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Maturity and Personality: What Does it Mean to be Mature?

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Abstract

Many people recognize the importance of maturity within our lives and praise it when observed in others, but very few know what it means to be a "mature person" or can adequately explain why we value it so highly. Outside of psychological, physiological, and biological studies, there is scant research on maturity as an aspect of our personalities. I believe this to be a mistake. Within this paper, I pursue a philosophical study analyzing different ethical theories reasonably related to maturity by Immanuel Kant, Aristotle, and Virginia Held in an attempt to gain a better understanding of maturity as a personality trait. After evaluating those theories, I conclude the paper by applying the findings from the previous sections to a situation involving difficult moral-decision making in order to predict and illustrate how a mature individual may act in such situations.

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Introduction:

Maturity is an often-discussed yet unexamined concept; one that we value highly within Western society and are encouraged to strive for. In fact, "being mature" is so important to us that it often appears on job applications as a qualification or description of a desired type of applicant. Unfortunately, when one looks for a description of what it means to be "mature," they'll be greeted by statements similar to "of or relating to a condition of full development" or "having attained a final or desired state" from the *Merriam-Webster* dictionary. With such lackluster and vague characterizations, I can't help but ask: what does it truly mean to be a mature person?

In this paper, I seek to answer these questions through a philosophical study that will analyze different ethical theories that either discuss or are reasonably related to maturity in an attempt to gain a more holistic understanding of it. I plan to investigate maturity from a philosophical perspective rather than from other fields of study, such as those of psychological, biological, or physiological, because they typically address maturity as a natural, developmental process of humans rather than an unnatural aspect of a person's character. While such areas of study are relevant to understanding maturity as a lifelong process, they go beyond the scope of this paper which solely seeks to identify specific qualities of character within mature individuals. Maturity as a character trait is an often overlooked concept that I hope to shed light on within this paper.

Face-Value Characteristics of Maturity

Before discussing any relevant ethical theories, it is important to discuss how most people seem to intuitively understand and identify maturity. To begin, maturity seems to be a trait

recognized by most people as admirable to possess and is highly praised when observed in a person. However, it seems that no one is able to simply identify a person as being mature without said person having demonstrated it in some way. Thus, maturity seems to be a trait identifiable through the actions of a given individual engaging in some form of activity. Although, a variety of activities seem to be able to demonstrate maturity; therefore, it is difficult to outright identify any specific one in which a mature individual may engage in. Regardless, it is obvious that the actions performed by a mature individual in such activities are in some way distinct from other actions performed by any non-mature person. Because "mature" actions stand out and are seen as admirable, it is fair to assume that the mature individual's actions are carefully thought out and performed in a manner appropriate to the situation in which they find themselves. As such, it is reasonable to label the activities that demonstrate an individual's maturity as "rational activities", meaning those activities that require rational discernment. Engaging in rational activities certainly allows the quality of maturity to be observed within an individual. Thus, a mature person is someone recognized as mature because of their admirable and appropriate conduct in rational activities. By contrast, a non-mature person may attempt a similar action in an improper manner due to a lack of proper reasoning.[1]

However, it seems incorrect to assume that using proper reasoning within rational activities is the only factor that goes into the personality and character of a mature individual. In fact, a mature person seems to be cognizant of their state of being and able to control their emotions when engaging in rational activities. In this way, mature individuals are self-aware and introspective; they know how they feel in a given moment and are able to control themselves to

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[1] "Non-mature" people seem to be distinctly different from "immature" people. It doesn't seem correct to assume that any person who isn't mature is automatically immature, as that term evokes a negative connotation. Thus, non-mature people seem to be in a neutral state whereby they aren't mature while immature people are those who act in a manner opposite to that of a mature individual.

prevent an inappropriate action. This self-control doesn't seem to disregard emotions though because emotions intuitively must play some role in any rational activity. Emotions are inherent, physical responses to situational stimuli. It is impossible to remove them from the equation of human cognition, as they play a central role in guiding how people conceive of themselves and interact with the world around them. While at this point in the paper it is unclear how emotions specifically affect a mature individual's actions in rational activities, it is important to note that they do affect and play a role in a person's thought-processes and actions.

It is important to also address the common misconception that a person's age alone dictates their maturity. In this paper I only use the term "maturity"; however, people tend to use words such as "adult" and "grown-up" interchangeably with it. These terms seem to imply that maturity is something possessed by everyone once they reach adulthood; however, while adults are more likely to be mature than children, this assumption is not necessarily true. While children are certainly capable of performing mature acts, no person would reasonably claim that children are as mature as adults because children lack the life experiences that promote fully developed intellectual and emotional maturity. This point highlights an important and subtle distinction between performing mature acts and being a mature person. While the former is a necessary precondition of the latter, it is not sufficient; mature actions can be performed but do not automatically make a person mature. A mature person is someone who consistently performs appropriate actions over their lifetime and, consequently, is recognized as mature. In this way, a person may observe and praise another person's mature act without necessarily asserting that they are mature. This is a common dynamic in child-parent relationships, which are also inextricably-linked with becoming mature. For example, a parent may notice their child help someone in need and then praise them for this mature act, encouraging that same behavior later

in life. By contrast, a child traumatized by their abusive parents may develop less emotional self-control and act inappropriately when participating in rational activities as an adult. The upshot of these examples is that maturity seems to be something that is shaped by an individual's upbringing and life experiences, not something acquired with age alone.

