

Emerging Trends: Traditional Reading To Modern Reading Through A Series *After* By Anna Todd

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Abstract

*American's contribution to English literature is inestimable. They are known for their fictional writing in different images, themes and backgrounds. Anna Todd is one of the modern American writers. She was known for her famous series called *after*. She started publishing on the social storytelling platform Wattpad. It is a captivating tale of an innocent girl, Tessa meeting a mysterious boy, Hardin and both were in a literary club. This series is totally about life, love and relationship between Tessa and Hardin but there is another side, where author indirectly show the changes in the way of reading or learning in the first two book *After* and *After We Collided*. The traditional way of reading is replaced by the modern way of reading. Book to e-reader.*

Key words: American literature, Technology enhanced learning, Tradition to online

Introduction

There are books from different ages, different genres, some published recently, some more than a century ago. One sees an amalgam of styles, diversity of thought. One sees little uniformity. There is visual confusion, but also a sort of joyful exuberance. It reminds me of a motley crew, a party made of odd individuals who enjoys one another's company. (The Clothing of books, 25)

American literature is produced in the United States of America and its preceding colonies. It traces the history of American poetry, fiction, drama, and essay and it also explains basic characteristics of literature such as characters, settings, plots, themes, and images. American literature echoes the hopes and dreams of the American people. American writers express their experience in a unique way. There are many great American novelists, poets, playwrights and both fictional and nonfictional writers. Anna Todd is one of the modern American writers. She is known for her famous series called *after*. She started publishing on a famous storytelling platform Wattpad. The book form of the series was published in 2014. It has been translated into many languages. The movie, based on her first book came out in 2019.

After series is a new adult romance novel. Todd was inspired by the music and fandom of a famous band called 'One Direction'. This series mostly deals with love, betrayal, life, and relationship between an innocent 18-year-old girl Tessa Young, who starts the first year of her studies and Hardin Scott, an attractive, rude, and tattooed boy who studies in the same college and both are literature students. Tessa works as an intern in a publishing house and Hardin also works from home for another publishing house. In this series, the author mainly focuses on their lives. The main concern of this paper is to focus on the unfocused elements of traditional reading to modern reading by the novelist.

Technological development is the overall process of innovation and invention. The current advancement in technology has been improved largely by education. It makes changes in the teaching and learning process. The modern way of learning replaces the traditional way of teaching and learning. With the help of Technologies, modern educational practice is driving away from tradition. Modern educational practice is aided with a variety of technology, computers, projectors, and internet and so on. Technology has also made an impact on books and that is called e-book or e-reader. An e-reader is a digital or electronic book that is formatted into a file that can be read on an e-reader device. There are e-readers like kindle, nook, and iPod. There are both positive and negative things in modern learning.

In this novel, Anna shows the transformation of traditional reading to e-reading through the characters of Hardin and Tessa. This paper mainly focuses on the first two books: *After* and *After We Collided*. The novel reveals that both Hardin and Tessa are very much interested in literature. Both Hardin and Tessa have the habit of reading books. They love to read books and they also discuss and argue about the characters, themes, and so on. In the first book, Hardin's love for collecting many books is displayed. It also shows that he loves classic novels.

I turn on a lamp and look around the room, my eyes immediately going to the bookshelves that cover one of the walls. Since this perks my mood up, I go over to it and scan through the titles. Whoever owns this collection is impressive; there are many classics, a whole range of different types of books, including all of my favorites. Spying *Wuthering Heights*, I pull it off shelf. It's in bad shape, the binding giving away how many times it's been opened.

I'm so lost in Emily Bronte's words that I don't even notice the change in light when the door opens, or the presence of a third person in the space. (*After*, vol. 1, 30-31)

The novel opens with a party at frat house where Hardin lives. Tessa's friend Steph gets too much intoxicated with drugs in the party. As Steph wants some refreshment, Tessa leads her into a room to help her friend. In that room, she notices a mini library and gets dumbstruck. She scans and takes her favorite book, *Wuthering Heights* and loses her conscious by the words of the text. The beholder of the room, who is known as Hardin comes there in few moments. Tessa learns that the whole classical collection of the books belongs to him and his hobby is to collect books. She also comes to know that *Wuthering Heights* is his most favorite one by the outer appearance of the book; it denotes that he often reads that novel out of the bookshelf. He also comments about the novel, *Pride and Prejudice* during the class discussion.

She goes to the same room in the next day and notices that *Wuthering Heights* was replaced on the table from the shelf. On reading it, she again loses herself in the words of the book that she was not aware of the opening of the door.

Wuthering Heights is missing from where it was on the shelf, but I find it on the bedside table, next to *Pride and Prejudice*. Hardin's comments about the novel replay in my mind. He has obviously read it before – and understood it –which is rare for our age group and for bogs

especially. Maybe he had to read it for class before, that's why. But why is this copy of *Wuthering Heights* out? I grab it and sit on the bed, opening the book halfway through. My eyes scan the pages and the room stops spinning.

