Person, Personality, Persona, and Privacy

Ramon Eguia Nadres

The Catholic University of Widya Mandala, Surabaya Campus

A B S T R A K

Belakangan ini kita sering diingatkan tentang bahayanya memasuki Internet: beberapa orang menunjukkan bahaya moralnya seperti akses mudah ke pornografi; sementara yang lain memperingatkan tentang bagaimana aplikasi media sosial digunakan untuk mengontrol pemikiran dan perilaku kita. Atas dasar ketidaknyamanan ini, beberapa orang menyarankan kita berpantang saja dari media sosial dan mendesak kita untuk menghapus aplikasi ini dari ponsel kita. Pertanyaan yang ingin kami jawab dalam artikel ini adalah: apakah mereka benar? Haruskah kita menolak terlibat dalam internet dan media sosial? Apakah menghindari diri dari Internet dan media sosial berarti menjadi lebih manusiawi dan otentik secara manusiawi? Peneliti ingin meyakini pembaca bahwa dunia internet adalah sebuah perubahan dalam kehidupan manusia yang tidak terlalu jauh dari pengalaman pergeseran paradigma sebelumnya yang dialami pada masa lalu. Seperti transisi-transisi sebelumnya, situasi ini menghadirkan bahaya, tetapi juga memberikan peluang. Jika manusia benar-benar makhluk sosial, sebuah platform sosial baru dapat menjadi bermanfaat bagi kehidupan sosial dan tidak akan langsung menjadi jahat bagi kita. Baik dan buruknya tergantung pada bagaimana setiap individu menghadapinya dan menyesuaikannya untuk keuntungannya. Tulisan ini secara khusus ingin membedakan antara konsep *person*, *personality* dan *persona* melalui manifestasinya di Internet. Dengan membedakan ketiga konsep ini, kami berharap bahwa kita dapat memahami lebih baik apa yang harus kita lakukan untuk mengubah realitas Internet sehingga menjadi sebuah keuntungan. Metodologi penelitian ini adalah kualitatif dan akan mengambil penjelasan-penjelasan konsep dari artikel-artikel dan buku-buku yang telah ditulis tentang topik ini. Tujuannya adalah membuat sebuah *conceptual framework* yang bisa dipakai untuk memahami soal *privacy* dan hubungannya dengan *person*. Penelitian ini akhirnya melihat bahwa manusia tetap harus coba dalam lingkungan baru yang dibentuk oleh Internet, memang dengan menjaga perkembangan baik personalitasnya, tapi dengan tetap menghadapi pertualangan di dalam dunia maya supaya dia bisa berkembang sebagai manusia yang moderen.

INTRODUCTION
Privacy: Suddenly a Big Issue in the World Today

In the past, whenever someone said "privacy", that meant that the others should respect a <u>physical</u> personal space: you are not to visit someone's home unless you are invited (Draine, & Hall, 1989)[1], you should never look at another person's personal things without asking permission, you should not be so

---

[1] According to *Culture Shock: Indonesia*, however, that is one of the things that foreigners should expect to

find different in our country: people are expected to receive and be entertained even when they come to

physically close to another person as to be mistaken as that person's boyfriend or girlfriend when you are actually not, etc. With the advent of the Internet, the term "privacy" has acquired a complexity of meaning. It is still related to the previous one, but it is now observed and protected on the Web and possesses a good number of nuances that the previous meaning of "privacy" did not have. The truth is, with the invention of the Internet, privacy has suddenly become one big and complicated public issue.

We need not look too far back into history to realize that it is indeed now a big issue. Younger people may not be able to recall a time when privacy was not as big an issue as it is now. Thus, younger generations may be surprised with the claim that this is a "suddenly big issue". The older generations have lived in a time when there was no internet, so they have an experience of a time when internet privacy was not an issue. In any case, whether young or old will now all have to admit that it is a serious issue.

One of the biggest earth-shaking events in recent times as regards privacy was the Snowden case.[2] Edward Snowden had worked as an intelligence contractor for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the National Security Agency (NSA) in the United States and was privy to the type of material that was being accessed by these agencies on the internet. In 2013, he requested leave and traveled abroad. Outside the US, he started revealing that the two agencies previously mentioned had been accessing information which, in conscience, he thought, were beyond the boundaries of respect for human rights. He claimed that the NSA had direct access to the servers of Google, Facebook, Microsoft, and Apple and was even able to hack into China's servers. This case started to make everyone become more aware of the issue of privacy, fearing that the information gathered by third parties may result in personal harm.

In the recent past, Netflix came out with a documentary entitled *The Social Dilemma*,

which claims that the Social Media platforms are making use of the information we upload on these apps to try to control our behavior on the Internet. These apps influence what we watch, what we read, what we buy or how we react to the panoply of stimuli that the Internet gives. By finding out which stimulus makes us react in a certain way, these platforms can actually direct us towards behavior that would be most profitable for them, e.g., clicking a button, actually buying some stuff, reading a specific article, enlisting for some program, etc.

