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ENGL 327W

“Pencils to Pixels” by Baron, is a very thought out article that I believe shows how something as simple as the technology we use to write has changed over time and how we often forget about the advances from our past. Baron speaks how we think computers changed writing forever but, in this article, he brings up writing has been altered a few times we just do not think about it now. In one part of his article he says, “ The pencil may be old, but like the computer today and the telegraph in 1849, it is an indisputable example of a communications technology.” I think this sentence speaks that we often forget that the computer changed how we write forever. Today, technology may cause distress in some but imagine what the pencil, or the printing press did for people back then. Although, Baron has a compelling paper that makes you question why we are fighting what is new instead of embracing it, like many do today. I would only have to disagree with one thing in his argument, Baron says the following “Electronic texts also present some challenges to the ways we attribute expertise to authors”. He follows this by saying he cannot trust someone he does not know but I believe it is easier because of technology that when reading papers and articles like this one to find out if the write and the paper are a fraud. For example, if I write an article and sign it Dr. Taylor Hunter it only takes a bit of research to determine I am a fraud by claiming I have a doctorate. Overall, I think this is a great article to read and helps expand your mind when it comes to embracing technology and using it to your advantage unlike the Lead Pencil Club.

“The first critique of writing” by Plato is quite interesting to think about and takes a lot to process because of the discussion they had on what deems a writer a writer. In one of the first sentences it says the following about paper “ For this invention will produce forgetfulness in the minds of those who learn to use it, because they will not practice their memory.” This sentence brings a lot of questions to my mind like is this statement true? Has writing everything down made it easier to forget things or has it made easier to remember things? It is a question I ask because we write things down to study and that is how we eventually remember it, but if we did not write it down would we remember? Writing also says a lot about a person like Socrates and Phaedrus discussed many times about the difference. Socrates stated the following about a writing “it knows not to whom to speak or not to speak; when ill-treated or unjustly reviled it always needs its father to help it; for it has no power to protect or help itself.” I believe especially today this is true, and we see it in politics when people bring up articles or papers candidates wrote in college and try to make assumptions.

Baron and Plato’s article where in conversation together I do believe they would agree with each other and bring up a lot of conversation about embracing change. In Baron’s article he embraces the change of technology and explains why we need to accept it versus fight it. In, Plato’s article he does the same thing except with writing and paper, as well as, what deems someone an honest writer. Baron I think would help explain to Socrates that just because paper was invented did not mean memory will not be used any longer just like common fears with technology. I believe they both brought up the same concern for the period and just to shows the fear of change has always been a worldly concern for centuries.

Sources

Barron, Dennis. “From Pencils to Pixels: The Stages of Literacy Technology

Gwendolyn Bennett's Life and Career,
www.english.illinois.edu/-people-/faculty/debaron/essays/pencils.htm.

“Plato's Phaedrus.” *Gwendolyn Bennett's Life and Career*, 1925, www.english.illinois.edu/-people-/faculty/debaron/482/482readings/phaedrus.html.