

CONNECTIVITY AS THE MEASURE OF MAN
On Ideologies of Western Dominance through the Case of the
Digitizing Mission

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Introduction¹

In *Machines as the Measure of Men* Michael Adas (1989) examines the ways in which Europeans' attitudes toward the material superiority of their culture influenced their attitudes toward, and interactions with, the peoples of the newly discovered areas of Africa, India, and China. Europeans, Adas tells us, came to identify scientific and technological achievement, the understanding and mastery of nature, as an objective measure of the value of a civilization. By this standard, they saw themselves as superior to the non-Europeans they came to know, justifying their right to 'civilize' and dominate the world.

Combining literature from Anthropology, Economics, History, Cyber-culture, and Poetry I make a three step argument. First I argue that a similar ideology of Western dominance is carried across the digital information revolution, with one tactical difference: *digital connectivity* replaces machines as the measure of people. Today, instead of rail-road coverage come bandwidth statistics; instead of grain and fiber production comes fiber-optics deployment; and instead of library sizes we have page-views and unique-visitors statistics as the gauges of a nation's technological eminence. All the while, the underlying theme of Men's mastery of nature as a measurement of evolutionary ranking is corroborated: the strategy is the same and only the devices of measurement are different. Second, based on what I identify as typical industrial-age interpretations schemas of technological and scientific achievements—ostensibly objective measures of society but, in effect, the foundations of subjective moral judgments—I will argue that today we can readily identify a contemporary parallel of the 'civilizing mission'. Recent private, federal, and international initiatives that aim to address major social challenges vis-à-vis the innovative design and use of information technologies (two of which are the 'Digital

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Opportunity Task Force’, sponsored by the G-8 and the ‘Task Force on Information and Communications Technology’ sponsored by the United Nations), are arguably pursuing a ‘digitizing mission’ that is aimed towards developing nations and developing communities within the developed Western world. A mean and an end alternately, connectivity at the hands of the digerati—the digital elite—who pursue such a digital mission is bound to ever increase, as will be discussed. Connectivity is part and parcel of the information revolution and the Internet is its hallmark. If the mission succeeds the entire population will be on-line². But many questions are raised when we query our basic assumptions about the seemingly benign nature of a totally networked world. What are the dangers associated with the digitizing mission? Is connectivity a good measure of society to begin with? In what ways do the hegemonies perceive connectivity as an end, and in what ways is it a mean that helps preserve existing power relations? Why does lack of connectivity detracts one’s cultural esteem in Western representation structures?

Last, and based on my first two observations, I look at how the ‘digitizing mission’ and connectivity as a tactics of measurement underlies even the most liberal attempts at overcoming the digital divide. A change in attitude and language, I argue, is necessary at least as any technological innovation for these attempts to be successful in closing the gaps.

² Considering the term ‘on-line’ in and of itself already raises a question: Where is this line leading? Too often the line assumes linearity from dark analog ages to the bright future of a networked world; is this the only way leading to (a digital) salvation?

The digital information revolution - an evolutionary step

Where is the Life we have lost in living?

Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?

Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?

The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries

Bring us farther from GOD and nearer to the Dust.

(T.S. Eliot, *The Rock*, 1934)

In our day and age, as Leer in her book *It's a Wired World* notes, we observe that computers and digital information technology are all around us, and have transformed our lives - the way we do business, conduct scientific research, provide education, practice medicine, create art, how we run the country, preserve our history, travel from one place to another, function at home, listen to music, communicate with one another, and so on (1996). All these practices come about as a result of a set of technological inventions that have a common denominator: connecting people using digital technologies.

Like former revolutions (the Neolithic and the Industrial, see Crosby 1986, and Adas 1989 pp 241-266) the contemporary revolution has had in the recent past and will have in the near future profound implications on the ways we understand and use space and time, and therefore on the ways we connect (to each other, to institutions, to ourselves). Harvey after Kant finds space and time to be “basic categories of human existence that we rarely debate their meanings” (1990). As we will later observe, the concept of digital connectivity is directly related to both manifestations of time-space compression and domination over time-space relationships and, therefore, connectivity according its proponents becomes a category of human existence in its own right.

