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Odysseys in Social Networks

Today I go to Facebook or Twitter and commit the daily routine of catching up on the news of my friends, or even people who I have chosen to follow simply because we have similar interests. This is the culture of social networking. I read these posts, and on a topical level I feel that I am staying close to these friends by staying in contact with them, but the truth is that I have never felt so far away.

When asked to think of the meaning of the work of Constantine P. Cavafy today, I am drawn to "Ithaka", one of Cavafy's most popular poems. Through the use of metaphor, Cavafy's homage to Homer's *Odyssey* explains the importance of one's own journey through life. "As you set out for Ithaka hope your voyage is a long one, full of adventure, full of discovery." The timeless saying states that it is the journey that is important, not the destination, but what stands out in "Ithaka" is Cavafy's ability to make this odyssey feel unique to me, and when you read the poem the odyssey will be unique to you, too.

The social network has allowed the web of interaction to break all physical boundaries, but in our information age, our world of 'seven second gratification' where everything is at our fingertips, we have forgotten how long our journey is. Cavafy does not just posit that the journey must be savored, but also that the soul must mature day by day. So, is it not true that Cavafy is urging for patience in life in order to reap its complete benefits?

The poem brings me back to my first thoughts on social networking, the fact that I feel distant to friends despite reading their own words almost every day. This is no way to fulfill the journey of life and by no means constitutes one that is full of adventure and discovery, for all my discoveries happen within a blink of an eye and a scroll down the page. Two things must be realized: first, remember that all of life is a journey, so give even the insignificant actions respect; second, remember that you are not the only one on an odyssey through life, in fact, every person you meet has a journey of their own.

Today, Cavafy's works leave us with an introspective understanding of life, and more importantly, how to live a life of fulfillment. True fulfillment is not getting everything we want, our Ithaka, as fast as possible. It is about appreciating and maturing from the experiences that get us there.