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ABSTRACT

The following presents an overview of various evaluative devices found in a series of oral narratives from former residents of the West End of Boston, Massachusetts. In working with an archivist at the West End Museum, I was able to read through interviews, each conducted with residents that were displaced from the West End after the urban renewal project of the late 1950s. These interviews were recorded for the purpose of collecting each resident's experience growing up in the neighborhood. After reading through each interview I found several instances of narrative speech. I conducted a narrative analysis, based on Labov and Waletsky (1967) method to explore the linguistic devices that narrators used to evaluate their experiences. Each device was defined linguistically and analyzed to determine its implications for the narrator. An overarching theme was discovered such that narrators use these devices to cast themselves in a protagonist role in an idealized community. The narrators' use of language perpetuates this transformation of experience and their nostalgia of the West End.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is the means by which human experience is transmitted. Seemingly obvious on a surface level, a narrator is able to choose words and sentences that captivate the listener. In retelling a past event, they make their stories interesting and believable; the narrator can relay their own emotions through the narrative based on the language that they chose. These methods have been extensively studied in the literary fields, yet the construction of this carefully chosen language has a linguistic level to it as well (ISSN 2015). The language used in narrative can be analyzed to reveal *how* it is making a story more interesting and believable. The narrator chooses these linguistic devices because they have an extraordinary ability. They are capable of controlling the listener's perception of the event—in the narrator's favor—while still remaining factually true.

Consider briefly, for instance, the narrative below told by a man named Freddy Forresta. Forresta is a former resident of the "old" West End of Boston, before the urban renewal project of the late 1950s. This narrative was one of many responses to the interviewer's asking of childhood memories.

> Jerry's bar is in the North End.
> We was sittin' there about 5 or 6 o'clock.
> Four guys come in sayin', "This is a stickup.
> Everybody down on the floor".
> I was gonna get down,
> but he didn't give me a chance.
> He hit me on the head.
> He couldn't knock me out.
> He robbed everyone in there,
> but he couldn't get my wallet.
> So I tackled him.
> I had him on the floor.
> I got shot in the finger.
> The bullet hit the floor.
> He hit me a couple more wallops with the gun.
> He couldn't knock me out.
> The blood was comin' out.
> They beat it.
> They took me to the hospital
> and stitched me up.

Freddy Forresta (n.a.) [2015.1.24]

Here is an event that involves extreme danger and a possible close encounter with death. In the way the narrator has recounted it, he is found rather heroic and brave, while blame is placed on the *four guys* orchestrating the *stick up*. Of course, few would argue that to come into a bar with a gun and rob everyone is morally wrong. It is not my intention to reduce any heroic actions the narrator did take in this situation. However, a closer look at the linguistic devices reveals a few cases of ambiguity. For instance, the phrase *I was gonna get down, but he didn't give me a chance* implies a false sense of action and casts the narrator in an innocent light. By using the modal and infinitive *was gonna get*, he hints that he moved, but, in fact, there is no

action actually taking place. He could have stood up in order to "get down" or even just thought about moving. Where he is likely an innocent figure in this story, he uses these linguistic devices to emphasize his innocence to the listener.

Similarly, the narrator chooses devices that evaluate the experience. That is, they indicate the main point or the *so what* factor. In this case, the narrator wants the listener to recognize his brave actions in the face of danger. He does this by embedding modals and negatives into his language, using phrases like *He couldn't knock me out* and *He couldn't get my wallet*. These aim to show the bad outcomes that could have happened, but did not (either because of his actions, or not). In highlighting these outcomes for the listener, the danger of the situation is intensified, and the narrator's actions are seen as more brave. In this paper, I will look further in depth at these linguistic devices—particularly the evaluatives—to explore different ways in which they help to convey the narrator's intended emotions and perceptions of the event to the listener.

This analysis is contingent, foremost, on the notion that a narrative is made up of a distinct type of speech, linguistically (Labov 1967). Narrative analysis originally emerged from discourse analysis, where the narrative was found to have "the most clearly defined properties" in comparison with other types of speech (Labov 2013:6). One of the first studies to present this was published by Joshua Waletsky and William Labov in 1967 and has remained a principal skeleton for linguistic narrative analysis. Labov and Waletsky (1967) examine the common organization of narrative, the linguistic structures and what they are doing for the narrator, and the ways in which these structures convey emotion or opinion.

Another commonality of narrative is the context in which each is told. According to Labov (2013) a narrative always concerns an event deemed "reportable". This usually involves the topics of "death, sex, and moral indignation"—something that a listener would be undoubtedly be interested in and not have to ask the *so what* question afterwards (Labov 2013:6). The study of narrative is closely related to sociolinguistics because the sociolinguistic interview format presents the perfect circumstances for a narrative to develop. That is, sociolinguistic interviews are always referencing these critical topics in attempt to overcome what is known as the Observer's Paradox: *the aim of a sociolinguist is to capture natural speech that is not being systematically observed. Yet, the only way to ethically obtain this data is to systematically observe a speaker* (Labov 2013; Van Herk 2012). To overcome this issue, sociolinguists find that asking speakers about these reportable topics often invokes emotions that cause them to forget about the systematic observation. As memories and emotions arise from these topics, the speakers' attention to speech decreases, and natural speech is produced. Consequently, it seems that this natural speech often transpires into narrative form (Labov 2013).

While Labov and Waletsky's (1967) method of narrative analysis is well-known, there are many additional approaches. Some are within the field of linguistics, including Ochs and Capps (2001) and Gee's (2009) methods. Others stem from related fields such as literature or psychology (ISSN 2015). The narrative analysis that I will conduct in this paper is based solely on Labov's approach, as it most closely relates to the structures that I plan to explore. Likewise, the devices that I found most prominently used in my collection of narratives were also those devices given the most attention by Labov.

2. LABOV'S METHOD OF NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

In understanding the narrative analysis that I will describe in this paper, it is first necessary to present a more thorough description of Labov's method. This method was originally developed

by Labov and Waletsky (1967) and Labov has since extended the work with several different studies. These include his book *The Language of Life and Death* (2013), which looks at devices and their meaning in a number of his collected narratives, and the chapter "The Transformational Experience in Narrative Syntax" (1972) from *Language in the Inner City: Studies of Black English Vernacular*, examining narrative and evaluation in AAVE. In this paper I will draw from all three works to analyze a series of narratives that I will introduce in more detail in SECTION 3.

As Labov (2013) defines, a narrative is: *A particular way of recounting past events, by matching the order of narrative clauses with the original order in which those events occurred* (6). For speech to be considered a narrative, it must be made up of these "narrative clauses". These are independent clauses that are tensed and are placed in the original order of events. This is also known as "temporal juncture" (Labov 2013). Consider the last two clauses of the narrative introduced earlier.

(1)   1 They took me to the hospital
        2 and stitched me up.

These are both independent clauses, as they do not have any subordinate conjunctions, or they begin with the coordinate conjunctions *and, but, if, then, or, nor, for,* and *so* (as in clause 2). The independent clauses are also considered narrative clauses because they abide by temporal juncture. Their order matches the original ordering of events and to rearrange them would be to change the meaning of the story (Labov 2013). For instance, to say *They stitched me up, and took me to the hospital* changes the facts and does not describe the event truthfully.

It is most common for these narrative clauses, in the English language, to consist of the simple past tense (Labov 2013). These example sentences include the past tense verbs *took* and *stitched*. There are, however, other ways that a narrator can recount past events in which the ordering of the clauses does not matter. The first way to do this is to use subordinate conjunctions *after, before,* or *when* (Labov 2013). If the narrator were to say, *they stitched me up after they took me to the hospital* or *after they took me to the hospital, they stitched me up* the ordering of the clauses would not influence the order that the listener understands the events to occur in. This can also be done using the past perfect auxiliary *had* (Labov 2013). The narrator could have said, *They stitched me up. They had taken me to the hospital* and, again, the events are still described in the order for which they originally occurred.

Regardless of which structure the narrator chooses, a narrative must have at least two narrative clauses that abide by temporal juncture. Clauses that use habitual structures, such as *would* or *used to,* or stative verbs, such as *have* or *be,* cannot be in temporal juncture. These structures occur very frequently in speech and can easily be confused with narrative because they also reflect on the past (Labov 2013). For example, the sentences below from Freddy Forresta's interview do this.

(2)   There was a lot of good people. We used to make home-made bread. They used to make the sauce and put it on the roof and dry it up.

Here, Forresta is talking about habitual things that he used to do. He does not mention a specific point in time that they occurred, and therefore, the clauses do not make up a narrative.

