist, discussed group boundaries in his edited book, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*. While his book deals mainly with ethnic and geographic groups, his ideas and discoveries can still be applied to other types of groups. He describes two different discoveries from his book. First, although these boundaries exist between groups, there is still a flow of personnel and a change of membership across those boundaries.[7] Second, despite these boundaries, there are still "stable, persisting, and… vitally important social

[3] Sebastian Junger, *Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging* (New York: Twelve, 2016), 92.
[4] Juan Widner, interview by Frank Juresh and Gabe Fowler, August 9, 2000, audio recording, 00:02:50, Kickapoo Valley Oral History Collection, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Oral History Program, housed at University of Wisconsin La Crosse Murphy Library Special Collections and Area Research Center, La Crosse, Wisconsin; Palmer Munson, interview by Fritz Cushing and Rene Widner, November 16, 2000, audio recording, 00:48:13, La Farge Dam Oral History Collection, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Oral History Program, housed at University of Wisconsin La Crosse Murphy Library Special Collections and Area Research Center, La Crosse, Wisconsin.
[5] Widner, audio recording, 00:55:07-00:58:28; Larry and Patty Robinson, interview by Frank Juresh, July 19, 2000, audio recording, 00:40:50-00:40:59, Kickapoo Valley Oral History Collection, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Oral History Program, housed at University of Wisconsin La Crosse Murphy Library Special Collections and Area Research Center, La Crosse, Wisconsin.
[6] Robinson, audio recording, 00:40:50-00:40:59.
[7] Fredrik Barth, "Introduction," in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, ed. Fredrik Barth (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), 9.

interactions" that exist across said boundaries.[8] All in all, these discoveries show that these boundaries do not cause the groups to be isolated from others in their world. Rather, we are still connected to others that live in our various spheres of social interactions.

ARGUMENT

As stated earlier, this paper asserts that a group's identity, and in turn those individuals' identities, is shaped by the stories that we tell about ourselves. Through my time with the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Oral History Program, I have firsthand experience with the importance that stories have in lives and identities. The support for this socially-constituted narrativism stems from how we discuss our world and the world around us. As well as, how the shared identity of a community functions and can change over time.

It is a common narrative identity argument to say that we tell our lives through a story format. The narrative is formed through the stringing together of experiences. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy's *Personal Identity and Ethics* entry summarizes Marya Schectman's explanation like so:

> "Imagine, for instance, a subject of experiences to whom various experiences merely happened over time. The events would be unified in a purely passive respect, simply as the experiences contained within the life of that subject of experiences. But for that subject to be a *person*, a genuine moral agent, those experiences must be actively unified, must be gathered together into the life of one narrative ego by virtue of a story the subject tells that *weaves* them together, giving them a kind of coherence and intelligibility they wouldn't otherwise have had. This is how the various experiences and events come to have any real meaning at all – rather than being merely isolated events – by being part of a larger story that relates them to one another within the context of one life."[9]

According to this narrative identity theory, our sense of self comes from how we link and talk about the experiences that we have. Consider how you may tell a friend about your day. More than likely, you would narrate it something like this, "first, I went to the store for a gallon of milk because I ran out yesterday. Then, I went home to finish homework and relax for the rest of the day." Of course, that is a very simplified example, but I think it illustrates my point. The question is how does this narrativism for personal identity transfer to group identity.

Alasdair MacIntyre works with this very idea. Early in his book, *After Virtue*, he describes the social identifications that we have. MacIntyre states that "individuals inherit a particular space within an interlocking set of social relationships; lacking that space, they are nobody, or at best a stranger or an outcast."[10] He displays our relationships with the world around us here and later in the book with this, "we live out our lives, both individually and in our relationships with each other."[11] Our stories intertwine to create a cohesive tale. MacIntyre posits a concise thesis later in the book that is in support of narrativism, "man is in his actions and practices, as well as in his fictions, essentially a story-telling animal."[12] These stories that we tell about ourselves come out in the oral histories from the Kickapoo River Valley.