The Netflix documentary, *The Social Dilemma*, has sparked this author's interest on the anthropological implications of the suspected media control. When *Media Ethics* was chosen as the theme of the 30th Conference of the *Himpunan Dosen Etika di Seluruh Indonesia*, this author, as a member of the said organization thought it fitting to write on the philosophical aspects of the person that are affected by current-day social media.

The question now is: should we end this relationship with social media and the internet to keep ourselves safe (Stieger, 2012)? Why is privacy so important? Is privacy an absolute right, like our right to life, or can other people gain the right to pry into our personal privacy?

CONCEPTS & METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach of this paper is qualitative, involving a development of a philosophical conceptual framework with ideas taken from related literature and the procuring of concepts related to privacy, the concept of person, personality, and persona. Since our focus is on Ethics, specifically its philosophical ramifications, the literature reviewed are those that lean more towards philosophical analysis. As such, the goal is not to exhaust all the literature available but to review enough of them to confidently arrive at the current general philosophical attitude as regards the person and

---

visit a home unannounced. This is something that this author has personally confirmed when he transferred to Indonesia. The statement above, therefore, should be taken in a more Western context, although this author does think that a number of Asian cultures follow the practice of respecting the privacy of the home that is observed in the West.

[2] See the corresponding entry in *Encyclopedia Britannica* for a short description of Snowden; url = https://www.britannica.com/biography/Edward-Snowden.

social media. This philosophical approach searches for the current essential understanding of the topic and not a critical review of absolutely all the available articles and books on the issue. We are not in search of techniques, technology or current procedures or the latest acceptable public policies, financial and economic repercussions and legal considerations related to privacy, person, and personality.

We excluded what is more strictly related to privacy as "guarding personal data". In other words, we are more interested in the philosophical notion of "person" and not the guarding of detailed information about individuals. We have also excluded studies that revolve around specific races or nations because we want to focus on the idea of "person" in its general, universal, and philosophical sense. We tend to put greater value on sources from around the years 2004 to the present because we find them still relevant, although we did not discard references from earlier years since philosophy aims at discovering what is perennial and not era-based interpretations.

The aim is to discover the interpretative key to understanding the importance of privacy and the relationship of the concepts of person, personality, and persona to this notion of privacy. The literature used is a mixture of philosophical texts and the results of research in the field of Psychology. In the past, psychology was more akin to philosophy than to the experimental sciences but the worldwide tendency to give greater credence to science than the other disciplines gave rise to experimental Psychology (Artigas, 2009).

Given this history and the fact of their common ancestry in the Humanities, establishing a working relationship between the discoveries of the two disciplines sheds greater light on issues, especially the one that we are investigating in this paper. Much of what is discovered in Psychology can actually support what is being studied in Philosophy's Rational Psychology.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
To Live Online or Not

The main ideas we may take home from this philosophical reflection on privacy are the following: There are both dangers and opportunities found in the Net. The advantages as so significant as to warrant facing the "dangers" that present themselves.

One of the dangers is the loss of privacy which philosophically-speaking is a breach of the intimacy of the person which should be respected. For us to prevent the harm and avoid the dangers, we need to have the basic understanding of the concepts of person, personality and persona so that we can know what we are developing or destroying as we use the Internet. In any case, human beings were born to adapt, and the Internet is just one more new environment to which humanity has to adopt so that it can move forward and progress.

There are a good number of speakers who are actively trying to convince others to stop using social media. Their reasons can be quite legitimate. For example, Dr. Cal Newport in a TedX Tysons Talk argues that social media is *not* a neutral source of news and entertainment (Newport 2016).[3] The social media moguls have hired attention engineers who know exactly what will call the attention of a person, entice him to download that app and then keep him hooked onto using the app continuously. This activity is not neutral because the app is constantly collecting data that will eventually be useful for advertisers who want to target the user as a potential customer.

So, again, as we have said before, is it good to have part of your life online, to have an online persona and to get involved with the world through the Net or to get involved with the world of the Net? Well, for one, from the very beginning of the history of Philosophy, Aristotle had already defined man as a *zoon politikon*, a social animal (Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a 2). The development of this doctrine all the way to Thomas Aquinas has made us see that this is not a mere statement of what could be externally observed, i.e., that human beings tend to live

---

[3] Dr. Carl Newport is the author of the book *Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World*, published by Grand Central Publishing in Singapore in 2016. In his TEDx Tysons talk, he advises people to quit social media. The video can be watched on YouTube; url = https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3E7hkPZ-HTk.

together. The social nature of man goes beyond that.

Social animals, like the ants, for example, have a social nature for the sake of *survival*. Man's social nature is *also* for the sake of survival, but *not only* for the sake of survival. The type of social life a man has opens up to so much creativity and variety that it is no longer just a matter of surviving but as *living as a human being*. That's right. For man to "survive" he cannot only just fulfill the basic biological needs that will keep him biologically alive: he has to create, he has to learn from what others have created, he has to receive the legacy of creative activity of his forebears, and he has to launch himself out, too, in an adventure of creativity. In a sense, this is what it means for man to "live authentically". A mere surviving-day-to-day and hand-to-mouth existence is not human.