Although these structures do not constitute the temporal juncture that is necessary for a narrative, it is still possible for them to occur in between narrative clauses. Called "free clauses" by Labov (2013), when found in between narrative clauses, these clauses add to the narrative in

other ways: they provide information about the setting or the narrator's emotions. In the example narrative, the clause *The blood was comin' out* does this by describing the scene to the listener and adding to the severity of the situation. The clause uses the stative verb *to be,* not following temporal juncture, but adding to the narrative in other ways. It comes strategically in between narrative clauses and is serving an evaluative purpose that will be uncovered later in this paper.

As part of the internal structure of narrative, Labov (2013) finds that narratives can each be broken down into common sections. These sections include an abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, and coda. While it is common to find most of these sections in a narrative, a complicating action is the minimum needed to construct a narrative (Labov 2013). To describe this breakdown, I will reference a second narrative that Freddy Forresta shared in his interview.

> I'm comin up Fleet Street
> These three punks from Charlestown came up to me
> One of them was a little blonde kid I know
> I used to give him money
> He sticks out a handkerchief with a bottle inside it
> I know it wasn't no gun
> "This is a stickup.
> Stand against the wall
> and put your hands up!"
> So I measure the kid with the bottle
> and boom hit him.
> He tried to hit me with the bottle
> but he went down
> then I kicked him in the jaw
> boom he was out cold
> my hand was sore the next day
> they couldn't rob me.

Freddy Forresta (n.a.) [2015.1.24]

An abstract is not found in this narrative. This section typically has between one and two clauses that summarize the entire story, or the most reportable event (Labov 2013). It is possible that the narrator could have started by saying something like *one time I kicked a kid out cold.* This takes the most reportable event of the narrative, or the event that the narrative is building up to, and introduces it right in the beginning. The reason as to why some narrators use an abstract, and some do not, is not always clear. It could have to do with personal style or the preceding conversation; however, there is usually not a concrete reason (Labov 1972).

The first four clauses of this narrative, then, make up the orientation. These clauses identify the setting for the narrative: time, place, people involved, and any other background information the listener needs to know. As this narrative demonstrates, these can be free or narrative clauses (Labov 2013). While they are typically free clauses, according to Labov (2013), this narrative has both. The clauses *I'm comin up Fleet Street* and *These three punks from Charlestown came up to me* are narrative clauses, and *One of them was a little blonde kid I know* and *I used to give him money* are free clauses. Both set the stage for the narrative that follows. These orientation clauses are most common at the beginning of the narrative, but can also be found throughout, as I will show in more narratives to come.

After the orientation comes the complicating action section—the only obligatory section in a narrative. This answers the main question of "what happened"? The complicating action is filled mostly with narrative clauses, but orientation clauses and evaluative statements are also found within (Labov 2013). In the example narrative, the clauses below represents the complicating action.

(3)   He sticks out a handkerchief with a bottle inside it
           I know it wasn't no gun
           "This is a stickup.
           Stand against the wall
           and put your hands up!"
           So I measure the kid with the bottle
           and boom hit him.
           He tried to hit me with the bottle
           but he went down
           then I kicked him in the jaw
           boom, he was out cold

This section of the narrative includes some evaluative statements (*I know it wasn't no gun* and *Boom*), but mostly consists of narrative clauses. Each of these leads up to the most reportable event *then I kicked him in the jaw. Boom, he was out cold*. This is clearly what the narrator wanted to get at; he was able to defeat this group of kids that were trying to rob him.

Within the complicating action section, Labov (2013) finds that there are sometimes more distinct sections of evaluation and resolution. In these cases, certain types of evaluative statements are concentrated around the most reportable event. This is done to alert the listener as to why the event should be seen as dangerous, strange, crazy, unusual, wonderful, or however the narrator wants it to sound (Labov 2013; 1972). Following the most reportable event there is also sometimes a clear resolution section. This is used in telling how the most reportable event was resolved or fixed, if it was problematic (Labov 2013; 1972).

The coda is the final section of a narrative. This signals the listener that the narrative is over and that the narrator has made all of their intended points (Labov 2013). In this narrative, the coda includes the last two clauses *my hand was sore the next day. They couldn't rob me*. Typically, the coda will jump from the time of the narrative to the present, breaking the temporal juncture. This difference in linguistic structure is crucial because it is noticed by the listener and they can tell that the narrator has finished. For this narrative, the narrator jumps to the next day and describes the lingering effects that the event had on him (Labov 2013).

In its entirety below is the narrative broken down into sections:

           Orientation:
           1 I'm comin up Fleet Street
           2 These three punks from Charlestown came up to me
           3 One of them was a little blonde kid I know
           4 I used to give him money
           Complicating action:
           5 He sticks out a handkerchief with a bottle inside it
      ev 6 I know it wasn't no gun
           7 "This is a stickup
           8 Stand against the wall

> 9 and put your hands up!"
> 10 So I measure the kid with the bottle
> 11 and boom hit him
> 12 he tried to hit me with the bottle
> 13 but he went down
> 14 <u>then I kicked him in the jaw</u>
> ev 15 <u>boom he was out cold</u>
> *Coda*
> 16 my hand was sore the next day
> ev 17 they couldn't rob me

Notice here that I have also numbered the narrative clause and put each independent clause on its own line. This is done in accordance with Labov's (2013; 1972) method, where each independent and subordinate clause gets a number. All non-finite clauses will stay on the same line, as well as verb quotation compliments and propositional predicates. Any clause that serves evaluative (ev) or orientation (or) purposes will also be labeled as such. This method of breaking down a narrative makes it easy to see the temporal juncture and specific clause types (Labov 2013). The most reportable event will also be underlined.

In breaking down a narrative in this way, one should also be able to reconstruct the order of events that center on the most reportable event. Labov (2013) calls the most reportable event e_0 and each event leading up to it e_1, e_2, e_3 …e_n. That is, e_1 is the event that answers the question, "how did e_0 happen"? and e_2 answers "how did e_1 happen?" (Labov 2013). This is done below with the example narrative.

> e_0 The kid was knocked out cold
> e_1 because I kicked him in the jaw
> e_2 because he went down
> e_3 because he tried to hit me with the bottle
> e_4 because I hit him
> e_5 because he told me to stand against the wall and put my hands up
> e_6 because he stuck out a handkerchief with a bottle inside
> e_7 because the three punks wanted to rob him

In many cases such as this one, the reconstruction of a narrative will have some holes in it and the events will not always be able to answer the question as to why the next event happened (Labov 2013). In this narrative, it is the e_7 event that is not so clear. The narrator does not describe exactly why these "three punks" wanted to rob him. Perhaps the narrator said something to them that provoked them. Or, he could have had a history with them that the listener does not know about. Given this gap, the listener is left to make their own conclusions and assumptions. It is possible that the narrator does not want the listener to know; he could have intentionally left it out to cast himself in a better light. In leaving this information out, the entire blame is put on the three punks and the narrator is made the protagonist. To discover the true reasoning, more background information or further discussion with the narrator would be needed.

Finally, Labov (2013) notes that any narrative must be both reportable and credible. Since narratives are typically centered on the critical topics introduced earlier, they are undoubtedly reportable. If their importance is not so clear, the narrator will use more evaluative devices to make their event seem reportable. However, the reportability and credibility of an event are inversely related; the more reportable and event is, the less credible it will seem

because of its unusual context. In turn, the narrator is constantly using linguistic devices to make their story believable to the listener (Labov 2013).

3. THE NARRATIVES

As I explore the evaluative devices used in a series of narratives, I will first explain the background information of these narratives that I do have. This helps in providing insight for filling the holes of reconstruction, in learning why certain evaluatives are used, and in discovering the ultimate goal of the narrators. Where the narratives that Labov uses in his studies are from sociolinguistic interviews—collected over time by himself, colleagues, and students—the narratives that I will be looking at come from a series of interviews that were not conducted by a linguist.

Each narrative used in this study comes from speakers that used to live in the "old" West End of Boston, MA. Upon initiating my research on narrative analysis, I was put in contact with the West End Museum in Boston through UNH professor Maya Ravindranath, who had access to series of interviews that possibly contained narrative speech. The museum's Assistant Archivist, Meghan Backhouse, shared these interviews with me and I was able to find that there were, in fact, narratives within them. Each interview was collected by a man named Paul Cincotta, from the North End, with the intention of gathering stories and experiences from these speakers for documentation. He did not do this for any scholarly purpose, but simply to preserve the stories that originated in the former West End neighborhood. A complete list of the interviews used in this paper is in APPENDIX B.