Dutton et al. look into the motivating forces behind the dispersal of the new information technologies. What they find by observations of information societies is that in many cases an information society may be valorized and promoted virtually as a social vision—a desirable way

of life in its own right (1989). The applications of this desire surround us. Consider for instance the following advertisement for mobile text-messaging (The Village Voice, April 2002):

“Evolution mandates that there are times when a species must adapt. Like now ... Ever since the dawn of mankind, people have used the hand for communicating. Now however, with the arrival of *mLife*, and the growing popularity of text messaging from AT&T wireless, it looks as though the thumb is taking over.”

The copywriters of AT&T surf the revolution waves audaciously and offer the lay people an alternative existence, which transcends their normal beings; not just boring text messaging but *mLife*, a whole new evolutionary stage—digital, mobile, and connected (and sure to increase AT&T’s revenues). This little ad conceals the digitizing mission’s *raison d’être* – increased connectivity is an evolutionary process that should be promulgated. Suffice it to note the social division between those who have and those who have-not (the ad strictly tries to convince people to join the *mLifers* and leap into the digital future). This rhetoric paints the new lifestyle of ‘connected living’ as something desirable, almost utopic. But while connectivity evangelists usher new technologies to ensure their dominance over the general public in ever-new inventive ways, the latter is often indifferent if not upfront hostile to the new offerings. Many decades after Eliot’s cry for our lives lost in information (Eliot 1952), the lamentation clearly spells out the tensions that surface as information and information technology become more dominant, all too often at the expense of traditional forms of living: ‘always connected’ through a cellular link, people finds themselves ‘always disconnected’ from their immediate environment, and the utopia becomes distopia as people develop a dependency on their connection³.

Analyzing connectivity from an economic angle allows us to peer into some of the sources of these tensions. Tapscott (1996) identifies three characteristics of the new economy that

³ Further discussion of Internet addiction is beyond the scope of this paper. See Thompson 1997 for an elaborate discussion on the phenomenon

are paramount to our discussion: **Virtualization** is the process where physical things become virtual, changing the metabolism of the economy, the types of institutions and relationships possible, and the nature of economic activity itself; **Disintermediation** is the elimination of intermediaries in economic activities including agents, brokers, wholesalers, some retailers, broadcasters, record companies, and anything that stands between producers and consumers; and finally, **Immediacy** is the time scale of the new economy which is a real-time economy. Commerce becomes electronic as business transactions and communications occur at the speed of light rather than that of the post office. These characteristics of the new economy are significant—they portray the advances in economy as evolutionary steps, which progress naturally from earlier formations into new structures that are fitter. In this rhetoric Amazon.com (the worlds largest bookstore) for one, is more ‘advanced’ than a friendly neighborhood bookstore since it was able to change its ‘metabolism’ and use digital connectivity and the Internet to rid itself of extraneous intermediaries such as actual shops. Another potent example of the ‘connected economy’ theme is found when comparing the rhetoric of electronic mail to that of standard mail. The advent of e-mail and the proliferation of courier services, clearly demonstrates the virtualization, disintermediation and immediacy typical of the new economy. The new economy’s contrast with the old necessitated the coining of new tropes to describe the former. The old postal services are now infamously known as ‘snail-mail’ services. The service that in the context of an industrial-era was a sign of progress transformed into a sign of retardation. The premium on punctuality is not new or idiosyncratic to the digital revolution. Adas finds that as early as the late eighteenth century

“Time became a commodity that could be ‘saved,’ ‘spent,’ or ‘wasted.’ Laborers sold it; entrepreneurs bought it. Work time and leisure time were clearly demarcated, and there emerged an industrial work ethic that stressed time thrift, human subordination to machine rather than natural or personal rhythms, and productivity rather than individual skills or expression.” (1989, p. 242).

Connecting the traditional mail services with the snail image at once demarcates them as slow, primitive, and contradictory to the spirit of our times, setting the ground for forced action.

It is not by chance that connectivity is intertwined with perceptions of time. As Giddens articulates in *Consequences of Modernity*, we are dealing with the contraction of space and time that manifests itself as the intensification of world-wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa, and local events precipitate to have global effects in real-time (Giddens 1990). Examples of this new sort of connectivity are found in the broadcasts of global media channels (CNN, Sky, and MTV to name a few) the programming of which is directed at, and consumed by, what might be called *horizontal* audiences, rather than *vertical* ones, denying the standard boundaries, and again, connecting the shrinking world.

