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Composer's Memo

Topic: Mankind Striving for Advancement

I begin my project by explaining how mankind's lust for advancement results in cultural changes around us over time. These changes occur in the form of smaller social or scientific advancements. These changes are the reason why older texts change meaning over time or in Dimock's words, sound gets added over them. I used the factors of happiness in human life by the Bhutan government which they use to calculate their Gross Domestic Happiness. The Bhutan government considers Gross Domestic Happiness more important than GDP. And I classified the factors in the terms of Social or Scientific changes, or even both, showing what kind of advancement improves the particular factors. I decided to display this information as a venn diagram as that could portray my viewpoint in the simplest terms. Interestingly, the factor - Living Standards was in the intersection of both social and scientific advancements. Moreover, the colors for the venn diagrams were chosen strategically by a color recommender for terms, and they were given a translucent background with images related to the topics which assist the reader in understanding.

This was followed by some examples of recent and very noticeable changes as a result of these advancements. The first example showed how our forms of communication have changed over time. In recent times, we don't use a lot of text to convey information but use videos or images instead. It was accompanied by an interesting cartoon to convey the point. This example was a result of more of a scientific advancement hence, had the same background color of red from the venn diagram. Similarly, the next two examples focusing on social changes in the society were on a green background from the venn diagram. This was done to keep color consistency between the topics even though mentioning the topics itself wasn't relevant enough according to me.

The second example showed a girl proposing to a guy. The third one portrayed a girl working under stress in her office. They were in the form of images. Both these scenarios were like a taboo a century ago, or even less. In “a Theory of resonance”, Dimock talks about how artifacts change their meaning over time. In a way that they add sound to it. I think that is true because with social evolution, our perspectives and meaning to different things change. I argue that this idea is also true in a hypothetical opposite scenario. I would say that if the argument is true, then in a hypothetical situation where an artifact from today was shown to someone in the past, a similar sound will be added to it but with a reverse effect. These examples show that these images would be considered very strange or even offensive to someone from the past.

Then I follow by talking about how scientific advancements are leading us into the Algorithmic Culture. I start by talking about the Netflix Prize Contest because it was indeed a very big and early step towards practical recommendation systems in our life. I mention that I agree with Hallinan and Striplas as they describe the Netflix contest and its constituent elements to be parts of a more abstract situation described as “a state of things in which something that will perhaps matter is perhaps unfolding amid the usual activity of life”. This innovation led to acceptance of recommendation algorithms amongst masses and they have been advancing and spreading ever since. I mention that these systems would be used in every part of our lives in the near future to simplify our lives in various ways making the whole experience unimaginable until we experience it. I accompany this with a cartoon showing a satirical use of recommendations in the future.

This is followed by some examples of innovations expected to take place in the near future as a part of the algorithmic culture. The first example shows a self adjusting room which could automatically adjust furniture and setup into lounge mode, work mode, sleep mode, etc. I planned to include an animated video for the self adjusting room example displaying how smoothly these adjustments would take place. But the inclusion of video in the pdf document was very complicated, hence I decided to include these four pictures. The 2nd example displays a smart toilet seat which could process and diagnose our urine and feces regularly and give us precise updates about our health. Such an innovation would be too beneficial for mankind, and trust me it's not that far before we all see it. Both the pages talking about algorithmic culture include an image footer portraying how the whole tech ecosystem is connected depicting cloud computing and the internet of things.

My targeted audience is young intellectual individuals interested in advancement of technology. I have kept the language very simple to appeal to larger audiences.