That said, we must now gaze at the world of creativity and advancement that the Internet has provided. Is it worthwhile for a human being to go there? Yes. Why? Because there are so many possibilities for "really living" there. As Yepes-Stork claims, an absolutely individualistic type of existence is untenable for a human being (Yepes-Stork, 1996). What about the dangers for our well-being? Well, look, the external physical world is also fraught with dangers. Since we cannot run away from them and we need to go out to find food and survive, we just learn how to face them.

So, too, since we can no longer practically run from the Internet, we must learn to live in it (Solove, 2004). The difference between the dangers in the physical world and the danger in the digital world is that we are more familiar with the dangers of the physical world than the dangers in the digital world. Because of that, we already have many systems in place that will protect us from the dangers of the physical world. Not so with the Internet.

On the other hand, imagine the first time that our ancestors had to go out from a safe dwelling, perhaps a cave, and venture forth in search of food. Did they already know all the types of dangers that were there waiting for them? No. Not yet, at least. Well, with the Internet, we are at that frontier. Should we take a hardline decision of never venturing there? We don't think so. It seems the wise thing to do is to venture forth and adapt as we have always done

in the past (Larsen and Buss, 2018). Adaptation is one of the activities that our brain is especially equipped for. Why are we not going to use it?

Still, the natural need to go forth, learn and adapt does not mean that we should not be wary about the dangers (Solove, 2004). We should. Again, that is what our brain is for. We need to learn, adapt and be wary of the things that are a danger for us.

Privacy: Multi-faceted Issue

This brings us back to the issue of privacy. If we need to interact and adapt, even on the Internet, what do we need privacy for? If contact with other human beings is key to living our life to the fullest, why should we hide a part of our life such that that part is not in direct contact with reality?

In his contribution to the *A Very Short Introduction* series of Oxford University, Raymond Wacks rightly says that the issue of privacy is a very complex issue. It has a moral side, a philosophical side, a legal side, a human rights side and a communication ethics side (Wacks, 2010). As each side tackles the privacy issue, it can very well tend to ignore all the rest since it is quite possible to have a long, detailed discussion of one aspect while setting aside all the others.

For example, someone could analyze the legal side and focus mainly on that. When one limits himself to what is legal, he can very well just look through all the privacy policies that the users of the Internet and social media have to agree to before enjoying the use of a webpage or an app. A researcher who focuses on the legal side—perhaps because he is a lawyer by profession—can very well either presume or ignore the moral and philosophical bases of what he is talking about.

Having said that and knowing that we, as human beings, strongly tend to ask about the significance and meaning of what we do, as Wacks says himself, there is no escaping the philosophical side of the issue of privacy. For one, we have to ask ourselves *why* it is important to us at all. What is its value? Why does it have that value?

The question of the value especially comes to the fore when we know that in the issue of privacy there are two attitudes that are on opposite sides of the balance. On the one hand,

we have the attitude of putting absolute importance to privacy itself. This is the side that tends to protect privacy at all costs and questions all types of intrusions on a person's privacy. On the other side of the balance is the need for surveillance in order to establish peace and well-being in society. The need for this especially stood out after September 11, 2001 when hijacked jets were deliberately flown right into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York. At that time, law enforcement so easily obtained wide-ranging permission to watch over phone and Internet communication in the name of National Security.

There is a sort of mystery in our situation today as regards privacy. On the one hand, we value it so much that, when someone like Snowden shows up and cries "foul!", we all listen and feel indignant. On the other hand, here we all are uploading so much personal stuff on the Net without a care about who's going to see it or read it. In fact, we often do that in order to be seen and read.

So, Wacks asks: are those things in the public domain or are they ruled by the principles of privacy? Obviously, by all the privacy statements that one has to read before looking at a website or using an app, there *is* an issue of privacy involved. On the other hand, if the person does not put up the prescribed protection over that personal information, does that mean an implicit consent for anyone with access to make use of it. Again, as we said, the matter is complex, so there are all sorts of copyrights and precautions over things that are found on the Net.

Perhaps, a clearer understanding of what all this is about can be found if we can only *define* what privacy is, a project which is not that easy either: "An acceptable definition of privacy remains elusive. Westin's ubiquitous and influential idea conceives of privacy as a claim: the 'claim of individuals, groups, or institutions to determine for themselves when, how, and to what extent information about them is communicated to others'." (Wacks, 2010). The collection entitled *Philosophical Dimensions of Privacy: An Anthology* gives witness to this difficulty. We shall be using some of the ideas from that anthology in the next section to elaborate on the definition of privacy, but mainly in the context of what we believe to be at the core of privacy, which is *intimacy*.

Intimacy and the Human Person

Ferdinand Schoeman who was tasked to give a sort of Introduction to the above-mentioned anthology says that "privacy has been identified also as the measure of *control* an individual has over: (1) information about himself; (2) intimacies of personal identity; or (3) who has sensory access to him." (Schoeman, 1984). In this definition, privacy is defined as a *right* over something. This definition stakes *ownership* over intimate information about oneself. It is clearly cached so that it elicits the corresponding attitudes in the owner and "the other": the owner should enjoy his right over this information; "the other" has to respect this right and not seek access without permission. However, this definition does not explain *why* we have that right and what is the logic behind this right: "Numerous writers take it as obvious that such issues are *not* privacy issues; for them, these issues only raise questions about an individual's rightful sphere of autonomy." (*Ibid.*).