The West End Museum itself opened in 2010 after years of preparation starting in 1989 (WEM 2015). It is located in the West End neighborhood of Boston and aims to preserve and display the area's history through archived photographs, maps, interviews, and exhibits, from the time before the urban renewal project that occurred in the late 1950s. The museum walks visitors through several different time periods, describing the immigration patterns that populated the area, popular buildings that previously stood there, and activities that the residents participated in. Its current focus is on the "Immigrant Era" from 1850-1960, with an emphasis on the 20th century. It also presents a wealth of information concerning the urban renewal project—how it happened, its impact, and stories from residents that lived through it. As the museum enforces, this part of culture is not only preserved for the families of the old West End, but for the community to remember and learn from (WEM 2015).

The series of interviews that I used were all collected after the urban renewal project happened. In each of them, Paul Cincotta asks about the speakers' lives in the West End before the project, as well as how it impacted them. The area of the West End itself was loosely bounded by Cambridge Street in the south, the Charles River in the west, North Washington Street in the north, and New Sudbury Street in the east (Gans 1962). The North Slope of Beacon Hill is also considered part of the old West End. This area is displayed in APPENDIX C in photos from before, during, and after the urban renewal project.

This neighborhood of Boston was originally built up due to overcrowding in the North End neighborhood and has a long history of immigration that constructed the dynamic community. Beginning in the early 19th century, the area was populated by mostly African Americans (Gans 1962). Nearing the mid 19th century, the population began to diversify as immigrants came to American from Europe. The first two main groups that settled in the West End were the Irish and Jews. By the end of the 19th century the Irish population started to

decrease and the West End became a predominantly Jewish community. Many of the churches were replaced with synagogues, including the Boston Synagogue that is one of the few remaining buildings to date from the old West End (Gans 1962). The community built up the area further by building club houses, schools, libraries, health centers, orphanages, loan societies, and labor unions. Two well-known settlement houses of the area were the West End House and Elizabeth Peabody House, which was unique in that it was open to girls and women, not just men and boys. Through its years, the West End also became home to Greek, Lebanese, Italian, Lithuanian, Polish, Syrian, Russian, and Ukrainian immigrants. Well into the 20th century, the West End was a diverse and well-appreciated community, as described by many historians and old residents (Gans 1962; Cincotta 1970-85).

The West End, however, was not admired as greatly by the upper class or city council in Boston. It was described by the upper class, negatively, as a "slum" because it was a poor working class area. In hoping to change this, the city enacted the controversial urban renewal project that destroyed the West End in the late 1950s (Gans 1962). Much of this account is depicted in Herbert Gans's (1962) book *The Urban Villagers: Group and Class in the Life of Italian-Americans*. He explains that the project was first proposed in the 1930s after the National Housing Act of 1949 was passed. This act gave cities the opportunity to reconstruct their buildings to be safer and newer. A similar urban renewal project had occurred in the South End of New York City in the 1940s and the city of Boston was looking to do the same (WEM 2015; Gans 1962).

The proposal for this urban renewal of the West End took many stages and was not implemented fully until 1953 when Mayor Curley declared the West End a "slum" (Gans 1962). According to Gans (1962), this declaration was made on the basis of a few terms. The streets were determined a fire hazard and too narrow, and 80 percent of the buildings were not up to safety and health codes. They were called "substandard" and "marginal" by Mayor Curley. Despite opposition to and appeals against the urban renewal, the project was set to take place within the next few years. The urban renewal began in 1957 and finished in the early 1960s (Gans 1962). Residents were told that the reconstruction would provide safer housing and streets and that all current residents would be able to return to the West End in affordable housing after the project's completion (WEM 2015; Gans 1962).

This entire project was controversial on several levels. Foremost, the bases on which the West End was declared a slum were not fully justified. Gans (1962) reports that the city stopped trash removal to make the area dirtier. Photographers were then sent in to photograph the dirty streets and the photos were used to influence the urban renewals passage. In addition to this, the actual plans of the urban renewal project did not reflect the promises that the city made to the West End residents (Gans 1962). Where residents were assured affordable housing upon return, the plan only included the construction of five new high-rise residential buildings containing 477 apartments. There was no realistic way that these apartments could house the over 2,700 families that were displaced. Finally, the leveling of over 46 acres of land, causing for the destruction of many historic buildings, was never justified (Gans 1962).

This controversy is not only well-documented by historians and the West End Museum, but largely regarded as an urban renewal failure in the eyes of other large American cities (Gans 1962; WEM 2015). Through the West End Museum, I was also given an extensive research paper by high school student Noelle Eckey (1995) that describes the project and its controversy. The wrong-doings of the Boston city council and long-term negative effects on the old residents come through in the museum's work and Eckey's (1995) paper, as well as Paul's interviews.

These speakers talk about how the area was not, in fact, a slum—by definition—and was only considered so by the wealthy that had never even been to the area. Each addresses the strong sense of community the existed in the West End, saying that this was broken up and destroyed when families and friends were forced to move away. These expressions are found in the following interview excerpts:

> "I could go to every street in the West End and know someone. Each street had a different personality all its own. The West End was a great, great neighborhood. You won't have it anywhere in the world like we had there." Leo Cuccinatta (1983) [2015.1.22]

> "People got along pretty good, because it was close-knit. Everybody seemed to take care of each other. You don't find that anywhere else. When I moved to Somerville I didn't meet my neighbors for two years." James Campano (1980) [2015.1.31]

The speakers' expression of love for their community is intensified by the stories of their sadness to leave. Several of the speakers actually bring up the same few people that were so heartbroken by the uprooting of their home that they actually passed away before the project began. The interview excerpts below relay these feelings:

> "…a lot of people knew it was coming. They died heartbroken. They could see it happening. They could see them tearing the houses down all around them. They died because they didn't care to live anymore. They were taking their homes" Marie Gigante (1980) [2015.9.13]

> "They had no place to go. Oh my God--there were so many people that died, it wasn't funny. They couldn't stand it. They couldn't start over from scratch. They were too old for God's sake. I think it was one of the worst inhuman things that ever could happen to people. I really do." Billie Lee (1981) [2015.1.15]

> "My mother died because of it. She said they'd never take her out of there alive…what do you call slums? It is the best part of the city that area." Leo Cuccinatta (1983) [2015.1.22]

In reading these interviews, the horrific emotional effect that the urban renewal has left on the old West End residents strongly comes through. The community that once existed can be remembered through the different accounts presented in the interviews, as well as others in *West Ender Newsletter* that was started shortly after the urban renewal's completion. The newsletter is published and sent out by the West End Museum on a subscription basis and is also available at the museum (WEM 2015). With respect to narrative analysis, many of these narratives have an undoubtable reportability factor to them. They come up through questions about a childhood home that was physically taken away from the speakers, leaving long-term emotional scars.

As the narratives are so reportable, they are full of evaluatives that show credibility and their importance to the narrator. Overall, in looking at the narrator's evaluative devices, the ways in which the narrator would like the listener to perceive their own identity and the former West End community are revealed. Their assignment of praise and blame in the narratives will make this clear. Like Labov's (2013; 1972) conclusions about narrative, these linguistic devices are used to cast the narrators as strong, brave, protagonist figures in an idealized community—intentions not surprising when coming from a group of speakers that were helplessly uprooted from their childhood homes.

4. METHODOLOGY

In analyzing these narratives, my first task was to sort through the interviews to find actual instances of narrative. While some of the interviews did not have any speech with narrative clauses, in many they were plentiful. Those that did not contain narratives did have information useful for learning about the West End speech community and culture of the time. These interviews were originally conducted in person, orally; however, I was given them in transcribed form. In sorting through them, I marked each place in the transcription where there was a narrative.

Upon extracting narrative speech from the interviews, I broke the narratives down into the numbered and sectioned structure that Labov (2013) uses. With this, I was able to more easily find the specific linguistic devices that the narrators were implementing. I made note of each evaluative structure and what it was doing for the narrator's purpose. After looking closely at each individual narrative and device, I analyzed the larger picture. My goal was to explore the different types of evaluatives that these speakers used and what the ways in which they allowed the narrator to portray themselves and their community in a certain light. Essentially, I wanted to discover what the evaluative devices showed about the characteristics and perceptions of the old West End community.

5. EXTERNAL EVALUATIVES

5.1 Direct Quotations from the Narrator

As Labov (1972) introduces in his work, the evaluative features of narrative are the least-researched aspect of narrative analysis. Evaluative structures mainly serve the purpose of showing assessment, according to what the narrator believes. These structures help in making the listener feel that same opinion. They evaluate the *so what* factor and give credibility to the narrative. After looking at these in greater depth, I will discuss how evaluatives are used by each narrator to portray themselves in a certain way to the listener—assigning praise or blame (Labov 1972; 2013).