To quickly recap the history of the river valley as stated above. This isolated rural area was trodden upon from 1969-1975 during the La Farge Dam Project. During this time, farmers and families were displaced by the U.S. Federal Government to make space for a dam that never came to fruition. Instead, the land that was purchased by the government was converted into the Kickapoo Valley Reserve.

There is a variety of tales that are told by residents from the Kickapoo River Valley. But there are three that I would like to highlight. First is a story from Larry and Patty Robinson about a neighbor named Hilda during the 1978 Summer flashflood. This one strikes me as a bit of a community folk tale.

> **Patty:** And that lady right down there in that greenhouse right by that bridge. She swam that and she didn't get out and she tried to get out and the water got her. And she's get up in a tree and the lightning hit it or it come so close that she'd get back in the water. Everybody thought that she was dead. And here she come walking across the field. After the water went down, here she'd swam

[8] Fredrik Barth, "Introduction," 10.
[9] Marya Schectman, *The Constitution of Selves* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1996), 96-99, cited in "Personal Identity and Ethics," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, last modified October 11, 2019, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/identity-ethics/#NarCri.
[10] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 33-34.
[11] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 215.
[12] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 216.

> the Nile when she was young. I never knew that until after that. She used to be an acrobat in Germany.
> **Frank Juresh:** Who's this?
> **Patty:** Hilda. Yeah, Hilda. I don't know what her last name is.
> …
> **Frank Juresh:** You remember her last name?
> **Patty:** No!
> **Larry:** No, I've never heard what it is. Have you?
> **Patty:** No! Everyone just calls her Hilda. But she's really interesting.
> …[13]

This story sounds outrageous at first listen, but it does serve a purpose in understanding this community and what they identify with. Hilda is a defining quiet, stubborn, and strong figure of the rural community. She is the character that defines the strength of the resilient river valley community, who deals with floods often. Through listening to the interview, one can tell that Larry and Patty view Hilda as a bit of an oddity, but also as someone to look up to in the community.

The next narrative comes from Olive Nelson, one of the interviewees that were directly affected by the La Farge Dam project. She tells some second-hand stories that one could consider conspiracy but should not be completely discounted.

> **Nelson:** Well another story I don't like in this country is why Russians are sent over here to learn to fight. Have you ever heard that? One place is Utah. Lawrence said that "I know one in Tennessee." Then Joyce comes up with the idea that United States people do not want to shoot United States people. They rush in here to get us. That's probably what their working for. Another story I heard, their shipping in… Now this is not recently, this is back a little ways… That pickups, white pickups, or white trucks, I don't know what they were. They were white trucks and just the minute they got to the United States they painted them. [pause] Now I think… [friend's name] told me that, it was her boy down there and he seen it. So, I tell you Brad, we don't know what's going on. We couldn't sleep at night if we knew. It's getting to be a wicked, wicked world.[14]

Again, a story that sounds a bit more like a tall tale than a piece of completely factual history. But this story offers insight into another identifying feature of this community. She shows a clear distrust for the U.S. government, who had previously shown her their deviousness with the La Farge Dam Project. This mistrust of the other or outsiders, namely the Federal Government, leads to a strengthening of an us vs. them mentality that is created by groups, such as rural communities.

The last tale comes from Pete Peterson. He tells a story of the community coming together to support each other during a trying time.

> **Peterson:** There was a lot of moving going on. Lot of barns I helped, Bob Ferris down there. Couple of them barns moved in. That's when I had to bulldoze the Kickapoo shut. Put some tubes in it and get a barn across.
>
> **Hatfield:** Where was that?
>
> **Peterson:** Down there, on the… below the [unknown name] church on 141. That new bridge, that new bridge they put in on Bob Ferris'. Anyhow, I… I had my bulldozer down there and I pushed the dirt and the banks in. Thrust [?] the tubes and this… Art's his name, he's dead now, but he was helping to move, or he brought the truck to haul the barn, pull the barn. He was standing on the end of the tube, looking down at the water. And then all of a sudden, he disappeared! It was all undermined and he fell right through that dirt.

