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ENG-350 The English Language

Part I

An Analysis and Critique of the Linguistic Features of

Wuthering Heights and *After*

Milestone 1: **LINGUISTIC PRINCIPLES DEOMONSTRATED IN THE TWO SELECTIONS**

1a. DESCRIPTION OF TITLES

Emily Bronte's novel *Wuthering Heights* captures the essence of a tumultuous relationship, entwined with the power of social status, and revenge in its cruelest form (Frey). Published in 1847, under the pseudonym Ellis Bell, this was Bronte's only novel ever produced (Tompkins). Similarly, Anna Todd's novel *After* conveys a rocky romance, and shows how a tough childhood can damage a person-inevitably carrying over into adulthood, shaping your lifestyle, and how you treat others. *After* was published by Gallery Books in 2014 (Goodreads).

1b. RATIONALE FOR WHY THE PIECES WERE SELECTED FOR A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

Wuthering Heights and *After* were published 167 years apart. Emily Bronte was an English novelist, born in Thornton, Yorkshire, England in 1848 (Tompkins). American author, Anna Todd, was born in Dayton, Ohio in 1989 (Wikipedia). With the time periods having a wide gap and location of authors spanning across the ocean, my analysis should show a stark

difference in linguistics. As there are many contrasts linguistically, there is a common theme in both novels. Both are about troubled relationships, but also how love prevails overall.

1c. ANALYSIS OF MORPHOLOGICAL AND PHONOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Austin utilizes phonology effectively in *Wuthering Heights*, which aids in the flow of the dialogue. For example, "She paused and hid her face in the folds of my gown, but jerked it forcibly away. I was out of patience with her folly!" (Austen). The words *face, folds, forcibly,* and *folly* show Austen's use of the fricative /f/. These words would also be categorized as a natural class. The manner of articulation that I observed was that of nasal /n/ sounds. For example, "…I've *no* more business to marry Edgar *Linton than* I have to be *in heaven*; and if the wicked *man in* there had *not* brought Heathcliff so low, I shouldn't have thought of it" (Austen). These uses of phonology emphasize Austen's beautiful words and show her expertise of the English language.

Morphological features in *Wuthering Heights* help to recognize word meanings for better understanding of this early Old English language. For example, "I tell you I won't hearken to your dreams, Miss Catherine" (Austen). *Hearken,* a free morpheme, is an unfamiliar word to me in which using context clues in surrounding sentences was unhelpful. The etymology of the word is of "late Old English *heorcnian* "to give ear, listen" (Online Etymology Dictionary). Another example of a morphological element, "…I might shape a prophecy, and foresee a fearful catastrophe" (Austen). *Prophecy, foresee, fearful,* and *catastrophe* convey Austen's use of monomorphemic and polymorphemic words.

Phonologically speaking, in *After*, Todd uses the consonant /c/ repeatedly, but creates the velar consonant /k/ sound. For example, "Her *clean* appearance *clashes* with anger in her face,

her long blond hair is flipped to one shoulder, yet every *curl* is still perfectly intact" (Todd, 10). The place of articulation, I find, is a reoccurring element throughout the book. "I think you've had enough, Hardin says and hands the bottle to Nate, who takes a drink. Who the hell is Hardin Scott to tell me when I have had enough?" (Todd, 55). The words *had, Hardin, hands, hell,* and *have* show Todd's use of the glottal fricative /h/.

Todd utilizes the morphological element of adjectives, which are content words, often. For example, "Until I turn around to see the *rude, tattooed, brown-haired* boy *sprawled* across Steph's bed" (Todd, 14). These words help to envision what the protagonist looks like. In doing this, readers develop a personal relationship with the characters. Inflectional affixes are applied throughout the book as well. In this sentence note the inflectional affix -s added to many of the words; "His upper *arms* have many more *tattoos* than I expected; small, seemingly random *images* and *icons* are scattered along his *shoulders* and *hips*" (Todd, 54). This particular example focuses on number and shows us that each noun is plural.

In conclusion, the novels *Wuthering Heights* and *After* convey similar plot themes, but differ greatly linguistically. I believe the time they were written in and the origin of the author played a big role in the language used. Bronte and Todd express their love of the English language and portray it well for all to enjoy.

Milestone 2: <u>ANALYSIS AND CRITIQUE OF LINGUISTIC PRINCIPLES</u>

2a. ANALYSIS FROM SEMANTIC PERSPECTIVE

The word *pray* is a homonym, which is portrayed in both *Wuthering Heights* and *After*, but in a very different way. For example, "Who is to separate us, *pray*?" (Bronte, 73). This form of the word *pray* is, "used as a way of adding ironic or sarcastic emphasis to a question"

(Definition of Pray by Oxford Dictionary). In contrast we see the quote, "And a big part of me is practically *praying* that she'll be right" (Todd, 17). This meaning of the word *pray,* "addresses a solemn request or expression of thanks to a deity or other object of worship" (Definition of Pray by Oxford Dictionary). Even though *praying* was used in the second example, the suffix -ing does not change the meaning, it changes the tense. This form of the word *pray* Todd utilizes, is more widely used in our twenty-first century English language.

