Envisioning Technology

Part One:

Traveling is to go on a trip or journey by car, foot, plane, bus, boat, or by other forms of transportation and can be with or without luggage. One can travel for a long or short period, round trip or one way, business or pleasure, far away or nearby.

I know that most people may not view traveling as a hobby, but traveling has always been a big part of my life. My father was not a United States citizen. He was originally from Belgium and came to America for college and graduate school. My father never became a United States citizen, so my dad, mom, and I traveled out of the country whenever I had a break from school. Since we had to travel consistently, my parents thought we should experience as many different places and cultures as possible. We were fortunate enough to be able to go to wherever we pleased, so there was no reason not to. My father was fluent in eight different languages, so getting around different cities was usually never an issue. My father also collected art, so from a young age, I was always going to different art museums. We spent hours there, my dad making sure I learned about as many paintings and sculptures as I could. As a kid, I always dreaded spending almost full days in museums, but now I am grateful that my parents made me learn about multiple aspects of the culture. Also, as I grew up, I realized more and more most people do not travel to half the places I have been in their whole lives. I am so grateful to be able to say that I have been to all seven continents. After my father passed away the summer before junior year of high school, my mom and I began traveling less, mainly because I had so much going on with trying to get into college and now that I am in college, I travel even less. Traveling has become even more important to me, now that my father is dead because I think of him now every time I go somewhere.

Technology as a whole has advanced the travel industry immensely, especially with the use of computers. In the article, *How technology has transformed the travel industry*, Suzanne Bearne writes, "Today, thanks to breakthroughs in technology and high-speed internet, travellers can book their own
flight and hotels online, choose to stay in a stranger’s house, and rather than entering that unfamiliar restaurant with trepidation, search online reviews on their mobile while connected to the hotel Wi-Fi.” (Bearne, 2016). Computers play a huge part in everyday life, and now is the primary technology used for traveling. People used to have to go through a travel agency to book a trip and hotel but now can do this on their own using a computer. Instead of blindly exploring a city for things to do and where to eat, one can look up the most popular restaurants and activities before even arriving in the place he or she is visiting. The extensive use of computers in this industry has not only made traveling easier but has opened doors for new businesses. Suzanne Bearne discusses the online company, Airbnb, and how this website has made it easier for more people to travel. Airbnb is a website where people can both rent out their houses, apartments, condos, etc. to others and rent other people's homes. There are pictures, location information, descriptions of the owner, house rules, and check in/check out times. Airbnb is offered across the world and often more affordable than local hotels, allowing more people to travel. Businesses such as Airbnb would never have been invented if computers were not such a significant part of the travel industry.

Computers have impacted and changed the travel and tourism industry in both positive and negative ways. With the help of computers, more people can travel, which has helped boost many economies, including domestic. Mehdi Nahvi's article, *Exploring the nexus of travel & technology-Advantages and Disadvantages of Travel Software*, states that in 2013 "international tourism spending in 2013 was 14% higher than the previous peak levels in real terms, while domestic spending was 6% higher," (Nahvi, 2014). In numerous small towns and cities, tourism is the backbone of the economy, and now with the use of computers, there are thousands of websites of pretty much every place in the world with pictures, information, and attractions. Although there are mostly advantages, the use of computers has caused a few disadvantages for some. Even though technology has helped expand most companies, Suzanne Bearne bring up how computers have hurt multiple travel agencies. Since almost everyone now uses computers to book trips by themselves, most people no longer need travel agencies. People would rather plan a trip themselves than pay someone else to do the same. Technology can also be detrimental to a business if someone writes a bad review online. It is so crucial for a business to leave a good impression
and genuinely take care of its customer because if it does not, it can ruin its reputation and lose future customers.

Technology as a whole is rapidly progressing, which will cause the world around it, including traveling, to shift. As computers improve and change, traveling will also change. There will always be a new and better way of doing something, and if companies want to stay relevant, they will adapt. Technology's future is unknown, so traveling's future is also unknown. There are rumors that people will eventually be able to take a trip to space, but no one knows until it happens. No matter what the future holds for computers and other technology, I think that traveling will always be a big part of society because people are, by nature, curious and want to see what the world and potentially other worlds hold.