The first types of evaluatives that I will examine are called *external evaluatives* by Labov (1972). These structures include direct quotations from the narrator, quoting a third party observer, and mentioning the sentiment of the situation. They do not always break the flow of the narrative, or the temporal juncture, but are usually imbedded within the narrative so as to keep the story moving (Labov 1972; 2013). To look at these external evaluatives, consider, first, this narrative by Lucy Lopardi, another former resident of the old West End. This narrative came about as Paul Cincotta began to ask her about her time working in the area.

> *Abstract*
> 1 I've been in a shooting too.
> *Orienation*
> 2 Just before closing the doorman and another fellow had an argument.
> *Complicating action*
> 3 I said, "put that gun away
> 4 I'm not afraid, you know.
> 5 I'm not afraid of nothing.

6 Go home!
7 you go home!
8 keep out of here
9 keep out of here"
10 I said, "will you stop!"
11 one guy says, "go ahead shoot me, you"
12 so he did!
13 he got him right in the head.
Resolution
14 so he pushed me outside the door
15 and locked it
16 he didn't want me getting in trouble
17 I went home
Coda
18 and the next day I heard all about the shooting
19 I said, "oh my God!
20 I'm right in the middle of everything!"

Lucy Lopardi (1978) [2015.4.14]

Here, I have identified the most reportable event as lines 12-13: when the man gets shot in the head. The complicating action, starting with the dialogue, leads up to this event and is followed by a series of actions that create the resolution. While the dialogue is in temporal juncture, and is thus made up of narrative clauses, it is serving an evaluative purpose as well. The direct quotations that Lopardi shares from herself are the first type of external evaluatives. By quoting herself addressing someone else, she gives both credibility and evaluation to the narrative. The quotes are used as evidence that the event really happened, because they are something that was actually said, and they portray how the narrator reacted, verbally, to the event.

This is found in the very first quotation where Lucy Lopardi recalls, *"Put that gun away. I'm not afraid, you know. I'm not afraid of nothing"*. By directly quoting herself, she first gives a credible description of what was said, as it is not a paraphrase but truthful speech that she used. The quotation also keys the listener in to the *so what* factor. Lopardi clearly wants the listener to know how dangerous the situation was—the reason that it is worth telling. There was a man with a gun right in front of her, a situation so severe that she had to intervene in hopes to scare the man away. A similar evaluation is found in the coda of the narrative. In quoting herself saying, *"Oh my God! I'm right in the middle of everything!"*, she again touches on the credibility of the event. In saying these words, she reminds the listener how close she was to this encounter with death.

Similar evaluative structures are found in a second narrative by Billie Lee, another woman of the old West End. This narrative is split into "episodes", or different sections of speech that show narrative structure and lead up to one overarching event. Below are the first two episodes of this narrative.

Paul: Do you remember Mary Driscoll, head of the Boston Licensing Commission?
Billie: Oh yes! She was a son of a gun! God bless my soul!

Episode 1:
Orientation:

1 When I was working in the Brothers café, her second-hand man he'd go around with her all the time
2 I had opened the bar at ten o'clock
3 and was having a sandwich and a glass of beer
4 and oh! he was awfully drunk
Complicating action:
5 he kept bothering me
6 and pushing against me
7 and expectorating on the floor
8 and I said, "cut that out
9 I don't want you to be expectorating on the floor,
10 and I don't' want you to be bothering me
11 because I'll get mad
12 and when I get mad it isn't going to be funny
13 Because I'll grab you
14 and throw you right out the door"
15 well I didn't know he was Mary Driscoll's second hand man
16 Finally he did it one more time
17 and he almost knocked me off the stool
18 So I just grabbed hold of him
19 <u>and threw him right out onto the street</u>
20 And right onto the sidewalk
Resolution
21 well, I came in
22 and got right back on the stool
23 and finished my sandwich
24 and drank my beer

Episode 2:
Orientation
1 Bobby Evens was working there as a bartender
Complicating action
2 and he said, "do you know who that was that you just threw out?"
3 I said, "I don't' give a damn if that was the President's son,
4 he did enough to me.
5 expectorating on the floor and everything
6 who in the world does he think he is?"
Evaluation:
7 well, he say, "I'll tell you who he is
8 that's Mary Driscoll's second-hand man"
9 "are you kidding me?"
10 he said, "no.
11 you better take a bee-line out of here
12 <u>If he finds out you threw him out he's gonna have your fired</u>"
Resolution:
13 so I went down out the back way out by the parking lot
14 and went up Cambridge Street
15 and I stayed up there until 11:30
16 and then I came back
17 and asked if it was alright to come in
18 he says "yes"

Billie Lee's direct quotations in this narrative serve the same purpose (presenting the *so what*) as they do in the first narrative, but do so in a different manner. In this narrative, Lee has already informed with the listener that she was talking to Mary Driscoll's second hand man, even though she did not actually know it at the time. The listener still learns about the events as they played out in their original order, but is given this extra piece of information for a specific evaluative purpose.

In the first narrative Lee says, *"cut that out, I don't want you to be expectorating on the floor, and I don't' want you to be bothering me. Because I'll get mad, and when I get mad it isn't going to be funny. Because I'll grab you and throw you right out the door"*. In telling the narrator exactly what she said here, she validates that she did not know who she was talking to, as she would likely not have said that had she known. This is seen again in the second episode, where she says, *"I don't' give a damn if that was the President's son. He did enough to me, expectorating on the floor and everything. Who in the world does he think he is?"*. Where she seems so sure of herself here, this feeling is countered when she later on flees the restaurant upon finding out who the man is. Sharing this direct quotation with the listener keys them in on how severe the situation was. She could have gotten fired because of her actions and what she said to the man. If the listener did not already know who the man was, they would not be able to see how severe the situation was just listening to her quotes. For this reason, she gives the listener this knowledge first, before she had learned it herself.

5.1.2 Perceptions of the narrator

In addition to giving credibility and showing the *so what* factor, these evaluatives are used strategically to portray the narrator as the protagonist. Similar to the analysis of the narrative by Freddy Forresta in the introduction, Lopardi uses these direct quotations to make herself seem heroic. The direct quote *"Put down your gun. I'm not afraid of you"*, does this on a surface level. Lopardi shows the listener that she was brave in the face of danger by directly stating that she was not scared to the gunman himself. Where she was quite brave and courageous in this situation, it is crucial to note that she assigns praise to herself in this narrative because she sees that as important. She wants the listener to know not only of the danger, but how she reacted to it as well.

Lee does the same in her narrative. Although her reason for sharing the narrative is firstly because it was so surprising and unusual to her, she also aims to place herself in the protagonist role. Despite the fact that she ran at the end to save her job, she still shares quotes that make her seem very brave and daring. In sticking up to this man that was rude to her, she also makes the listener aware of how brave she is and not afraid to tell someone off, no matter who he is or what kind of power he has.

5.2 Introducing a third party

These narratives demonstrate two additional types of external evaluatives as well, one of which involves the quotation of a third party. This means a person that is not the protagonist or the antagonist of the story. In the Lee's narrative, this is done by stating a direct quotation from the bartender, Bobby Evans. Lee quotes him saying, *"I'll tell you who he is, that's Mary Driscoll's*

second-hand man". Sharing this quote from Bobby Evens, Lee further validates her narrative to the listener because the quote is coming from an unbiased third party. If Lee is the protagonist (as shown above), and Mary Driscoll's unnamed second hand man is the antagonist, then Evens is the third party. Instead of saying something like *And then I found out that the man was Mary Driscoll's second hand man,* Lee shows that she learned this information from Evans, making it more credible.

Lopardi's narrative does this as well. On line 11, Lopardi says, *One guy says, 'go ahead shoot me, you'*. This third party quotation has a few levels of evaluation attached to it. In one way, it is similar to Lopardi's own quotations, implying danger in its mention of shooting. This third party quotation, however, is also walking the listener through the situation as the narrator felt it. When the gunman first comes in, Lopardi is found yelling at him, almost teasing him with her words. She says "*I'm not afraid of you*", boldly, to the gunman—an action that shows bravery in her mind, but could also show that she does not yet understand how serious the situation is. She says that she is not afraid, but she may also have not believed that the gunman would actually shoot. After all, a situation such as this is not normal, she could very likely still have been processing it as it happened, still not believing it to be true.

In introducing this third party, Lopardi presents an unbiased observer with similar feelings. This man says "*go ahead shoot me, you*", temping the gunman and clearly thinking that he will not actually shoot. The fact then that the gunman does shoot and kills this third party observer, only further evaluates the narrative for the listener. It shows how shocking the situation was for the narrator looking back; in retelling the event she conveys the actual danger by contrasting the surreal feelings she had in the moment with the actual danger that was at hand. By putting this evaluation in the form of a third party quotation, she gives it both validity and significance.

