Writing Assignment

June 18, 2013

Wendell Berry debated that the advancement and use of technology compared to the process it replaced was not as efficient as it sounds. Two readers who chose to respond to his article harshly criticized his seeming objectification of his wife, and implied that she was treated as a tool, standing in for what could be accomplished by a computer. We believe that Berry is correct in his stance that computers could ultimately weaken, or even completely destroy, human to human relationships.

Just because technology is more advanced, it does not mean that it is always better. In response to Berry’s argument, he received many letters. One of them sarcastically says, “Wife meets all of Berry’s uncompromising standards for technological innovation: she’s cheap, repairable near home, and good for the family structure.” The reader is implying that Berry’s standards are not reasonable and that his wife is being forced into carrying out the tasks of a computer. Berry believes a person should have a deep relationship with those close to them, moreover his wife. He speaks reverently about the familiarity he has with his wife, due to their frequent collaboration, saying, “She is my best critic because she is the one most familiar with my habitual errors and weaknesses. She also understands, sometimes better than I do, what *ought* to be said.” She is not like a machine; her skills are transferrable and she is priceless. If people started to use technology more, they would not have that relationship anymore. A screen too often blocks what you really feel and what you are trying to convey. Technology does not have any emotion whatsoever. The feeling you could put into a letter or even a face-to-face conversation with another person cannot be put into a simple 160 character text message. You cannot hold an authentic conversation with someone through a device. If you ultimately rely on electronics for almost everything, you will not have relationships with anything except that device you depend so much on, losing the human element.

In conclusion, we support Wendell Berry’s opinion on why he should not buy a computer. Modern technology can come between relationships. The relationships we have with a person are more valuable than technology will ever be. You do not have genuine emotion with a smartphone, a computer, or any piece of technology. You can replace the capabilities of the device, but there is no substitution for human interaction.