Part Two:

*Gossip Girl* is a drama television show that is based on the book series. The show is narrated by a blogger "Gossip Girl" whose identity is unknown. The series follows the lives of upper-class teenagers living on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. Gossip Girl writes about all the drama and experiences this group of the teens goes through, causing these teens to become almost famous. Through all the scandals and extravagant events, people become obsessed with this group. Gossip Girl is known to have all the inside scoop and knows it first. The blogger is able to stay on top of the teenager's lives and know everything that is going on because of its followers. Anyone can submit any form of gossip they see or hear to Gossip Girl, and the blogger will post the best and most exciting news.

In the first episode, the audience is introduced to all the main characters which include: Serena van der Woodsen(also referred to as S), Dan, Jenny, Rufus, Blair(also referred to as B), Nate, Chuck, Lily, and Eric. Dan, Jenny, and Rufus are outsiders because they are not as wealthy as the others. Their story is told slightly separately at first until Dan, Jenny, and Rufus become apart of the others' group. There is not a lot of backstory to this episode because it is the first episode and a lot of information is explained within the first few episodes.

The first episode starts with a random girl taking a photo of Serena on her phone at the train station. She sends to Gossip Girl, and the blogger immediately posts about it. Gossip Girl writes that Serena is apparently returning from boarding school but states that no one actually knows why she left or
why she is back. Within the first minute, it is apparent that the use of cell phones play a key role in the series because that is how Gossip Girl received information about Serena.

The show accurately depicts how available cell phones are in real life. When the show was being aired on television, it was based on the present, so all technology was up to date with time in real life. Now cell phones have advanced, but still, for the most part, the same. Cell phones are available to everyone who wants and can afford to pay for one.

In the show, cell phones are primarily causing problems rather than solving them. Cell phones are mostly shown in two situations. First, when someone is taking a picture or video of one of the main characters and sending it to Gossip Girl and telling her what is going on. Second, when Gossip Girl then posts something and everyone checks their phone to see what she posts about. Usually, Gossip Girl is causing drama and problems for the people in the post. For example, within the first scene, as soon as Serena steps foot back into New York she is talked about, and Gossip Girl brings up all the unanswered questions people have about why Serena left and came back. This is not solving any problems for Serena, but instead just causing people to start spreading rumors.

The use of cell phones in this particular way is affecting the character's lives more negatively than positively because Gossip Girl is making their lives public and now everyone wants to know everything about them. This is very relevant to society today because this happens in real life. In real life, we do not have Gossip Girl, but we have magazines and paparazzi who follow celebrities every day and track what they do, where they go, what they are wearing, and who they are with. People today are obsessed with celebrities lives and are not allowing them any privacy. This also causes a lot of drama for celebrities today because every aspect of their life is tracked and posted about.

In my opinion this use of cell phones is unethical. I do not understand why people are obsessed with the lives of actors and actresses. Being an actor or actress is just another profession. Yes, they make a lot of money and can have extravagant lives, but there are many other professions that have a high income. I also understand that for most, living in these big cities and being surrounded by expensive things can only be a dream and it is fun to kind of experience it through celebrities. I do not understand though why every single part of their lives has to be put on display. For the most part, what people think celebrities’ every day lives are is, in reality, just an act and are putting on show. Actors and actresses have
these jobs for a reason, they know to act both on and off the screen. They put on a front to entertain people and earn more money through publicity. I think the fact that they have no privacy is unethical. They have to consistently put on an act for the cameras and are being treated like zoo or circus animals. They are trained to act a certain way and do certain tricks so that people can be entertained and take lots of pictures.

Technology, especially cell phones are constantly advancing and improving. I think cell phones could possibly both evolve and diminish from the world at the same time. They could potentially diminish because they will evolve into something that no longer is an actual cell phone. There are a lot of rumors about how people are going to have chips in their brains to communicate or other devices that are no longer cell phones. I do not think this will happen in five years, but anything is possible later in the future. I’m unsure exactly how cell phones will advance or what they will advance into, but as a whole cell phones and everything on cell phones will always being important in society.
Work Cited