[13] Robinson, audio recording, 00:15:34-00:18:00.
[14] Olive Nelson, interview by Brad Steinmetz and Deanna Ewing, December 6, 2000, audio recording, 00:48:35-00:49:59, La Farge Dam Oral History Collection, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Oral History Program, housed at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Murphy Library Special Collections and Area Research Center, La Crosse, Wisconsin.

[Laughter][15]

This story illustrates the connection that a community can have during a difficult time. This shared experience creates the basis for the group. From this tale, the Kickapoo River Valley residents find a connected history of support. This support system becomes essential for the rural community's survival and then becomes a part of the group's identity.

Through each of these tales, one can start to see the culmination identity traits for the Kickapoo River Valley. In each of these stories, the storyteller creates their identity communally and that is exactly as they describe it. They are surviving in this world together, simply because that was the best and safest way. What is next is how this socially-constituted narrative identity changes over time.

It is clear that a group's identity should change over time, purely because a group's situation and members change. Edmund Husserl considers this with his idea of generative phenomenology.[16] This is a community-based identity that is formed through the history and tradition of that group and can be reconsidered and changed through a group's retrospection and introspection. An important piece of this idea is the renewal of the culture and cultural identity. This renewal is defined as an ethical critique of the culture, or groups that we are involved in.[17] This renewal of a group's identity allows for the ability to reshape and optimize the culture of the community. To make a broad example, prior to a 1978 revelation, African Americas were restricted in their rights and abilities to conduct rituals within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. The 1978 revelation officially barred this racial discrimination through direct revelation. While this is a more institutional example of generative renewal, it still illustrates the point. Another example can be seen with Hmoob American students' oral histories from the 1990s.

The Hmoob people were forced to flee from their homeland in Laos after they assisted the Central Intelligence Agency in the Secret War during the Laotian Civil War. The Secret War was a ploy by the CIA to support the Royal Lao Government against the communist Pathet Lao between the years of 1964-1973. The CIA failed in defeating the Pathet Lao and they subsequently took over Laos and began hunting down the Hmoob soldiers who resisted them. Some Hmoob evaded the communists in the Laotian jungles and swam across the Mekong River into Thailand, where they were interned into refugee camps before eventually deciding whether to immigrate to the United States.

The Hmoob culture is deeply connected to the traditions and rituals that are embedded in their daily lives. These include their New Year celebrations, medicinal rituals, religious ceremonies, birth celebrations, weddings, funerals, and many others. Upon their arrival to the United States, they received the same treatment as many other immigrant groups that come to the country. Over time, they are finding their culture and members becoming Americanized.

The oral histories with Hmoob American students were created to track the stories of young immigrants or first-generation Hmoob Americans. Ge Vang, the interviewer, included a question that prods at what these young people want for their culture as they begin to take the reins of it. He asks, "where do you see the Hmoob people in the future?"[18] I find that there are a few interviews where the response to this question epitomizes Husserl's generative phenomenology. Romain Lor Vang and Sher Sia Xiong were college students, while Tou Ger Moua and Phanet Lor were high school students at the time of the interviews. Romain Lor Vang and Sher Sia Xiong also share some views on the survival of the Hmoob culture and whether they care if it will survive or die. Romain and Sher both believe that while they might hope that the Hmoob culture will survive in the U.S. it may just fade into the American Melting Pot.[19] When prodded by Ge Vang about if they care whether their culture survives or not, they responded with "… Well… It really doesn't matter to me" and "Personally… I don't really care cause as long as there's Hmoob then the culture is still surviving… I don't really care about traditional, as long as you can live and breathe and its ok with me."[20] On the other hand Phanet Lor and Tou Ger Moua, want the Hmoob culture to survive and see

