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Is Technology a Toxic Boyfriend or a Parasite?

Technology has been integrated into our lives so much we have begun to love it. We treat our phones with care, making sure they are protected, updating our computers to the newest model so they run smoothly. This leads to the idea of technology and the internet being a parasitic relationship at times. As weird and strange as it sounds, we all have a relationship with our technology. I question which side leaches and takes more from the other. Is it technology taking and taking or are we the ones who seize what we want and give nothing in return? Or does it simply boil down to a toxic relationship on both sides. To analyze this idea, I want to bring in author Kevin Kelly's *Technophilia*, ENG 110 student, Franco Leehive's essay, *Technology: The World's Greatest Resource*, and ENG 110 student, Noah Kesler's essay, into conversation. Through analysis of our relationship with technology I intend to dig deep into the trials and tribulations of this love. While there are pros to technology being deeply ingrained in our lives, does it require or deserve the relationship we have built with it? Personally, I don't believe that there is a need to covet it the way we do.

The debate about how technology runs and ruins our lives is ongoing. Not only have we become extremely distracted with the internet and technology, but some have even begun to love and admire it. Author Kevin Kelly wrote, *Technophilia*, as almost a love letter to technology. He claims that technology only wants to become useless and beautiful and that its beauty will one day rival that of the natural world. Kelly expresses, "that in the not-too-distant future the

magnificence of certain patches of the technium will rival the splendor of the natural world.” (Kelly). The idea that Kelly puts out there is that when we compare technology to that of natural beauties like waterfalls, beaches, or grand forests, there may be a struggle in claiming which holds more beauty. This idea is very subjective with the saying, “beauty is in the eye of the beholder” you can’t exactly claim that one thing will be more beautiful than another and put it out into the world as though it is a collective thought. But digging further into this it leans into the idea of a lovestruck girlfriend (Kelly) who sees beauty and only good in their boyfriend (technology). Kelly even alludes to this idea of a relationship, “I caress [the net] with my fidgety fingers; it yields up to my desires, like a lover.” (Kelly). He writes about technology with such love and admiration that it makes me question whether we have formed a relationship to technology similar to that of a toxic boyfriend who we fail to see the flaws in, or is it more similar to a parasitic relationship. Where technology has formed a bond with us making us believe that what we gain from it is necessary for us to live, but in turn most of us are blind to what it is taking from us.

Many toxic relationships are not always as black and white as we make them to be. What may have started as something great can easily turn sour. Franco Leehive agrees with Kelly on the basis that technology can be a good and beautiful thing benefiting the many. However, he sees that technology also has the ability to destroy, “The world’s greatest tool to mankind is technology this tool can be used for immense greatness or it can be used to destroy the world” (Leehive). What Leehive is trying to get across is that technology has the ability to save lives like the minuscule nanobots that researchers have developed to unclog arteries. On the other hand, there are also technologies like guns and bombs that kill and destroy life. To my point we have created such a relationship with technology that we have given it the power over us to destroy us one day. This idea is a scary one and not one to be taken lightly. Kelly adds in an interesting

point, “We rebel at the negative costs of this interrelatedness, and its negative externalities such as pollution” (Kelly). He is talking in regard to the ever-evolving technium and how we keep on adding to it. As well as how we keep useless technology around just because we find it beautiful and for nothing else. The fact that many people choose to ignore the continuously piling negative effects that technology can have on our environment is worrying. It adds a new meaning to Leehive’s statement of technology being used to destroy the world. That we have already begun to unintentionally destroy the environment that our neglect has made it intentional.

Some parasites have the ability to alter our brain, making us feel like we must rely on it. Noah Kesler brings in the idea that when technology is not near us we feel disconnected, comparing the connection we have to our phone to similar to the one we share with family, “Some of us have the same connection to our phones that we do with our closest friends or maybe even family.” (Kesler). We have come to a point where when we are not in arms reach of our phone we miss it like a long distance boyfriend. This can be dangerous, relying so heavily on technology that we have allowed it to creep into our minds and give us a comforting feeling when it is around. Kelly furthers the idea of being attached to technology, “[the] net is now vastly wider than me, wider than I can imagine, so in a way, while I am in it, it makes me bigger too. I feel amputated when I am away from it.” (Kelly). Kelly feels so connected to technology and the internet that he believes it has become an extension of himself. When he is away from technology he feels like one of his limbs have been cut off and only the feeling of its ghost lingers. This makes technology seem more parasitic, leading away from a toxic relationship but more into parasitism. Technology takes our identity with it when we part, and we end up similar to lost souls wandering aimlessly until reconnected with our bodies.

I don’t like the idea that technology has become so imbedded into our lives and minds that we struggle to go without it for even a day. Yet I struggle to see a world where a significant

distance put between us and technology would be able to work. We rely so heavily on technology like our phones to aid in completing tasks that we struggle to perform well without them. They have become a crutch that we stand on and are refusing to heal from. I cannot pretend that I am better than others because I do not hold my phone and other technologies in a high regard because that would be false. I find myself coveting my technologies and when I come to the realization, I feel the need to take a step back. Some days I want to put a large barrier between me and my phone, even feel like I should leave it in my room, but then I realize that I need it for things like logging into my school account, keeping track of time, connecting with my friends for lunch. Though much of me relies on technology doing away with it would be hurtful. So, while I am not as awestruck and lost to technology as Kelly, I still feel a sense of loss when it is not around or even heartbreak when my one technology is broken like my boyfriend had just broken up with me. The thought that I can compare a breakup with a damaged computer is worrying and scary.

Works Cited

Kelly, Kevin. "Technophilia." Accessed 22 Apr. 2025.

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Kesler, Noah. Accessed 22 Apr. 2025.