Kearny (1995) offers us a potential explanation of the motivations for this increased connectivity. In his detailed report *The global and local: Anthropology of Globalization and Transnationalism*, Kearny finds globalization to be fraught with the movement of information, symbols, capital, and commodities in global and transnational spaces. Kearny finds that the last three decades ushered significant increases in the volume and velocity of such flows, causing in practice a compression of time that

“...results from the imperative in capitalism to constantly shorten the average turnover time between investment and the taking of profit. During periods of capitalist restructuring, changes are made that markedly reduce turnover time by shrinking barriers to production, marketing, and profit taking...” (p. 551). Kearny returns to Harvey’s thesis: an acceleration in the secular trend of time-space compression in capitalist political economy is central to current cultural changes. According to Harvey, “it is exactly at such moments that major shifts in systems or representation, cultural forms, and philosophical sentiment occur.” (Harvey 1990, p. 239 quoted in Kearny 1995, p. 551).

Based on the examples we reviewed, in the next section I will argue that these shifts in the systems of representation and cultural forms facilitated the establishment of connectivity as the new measure of Men.

The dangerous premise of connectivity as a prerequisite for progress

Connectivity is often associated with homogeneity—the remote and local interact, many becoming one, vast becomes small, etc.—but when it comes to the information revolution the gist is hegemony rather than homogeneity. Similar to its antecedent revolutions, the information revolution sweeps society with uneven vigor. The canonical story is this: in spite of the incredible technological advances of the past decades, and the profound implications that the digital revolution has had on the Western hegemonic world, it has yet to touch the lives of most people in most parts of the world. Ostensibly, groups that have traditionally been digital have-nots are now making dramatic gains (unlike in traditional realms, in cyberspace the disparity between men and women has largely disappeared) nonetheless, the digital divide remains: certain nations, communities, and populations such as low income, minority, low achieving, rural, and non English speaking cannot cross the abyss, and are left behind. (National Telecommunications and Information Administration 2000, Hoffman et al. 1999). Despite or maybe because of the digital revolution, increasing numbers of workers are unable to find jobs or gain access to the emerging technological resources needed to ensure productivity in an increasingly digitalized and rapidly changing world economy (Bridging the Digital Divide 2001). Even where new technologies are available, for large populations they have had only minimal impact on the great social needs of our times: improving education, reducing poverty, enhancing health care, supporting community development. The imperatives rapidly ensue based on the logic that this state of things is not accepted, as it hinders progress. In the Clinton administration's jargon: unless helped these populations are 'left behind' (National Telecommunications and Information Administration 2000).

The actions taken to close the divide are habitually superficial. The usual meaning of "the digital divide" is too often reduced to inequality in access to the Internet. Arguably access is a prerequisite for overcoming inequality in a society whose dominant functions and social groups are increasingly organized around information technology (Castells 2001). But the Internet, as Castells rightly points out, is not just a technology; "it is the technological tool and organizational form that distributes: information power, knowledge generation, and networking capacity in all realms of activity."

Despite the underlying assumption of the proponents of the digitizing mission—that unless helped from the outside developing countries and populations are stopped at the gates, and that being disconnected or superficially connected to the Internet is tantamount to marginalization in the global, networked system.—the facts show otherwise. According to James (1999) the form of globalization now being experienced and the conditioning of this globalizing effect by the particular digital forms of information technology imply that the contemporary patterns of globalization need to be understood in those same technological terms. James reaches the controversial conclusion that the benefits of the induced globalization, accrue to developed rather than developing countries. The former will tend to benefit to a greater degree than the latter from the mechanisms through which information technology influences the pattern of globalization. In other words, the chances of the developing populations to cross the chasm, is getting smaller and smaller.

The digitizing mission – social effects

A caveat is in place. The proposed digitizing mission is not a coherent ideology. In his account of the civilizing mission, from which I draw parallels, Michael Adas notes that:

There was no authoritative, comprehensive, and systematic exposition of the beliefs that made up the credo of nineteenth-century policymakers, missionaries, and other advocates of overseas colonization. Therefore, by the strictest of definitions, the civilizing mission was not an ideology at all. But if we dismiss it because its ideas strike us as simplistic, because no thinker combined them in a coherent whole, or because in the postcolonial era

they seem little more than duplicitous platitudes fabricated to cover colonial crimes, we risk distorting and neglecting assumptions and aims that affected nineteenth-century European colonial policies and activities in major ways. (1989, p. 200)

By the same logic, the digitizing mission is not an ideology at all, but if we dismiss it, we risk distorting and neglecting assumptions and aims that underlie many of the practices we find in the field. Without a doubt many of the motivations of proponents of the digitizing mission are pure and benign, and benevolent people are devoting their (and their organizations' and corporations') wealth, time, and energy to overcome inequalities in society, without any hidden agendas. But at the same time we cannot ignore the perils of the digitizing mission which are numerous and grave. Can we risk 'cultural imperialism', neocolonialism, the reintroduction of orientalism, and insidious misrepresentations that perpetuate hegemony?