One anthropological interpretation of why privacy is so important is the analysis that could be found in the book of Yepes-Stork and Aranguren (Yepes-Stork & Aranguren, 2003). There is something about the person that makes him guard his intimacy. As Yepes-Stork and Aranguren suggest, there is a "place" in us that only we can access, but we can also open it up to those whom we trust. This opening up and trusting is like a privilege given to that person (See also Williams & Bengtsson, 2020).

What is inside that "place"? It is the person himself. That *self*[4] hides in intimacy because it

---

[4] Let it be known that the concept of *self* could be controversial. There are many ways by which we can define the *self*. Some of these definitions may define the *self* as a metaphysical core. Other definitions may prefer to define the *self* as the very self-awareness that appears once the requirements of self-identity, self-esteem, self-regulation and self-improvement appear. Still others would like to just define the *self* on the neurological or molecular level. In an article entitled *What is the Self?* found in the online magazine Psychology Today (url = https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/hot-thought/201406/what-is-the-self), Paul Thagard says that the newest approach involves saying that these are all related to the *self* but expressed on different levels.

can only be given to those whom we can trust, to those whom we know will take care of our *self*. This phenomenon seems to tell us that: (1) the *self* is something precious[5] and that is the reason why it has to be guarded; but, at the same time, (2) the *self* is meant to be *given away* in *love* (Yepes-Stork & Aranguren, 2003). It seems to be part of human nature and something that we do in order to achieve our personal flourishing and perfection: we need to open that "place" of the *self* to another in order to give ourselves as a gift (Williams & Bengtsson, 2020), which is precisely what being in love means.

Being in love involves *ecstasy*. Why the word ecstasy easily leads us to think of something sexual, the ecstasy of love is a bit more sublime than that. The ecstasy of love means *going out of oneself* (*ex + stare*; "to stand or be outside"). This going out of ourselves makes us vulnerable (we can be hurt) and, therefore, the process of falling in love has to be thought out with care and mindfulness. Songs[6] have incessantly warned us of this and yet, because of the overpowering force of either true love or strong attractiveness—even to the point of lust—people have been making the same mistake in human history over and over again. The songs and the experiential evidence just go to show the ecstatic nature of love, and how we are uncontrollably led into throwing all rational thought to the winds and leaping into a relationship that later on might hurt us.

This brings us back to *intimacy*. It is a concept that is related, in the physical world, to what is called *personal space*, but intimacy is not only spatially defined. The reality of *intimacy* is related to *privacy* (Hugl, 2011), although as we have seen, the term privacy has acquired a strong nuance of being *the guard of one's intimacy* in the Net. The concept of intimacy, therefore, can be a key to unlocking the present-day meaning of privacy.

We have already seen the positive side of the concept of intimacy: it is a matter of guarding something very precious behind its walls, which can only be shared with those whom we trust and love. This action, as we said, is also a core way of reaching happiness and perfection. It is part of

the central human activity that leads to personal happiness and personal perfection (Finnis, 2021).

> In addition to its significance in liberal democratic theory, privacy stakes out a sphere for creativity, psychological well-being, our ability to love, forge social relationships, promote trust, intimacy, and friendship. In his classic work, Alan Westin identifies four functions of privacy that combine the concept's individual and social dimensions. First, it engenders personal autonomy; the democratic principle of individuality is associated with the need for such autonomy – the desire to avoid manipulation or domination by others. Second, it provides the opportunity for emotional release. Privacy allows us to remove our social mask: […]. Third, it allows us to engage in self-evaluation – the ability to formulate and test creative and moral activities and ideas. Fourth, privacy offers us the environment in which we can share confidences and intimacies and engage in limited and protected communication. (Wacks, 2010)

The existence of civil legislation protecting privacy stands as proof to the fact that the guarding of intimacy has a special value to man.

> In any event, the celebrated article condemned the press for their effrontery (foreshadowing also the threat to privacy posed by Kodak's new-fangled contraption) and contended that the common law implicitly recognized the right to privacy. Drawing upon decisions of the English courts relating to, in particular, breach of confidence, property, copyright, and defamation, they argued that these cases were merely instances and applications of a general right to privacy. The common law, they claimed, albeit under different forms, protected an individual whose privacy was invaded by the likes of a

---

[5] Some might further clarify that the *self* is precious because it is not just "something" but "someone".