Lexical ambiguity is a semantic element seen often throughout both novels. Inferring and using linguistic clues helped me understand these ambiguous sentences. Bronte writes, "Nelly, I see now you think me a selfish wretch; but did it never strike you that if Heathcliff and I married, we should be beggars (Bronte, 73). The word *strike* has multiple meanings; I quickly concluded that the word meant 'to occur' not 'hit.' In Todd's example, "What do you want Hardin? I ask, giving him a taste of his own medicine" (Todd, 43) we see ambiguity as an idiom, in a familiar form. 'Giving him a taste of his own medicine' implies she is treating him as poorly as he has treated her, not actually giving him some kind of medication.

2b. REGISTER LEVELS

The register level conveyed in *Wuthering Heights* changes depending on who the protagonists, Heathcliff and Catherine, are speaking to. If there is dialogue between Heathcliff and Catherine or they are speaking of each other, the register is more intimate. My favorite line of the book coincides with this intimate register when Catherine speaks of Heathcliff to Nelly. "…but because he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same" (Bronte, 72). Similarly, in *After* the protagonists, Hardin and Tessa, share an intimate register. Throughout this dialogue the intimate register is clear. "Why do you love…how could you possibly love me? His voice cracks and he stares at me, and I feel like the words I say next

will determine my fate more than anything I've ever done before. How could you not know that I love you? I ask instead of answering him" (Todd, 368).

On the contrary, as much as these protagonist lovers indulge each other romantically on an intimate level, the register shifts to casual as other characters in the story try to persuade them to stay apart. We see this register in *Wuthering Heights* as Nelly tells Catherine, "I see no reason that he should not know, as well as you, 'I returned;' and if you are his choice, he'll be the most unfortunate creature that ever was born! As soon as you become Mrs. Linton he loses friend, and love, and all" (Bronte, 73). Conversely, we see this casual register conveyed in *After,* as well. "What the hell, Hardin? I told you to stay away from her; she is my roommate and she's not like the other girls you mess with. She's nice, innocent, and, honestly, too good for you" (Todd, 182).

2c. DIALECT

The dialects Emily Bronte employs, Haworth and Yorkshire, were used in Yorkshire, England in the 1840's. This dialogue focuses on pronunciation, accent, and vocabulary (Dialect in Wuthering Heights). 50 dialect words are used throughout *Wuthering Heights*. For example, "The use of the definite article "the" became t' before a vowel and th before a consonant, showing that dialect did follow rules. The speaker said that these rules had different outcomes from those in standard English, and past tenses "seed" and "telled" replaced "saw" and "told." He said that "childer" was an older and more accurate word than "children," the one we use now" (Dialect in Wuthering Heights). "Brontë uses dialect to lend authenticity, display temper, create narrative interest, and help create the oppressive mood of the characters and story" (Hardison).

The dialect in *After* is general American English, as the author Anna Todd was born in the United States. "All accents in the United States exist relative to General American, which is the name given to the American accent that has "neutral" characteristics. No region of the country actually speaks General American — often, it's defined as "sounding American but like no part of the United States in particular" (Devlin). The setting of the novel is in Washington state and would therefore has a Pacific Northwest accent. "Pacific Northwest English sounds pretty close to General American. Of the differences that do exist, almost all of them involve vowel pronunciation. Pacific Northwesterners observe the cot-caught merger, meaning they pronounce words like "don" and "dawn" the same, while other parts of the country separate them" (Devlin). The dialect changes when we switch to the male protagonist's dialogue. We are told at the beginning of the book that Hardin has a heavy British accent and grew up in London, England. Most likely, his dialect originates from the "Multicultural London English, colloquially called Jafaican, is a dialect (and/or sociolect) of English that emerged in the late 20th century" (London Accent).

2d. STYLISTIC ELEMENTS

The male protagonists in *Wuthering Heights* and *After*, express a negative politeness. In Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff agonizes over Catherine's death and carries a harsh disposition. "Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest as long as I am living. You said I killed you—haunt me then. The murdered do haunt their murderers. I believe—I know that ghosts have wandered the earth. Be with me always—take any form—drive me mad" (Bronte, 152-153). In *After* for example, Todd distinctly shows this negative politeness in the dialogue, "Fine. I will stay away from her. But don't bring her to any more parties at my house, he snaps, and I hear him storming off. As he goes down the hall, his voice recedes, too, as he yells, I mean it, I don't want to see

her again! And if I do, I will ruin her" (Todd, 183). Similarly, Catherine in *Wuthering Heights,*

portrays a negative politeness, especially when she cannot be with Heathcliff. "I gave him my

heart, and he took and pinched it to death; and flung it back to me. People feel with their hearts,

Ellen, and since he has destroyed mine, I have not power to feel for him" (Bronte, 158).

