Becoming orphans repeatedly, the influence of social media technology on identity

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Of the origin, every human person is a social being. We only really gain meaning if we can make a contribution to the group to which we belong. The "drive" to contribute is deeply rooted in our constitution, including our brains. Our natural diversity - men, women, strong people, smart people, large people, small people, etc. - is useful to develop in line with both our own possibilities ("talents"), and the needs of the social community to which we belong.

Needs cover a broad range, from having and raising children, taking care of food, defending the community to ensuring comfort (clothing, warmth, technology, etc.) and meaning (religion, incantation, entertainment). For many thousands of years, all those tasks had to be taken over by new generations over time over again. Sometimes gender was a biological precondition (males cannot have children), sometimes gender, or any other biological variable, was a social condition (in some communities / cultures, nystagmus (the "third eye") was thought to make a person a seer / spiritual.

It goes without saying that with literally fading boundaries between social communities (this comes together with advanced technology), it is much more complicated for individuals to find their place in a social community. In other words, it's hard for us to make our address known to the abstract (virtual) society that we could belong to. Since such physically rooted address barely exists, this may be even impossible. "Cogito ergo sum" may be replaced by "I app so I exist". As little kids we often cried "Watch me, look what I can". However, when we get older it becomes clear that there is no clear address where we can offer our contribution ... Independent of all our competences, only if "society" (social media) recognizes us, we won't stay unnoticed. Social media such as YouTube are full of brilliant contributions without any recognition.

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In fact, with the gradual replacement of a physical society that addresses us and makes clear where we belong with a virtual one, in our lives we are repeatedly forced to re-enter a (work) community as orphans, without family/friends. Of course this may be exciting, and it may offer lots of opportunities. But at the same time, many people experience that if they go to live another life, for instance in a completely different city or sometimes even a completely different country, that the language and customs they have to adapt to in reality are different from their "virtual" expectations.

Despite what the world wide web - social media (and knowledge of shared culture carriers, such as music, films, etc.) makes us believe, the global (virtual) world is to a large extent also an illusion. Calling "look at me" makes sense for that single superstar, but most of us will have to get used to the fact that meaning is not self-evident, and that repeated redefining our social networks does not naturally enhance our self-esteem. Some children are born without orphans / family context. During our lives, most others repeatedly switch between social contexts and other identity providers, and thus also repeatedly lose contexts.