[6] There is a very old song whose lyrics hit the nail on the head. It goes this way: "Fools rush in where

angels dare not tread, and so I run to you, my love, my heart above my head."

snooping journalist. In so doing, the law acknowledged the importance of the spiritual and intellectual needs of man. They famously declared: 'The intensity and complexity of life, attendant upon advancing civilization, have rendered necessary some retreat from the world, and man, under the refining influence of culture, has become more sensitive to publicity so that solitude and privacy have become more essential to the individual; but modern enterprise and invention have, through invasion upon his privacy, subjected him to mental pain and distress, far greater than could be inflicted by mere bodily injury. (Wacks, 2010)

On the other hand, guarding one's intimacy could have a negative face (Wacks, 2010). Some hid behind the walls of intimacy because of *shame*, not *concern over keeping a precious gift*. Shame is a condition when one feels that the self is not worthy of being exposed because it is not worthy of being admired and loved (Larsen and Buss, 2018). Be it because of the psychological difficulty of loving oneself or actually knowing of the evil that lurks in one's heart, a person in such a situation prefers to hide what he has rather than to share it. In other words, a person may wrongly hide his *self* because of a lack of self-knowledge, or he may strategically hide himself because he is hiding evil intentions from the person that he wants to have an unjust relationship with.

These two versions of intimacy can very well take place in the Net: a person may be very careful about privacy issues because she doesn't want to come into harm's way or he may be very attentive to privacy issues because he wants to keep his ulterior motives hidden. In the next section, we would like to tackle the issue of Internet Personality and how this ties up with the two versions of intimacy above.

Internet Personality: Are we the Same or are we a Different Person on the Net?

First of all, as what good philosophers do, we have to define our terms. Otherwise, the author could be talking about one thing and the reader could interpret that term in a completely different way.

The term "person" actually has at least two meanings that are relevant to our subject matter. The first meaning is related to being a reference to the continuity of being. This is the sense referred to when we say something like "that was the same person I met twenty years ago!" Many things may have changed in that person during those twenty years, and yet we indicate continuity by referring to the person as the same person (Noonan, 2018; Olson, 2021; Shoemaker, 2021).

This meaning is related to Boethius' definition of person which was subscribed to by Thomas Aquinas, that is, *individua substantia rationalis naturae*: an individual substance[7] (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 29, a. 1; Boethius (1345). *De Persona et Duabus Naturis*, C. II; Seidl, 1987) of rational nature, that is, a thinking being. This meaning has a largely static nature, even though the whole reality of the person is very dynamic.

That said, the second meaning related to our topic is the meaning of *person* which is the same as *personality*. This meaning takes the term *person* as "who we are". In many of the conversations about "who we are" the term *person* carries with it, not only its existence as a rational substance but also all the richness of the personal story that she has already added to herself in the course of her life. This is the reason why, in the philosophical exchanges about the person, some philosophers can very well say that a person is the convergence of several events that come together such as the convergence of self-identity, self-esteem, self-regulation and self-improvement.

The convergence of the appearance of these events is paid more attention to when defining the person rather than the existing substance of rational nature (Olson, 2021). This is because the *personality* of the person is what is being emphasized. Real existence is not considered to be the continuity of being in the

---

[7] For Aristotle, everything that exists in the world is a substance. The universe is filled with substances. The person can be found among these substances. What distinguishes the person from the other substances is that the person is rational; he is a thinking substance.

world. Being in the world can only be authentic when it is enriched by all the activity and flourishing that the person is capable of. From the point of view of this meaning, that is what a person is.

The two meanings, in fact, are not incompatible. When explaining change, Aristotle says that any change involves two things (cf. *Physics* 1.7): a substrate that doesn't change [and this is the way by which we know that the main foundational thing existing before the change is the same as the main foundational thing after the change]. For example, in what Aristotle calls "accidental change", the substance remains the same but at least some of the accidents change. Let's say that the substance is "apple". When the substance "apple" is unripe, it possesses the accidental feature (color, a quality) which is green. When the substance "apple" becomes ripe, it leaves behind the accident "green" to replace it with the accident "red". We know that it is the same apple. Only its color has changed.

We can somehow apply this procedure to the two meanings we mentioned above. In fact, we can already stop using the term "person" for the second meaning and start using "personality", which more perfectly describes what it is and it also helps differentiate it from the first meaning.

Using an analysis parallel to the one used by Aristotle to analyze change, we can say that the core unchanging reality is the *person*, while the one that actually changes and grows is the *personality* (Larsen and Buss, 2018). Making a distinction like this, however, is tricky since sometimes it makes us fall into the trap of thinking them to be two separate substances or two different things. Actually, a *person* cannot be without *personality* and a *personality* cannot just be floating around without its *person*.

Each human being, to our mind, therefore, would have the foundational existential aspect that makes it identifiable to itself in the course of time. This is more specifically embodied by the *person* but it does not exhaust all the reality of the person because the very definition of the person involves possessing its *personality*, i.e., that aspect of the human being that gives her *plasticity*.

The concept of *plasticity* can be found in Education and Neuroscience (Peters, 2018). In fact, the plasticity of neurons studied by

Neuroscience is very much linked with how man learns new things. Plasticity involves the ability to change oneself or a part of want oneself as one wills. From the point of view of Education, this feature explains why human beings have the least number of instinctive behaviors. He adapts more to his environment via *learning* rather than through instinct, precisely because of his plasticity.

