West Monroe Cyber 10

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Berry Response

Windell Berry provides a strong case for his argument against using a computer as a writer; however, Berry’s arguments remain flawed. Undoubtedly, Berry is a talented writer; nonetheless, he tells us of his imperfect editorial skills. Berry recognizes that he makes mistakes, but instead of using new technology to rectify these mistakes, Berry turns to his wife. Does Berry ever tell us of his wife’s feelings on this matter? Not quite. Berry’s wife may be devoted, but he has isolated her from society; she no one to shield her from his demands. Therefore, a modern reader must wonder if Berry’s unwillingness to accept technology creates or impedes a healthy relationship. This woman is obviously a superb editor, delivering quality work, but the work is not her own. Virginia Woolfe addresses this concept with Judith Shakespeare, arguing that given the time, a woman could achieve respect in her chosen field, but is she even given a chance? Berry seems to take away his wife’s ability to achieve independently. Arguably, Due to Berry’s detrimental perception of computers, he has sacrificed his marriage, not saved it.

Additionally, Berry presents a similarly weak argument against computers when he discusses consequences. Berry states that the methods used to generate power for computers damage the environment, and though his point here is valid, Berry’s attempts to reduce said damage wastes an additional finite resource—time. If Berry would simply use a computer instead of relying on the movement of the sun, he would have time for more productive activities. For example, he could treat his wife to a romantic dinner to show his appreciation for all that she does. Furthermore, he could work with various agencies to create a more eco-friendly world rather than only making himself green. Though using computers inadvertently harms nature, the same may be true for not utilizing time to bring about change.

Finally, a key factor that is constantly overlooked is that quality content is not attainable without time. Our time with computers is fractional when compared to the thousands of years man has had to master the “quill and ink” approach. How could one reasonably determine that there *will* be no writers producing quality content on computers simply because there has not been any yet? Talented writers are out there, and given the time, the computer will be a beneficial tool in facilitating the quality of content and timelessness in literature that Berry begs the reader to produce. To recapitulate, the cost and consequences of not using a computer seem to promote an unhealthy relationship with his wife. Berry’s assumption that no great work can be produced with a computer stems from his ignorance concerning the amount of time needed to create such content. Shakespeare, Poe, Milton, Dickens, Austin, Woolf, and Joyce were not contemporaries of one another; they developed in their own time, aided by the tools available. The same quality can and will emerge in the wake of this new technology but it will not be overnight.