However, Tessa in *After* conveys a positive politeness, as she is always trying to find the

good in her furious counterpart. We see this when Tessa's internal dialogue states, "It is

remarkable that Hardin, who hates everyone except himself, and maybe his mother, has all these

people who care about him yet refuses to let himself care for them. He is lucky to have them, us.

I know I am one of those people. I would do anything for Hardin; even though I would deny it, I

know it to be true" (Todd, 242). The author's use of politeness in both novels helps develop

literary elements further, especially the plot and characters.

2e. CRITIQUE OF STANDARD/NONSTANDARD ALIGNMENT WITH LINGUISTIC PRINCIPLES

Wuthering Heights displays standard linguistic principles. Standard linguistics is strong

in *Wuthering Heights* when the high social status characters exchange dialogue. Non-standard

linguistics does come in to play with certain characters, especially Joseph. A shift to the

Yorkshire dialect, creates dialogue that is hard to understand. For example, "'What are ye for?' he

shouted. 'T' maister's down i' t' fowld. Go round by th' end o' t' laith, if ye went to spake to him"

(Bronte, 7). In an article on dialects, Dr. Peyt said, "that Emily Bronte had a problem of having

only the 26 letters of the alphabet to represent all the different sounds in the vocabulary of her

non-standard English speakers" (Dialect in Wuthering Heights). Similarly, *After* shows standard

and non-standard linguistics as well. Standard is present in the following dialogue, "Let me

guess: one of Noah's conditions for reconciliation was that you have to stay away from me? His

tone is more serious now" (Todd, 205). Non-standard is shown with short choppy sentences as in, "Can't drive. Still drunk, he says with a mischievous grin" (Todd, 207). Having a mixture of both styles in linguistics breaks up the seriousness of each novel and shows the characters as people we can relate to.

In conclusion, we see some similarities, but also stark differences in how the semantics of words are used in both novels, how dialects shape the characters dialogue, and how all of these parts then connect to the stylistic elements. These fundamentals all work together to make these books classics!

Milestone 3: ANALYSIS AND CRITIQUE OF INFLUENCES ON USE OF LANGUAGE

3a. CHANGES

Over the past 173 years, our language has drastically transformed. We see this as Bronte utilizes the Yorkshire dialect in *Wuthering Heights*. "What are ye for? he shouted. T' maister's down i' t' fowld. Go round by th' end o' t' laith, if ye went to spake to him (Bronte, 7). Compared to the general American dialect in *After*, this passage would be revised as, "What do you want? he shouted. The masters down in the fold [sheep pen]. Go around by the end of the barn if you want to speak to him" (Understanding Joseph's speech in Wuthering Heights).

As revisions took place, I found some of the words less difficult to decipher, but others had to be researched. For instance, 'fowld' and 'laith' are not words we commonly see and are revised as 'fold' and 'barn' (Understanding Joseph's speech in Wuthering Heights). You could also exchange 'fold' for 'sheep pen' in the passage to make it more meaningful. Also, the letters 't' and 'o' stand for words. 'T' stands for 'the' and 'o' stands for 'of' (Merriam-Webster). "The use of the definite article "the" became t' before a vowel and th before a consonant, showing that

dialect did follow rules" (Dialect of Wuthering Heights). Tenses were also revised in the passage to make it clearer.

3b. INTENDED MESSAGE

As Americans, we do not speak nineteenth century English, nor in Yorkshire dialect, as it is spoke in *Wuthering Heights*. Clarity comes with the revised, second passage that portrays a general American dialect and twenty-first century language, as in *After*. The intended message, which is spoke by the character Joseph, the reliable servant, giving direction to seek his master; is altered in a positive way, making it more understandable. It does however take away the essence of Bronte's work, from the initial passage and change the nature of the character whom social standings tend to focus. Although, the semantics and syntax might be foreign to American readers, it should be appreciated for how it has evolved over time.

3c. RECOMMENDATIONS TO ALIGN WITH STANDARD LANGUAGE & LINGUISTIC PRINCIPLES

Wuthering Heights can be better aligned with the standard use of language and linguistic principles like those used in *After* by changing the dialect, syntax, and semantics of the dialogue. Bronte's use of the Yorkshire dialect in *Wuthering Heights* creates a sense of confusion as to how to pronounce certain words and what their meanings are. For example, "There's nobbut t' missis; and shoo'll not oppen 't an ye mak' yer flaysome dins till neeght" (Bronte, 7). Translated in the general American dialect, a sentence that is comprehendible and pronounced correctly would result. 'There's nobody but the mistress, and she'll not open it for you if you make your frightening din [noise] till night" (Joseph's Speech). A change in the semantics of the passage

has made it understandable, syntax has been altered to make a better arranged sentence, and dialect has been modified so familiar words can be read and interpreted.