This gives a lot of room for creativity and a system of culture and education. A human being has to receive inputs from other human beings, for example, from his parents, in order to learn how to survive. At the same time, the whole process is not limited to what he can learn from others. With the interaction with the environment, he also learns things by himself and creatively adds to the solutions that he may have received from his parents or other people. This is plasticity.

In neuroscience, plasticity is studied in terms of changes in the number and connections of synapses in the brain. Studies show that, when we learn, the brain cells start putting out new dendrites and start making new connections, which are the neurophysiological basis of learning.

The purpose of this discussion in plasticity, again, is to help us distinguish between the constant side of the identity of a human being, which we shall refer to as his *person*, and the changeable and adaptive side of his identity, which we shall refer to as his *personality*.

Armed with these concepts, we therefore claim that we are *the same person* inside and outside the digital world, but we can have different *personalities*. Then again, we have to distinguish between *personality* as the stable dispositions developed by the person within himself, which will probably be the same whether he is inside or outside the digital world, and *personality* as how one *projects himself* to others, what he wants them to see when they meet him.

The internal stable dispositions created by the person through his choices and interaction with people and the environment can be called simply his *personality*. In English, there is a word that refers precisely to how *we project ourselves* to others or how others see us, and that is the word *persona*. Unfortunately, meanings of the three terms: *person*, *personality* and *persona*

tend to blend into one another and sometimes even substitute one another. At this point, it is important for the reader to keep in mind what we mean with these three words in the context of this article.

Intra-Digital and Extra-Digital Personalities

At the beginning of the school year, this author was asked to orient the freshmen as regards being a student in the Digital Age. The advice given was simple. In this day and age, we need to be citizens of two worlds: (1) the physical world, which is our physical environment; and (2) the digital world, which is a virtual world.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, which at that time no one could have imagined was coming, the universities in Indonesia were already being encouraged to put their lessons online in preparation for what UNESCO has termed *Education in the 21st Century* (Singh, 2017). This author recalls how a good number of lecturers were dragging their feet because the process of putting up the entire system required so much work. Covid-19 came, and the entire process went into high gear. It just had to be done; otherwise, the educational programs would grind to a stop.

This event made us all realize that it is possible to do it and that we would do it when it became absolutely necessary. For us, the ability to change and adapt was a pleasant discovery. But, even now, there are those who pine for and reminisce about the time when we could have classes face-to-face. The desire is legitimate. The question is: are we really going to go back entirely to what it was all like before? We think that we will not. We were already going towards the online direction even before the pandemic struck. Now that we have suddenly gone forward by leaps and bounds, why are we going to turn back?

This brings us back to our existence on the Net. Is it a real existence? Are we real persons on the Net? Let us go back to using our conceptual tools of *person*, *personality*, *persona* and *privacy*.

We can say that we are the same *person* intra-digitally and extra-digitally because the *person* is the principle of continuity in being of our selves. We can be a different *persona* on the Net. We can actually also put different personas outside the Net by putting on a different façade in the different physical environments where we move. The difference is that it is way much easier to create personas –and many of them— on the Web. Creating different personas in the physical world oftentimes requires a physical distance between the places where you have different personas. On the Internet, you don't even have to move away physically from where you are. You can put on your various personas while peacefully sitting in the same place.

Your *personality*, in principle, is the collection of more stable habits and dispositions that your person carries. It underlies the different personas that you may put on (Blumer & Doring 2012: 5) and, at the same time, *it is affected* and can be modified by the choice of putting up various personas (Stieger, 2021).

We must take note, however, that using several personas does not immediately mean being plagued by Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID, formerly called Multiple Personality Disorder). DID, for one, is a rare disease, but the use of several personas is not unusual among the users of the Internet and social media. DID is also often associated with self-destructive behavior (Brand, 2016) and the phenomenon of one personality not being connected with the other, that is, the person is not aware that he possesses both personalities. When he becomes one of them, the other is considered completely other. Not so with the Internet users who employ different personas. They may shift their persona consciously or unconsciously, but the person remains the same.

The very terminology of the disorder jibes well with the definitional distinction we have made between person, personality, and persona. The disorder is called *dissociative **identity** disorder* (formerly, multiple **personality** disorder); while the normal person on the Internet is using different **personas**. Personality, as we have defined it above, refers to stable, acquired habits and traits. They can be changed but they tend to stay that way until there is a decision to make a change. A persona is *the way we project ourselves to others* within a certain context and, in this case, how we present ourselves to others on the internet. The personas may be different, but the person and the currently developed personality beneath is the same.

It turns out that we could not immediately conclude with 100% certainty that the use of

social media harms us. A spot review of several scholarly psychological studies on the Net leads us to these conclusions: (1) *Dangers*. The Internet and social media *do* present dangers, especially to the youth since young people enter into the virtual world without the benefit of a well-developed critical mind that a lot of adults already have (Diomidous et.a1 2016).' (2) *Caution the Young*. This means that young people need to be prepared by their mentors as they gradually meet the different types of content that they can meet online. There is wisdom in monitoring children's use of the Internet (Wood et al 2016): (3) *Differences*. Considering the above, we have to realize that personality, especially that of young people whose personality is still in the initial or middle stages of development, is still being forged, and it is not only forged by experiences in the real world but now also in the virtual world. And *Addiction*.

