In response Wendell Berry’s unconventional and provocative claims about the evils of computers, Gordon Inkeles attacks the relationship Mr. Berry cherishes with his wife. Aggressively asserting that Berry manipulates his lover for his own good, Inkeles criticizes what he perceives as Berry’s antiquated ideas of gender inequality.  Despite what could be viewed as an endorsement of stereotypical gender roles, Berry makes a valid point when raising concerns about technology’s potentially harmful effects on human interaction.  The more time spent behind a screen, the less time we have interacting, conversing, and learning from loved ones.

One of the more popular complaints regarding the current generation is our almost nonexistent attention span.  Indeed, not only do we swap devices and applications at a whim, but the ease of communication seems to add a new dimension to conversation.  While one can quickly and easily contact friends and family via text or Facebook, it is hard to continue a normal exchange due to the preoccupation of participants.  Without interactions consistently lasting more than five minutes or with a normal flow, it is hard to learn or adapt to the former social norms of truly listening to a counterpart.  People need to vent and share their ideas, and the more technology is implemented the less we satisfy this natural desire.

Though one can share ideas and thoughts freely on a daily basis with the aid of blogs, social media, and even poems, literal speech has lost prevalence and grandeur.  Formerly a skill sought greatly, public speaking has become an art dominated by those who dedicate themselves to it specially.  While writing and the written word have grown with the internet, the magical experience of speaking to another person can be lost.  Skype and other such programs are accepted as a solution to such deficiencies, yet the screen and atmosphere change behavior and subtract from the experience.

Perhaps the most important of all social proficiencies, the art and beauty of body language is lost as work exchanges are digitized, projects are done through Google services, and video chats cut out all but facial expressions.  Psychologist James Borg hypothesizes that speech is only 7% of human communication, leaving 93% to body language.  Not only is body language critical in everyday conversation, but it is essential for effective parenting, dating, marriage, and leadership.  Social interaction through a computer leaves out this major portion of human nature and can therefore be crippling to the future generation.

Wendell Berry brings to a front the social problems introduced by modern technology, and although constant connection should bring people together, it often drives them away.  Azusa Hayano, a suicide patrol at Aokigahara Forest (the most popular suicide forest in Japan) expresses this perfectly by explaining “Face to face communication used to be vital, but now we can live our lives being online all day.  However, the truth of the matter is, we still need to see each other's faces, read their expressions, hear their voices, so we can fully understand their emotions.”