5.3 Stating the sentiment

The direct quotation evaluatives, either from the narrator or a third party, do not break the flow of temporal juncture. Because of this, they are somewhat embedded into the narrative. While the listener still takes the quotations as evaluation, this does not happen so much on a surface level. A third type of external evaluation is not as embedded in the narrative and breaks the temporal structure to make an evaluation outright. As Labov (1972) finds, the narrator does this when they find that an embedded narrative will not fully communicate the importance of the event. This structure involves mentioning of the sentiment of the situation, typically, by the narrator stating what they were thinking (I thought…) or using the verb *to be.*

The second narrative by Billie Lee uses one of these evaluative structures on line 15: *Well, I didn't know he was Mary Driscoll's second hand man*. This is a statement of Lee's thoughts at the time that she wants her listener to understand. She reveals that she didn't know who the man was at the time, showing the *so what* discussed above. Lee emphasizes that she did not know who the man was to make herself seem even braver in what she said to him.

5.3.1 Assignment of praise and blame

In the narratives discussed thus far, it has been rather clear that the narrator assigns praise to themselves. Lee, Lopardi, and Forresta each aim to make themselves heroic and the story's protagonist through their evaluatives. There are, however, cases where this is more complex.

Evaluatives in general are used by the narrator to control how they are perceived by the listener. In some cases these evaluatives show other aspects of their identity. They may not always cast the narrator in the best light, but result from guilt or blame that the narrator has placed on themselves. To analyze this, I will present a second narrative by Lucy Lopardi.

Orientation
1 They called it The Gilded Cage at that time.
2 I worked there at the Gilded Cage
3 until one day I was dancing
4 and my son, at the time I'd say he was about nine
5 so he never knew what I was doing
6 I always told him I was a waitress
Complicated action
7 So this day I was on stage
8 naturally I had a low gown.
9 He peeks in!
10 The bartender said, "Lucy! Your kids at the door!
11 Watch what you're doing!"
12 I said, "What's he doing there?
13 Oh my God!"
14 So I finished my number
15 and I went to the door.
16 "I don't like what you're doing", he said.
17 I said, "What am I doing?"
18 He said, "I don't like that.
19 Look at you!
20 No clothes on!
21 Look at you!
22 No clothes on!"
23 Was he mad!
24 He was furious!
25 I says, "I had to fill in today for the girl who was sick.
26 I know how to dance, you know.
27 you know that I know how to dance."
28 "I know it. I know it.
29 But you're making everyone see you like that.
30 I don't like it. I don't like it.
31 So I say, "I'll quit.
32 I won't come here no more."
Coda
33 So I kind of played leary when he was around.
34 I think that any time he'd open the door when I was on state that I'd be kind of leary. you know.
35 But he kind of got over it after a while.

Lucy Lopardi (1978) [2015.4.14]

First, I will address the types of evaluatives present in this narrative. Lopardi uses a direct quotation from herself early on, *"What are you doing here? Oh my God!"*. This lets the listener know from the beginning that her son should not be there. We learn that she is hiding her job

from her son and that it is of utmost important\ce to her that he does not find out what she does. She confirms this evaluation in her second direct quote, *"I had to fill in today for the girl who was sick. I know how to dance, you know"*. Here, the extent to which she does not want her son to find out about her job is revealed, as she lies to him to hide the truth. She does this again by quoting herself saying, *"I'll quit. I won't come here no more"*. In telling the listener exactly what she said, Lopardi expresses one reason as to why this narrative is reportable: she had a secret that she did not want her son to discover. This secret was so bad, in her opinion, that she kept the lie for what is implied to be many years after this event took place.

Lopardi also uses two types of sentiment statements in her narrative. On lines 23 and 24, she does this with the verb *to be,* saying *He was mad! He was furious!*. Breaking the flow of temporal juncture, Lopardi directly projects her son's feelings. In making the listener aware that she saw his anger, the listener is also made aware that she did not want him knowing about her job. She does this again in line 34, *I think that any time he'd open the door when I was on stage that I'd be kind of leery, you know*, this time using a statement of her thoughts. By telling the listener what was going through her head, she further lets the listen know how important this secret was to her.

On a surface level, these evaluatives reveal Lopardi's secret and her intentions with it. This narrative is different, however, when it comes to the assignment of praise and blame. In its analysis, I asked myself, who is the protagonist? And, who is Lopardi assigning praise and blame to?

Given that Lopardi's job could be regarded by many audiences as morally wrong, it is difficult for her to portray herself as the protagonist. We know that this type of dancing is morally wrong in this society, as she does try and hide it from her son (contingent on the assumption that family members aim to be truthful with one another). We also know that Lopardi enjoys her job, as she still keeps it even after telling her son that she had quit. Acknowledging this, she is met with a struggle of portraying herself is a good light to the listener, and still standing for what she loves and believes in.

Based on these findings, why, then, is she hiding her job from her son? And why does she let the listener know that she has lied? If she wanted to protect her image, she could have left out the part that she continued on with the job. Instead, she makes herself vulnerable to the narrator's interpretations by taking away the praise from herself.

I believe that one way she tries to make herself the story's protagonist is to cast her son as the antagonist. This way, the protagonist role is defaulted to her. She uses a third party quote from the bartender on lines 10 and 11, *The bartender said, "Lucy! Your kids at the door! Watch what you're doing!"*, to show that he should not be there. In a sense, she is implying that he is in the wrong by coming to her work. She does this again in the coda when she says, *He kinda got over it after a while"*. This verb choice "got over", also implies that he was wrong in disagreeing with Lopardi's choices. The son is made to look like the antagonist because he disagreed with the narrator's beliefs, causing her stress and difficulties that were not warranted because it was not his place.

While this defaults Lopardi to the protagonist role, there is still a conflict in that she does not necessarily assign praise to herself. She does assign blame to her son for being where he shouldn't have, but, in a way, also assigns the blame to herself when she lies. The lies are in the form of direct quotations, and thus, must serve some purpose in sharing them with the listener. This assignment is likely much more complex than those of other narratives. Although she does blame her son for finding out her secret, it is also possible that she blames herself for causing this

disconnect between them. In the end of the narrative, she does not leave off on a good note. Her son is left "leery" about his mother, not trusting as a mother-son relationship ideally should be. She states that he *kinda got over it*, but it still seems as though this lie is lingering between the two characters. Perhaps, she shares these quotations because she does feel as though she is to blame. Of course, to prove this more background information on the relationship between Lopardi and her son is needed (and is not expanded upon in the rest of the interview). However, it is a likely reason that Lopardi shares these quotations with the narrator, and detracts from her own praise and protagonistic portrayal.

6. COMPARATIVE EVALUATIVES

6.1 Negatives and Questions

A comparative evaluative is similar to evaluatives that mention the sentiment in that they break the narrative's temporal juncture. In doing so, they stand out to the listener as distinct, presenting credibility, the *so what*, and they way in which the narrator wants to be perceived. A common linguistic device used to do this is the negative. Remember the first narrative by Freddy Forresta that does this. He says *He couldn't knock me out* and *He couldn't get my wallet*, to show the potential danger that could have happened, but did not. This keys the listener in to how dangerous the situation actually was and is the take-away message that the narrator wants to be remembered.

Another narrative from Billie Lee's interview uses these negatives as well. This narrative is split into four episodes, each leading up to the concluding events.

> Episode 1:
> *Orientation*
> 1 There was another guy that robbed the place in Scollay Square
> 2 He stole TV cameras and walkie-talkies and a Luger pistol.
> 3 He lived up on Bowdoin Street
> 4 He was laughing his head off
> 5 because they couldn't find out who broke into his place.
> 6 One night when I came into work
> 7 there was a guy talking to my boss
> 8 and he was telling me, "I'm coming in here tonight
> 10 and bringing my gun
> 11 and I'm going to shoot up the place".
> *Complicating action:*
> 12 So I come in
> 13 and says, "look you little punk—you bring in your gun
> 14 and I'll tell you what I'll do,
> 15 I'll take that gun
> 16 and I'll ram it right down your throat.
> 17 And don't think I won't do it."
> ev 18 <u>Because I says, "bring it in"</u>
>
> Episode 2:
> *Orientation:*
> 1 and by god, he did bring it in at eight o'clock

2 he said he'd be in with gun
3 eight o'clock came
4 and I was standing there by the station
Complicating action:
5 he came in with the gun.
or 6 He had the catch off
ev 7 I didn't know how to work the catch, thank god.
or 8 there was one part of the bar that you opened to get out
or 10 the bartender was there
or 11 my little guy was way down at the end little Mickey
12 so this guy said just what I said, "I'd bring the gun up"
14 so I went right up to him
15 and I said, so you brought your gun in"
16 he said, "I did"
17 I said, "well, now, isn't that sweet"
18 I said, "I have news for you.
19 I'll be right back in a minute"
20 I went up to the corner to the Scollary Square Grille
or 21 Bill was up there talking to the cop.
22 I said, "Bill, there's a guy trying to hold us up.
23 now you come down right away."
Evaluation:
ev 24 I thought he was right behind me.
25 but he had started talking to the waitress
or 26 she was a beautiful blond
or 27 he was sweet on her
28 so our bartender, jerry, he was backing him out
29 I put my leg out a
30 and he fell over it
31 when he did I jumped right on him
32 <u>I pinned him right to the sidewalk</u>
Resolution:
33 and there bill was, up at the corner
34 I yelled, "you god dam fool get up here.
35 Get down here
36 What do you think I'm going to do your dirty work?"
37 And I held him down until Bill came
38 and put the handcuffs on him
Coda:
39 it was the same guy that held up the place down there
40 and stole the walkie-talkies and the cameras and the whole damn mess
41 and the gun, they traced that gun right to him.