In their research into post-industrial transformations Kyle and Crenshaw (2002) find that "adoption of the Internet has not been a simple linear function of economic and political development, but instead has been driven by complex interactions involving different structural dimensions that could be termed 'post-industrialism.'" After Hedley (1988) they find that a concern about the consequences of Internet diffusion is "cultural imperialism"

Like telephony, the Internet and other technologies are bound to have certain consequences involving cultural/linguistic hegemony and therefore social control, cultural dominance, and the ability to yield symbolic power. Hedley emphasizes the value-laden nature of this form of information diffusion, observing that U.S./Western hegemony in information technology poses the threat of an imposed cultural convergence on those who wish to "hook-up" to the global economy. Certainly the Internet is no respecter of borders and, as a consequence, is spreading a homogenizing culture around the globe, particularly among elites... (Ibid)

Ideologies as defined by Giddens (1979) tend to present the interests of elites as if they were universally shared. We find a real world example of this tendency in a detailed study by Terry Harpold (1999). Harpold interrogates "cartographic representations of the Internet as a first step in a critique of the complicity of techniques of scientific visualization with the contrasting invisibility of political and economic formations." Because maps are fundamentally cultural

things, they are embedded, Harpold suggests, “in the epistemological and ideological structures that Roland Barthes calls the ‘mythologies’ of semiological systems”. Harpold examines skewed, oversimplified depictions of global network activity that tend to show the developing countries as voids ready for exploitation, and proposes that “[these depictions] are embedded in unacknowledged and pernicious meta-geographies—sign systems that organize geographical knowledge into visual schemes that seem straightforward...but which depend on historically and politically-inflected misrepresentation of underlying material conditions.” The problem (returning to Giddens) is that this kind of representations, or rather, misrepresentations loop back into action:

...misrepresentations of conditions of access and identity in the wired and unwired realms do certainly matter in one sense: the imaginary orders they produce and sustain are likely to return to the real as consequences of economic policy, military intervention, and technological and symbolic exclusion. Those who will plan the network infrastructures of the next century are likely, however we may characterize their conscious motives, to rely on maps of one sort of another. Sustained, progressive critique of the meta-geographies of Internet diffusion and traffic must look beyond the limited (and limiting) visual vocabularies of national-political identity, and base its investigations on new schemes for representing the archipelagic landscapes of the emerging political and technological world orders.

And thus we see that the modes of representation and the modes of action intertwine and affect one another, always to the benefit of the digital elite.

Wise in his book *Exploring Technology and Social Space* (1997) looks at global information networks. He finds that while the development of information infrastructure can be crucial to the betterment of life in a lesser-developed country

But proposals of how to develop these countries always have a specific method in mind, a particular model of ‘infrastructure,’ for example, and a specific notion of what is ‘better.’ Alternative schemes that might be more appropriate for a culture or nation are swept aside (or completely ignored) in the desire to be the most technical developed.

Obviously, the lesser developed countries are the ones that “suffer from the imposition of the new technological assemblage on a global scale.” Like James’s conclusions (1999), which we saw

earlier, Wise believes that the networking game is played by the developed nations at the expense of the developing ones. The consequences may include

...the reinforcement of relationships of dependency and unequal exchange and the resurgence of an informational neocolonialism. Discourses that label the lesser developed countries as 'unwired,' however, establish relations of negativity (they are not us, they are not wired, they are not developed, that reintroduce orientalism and neocolonialism. (ibid, page 161)

Wise exemplifies his contentions by looking at two recent US initiatives. In the first case, during 1994 Vice President Al Gore proposed the creation of a Global Information Infrastructure (GII) at the meeting of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).