[15] Vernon Peterson, interview by Chuck Hatfield, April 6, 2001, audio recording, 00:14:31-00:15:31, La Farge Dam Oral History Collection, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Oral History Program, housed at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Murphy Library Special Collections and Area Research Center, La Crosse, Wisconsin.
[16] Steinbock, "Ethical Renewal and Critique," 449-464.
[17] Steinbock, "Ethical Renewal and Critique," 452-453.
[18] Romain Lor Vang, interview by Ge Vang, September 11, 2000, audio recording, 00:26:26, Hmong Interview Collection, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Oral History Program, housed at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Murphy Library Special Collections and Area Research Center, La Crosse, Wisconsin.
[19] Vang, audio recording, 00:26:26-00:27:03; Sher Sia Xiong, interview by Ge Vang, July 19, 2000, audio recording, 00:33:08-00:35:21, Hmong Interview Collection, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Oral History Program, housed at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Murphy Library Special Collections and Area Research Center, La Crosse, Wisconsin.
[20] Vang, audio recording, 00:26:55-00:27:03; Xiong, audio recording, 00:34:23-00:34:53.

the importance of it for their future children.[21] When Ge Vang asked about if they care about the survival of their culture, they responded with phrases like, "its really where we came from and its really what our parents want us to do and would hope that we carry it on" and "I would but in another sense, its kind of hard for me to pick out which way. Because, it is America but on the other hand you do have your own culture."[22]

Obviously, this is a choice selection of interviews that comes from a selected number of individuals that were interviewed. Still, I think that it is clear that these four individuals are taking part in the generative process to decide the future of their group. At the time of the interviews, which were conducted in 2000, these individuals were just starting to consider their group's future. Now, they are in their 30s/40s and are actively shaping the role of the Hmoob people in the United States. They question whether their culture will hold on to their traditions and act as a distinct part of the U.S. or if they will fade in the American Melting Pot and give some of their traditions.

To give a short but rich and intriguing example of this generative phenomenology, ponder the use of all the oral histories in this paper. Through my analysis and interpretation of these tales, Husserl's generative phenomenology is being directly fulfilled. These stories are being reconsidered, reconfigured, and reused to examine life and the world in another way. Originally, the oral histories were meant to relate the stories of the La Farge Dam Project or Hmoob American students, but now they can be used to examine how we form our identity around those stories. This is exactly what Husserl explained as generative phenomenology, who pushed for critique tradition and culture "*to revitalize* and *to carry on* the sedimented system of values and goals" and linking our past with our future.[23]

To sum up a long argument, the rural folks of the Kickapoo River Valley show the importance of tales and oral histories in showing and explaining their group identity. At the same time, stories from the Hmoob American students demonstrate how a group will actively reconsider and change their collective identity over time.

OBJECTIONS AND REPLIES

There are three main objections to this view of this socially-constituted narrativism. These objections look to our memory and how we conduct our lives. I intend to respond to each of these objections uniquely.

The first objection concerns the accuracy of our memory. These philosophers, such as Galen Strawson, will rightly claim that are some serious issues with our memories and whether we can trust it. Strawson points out "that autographical memory is an essentially *constructive* and *reconstructive* phenomenon… rather than a merely *reproductive* one.[24] This is completely and utterly true. The Association for Psychological Science even tries to dispel the myth of eyewitness testimony being the best kind of evidence by stating that although eyewitness testimony is compelling, "memory doesn't record our experiences like a video camera. It creates stories based on those experiences."[25]

My response to the objection of the truthfulness of our memories is thus, I think that in some cases for socially-constituted narrativism, whether our memories are entirely truthful does not matter. Fictional tales influence who we are as people as well. Consider the tales of King Arthur and its effect on the identity of the British Isles, the stories had a massive impact on uniting the British people under the tales. For a direct example from this paper, think back to the Larry and Patty Robinson's story about Hilda, who is a larger than life figure in their area of the Kickapoo River Valley. It truly does not matter whether the entirety of the story is true or not because those false tales will still influence the identity of the group and individual.