Episode 3:
Orientation
1 I had to testify in court.
ev 2 my boss was a nervous wreck
ev 3 but I was calm as a cucumber which I always am
Complicating action
ev 4 I told them in court exactly what happened.
5 I said "yes your honor he tried to hold the place up

6 but I got in
7 and nailed him to the sidewalk
8 and the policeman put the handcuffs on him"
Coda:
9 he was in the little cage over there
10 he got a year or something life that
11 they got all the stuff back
12 because he didn't' pawn it
13 he got the walkie-talkies back and everything
14 the place was right next to the tattoo on Cambridge street

Episode 4:
Orientation:
1 after his year was up
2 he came into the brothers
Complicating action:
3 and he said "you gave me one of the greatest favors in the whole damn world.
4 because I tell you
5 I was going crazy
6 I was drinking what wine
7 and I didn't know what I was doing"
8 he shook hands with me
ev 9 I wouldn't know him if I fell over him
Coda
10 from then on we were the best of friends
11 he says, "any favor I can do for you ask me
12 and I can do it for you".
13 Now isn't that something?
14 I straightened that guy out by putting him in jail for a whole year
15 otherwise he might have gone around stealing other things
16 and become who knows what?
17 a regular gunman.

Billie Lee (1981) [2015.1.15]

     The first three episodes of this narrative contain mostly external evaluatives. For example, lines 34 to 36 of episode two are a direct quotation from Lee: *I yelled, "you Goddamn fool get up here. Get down here. What do you think I'm going to do your dirty work?"*. This quote reveals, like the previous narratives, that this was a very dangerous situation in which that narrator acted heroic in the face of danger. Specifically, Lee is pointing out that she was the one to catch gunman instead of Bill, whom should have been paying more attention to his work. She does this again with an evaluative that addresses the sentiment in line 24 of episode two, when she says, *I thought he was right behind me*. Again, Lee draws attention to her own heroic actions. In mentioning that she thought she had back-up help the entire time, she makes her own actions seem more fearless, when she was, in fact, completely on her own.

     Like the last narrative by Lopardi, the *so what* factor in this narrative is slightly more extensive than the others. When the fourth episode is recounted, the *so what* is expanded through the comparative evaluatives. The modal and negative found in line 9, *I wouldn't have known him*

if I fell over him, is the first to do this. As previous negatives that I have shown do, this device gives light to something that could have happened but did not. In this case, the listener discovers that the man that Lee ran into looked different, and is left wondering how the situation would be different if he had looked the same. To evaluate this, consider that the man's change in appearance represents a change in character. If Lee were to run into him and state—in temporal juncture—that she recognized the man right away, the listener would understand that the man had not changed is antagonistic ways. Instead, Lee breaks the narrative's flow to reveal that the man's looks are very different, using a modal and negative. A new extension of the *so what* is introduced such that Lee finds this narrative reportable because the man changed and the outcome was not as she had expected.

This idea is further developed in the coda of episode four through a second type of comparative evaluative. In using questions, Lee expresses to the listener just how surprising or unexpected, the narratives outcome was to her. In line 13 she says *Now isn't that something?* and in lines 15-17 she asks, *Otherwise he might have gone around stealing and other things and become who knows what? A regular gunman*. Like negatives, these questions break the temporal structure and are asked directly to the listener. They cause the listener to ponder the questions themselves and, thus, evaluate the situation at hand. When asked *who knows what?* the gunman could have become, the listener is made to think about the negative consequences that the situation could have presented but didn't. In this particular case, Lee does not want her point to be missed, and answers the question for the narrator herself. She states *a regular gunman* to highlight just how bad that outcome would have been, making what actually happened seem more surprising.

In regards to the assignment of praise and blame, Lee aims her questions to the listener in order to cast herself as the protagonist. She makes it clear that the gunman has changed his ways for the better as a direct result of her. This is done, first and foremost, when she gives the gunman's quote: *"you gave me one of the greatest favors in the whole damn world"*. However, she wants to emphasize this point and does so in these questions. By saying *otherwise*, she means that, if not for her, the gunman would still be on the wrong path or still be in jail for his crimes.

7. INTENSIFYING EVALUATIVES

7.1 Quantifiers and Repetition

A third group of evaluative devices that Labov (1972) addresses in his work is what he categorizes as intensifiers. Many of these devices are difficult to capture when analyzing an oral narrative through a transcription, as they include the use of expressive phonology and gestures (Labov 1972). There are, however, two types of intensifying evaluatives that can be found through reading including quantifiers and repetition.

In looking at quantifiers, consider a narrative from a fourth speaker of the old West End, Maria Lupo.

Abstract
1 One time all the girls, we were about thirteen years old
2 we robbed Casaro's bakery
3 We robbed the truck
4 All the bread
Orientation

> 5 running down the street with his bread, one of my friends squealed
> *Complicating action*
> 6 He said, "oh, all the girls are robbing your bread!"
> 7 And he came out chasing us
> 8 He was chasing us all over the street
> 9 Up the hill
> 10 up Beacon Hill
> or 11 It was snowing out
> or 12 The bread was everywhere
> 13 He called us more names
> 14 Then it got to my uncle
> 15 My uncle was yelling at me
> 16 "What do you mean you steal bread off of my people?
> 17 <u>You can have anything you want</u>!"
> *Coda*
> 18 But he didn't tell my mother

Maria Lupo (1980) [2015.1.9]

This narrative uses the quantifier "all" in two different places: in line 4 with *all the bread* and in line 8 with *he was chasing us all over the street*. According to Labov (1972) "all" is one of the more common quantifiers and a most frequently used type of intensifier to evaluate a narrative. It is serving a purpose here to make the actions seem more extreme, as the narrator wants to convey the action of the event as she felt it. By saying *all the bread*, as opposed to just *the bread*, and *all over the street*, instead of *down the street*, the narrator is implying larger, more extreme actions.

In terms of repetition, consider back to the first narrative told by Lucy Lopardi. In lines 4 and 5 she repeats her quote *"I'm not afraid"* and in lines 8 and 9 she repeats *"keep out of here"*. In reading these transcriptions it is difficult to tell, in some cases, whether the repetition is a part of what was actually said by Lopardi, or if it is just her repeating her own quote in the narrative context for emphasis. According to Labov (1972), both devices are possible and serve a similar purpose. If, in the quote itself, Lopardi actually said these phrases twice, then the purpose it serves is the same as I have discussed in the external evaluatives section. She may have chosen the quote, partially, because it shows emphasis on her bravery.

If, however, the second line of each repeated phrase is not a part of the quotation, then it is serving an additional purpose. In repeating her own words, she shows both how important they are in displaying the danger of the situation and her bravery in it. They let the listener know that this particular statement is important and is what they should be gathering as the *so what* of the narrative. Again, it is difficult to tell which device is observed here. Labov (1972) adds that repetition is a less common intensifying evaluative, and is found most frequently with skilled narrators. Not knowing the background of any of these West End speakers, it seems reasonable that these repetitive devices are rare.

8. EVALUATIVES AND IDENTITY

I have addressed the many types of linguistic devices that narrators use to evaluate their experiences. These external, comparative, and intensifying evaluative devices make the listener aware of the narrative's credibility, purpose, and also control how the narrator is perceived. In looking at one more narrative, I will add to this discussion.

The majority of narratives here reveal that most narrators use evaluatives to cast themselves as the protagonist. In many cases, this happens in the face of danger where the narrator has done something heroic. These narratives that have to do with danger are certainly reportable, yet the narrator continues to evaluate and emphasize the danger because it makes them seem braver. The one narrative that seems to have more complex results so far is that of Lucy Lopardi, where she defaults the protagonist role to herself by making her son the antagonist. On a deeper level this suggests that she feels guilty for what happened with her and her son—and this comes through in her evaluatives. In looking at another narrative of Billie Lee, we see a similar use of evaluatives, but in a different context.

