To Type or not to Type

Professing his brazen stance on technological innovations according to society’s criteria, Wendell Berry avers his antipathy to not only computers, but to reprobate manufacturers and energy corporations. Berry explicitly states his personal tenets as well as his own standards that must be attained in order for his mind to be persuaded otherwise. The focal point of Berry’s argument, which I believe to be valid, is that having a computer does not make writing definitely better and that it is not crucial for writing in general. As the saying goes, one man’s trash is another man’s treasure. I appreciate Berry’s tenacity in preferring more traditional resources, and I have come to deem his resolute convictions as sensible to a certain extent.

The first thing to note is that Berry’s animosity is justified by his own ethics, not anyone else’s, in which he wishes to “write conscientiously against the rape of nature” without being “implicated in the rape” (31). His resentment of energy companies and manufacturers adds to his persona as a man who values the environment and the importance of being a consumer. On a deeper scale, standing in Berry’s shoes, a computer embodies the polar opposites of his true values: “peace…ecological health, political honesty…and community stability” (32). I believe that Berry is brave to stand firm by his belief and that he is somewhat correct in his view of technological innovations. In my own experience, relying too much upon communication via computer or phone can make one less accustomed to social situations and less prone to being with his wife who edits his writing, and hypothetically, referencing my own experience, if Berry did choose to purchase a computer and he relied heavily upon it, this could jeopardize the connection between Berry and his spouse.

Another thing to conjecture is that Berry’s specific list of requirements adds to his aversion to technological advances. I do not think that his particularity is a detriment. Berry’s standards are reasonable, but companies are unable to achieve Berry’s specific requirements. Focusing on practicality and conservation, Berry wishes for the new technology to be “cheaper” and “use less energy” as well as other things (32). One such example of a technology obtaining these requirements is the gradual societal shift from formal to more casual clothing. Instead of formal clothing, the emergence of jeans allows for more comfortable clothing that is better suited for work purposes, and as a result of its popularity in society, has become an article of clothing suitable for most occasions. Regardless of this example, Berry believes that it is gratuitous in replacing something that is already good. Berry’s persistent in his beliefs is an admirable quality and is an elemental part of his chosen lifestyle, and I concur with his motives.

Overall, Berry’s situation does not call for a computer, and computers do not necessarily improve writing quality, and because the computers do not support his lifestyle or meet his, he does not support them. Berry’s traditionalist approach to life is just the way he chooses to live, however conservative he is, and his boycott of computers is reasonable.