Upon reading Mr. Berry’s essay, and his response to both his adoring readers and concerned critics, I come to the realization that there have been misinterpretations on both sides. Misinterpretations created to appeal to irrationality, aimed at inciting emotions rather than educating the minds of naive readers. Though many of Berry’s claims are absolutely accurate, and are surely issues that need solution, his main argument is vacuous: for technology is not the problem, but something else is.

Mr. Wendell sees the rape, degradation, and exploitation of the Earth around him. He sees the land strip-mined, torn apart, and then he finds his land poisoned by the toxic black sludge, which is directly caused by the mining of coal (which is a very common industrial practice where he lives). Luckily, we do not have to worry about such “environmental issues”, do we? Unfortunately, we do. Underneath North Louisiana’s primary water source lies one of the largest natural gas reservoirs in North America; Furthermore, to be more drastic, an environmental disaster is waiting to happen: The Haynesville Shell. Though the shell itself is benevolent, the process by which natural gas is extracted is not. Hydraulic “fracking”, where water and various chemicals are used to crack underground reservoirs of gas, is in no way “a fool proof scheme” and one could argue that “fracking” could cause even more environmental damage than strip-mining, if a leak occurred, especially in North Louisiana, where the only thing separating the areas only competent water supply is a layer of concrete. As Berry’s essay suggests, these schemes, blind and dangerous, are created willingly to maintain our flow of electricity, no matter the cost (especially on the environment).

Thus Mr. Wendell decides to blame our environmental damage entirely on computers, and, certainly, on technology. But is the problem technology? Does the answer to all our environmental problems stem from the prohibition, non-proliferation, and deletion of the “personal computer”? The answer, surely, is no. The speed of technology, the speed of development, and the speed of consumption are the true causes of the problems we now face environmentally. We consume and consume and consume, and we develop and develop and develop, without even considering the implications and consequences of our actions. Technology is neutral -- neither good nor bad -- technology, in its simplest form, is a tool, something used to do work more efficiently. Technology does not make us blind, it does not make us weak; it does not make us stupid. But rapid blind growth, surely, can never be good.

For those who need computers, for those whose computers help them learn, and for those who computers make life even better, if they want one, they should own one. It is, of course, a personal choice. Perhaps Mr. Berry’s argument was more symbolic than anything else, and his choice is obviously symbolic: a choice of a slow life over one of speed, one of waiting over wasting, one of time over distance, a life of quality over quantity.