> *Orientation*
> 1 Then during the war there was a girlfriend of mine sitting in the booth
> 2 and I was talking to her
> 3 and she had been drinking quite heavily
> *Complicating action*
> 4 so I said, "I'm going in the kitchen
> 5 and get you a cup of coffee.
> 6 I'm going to sober you up".
> 7 So the first thing you know this guy came in
> or 8 he was very tall
> or 9 He looked like the untouchables with a long coat and slough hat
> 10 He came in
> 11 and slid into the seat right opposite her
> 12 I said, "don't' bother her
> 13 she's been drinking
> 14 don't bother her."
> 15 I says, "I'm going to make her some coffee
> 16 Do you want a cup?"
> 17 he says, "no thank you."
> 18 I left and went in
> 19 and made the coffee
> 20 and come out
> or 21 and she was still there
> 22 I said, "come on Gladys wake up
> 23 and drink some coffee"
> 24 she just sat there
> 25 I said "come on you haven't' been drinking that much"
> *Evaluation:*
> ev 26 Which I know
> 27 <u>Jesus-I'll tell you she went right over, just like that</u>
> 28 And I looked
> ev 29 and there was blood
> 30 He had shot her from under the booth
> 31 He'd shot her right in the stomach
> 32 and killed her.

> Billie Lee (1981) [2015.1.15]

To begin, this narrative presents an array of evaluative devices that reveal the *so what* factor. These devices, at first, seem no different than in the first narratives—they show the

situation's dangerous nature. For instance, the statement of the sentiment in line 29, *there was blood,* projects a frightening scene into the listener's mind. A closer look at these devices, however, shows that they have deeper intentions as far as Lee's usage of them to assign praise and blame.

In analyzing this narrative, I first noticed that Lee does not use evaluative devices to make herself seem heroic or assign herself praise. She does not quote herself standing up to a gunman or tackling one like in many of the other narratives. What then, I asked, is she using evaluatives for? And, why has she chosen to share this narrative? After considering the direct quotations that Lee uses, it is possible that she is actually trying to rid herself of self-inflicted blame that she holds for the death of her friend on her watch. Of course, both Lee and the listener know that Lee is not actually guilty for the murder of her friend, nor is she the antagonist of the narrative. However, the evaluative devices show that she may feel some guilt for the death of her friend, as she was drinking and was killed at the bar while Lee was working. Essentially, Lee uses evaluative devices to take the self-inflicted blame off herself.

This idea first becomes evident in lines 4-6 where Lee says, *"I'm going to the kitchen to get you a cup of coffee. I'm going to sober you up"*. Here, she demonstrates a certain responsibility for her friend that she has taken on. Although her friend can likely survive at this level of intoxication, she is making it her duty, as a friend, to help her become sober. Acknowledging this, Lee next tries to validate to the listener the reason as to why she left her friend alone. The quotation and statement of the sentiment in lines 27 and 28 does this: *I said, "come on you haven't been drinking that much". Which I know*. Here, she confirms that she knew her friend was drunk, but not drunk enough that she could not leave her alone while she grabbed the coffee. In adding the statement of the sentiment *which I know* to the end of her quote, she implies a need to validate it to herself—she feels some level of guilt for leaving her friend. After all, her friend was killed only once she Lee left the room.

In lines 15-17 Lee also tries to rid her guilt through quoting herself and the gunman. She says, *I says, I'm going to make her some coffee. Do you want a cup?" He says, "no thank you"*. In including these quotations in the narrative, Lee shows that she thought the gunman was just a regular customer, as she asked him if he would like coffee as she would for anyone else. This further illustrates her innocence and the fact that she had no idea that what kind of harm the man would cause after she left.

Finally, notice that Lee does not let the listener find out that her friend was shot until the time that she learned it herself. If she did (and it abided by temporal juncture), Lee would have mentioned it in between lines 19 and 20, before she returned into the room. Instead, she uses the past perfect *had* to report that action while still keeping to temporal juncture. She says *He had shot her right from under the booth. He'd shot her right in the stomach and killed her.* By keeping the listener in the dark about this, they are made to learn about the death just as Lee did and share the same shock and fear that she felt. Consequently, as they are just as surprised about it as she is, they are also made understand her guilt.

Overall, it seems as though Lee uses these evaluative devices both to clear her own conscience and to project these feelings to the listener. She feels guilty about her friend being killed when she left the room and that she was not there to try and protect her. The evaluatives make this guilt clear for the listener, despite the fact that she could not have done anything to prevent the death. Again, the exact proportions of this projection cannot be determined without consulting the narrator directly. She does not discuss the situation further in her interview.

However, based on the evaluatives that she uses and the purpose that evaluatives are shown to serve in narrative, this is a likely analysis.

On a larger scale the evaluative devices used throughout each of these narratives reveals something interesting about human identity and nature. In general, it seems as though speakers aim to cast themselves as the protagonist in their story. In an event where one would likely show, or at least feel, fear, these narrators make themselves appear extremely courageous. Even though the actions that these narrators describe are, in fact, very heroic and brave, they enforce them with the evaluative devices. My claim is not that they are falsely portraying themselves as the protagonist, but that they make an extra effort to make it clear to the listener that they fit this role.

This is even true in Lopardi's narrative about her son discovering her job as a dancer. Even though the evaluatives revealed some level of guilt and blame for her relationship with her son, Lopardi still tries to cast herself as the protagonist, in making it seem that her son was wrong in his actions. Furthermore, this claim still stands for Lee's last narrative. Although she is not out rightly trying to make herself seem heroic or brave, she is creating some level of validation for her own conscious. She needs to make it clear to herself and the listener that she was not to blame for anything that took place, even if it still haunts her. Likewise, she needs the listener (and possibly, herself) to understand that she could not have done anything to prevent the death. In a sense, regardless of each unique story, these narrators use evaluatives that give themselves a good name. They never want the blame entirely on themselves and execute this by assigning the praise and blame accordingly with the evaluative devices. It is not to say that this is wrong, or even selfish, it is simply an observation that is shown characteristic of narrators.

9. INFLUENCES FROM THE WEST END COMMUNITY

Labov (2013; 1972) presents similar findings showing that narrators use evaluative devices in order to be perceived positively by the listener. The narratives that Labov (2013) uses, however, all come from a wide range of speech communities. While his original work emerged from studies of AAVE speakers, much of his more recent research aims to find connections and similarities in narrative devices for all speakers. While my analysis of the West End narratives is similar to that of Labov's (2013)—in terms of the narrator's portrayal of their own identity—I also considered an analysis that was specific to the West End community. Because each of these narrators were brought up in the "old" West End and were responding to an interview on the West End and the urban renewal project, there are perhaps reasons as to why they are using certain evaluatives, caused by their being a part of the West End speech community. Likewise, it is possible that they are trying to be perceived by the listener in a common way due to their past experience in the West End.

The first observation is the possibility that each speaker emphasizes their bravery and heroic actions to counter the domination of the Boston city council during the urban renewal project. At this time, they were made to feel helpless and forced to move, despite numerous appeals from residents (Gans 1962). In their interviews, speakers made various comments that highlight this point:

> "[The politicians] were saying, 'don't worry, don't worry, we'll take care of you. We're your representatives here [in the West End]. When everything is built up you can come back. And when everything was built up, the representatives disappeared. And that was the end of that".
> Sam Sawtille (1979) [2015.1.6]

> I used to walk through [the West End] when it was being torn down. It was a really strange feeling to walk through it and see the neighborhood we used to play in and see houses where we used to know the families, and to see it being torn down. It was like something dying. There used to be a lot of life there, a lot of good feeling. It was all gone. It was a strange feeling to walk through it". George Whitehouse (1980) [2015.1.4]

The urban renewal project was entirely out of these residents' control, hindering the confidence and hope. In order to show how brave they have become in spite of this, the speakers use evaluative devices that show themselves acting brave in the face of danger. Likewise, they use evaluatives to describe just how dangerous each situation was, making their bravery seem more significant. Overall, the display of bravery in these narratives could be a way for the narrators to counter the helplessness they felt during the urban renewal.

Contra this analysis, it could be argued that a narrator might try to emphasize their bravery in the face of adversity in any situation—not case specific to the West End. An additional analysis could examine this in terms of the actual features of each speaker's language and common narrative tactics of respective communities and social groups. For instance, it is possible that the West End community used a higher concentration of evaluative devices than other speech communities, due to experiences of their past and the portrayals of themselves that they wish to create.