Gore's proposal to the meeting of the ITU of a "planetary information network" mentions, as primary advantages, education, the exchange of ideas, and contacts with families and friends (this last one is resonant with the public relations efforts of US long distance companies). But the central concern of the GI, according to Gore, is economics: the creation of a 'global information marketplace.' The GI is seen as a spur to global economic growth...Gore stated that "a primitive telecommunications system causes poor economic development" and that an advanced information network is "an essential prerequisite to sustainable development." (ibid, page 163)

Wise further mentions that Gore used two analogies to make his point. In the first analogy: the global information infrastructure is equated with the North-American infrastructure. The GI will work for the world just like the national information infrastructure worked for the US. In the second analogy the information highway is equated with transportation highways, and is supposed to stimulate economic growth like the latter did in the US in the 1920s. I find both analogies sarcastic. The development of the transportation system in the US had, no doubt, a great share in positioning the US economy as the world's leading economy, but at the same time, it hastened the energy crisis of the 1970s, and contributed a great deal to environmental problems. These problems, Gore wants to forget, will be exported along with the merits of his technology. In the case of the national information infrastructure, the sarcasm is even more abundant. The two largest US telecommunications companies, WorldComm and Global-Crossing, which arguably

contributed to the information highway frenzy more than any other company in the world, are now bankrupt. The combination of promiscuous corporate governance with a painful sobering from the high-bandwidth-to-every-house dream drained billions of dollars from the pockets of lay investors and left thousands of miles of dark (unused) fiber-optics in US and international soil and oceans. Is this Gore's vision for less stable countries?

The second point in case Wise discusses is AT&T's proposal to encircle Africa with a sea communication cable that would have multiple docking stations ashore, in different African countries. The 'digitizing' plan suggested an African-owned information infrastructure (financed by a transnational corporation) that would allow connectivity among the African countries, and between Africa and the rest of the world. In practice what the plan aims to create is an increased African Debt to the global financial system, and an easy penetration point for AT&T into the black continent which is 'waiting' to be exploited.

Closing the digital divide - A different approach

In recent years, different groups have realized the potential hazards of the increasing digital divide and the traditional solutions aimed in closing it. Three such groups are the Digital Divide Organization, the Digital Nations Consortium, and the United Nations. According to their own account, these organizations do not aim to impose solutions but rather to empower people in all walks of life to invent their own (see The Digital Divide Organization Homepage 2002 and the Digital Nations Prospectus 2002). In their own view, although these novel activities are like a drop of water compared to a sea of inequality, their importance lies in their attempt to alter the global agenda when answering the simple question: "How to close the Digital Divide?" The question has been the subject of dozens of acrimonious debates and conferences around the world, with no clear answer. Unlike private corporations and governmental agencies, organizations like DigitalDivide.org try to find pragmatic ideas and to stimulate action. In their operations these organizations emphasize the importance of building the stable and sustainable socio-geo-political

foundations necessary to the success of such ambitious projects. DigitalDivide.org gives a brief summary of its own history (2002):

In the first phase, lasting till 1996, activists argued that government regulators must step in to compensate for IT-driven market forces that ruthlessly widen disparities between rich and poor ... The prevailing view was that the Divide must somehow emerge through voluntary "partnerships" of leaders in every realm, not just through the social engineering of governments. This led to a brief second phase, lasting until the dot-com bust in mid-2000. It was a time when just about every leading institution from every sector advocated for "digital opportunities" as if these would somehow add up to closing the Divide...[in the third phase] each Digital Divide effort must go beyond mere prescriptions. Many are doing dirty work in the field, taking on entrenched interests, and bootstrapping the necessary changes even amid severe economic constraints. But not all the innovation in closing the Divide is happening at the grassroots. Knowing there will be no manna from heaven, policymakers engaged in the movement to close the Divide have no choice but to achieve policy reforms in their own institutions.

On one hand the authors believe that "the movement that began with preachy rhetoric about the faraway poor, has strengthened the hand of reformers within the world's major institutions" (ibid) but on the other hand, there is still a long way to go. We should note, however, how Western-centric the whole debate is. The international organizations main motivation for action is not their benevolence, but their desire to be perceived as benevolent, and to control the cornucopia of resources allotted to the fighters of digital illiteracy. The same is sometimes true to private corporations. In his recent book *Digital Corporate Citizenship: The Business Response to the Digital Divide*, Craig Warren Smith (2002), the founder of DigitalDivide.org explores what he calls "signature initiatives" – multimillion dollar social projects initiated by corporations in the US and around the world. A major question Smith investigates is whether these initiatives represent a departure from classical cost-cutting business practices typical of global corporations or whether they are somehow aligned with the business strategies that emerge from the new economy. He finds that while "these new expressions of "digital corporate citizenship" represent an important dimension in the global movement to close the digital divide and, as such, contribute to an understanding of how social problems can be resolved in the digital era... [the] initiatives also have implications for corporate strategy and,

some say, they hold a key to the brand image of Internet corporations that are eager to be perceived as positive assets for society.” Yet again we see this dualism between the real motives, and the perceived aspects of the matter.

