Defiance of Change vs Progession

In Wendell Berry’s essay, “*Why I Am Not Going to Buy a Computer,*” his analysis contains flaws, which lead him to believe that evident solutions are in fact problems. This connects to the underlying theme that one can defy change, but not abstain from it.Wendell utilizes the example of his conservative farm-life to juxtapose the imminent progression in technology many people find themselves experiencing. He implies that his simple profession and life-style require very few technological advances. Although he insists other various occupations do not demand many forms of modern mechanics, advances in technology stimulate progression of various fields, such as agriculture and medicine. As human knowledge continues to advance, it is pertinent for progression in any field to also advance, thus connecting to the common theme that one can defy change, but not abstain from it. This establishes this theme because, while Berry may continue to display his belief that computers and their mechanical advances are not necessary, this change is inevitable. In his biased and opinionated essay, Berry states his list of standards that must be met in order for him to accept such changes to his rural life. However, there are many inherent contradictions that can be found in his criteria. His argument, which requires a new tool to be cheaper than the one it replaces, demands a higher quality assurance with fewer costly parts to produce. This is nearly impossible to achieve because while technology continues to advance, prices increase in order to make the product better. Through following Berry’s demand for higher quality, prices will reasonably increase. He further explains that one should not disrupt an already implemented good in a society. Though something may already be considered “good” by his standards, this does not negate the fact that it can be improved and can supersede the current state of whatever technology implemented.

Mr. Berry’s deeply held views surrounding advancements of technology are motivated purely by fear and by the desire to stall development. Berry uses masks of concern for the environment and family values as a way to buttress his choice of not purchasing a computer. He works in every aspect of his life to maintain distance from what he subjectively deems to be unnecessary progression. Berry expresses dramatic comparisons, relating strip mining to rape. He further states that integration of technology would cost him his relationship with his wife. His overall position in the essay provides the reader with the impression that he does not think beyond his small rural environment, thus leading the reader to believe that he is narrow minded. The tactics and thought processes Berry applies all lead back towards a state of regression. If his foremost goals were actually preservation of the environment and the family structure, it would make more sense for his goals to push towards healthier uses of computers. He also does not clearly define at what point does change needs to be halted, meaning that even the development of the modern shovel could be considered unnecessary.