One device that these narrators do use an extensive amount of is direct quotations from themselves. While these types of evaluatives are present in the narratives Labov (2013; 1972) presents as well, an empirical study could determine if they are used more often by West End speakers. Regardless, these direct quotations were one of the most used evaluatives within this set of West End narratives, and, as I believe, were used for a particular reason. These speakers have a need to make their childhood experiences seem important, legitimate, and credible. When the city of Boston did not listen to or care about their appeals, the residents were made to think that their presence in the West End was insignificant. As the buildings and streets that they grew up in do not exist anymore, it is almost as if their childhoods were not "real". The extensive use of quotations, then, is perhaps a result of the narrators' efforts to make their experiences seem more credible. As shown above, the quotations allow the listener to hear the actual things that were said, not paraphrases. This way they are giving the listener the facts, the actual statements, and the truth. Based on the background of these speakers, they have reason to do so. They want the listeners to feel how "real" these memories are, even though the physical locations where they happened have been destroyed.

One device that is used differently than in Labov's (2013) narratives is that of vague verbs. In the very first narrative introduced by Freddy Forresta, I showed how the use of the verb *tried* allowed the narrators to imply an action, where there was, in fact, none. Remember, the phrase "I was gonna get down, but he didn't give me a chance" gives the listener this false sense of action and casts the narrator in an innocent light. This particular use of the device—where the vague verb is used to describe something the narrator is doing—is common in the narratives that Labov (2013) presents. While the West End narratives do this as well, it is actually more common that they use the vague verbs to describe something that the antagonist is doing. Consider for instance lines 12-14 of Forresta's second narrative:

(4)   12 he tried to hit me with the bottle
         13 but he went down
         14 then I kicked him in the jaw

Here, the narrator uses verbs that imply an actual action, such as *kicked*, to describe his own actions. This shows the brave actions that were taken and verifies them. The vague verbs, instead, are used on the antagonist to reduce the actions that they made. For instance, the verb *tried to* is used to describe to antagonist. If the narrator had said something like *He swung the bottle at me*, the action would seem much more severe.

This mission to reduce the antagonist's actions, as well as the search for credibility through direct quotations, is possibly a result of the hardship that speakers endured in the West End community. Had these speakers not been forced out of their homes and lied to by the Boston city council, they may have not needed to validate their past stories as thoroughly to the listeners. Of course, it is always difficult to make these speculations without directly consulting the narrators themselves. These ideas, however, are viable explanations for the information given.

Finally, one aspect of this analysis that stuck out to me personally was the relationship that these narratives had to the rest of the interviews in their entirety. As the narratives mostly involve stories of danger and death, it might be expected that speakers would follow up in their interviews saying something like *and that's why I would never go back* or *I don't like to think of my time in the West End*. However, this is not the case. Despite the horrible situations each narrator describes, they still express praise and admiration for their homes in the West End. For example, speakers share:

> "We didn't have anything but we had everything [in the West End]. You understand what I mean?" Marie Gigante (1980) [2015.9.13]

> "I remember watching on television when I was twelve years old and I used to feel bad for the slum kids I used to watch until I realized I was one of them--and I was feeling bad for them!" James Campano (1980) [2015.1.31]

This creates an interesting complex. On one hand, the speakers seem to have this idealized view of what their community was. They say that it was this incredible place to grow up, yet it seems rather dangerous when just reading the narratives. On the other hand, they are perhaps describing these dangerous situations because they helped make them as brave and strong as they are today. It is possible that the narrators highlight the danger, and maybe even exaggerate it slightly, to make the listener aware of just how strong of a community they are. They want listeners to understand that they will not let anyone manipulate them again like the Boston city council did during the urban renewal. Regardless, the speakers' true intentions are to make the listeners feel the nostalgia and admiration that they feel for their childhood homes, based on the memories that they have.

Linguistically, these narratives present an intriguing use of evaluative devices to portray the narrators' intentions both at the individual and community level. It is clear that they work in many forms to increase the narrative's credibility, as well as control the listener's perceptions of the situation and the narrator. Although they may come to the narrator at a subconscious level when telling a narrative, the analyses that they reveal are quite extensive and known by the listener. For the community, these devices act as tools with which the narrator can transfer their experience to the listener, allowing the listener to evaluate the actions and feel the narrators' emotions. For someone who knows nothing about these people or the urban renewal project, the admiration that these narrators felt for their former home is certainly made clear in their narratives, all through the particular language that they have chosen. In the West End the true

meaning of their community is transferred through narrative and no part of the speaker's memory and passion for what was lost physically is forgotten.

10. APPENDIX A: REFERENCES

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11. APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW REFERENCE LIST

Museum Accession Number	Additional Reference Name	Interviewer	Interviewee	Date Recorded
2015.4.14	Bruno Interview 0012	Paul Cincotta	Lucy Lopardi	10/17/1978
2015.1.9	Bruno Interview 0007	Paul Cincotta	Maria Lupo	8/2/1980

2015.1.15	Bruno Interview 0013	Paul Cincotta	Billie Lee	4/18/1981
2015.9.13	Bruno Interview 0011	Paul Cincotta	Marie Gigante, Josie Savage, Lucy Lopardi	8/29/1980
2015.1.31	Bruno Interview 0030	Paul Cincotta	James Campano	7/8/1980
2015.1.24	Bruno Interview 0022	Paul Cincotta	Freddy Forresta	unknown
2015.1.4	Bruno Interview 0002	Paul Cincotta	George Whitehouse	5/25/1980
2015.1.6	Bruno Interview 0004	Paul Cincotta	Sam Sawtille	9/10/1979
2015.1.22	Bruno Interview 0020	Paul Cincotta	Joseph Cuucinatta, Rose Cuccinatta, Leo Cuccinatta	4/12/1983

12. APPENDIX C: IMAGES OF THE WEST END

FIGURE 1. Aerial view of the West End neighborhood before urban renewal (WEM 2015)

FIGURE 2. Aerial view of the West End neighborhood during urban renewal in 1959 (WEM 2015)
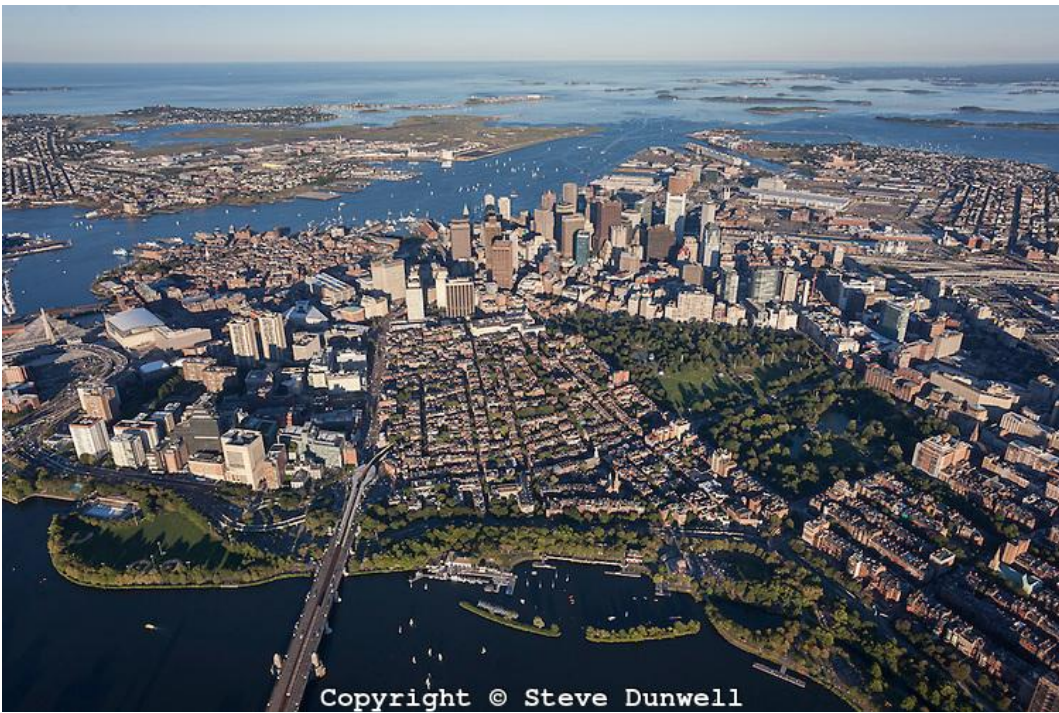

FIGURE 3. Aerial view of the West End neighborhood after urban renewal in 2015; high-rise apartments on left and Beacon Hill on right. (Dunwell 2015)