According to its prospectus *DigitalNations* (2002), an academic collaboration emanating from New England’s tech-savvy academic institutions set within its goals the aim to work on the technical and social sides of digitizing concurrently:

The MIT Media Laboratory is establishing a new research consortium, called Digital Nations, that focuses explicitly on these major social challenges. Researchers at the Media Lab are collaborating with people around the world, aiming to catalyze social changes that are dramatic but also humanistic, sustainable, and resonant with local needs... The Digital Nations consortium does not aim to impose solutions but rather to empower people in all walks of life to invent their own solutions.

The promising part of this prospectus is that the ultimate goal is not a world full of wires, but a world full of creative people. This is a substantial deviation from the general digerati talk.

A third project that promotes connectivity was sponsored by the United Nations. UNESCO’s Society for International Development sponsored *Women on the Net* (WoN). Gillian Youngs (2001) explores the nature of the project. WoN, she tells us is a “symbolic of the new forms of adventure in communication and political and cultural exchange which the Internet can facilitate. It aimed from its outset in 1997 for multiple forms of diversity with regard to the individuals and organizations which it involved. Its founding focuses was bringing together technicians, researchers, activists and development practitioners to think about the work collectively.”

According to its co-originator, Wendy Harcourt Won had four main aims:

First to encourage women, particularly in the south and in the marginal groups in the north (and Central and East Europe), to use the Internet more easily as their space.... Second, to open up and contribute to the new culture that was being set up on the Internet from a gender perspective at once local and global. Third, to bring together individual women and men working from different institutional bases...to explore a transnational women’s movement agenda in response to and shaping evolving telecommunication policies. And fourth, to create a resource (community and support)

base which could be tapped into by different women's groups...(Harcourt 1999 quoted in Youngs 2001)

Youngs finds that it was clear right from the beginning that the issue of women using the Internet as their space was at the heart of the project: "WoN itself was creating a space within virtual space". This last observation is a clear example of the general sense in which connectivity is perceived as a mean and as an end contemporaneously. WoN promotes connectivity both as a mean (for better communication, for community, for support) and as an aim—it is about conquering one's ground and placing one's flag in cyberspace. Women, that were marginalized (Maria Meis (1998) would say housewifized) and arguably lost the battle of power and hegemony in the physical world forever, are encouraged to act early and use cyberspace as the new theater of war.

Conclusion

I explored different perspectives manifested by key organizations that aim to close the digital divide. Disparate as they may be, however, all these bodies share one common denominator: connectivity is believed to be a good measure of a culture's evolutionary stage. By tracing the origins of this common perception to shifts in representation systems, which are often discussed in evolutionary terms, I argued that connectivity measurements reinstate the West's tendency to judge itself and its surrounding based on sheer technical and scientific mastery of nature, without considering longer-term affects.

William Langer in *Diplomacy of Imperialism*, pointed out that "the civilizing mission has been considered little more than a hypercritical attempt to elevate base motives with high-sounding clichés about the European destiny to better the condition of humanity." (Langer 1938 quoted in Adas 1989). As we have seen, much like its civilizing mission ancestor, the digitizing mission lacks a coherent definition and yet as an underlying motive in too many of the

equalization efforts, it is an omniscient emblem of Western domination that we might have thought was long-by gone.

There is great hope in the activities of the new organizations that aim to empower developing nations and communities instead of dominating them in the guise of ‘bestowing’ upon them the wonders of technology. For these impressive endeavors to be successful, however, we must change our conceptual treatment of human beings and see them as such, and not resort to connectivity as a fatal measure of Man. Governmental and international support for this new initiatives is essential in order to ensure that the developed world is not transporting its maladies into the developing world while gaining control over it. Changing the language and clearing the inspirations is equally important.

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