I'm lost in the world of Catherine and Heathcliff that when the door opens, I don't hear it. (58)

Tessa and Hardin often compare their favorite characters with each other from their favorite books. It shows that they are not only interested in reading books but also try to apply it in their day to day living. They attribute this attitude to the physical assessment of the book and believe that it is through the assessment, that they cherish every character, dealt in the book.

I feel foolish as I, too, begin to compare Hardin and myself to the characters in the novel. The difference is that Heathcliff loved Catherine tremendously, so much so that he sat by idly as she married another man before he finally married someone else. Hardin does not love me that way – or at all – so he has no right to compare himself to Heathcliff. (419)

Anna indirectly denotes that books are the best companion in the world. Looking deeply into novel, one become aware that both Tessa and Hardin are book lovers and have many collections of books but, on the next book, *After We Collided* shows some changes in this traditional way of reading.

In the second book, *After We Collided*, the printed books are replaced by the new technology called e-book or e-reader. In the course of the novel, Hardin plans to present an e-reader to Tessa on her birthday. Due to some problem, he becomes irritated and goes back, leaving e-reader in her car. From that moment the transformation starts.

There is nothing, literally nothing, on, and I would rather read anyway. I grab my car keys and go out to the car to get my bag.

When I open my car door, something black catches my eye. An e-reader?

I pick it up and pull the small Post-it note off the top. Happy Birthday – Hardin, it reads. My heart swells, and then tightens. I never liked the idea of portable reading devices. I prefer to hold a book in my hands..... Besides, it'll make it easier to carry around submissions for work without having to waste all that paper printing them out. (After, vol.2, 112-113)

In this passage, Tessa acknowledges that she never likes the idea of having an e-reader because she loves to hold the book in her hands and to feel the words of it. In this world, many people have the habit of loving the physical appearance of the book like touching the pages, inhaling the smell of the book, admiring the cover page of the book and to take wherever they travel. The dusty old pages of the books have their own charm. She also likes the advantage of carrying the e-reader, since it saves time and money to take print.

I stayed up until four reading and browsing through Hardin's wonderful gift. (114)

As he chews, Landon looks past me and raises a brow. “You got an e-reader? I thought you hated them.”

“Well... I did, but now I kind of love them.” I pick up the device and admire it. “Thousands of books right at my fingertips! What could be better?” I smile and tilt my head to the side. (116)

She spends all night in reading novels. When her friend asks about the e-reader, initially she says that it was not her own choice to use it but she loves that it helps her to access thousands of books on a single click.

Of course there are many advantages in e-reader like referring multiple titles at the same time, storing of all notes, highlighting the important points and even to lookup synonyms, adverbs and verbs. Usages of e-readers increases gradually, still we cannot give up books in printed form, which helps one to feel it more emotional than e-reader. There is something about holding a book and in act of turning a page physically cannot be matched with pixels on a screen.

As Jhumpa Lahiri points out in her essay *The Clothing of Books*, every cover page of the book signifies that the text inside is clean and definitive. She also says that the perfect cover page is like a beautiful, elegant and warm coat that wraps the words inside the text. The cover page of a book also has the power of spreading the words of its content to the entire world and influences the readers. So, the cover page of a book is also very much precious and essential.

The right cover is like a beautiful coat, elegant and warm, wrapping my words as they travel through the world, on their way to keep an appointment with my readers. (*The Clothing of books*, 9)

There are many pros and cons in both printed books and e-reader. A significant benefit of e-reader is the ability to store them without the bookshelves. E-readers are the incomparable way to enjoy reading many books while traveling. E-books will be very useful for the people, who are having poor eye sight. We can change the size of the text and also adjust the brightness level. We can read them in the dark. It is easy to download and also we can share an e-book through email to our friends. There are many important factors in the e-reader like audiobooks. This allows us to enjoy while driving, walking and so on. Sometimes, it does not cost much to publish information in digital format. We can agree that portable reading device has its own pros but reading a book is an incomparable experience and it gives liveliness.

Printed books not only give us information but they also attract us with its decorative objects. It is a piece of art. Books are the most precious thing in the world. According to science, books are better for brain and health. Some People say that the printed books are vanishing slowly. The fact remains, that they don't understand the fragrance of the book. Only the book lovers can understand the smell that emanates from a book and it adds to the excitement of reading. The physical touch of a book, on flipping through the pages, cannot be

compared to reading on the e-reader or other portable reading device. Many doctors recommend printed books over e-readers, because the artificial light can keep a person awake at night for unnecessary amounts of time.

People will never get bored of reading. Both printed books and e-readers are valuable and profitable. They are beneficial in different times. We can use both printed books and e-readers according to our interest and convenience. They both are the tools for knowledge and wisdom. All these profits are nothing but give entertainment and pleasure in life.

Work cited

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