3d. CONTRAST OF LANGUAGE ELEMENTS DUE TO THE DIFFERENT TIME PERIODS

The contrast of language elements due to different time periods spans 167 years between *Wuthering Heights* and *After*. "Brontë has a sense of rhythm in her sentences, varying short and long sentences and the sounds of words to create the right pace and mood for the occasion" (Bronte's Style). This is evident when Heathcliff describes the opening of Catherine's coffin, "I thought, once, I would have stayed there: when I saw her face again – it is hers yet! – he had hard work to stir me; but he said it would change if the air blew on it, and so I struck one side of the coffin loose, and covered it up: not Linton's side, damn him!" (Bronte, 262). The long passage shows the vulnerability of Heathcliff and how he is carrying on like a madman!

Todd's style in *After*, similarly varies short and long sentences where the tone transforms the characters and setting. We see this when Tessa is fighting within herself to let Hardin stay with her. "I know he is lying. He's mostly sobered up, but he's right. He should stay" (Todd,). The shorter, choppy sentences reveal Tessa's quick and scattered thoughts as she is trying to figure out who Hardin is, why he can't seem to leave her alone, and how he came to be in her life.

3e. POSSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL, HISTORICAL & CULTURAL FACTORS OF THE TIME PERIODS

Culture has definitely had an influence on both novels; each portraying their era effectively. Bronte uses imagery efficiently throughout her novel, which helped in the

understanding of the character behaviors. "Reflecting nineteenth century culture, there is plenty of religious and biblical language. For example, there are frequent references to heaven and hell, Heathcliff being like a devil, and imagery such as sheep and wolves (used in Jesus' teachings)." To many Victorian readers, references to religion were seen as unacceptable. (Bronte's Style). Environmental and historical influences in *Wuthering Heights*, are seen in characters, their actions, and the manor is which they reside, and how they are related. In this case the manor, Wuthering Heights, which is described as "a bleak, dark, and cold place" (Wuthering Heights-Characters and their Environment); is compared with Heathcliff. "The characters and actions that are closely associated with Wuthering Heights reflect the unpleasant environment. In particular, Heathcliff is fiendish, grim and moody" (Wuthering Heights-Characters and their Environment). We see Heathcliff's character described by Mr. Lockwood in the following passage, "Rough as a saw-edge, and hard as Whinstone! The less you meddle with him the better…He must have had some ups and downs in life to make him such a churl. Do you know anything of his history?" (Bronte, 29-30).

Todd utilizes allusion successfully in her novel by referencing her own experiences in life. "*After* deals unflinchingly with other topics that today's book editors and hovering parents might consider too mature for young audiences—both protagonists' fathers are alcoholics, and Hardin at one point describes witnessing his mother's rape. "I'm not writing about the one percent of people who have this fairy-tale, amazing life," she has said. "I'm writing about people like me, who maybe had a rough childhood" (Bosker). Culturally, both novels clearly relate to events and the language of their time periods. We also see environmental and historical factors that influenced Todd's writing. As the setting of the novel is primarily on a college campus, we see dialogue and actions that convey this background and present time-period. In the following

passage we see this expressed, "The drive back to the dorm is relaxed. His long fingers rub circles on my leg, and I'm disappointed to see the WCU sign when we finally hit campus and the student parking lot" (Todd, 122).

3f. INFLUENCES OF THESE FACTORS ON THE LANGUAGE USAGE IN THE TWO SELECTIONS

During Bronte's era, much was focused on societal stature and religion. We see these notions throughout the novel's dialogue. For example, "I was only going to say that heaven did not seem to be my home; and I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth; and the angels were so angry that they flung me out into the middle of the heath on the top of Wuthering Heights; where I woke sobbing for joy" (Bronte, 104). Although the semantics and dialect are hard to follow at first, it is one to push through and is a true gem. As Todd related the story to events that occur in everyday life, even hers, she wrote to her era, and how people talk in the twenty-first century. She used words that are common in the English language of our time, which makes this novel an easy read. We see this in the following passage, "I want to say something-anything-but I can't without telling Hardin that I don't want him to stay away, that I think about him every second of everyday" (Todd, 213).

As *After* refers to the classics like *Wuthering Heights* and *Pride and Prejudice,* the novels exploded with a younger audience and became popular. Its novels like *After* that re-establish the classics and bring new light to how wonderful they are. Young readers then take to old, worldly novels, and are able to appreciate them in all their wonder.

In conclusion, these novels both convey vastly different depictions of the English language, due primarily to the era in which they were written. They are unique in their own way and have been a pleasure to read and critique!

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