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Wendell Berry Versus the Rape of Nature

In Wendell Berry’s article “Why I am Not Going to Buy a Computer” Berry lays out the reasons for his refusal to purchasing new technology. His reasoning is rational and could even be called moral, while his standards for new technology should be in the backs of everyone’s minds already. Berry tends to view modern technology as a handicap to society rather than innovative. His beliefs are make sense when one puts into account how technology affects the environment, the efficiency of technology, and the way it affects deep rooted culture.

Early in his article, Berry refers to the strip mining of coal with negativity saying, “I would hate to think that my work as a writer could not be done without a direct dependence on strip-mined coal.” With coal mines releasing toxic waste into the air just to provide power to homes, how can someone argue against this claim? Wendell Berry is attempting to appeal to the sense of reason within his readers and he is right to. The burning of coal, which is mostly burned to provide energy, releases large amounts of carbon dioxide into the air which could have major consequences in the future. Berry is trying to stop this “rape of nature” as he calls it, and that is a force for good.

It is also arguably nobler of Berry to use only pen and pencil to write his paper. In keeping the same typewrite since the 50s and not owning a TV set, he clearly shows that he practices what he preaches. He supports the use of his typewriter for so long by pointing out that in terms of computers, by staying up to date users need to buy new models and discard the old. In this case, if someone truly wanted to stay up to date, it would cost them more money than just one computer.

The emails that respond to Berry’s essay on not buying a computer, are mostly negative and use snark and sarcasm to attack his character rather than provide reasonable counterpoints. They paint him out as and arrogant man stuck in the past way of doing things and too unintelligent or too lazy to move toward the future. Wendell Berry is not the stubborn, condescending, technological laggard many ima