The really negative effects are found when a person gets *addicted* to internet contents or activity. This means there is an unbalanced use. We take note, though, that addiction also occurs in the external world. The root of the problem may not be in the Internet itself but a previous trauma whether offline or online which brings the person to soothe himself through the addiction. Unfortunately, there are many things available on the Net to which persons can be addicted to (Aboujaoude, 2017; Altuwairiqi, 2019; Egan, 2013).

Same Personality. As we said, the Internet or social media rarely gives a truly split personality. We may have several *personas* or *avatars*, but as Kosinsky says, if we were to stitch together the footprint left by a person after using social media, we will oftentimes come up with the same personality as he has extra-digitally (Kosinsky et. Al, 2014). In other words, more often than not, a person brings his personality *into* the Net. It may be influenced or changed there but, if it is changed, it is also this changed personality that we find outside the Net. A Jekyll-and-Hyde sort of transformation event does not occur (Blumer & Doring, 2012).

Tool for Knowing Oneself. Rather than just being another environment where personality is forged, the Internet also has the uncanny ability *to reveal our personality to us*. What we do in the real world hardly leaves as much footprints as we do leave on the Internet. With all the efforts to protect privacy, we very well know that a record of what we have done on the Internet is left somewhere out there. But that record also has its usefulness. According to a 2014 study, those remnants can be reconstituted to give us an idea of the personality that we have made for ourselves. The philosophers of old have already said that there is an advantage of knowing oneself (Plato, *Phaedrus*, 229). Now, it seems that we can precisely do that, and even more effectively so, with the help of the Internet (Quercia et.al; 2011).

Be Yourself. Lastly, an interesting finding about the Internet is that expressing our true personality on the Internet has positive repercussions on mental health. We know that a lot of types of non-synchronization among the parts of our personality can cause tension and a loss of mental well-being. But this study says that, if we succeed in being the same person (and persona) on the Internet as we are in the real world, then the resulting balance in personality is amazing (Bailey et. al, 2020).

This research focused on a philosophical reflection on the issue of privacy and how it is related to person, personality and persona. Thus, it did not purport to examine all the aspects of privacy but aimed at providing a conceptual framework for further exploration. There are other aspects that would be interesting to look into as , for example, the actual profitability of doing online education: how these impacts on the educational process including the moral and mental health of the students.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION
Live and Adapt; Protect, Nurture and Love

Should we avoid going into the Net? Our study concludes that we shouldn't. We must remember that the history of humankind has been meeting one challenge after another, adjusting, surviving, and flourishing. We cannot shrink into a hole just because the Internet looks intimidating, dangerous, and new. We must learn how to live with it. We must learn how to live *and thrive in* it. We must look at it as a process that our species have already followed in the past and the result is that we not only have survived but we have improved.

The healthy development of our personality is in our hands, although we know that we ought to help one another to build an environment that would be conducive to healthy personality growth. But that is what we also have to do in our physical homes, not only on the Net.

It also helps to understand what is at the root of our love for privacy: it is the need for intimacy. As we said, intimacy has two aspects: (1) the *protection* and *nurturing* of something precious that we seem to have walled up inside ourselves as a treasure; and (2) the *giving of oneself to others* in love, an act that perfects and makes a human person authentic and happy. We think that this is what should be the foundation of the meaning of privacy more than just the need for *control* over one's affairs and escape from the prying gaze of others. It is for the sake of the true human growth and happiness of the person that we have inside that privacy becomes a big issue.

REFERENCES

Aboujaoude, E. (2017). "The Internet's Effect on Personality Traits: An Important Casualty of the "Internet Addiction" Paradigm". *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*. 6(1), 1-4. DOI: 10.1556/2006.6.2017.009.

Altuwairiqi, M., Jiang, N. and Raian, A. (2019). "Problematic Attachment to Social Media: Five Behavioural Archetypes". *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health*. 16, 2, 1-36. doi:10.3390/ijerph16122136.

Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a 2

Artigas, M. (2009). *Filosofia de la Ciencia*. Pamplona, Spain: Eunsa.

Aquinas. T., *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 29

Bailey, E.R., Matz, S.C., Youyou, W. and Iyengar, S.S. (2020). Authentic self-expression on social media is associated with greater subjective well-being. *Nature Communications*, 11:4889. doi:10.1038/s41467-020-18539-w.

Blumer, T., & Doering, N. (2012). Are we the same online? The expression of the five factor personality traits on the computer and the Internet. *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, 6(3), article 5. doi: 10.5817/CP2012-3-5.

Boethius (1345). *De Persona et Duabus Naturis*, C. II.

Brand, B.L. (2016). Separating Fact from Fiction: An Empirical Examination of Six Myths About Dissociative Identity Disorder. *Harvard Review of Psychiatry*, Volume 24, Number 4, July/August 2016.