The second objection stems from concern over the segmentation of our lives. Sartre used this idea of our demarcated lives in his concepts of existentialism.[26] We have the public part and the private part, as well as work and leisure, and so on. We also fill different roles in our lives. I am a student, a son, a fiancé, a coworker, and a friend. Our lives are necessarily split and demarcated. Since this is the case, some argue that our life stories are closer to a collection of segments rather than one unified life. This has serious implications for my argument.

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[21] Tou Ger Moua, interview by Ge Vang, October 31, 2000, audio recording, 00:45:21-00:48:20, Hmong Interview Collection, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Oral History Program, housed at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Murphy Library Special Collections and Area Research Center, La Crosse, Wisconsin; Phanet Lor, interviewed by Ge Vang, August 3, 2000, 00:43:00-00:47:35, Hmong Interview Collection, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Oral History Program, housed at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Murphy Library Special Collections and Area Research Center, La Crosse, Wisconsin.
[22] Lor, audio recording, 00:44:48-00:45:07, Moua, audio recording, 00:47:30-00:47:50.
[23] Steinbock, "Ethical Renewal and Critique," 458; Steinbock, "Ethical Renewal and Critique," 457.
[24] Galen Strawson, "Against Narrativity," *Ratio* XVII (December 2004): 444.
[25] Stephen L. Chew, "Myth: Eyewitness Testimony is the Best Kind of Evidence," Association for Psychological Science, accessed May 15, 2020, https://www.psychologicalscience.org/teaching/myth-eyewitness-testimony-is-the-best-kind-of-evidence.html
[26] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 204.

It seems to me that it is fair to point out the segmentation of our lives. But it seems to me that those segmentations are still part of the narrative that is being spun. For some, the narrative identity is necessarily linked to a full, complete, and clean story of the individual's life. While this would be convenient, it is not reality. We already edit our memories and stories, either by filling gaps or omitting troublesome memories. Simply, of course, our lives are demarcated. One would not act as a parent to their boss or co-worker, just as they would not act as an employee to their life-partner. Or consider the Hmoob American students, they must live as American students, while at the same time being involved in Hmoob culture. I think that this is something that we must struggle with. Unfortunately, I do not have time or space in this paper to consider the solutions to the segmentation of human life.

The third possible objection rejects my claim entirely. It states that we do not need social groups. One could point to the introverted and rebellious parts of our being. There are moments where we desire to not participate in any social group. We desire some sort of alone time. If we all have tendencies to want to rebel social groups and be alone, then why should we consider identity through a social lens?

It seems absurd to believe that we could exist separately from other people. From the very start of our lives, we are a part of a group, our family. Could someone be immediately be separated from their family? Of course, but they would not survive long on their own. This idea that we cannot be completely separated from other people is even more evident in the social media era. I can and will connect with people over social media while I am in the middle of nowhere, as long as I have access to the ever-prevalent internet. Since this is the case, it would seem impossible to believe that we can truly and fully separate ourselves and our necessities from other humans.

CONCLUSION

This paper attempted to explain the way that socially-constituted narrativism, which is a group's identity through the narrativist lens manifests in histories and tall tales. Through the Husserl's socially-constituted individuals and MacIntyre's narrative identity for those socially-constituted individuals. I asserted that a group's identity and its members' identities are shaped by the stories that are told. Using oral histories from the Kickapoo River Valley rural groups and the La Crosse Hmoob Americans, I enlighten how the groups are formed, how narratives form their identities, and how Husserl's generative process is used to change the group over time.

During the COVID-19 quarantine, it is more important than ever to reflect on and understand the groups that we are a part of. It would be foolish to not consider the value and effect that our membership in groups has on our world view. We need groups, simply because we are social creatures. We socialize to improve our own lives and to shape how we see our world.

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