Clark, M.T. (2021). "Plotinus, Augustine, Aquinas, K.Wojtyla on Person and *Ego*". *20th WCP: Plotinus, Augustine, Aquinas, K.Wojtyla on Person and Ego*. Retrieved from https://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/PPer/PPerClar.htm.

Diomidous, M., Chardalia, K. (2016). "Social and Psychological Effects of the Internet Use". *Acta Informatica Medica*. Feb 24(1), 66-69. doi: 10.5455/aim.2016.24.66-69

Draine, C., Hall, B. (1989). *Culture Shock Indonesia*. Singapore: Times Books International.

Egan, V., Parmar, R. (2013). "Dirty Habits? Online Pornography Use, Personality, Obsessionality, and Compulsivity". *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 00, 1-16. DOI: 10.1080/0092623X.2012.710182.

Finnis, J. (2021). "Aquinas' Moral, Political, and Legal Philosophy". *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. (Spring 2021 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2021/entries/aquinas-moral-political/>.

Hugl, U. (2011)."Reviewing Person's Value of Privacy of Online Social Networking." *Internet Research.* Vol. 21, No. 4, 384-407. DOI 10.1108/10662241111158290.

Kosinski, M., Bachrach, Y. (2014). "Manifestations of User Personality in Website Choice and Behaviour on Online Social Networks". *Mach Learn*, 95, 357–380. Doi: 10.1007/s10994-013-5415-y.

Larsen, R.J., Buss, D.M. (2018). *Personality Psychology: Domains of Knowledge About Human Nature*. New York, USA: McGraw-Hill Education.

Newport, C. (2016) *Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World*. Singapore: Grand Central Publishing in Singapore. His TEDx Tysons talk url = https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3E7 hkPZ-HTk.

Noonan, H., Curtis, B. (2018). "Identity". *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (Summer 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.). Retrieved from =<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/su m2018/entries/identity/>.

Olson, E.T. (2021). "Personal Identity". *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Spring 2021 Edition. Edward N. Zalta (ed.). Retrieved from <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2 021/entries/identity-personal/>.

Peters, M.A. (ed.) (2018). *Encyclopedia of Educational Philosophy and Theory*. Singapore: Springer Science+Business Media.

Plato, *Phaedrus*, 229e5–6.

Quercia, D., Kosinski, M., Stillwell, D., Crowcroft, J. (2011). "Our Twitter Profiles, Our Selves: Predicting Personality with Twitter". *2011 IEEE International Conference on Privacy, Security, Risk, and Trust, and IEEE International Conference on Social Computing*, 180-185. Doi: 978-0-7695-4578-3/11.

Ray, M. (2021). "Edward Snowden". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 17 Jun. 2021, https://www.britannica.com/biography/E dward-Snowden. Accessed 20 October 2021.

Schoeman, F. (ed.) (1984). *Philosophical Dimensions of Privacy: An Anthology*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Seidl, H. (1987). "The Concept of Person in St. Thomas Aquinas: A Contribution to Recent Discussion". *The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review,* July, Vol 51, No 3, 435-460. Doi: https://doi.org/10.1353/tho.1987.0016. Retrieved from https://muse.jhu.edu/article/638052

Shoemaker, D. (2021) "Personal Identity and Ethics", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.* Fall 2021 Edition. Edward N. Zalta (ed.). Retrieved from <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2 021/entries/identity-ethics/>.

Singh, R.R (2017). *Education for the Twenty-First Century: Asia-Pacific Perspectives. Buenos Aires, Argentina, January 24–25, 2017.* Bangkok, Thailand: UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

Solove, D.T. (2004). *The Digital Person Technology and Privacy in the Information Age*. New York, USA: New York University Press.

Stieger, M. (2021). Changing Personality Traits with the Help of a Digital Personality Change Intervention. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science of the United States of America*, PNAS February 23, 2021, 118 (8) e2017548118. doi.org:10.1073/pnas.2017548118.

Stieger, S., Burger, C. (2012). "Who Commits Virtual Identity Suicide? Differences in Privacy Concerns, Internet Addiction, and Personality Between Facebook Users and Quitters". *Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking*, Vol 00, No 00, 1-6. DOI: 10.1089/cyber.2012.0323.

Thagard, P. (2014). What is the Self?. *Psychology Today*. 23 June 2014, url = https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/bl og/hot-thought/201406/what-is-the-self).

Wack S.R. (2010). *Privacy: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Williams, T.D. & Bengtsson, J.O (2020). "Personalism." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Spring 2020 Edition. Edward N. Zalta (ed.). Retrieved from

<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/personalism/>.

Wood, M.A., Bukowski, W.M. and Lis, E. (2016). "The Digital Self: How Social Media Serves as a Setting that Shapes Youth's Emotional Experiences". *Adolescent Res Rev*, 1, 163–173. Doi: 10.1007/s40894-015-0014-8.

Yepes-Stork, R. (1996). *Fundamentos de Antropologia: Un Ideal de la Excelencia Humana*. Pamplona, Spain: EUNSA.

Yepes-Stork, R., Aranguren, J. (2003). *Fundamentos de Antropología: Un Ideal de la Excelencia Humana*. Pamplona, Spain: EUNSA.