Finally, it seems that another aspect of maturity is a consideration for and willingness to act towards improving the wellbeing and furthering the interests of strangers and those a mature person cares for out of a selfless kindness. The mature individual appears to be someone who values the relationships in their life and is motivated to positively impact both loved ones and strangers alike. This motivation does not compel a mature person to necessarily risk their own welfare for another's; however, specific circumstances and people may motivate them to do otherwise. Mature individuals seem able to evaluate the relevant factors of a situation in order to judge how an act will affect themselves and those involved. For example, a mature person may feel emotionally compelled to help their friend on a moment's notice move into a new house, disrupting their pre-existing plans for the day. However, if performing this supererogatory act would force a mature individual to abandon obligations that they have rationally determined to be more important, then they may choose not to offer their assistance. In this way, the mature person may feel an emotional obligation to help their loved ones and will often act on this, but is also able to rationally discern whether doing so will have too great of a negative impact on their own interests and wellbeing. In these cases, the mature person may reasonably choose not to assist. While they tend to act selflessly more often than not, a mature person seems able to determine whether performing situation-appropriate actions for the benefit of their loved ones is too demanding of or detrimental to them.

In summary, it seems that a person is identified as being mature through their engagement in rational activities involving the use of their proper reasoning and control over their emotions. In doing so, they are able to effectively evaluate a situation and perform a distinctly admirable and situation-appropriate action that is noticed and, possibly, praised by others. Additionally, maturity doesn't seem to be possessed by all adults, rather it is a life-long process that begins with a proper upbringing and is developed overtime through life experiences. Additionally, mature individuals seem to possess a selfless and kind motivation to help their loved ones and strangers, so long as doing so isn't too demanding of them or overly detrimental to their personal well being or interests. In the following sections, I will evaluate some philosophical accounts of maturity that may help to expand upon these intuitive features and explain others.

Kant and Maturity

Of the somewhat sparse accounts on maturity, Immanuel Kant offers the most overt and in-depth conceptualization of maturity in his essay *An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment*. While he never specifically uses the word "mature" within his writing, Kant utilizes the word "immaturity" to describe his understanding of "enlightenment":

> *Enlightenment is mankind's exit from its self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity* is the inability to make use of one's own understanding without the guidance of another. *Self-incurred* is this inability if its cause lies not in the lack of understanding but rather in the lack of the resolution and the courage to use it without the guidance of another (Kant 58).

Kant believed that the natural state of humanity was a mature one; the only required qualification for achieving maturity was "freedom: namely the freedom to make a *public use* of one's reason in all matters" (Kant 59). However, in his life, Kant did not observe this trait in those he saw among the greater populace. He believed that the greater populace of humanity was lazy and cowardly, willfully staying ignorant of their innate ability to develop their personal reasoning and

allowing their "established guardians of the masses" to tell them what to do and how to think (Kant 58).

According to Kant, shirking this immaturity was not an easy process as immaturity had become almost natural to humanity, "Rules and formulas, these mechanical instruments of a rational use (or rather misuse) of his natural gifts, are the fetters of an everlasting immaturity" (Kant 59). As such, only a few brave individuals were able to leave this state by being courageous enough to develop their own rationality and thoughts independent of societal rules and their guardians. As a result, the maturation of a majority of a society's population, though noted as being inevitable, was dependent on whether or not they were governed by oppressive forces that suppressed their beliefs and thoughts (Kant 59). In understanding immaturity, we can reasonably conclude that Kant's "maturity" is an individual's cultivation of their critical reasoning and embracement of their innate autonomy, demonstrated through a person's public expression of their reason.

Kant's account of maturity seems to possess appealing qualities that expand upon aspects of the trait discussed in the previous section, specifically the ideas of developing one's reasoning and freedom of thought. As stated, a mature individual seems to be someone who has developed their reasoning and is able to apply it within any given situation in order to determine and take the most situation-appropriate action. Kant adds to this conception by introducing the idea that a mature individual is also someone who is independent of thought, meaning that they are able to develop their own unique opinions and beliefs by critically examining and critiquing aspects of their society and personal life (Kant 59). In this way, a mature person cultivates authentic and genuine values that shape their outlook on life and that they unashamedly express publicly despite potentially being deemed unpopular or iconoclastic. For example, similar to how Kant

conceives the role of a "scholar" in critiquing society, a mature individual writing an impassioned and logical opinion piece on a polarizing issue would be demonstrative of this independence of thought (Kant 60). Thus, it appears that establishing one's independence of thought is a precondition for engaging in rational activities in a mature way; an individual's own personal beliefs and values must motivate them to perform such acts in the first place. Kant's emphasis on reason nuances our understanding of maturity because it underscores the relationship between a person's rationality and independence of thought, and, also, emphasizes the necessity for courageously expressing one's convictions in rational activities.

Interestingly, Kant also argues that once a person has "thrown off the yoke of immaturity" they *will* assist in the development of maturity within the greater public, "For there will always be found some who think for themselves...and who...will spread among the herd the spirit of rational assessment of individual worth and the vocation of each man to think for himself" (Kant 59). Here, Kant implies that a person, who has already developed their autonomous thought, is instinctively inclined to assist and educate others on cultivating their own. This strikes me as a notable aspect of his conceptualization of maturity, as it suggests that, rather than being duty bound to do so, a mature individual possesses an inherent motivation to promote maturity within people of their society. This idea is similar to the traits proposed previously about the mature individual possessing a selfless motivation to assist strangers and those they care for. Thus, Kant's conceptualization seems reasonable because a mature person appears to be someone who would want the best for others by seeking to promote such a desirable and respected trait within them. However, it seems appropriate here to then propose the question: is Kant's conceptualization of maturity sufficient?

To address this question, it seems proper to discuss whether the three qualifications he outlined for achieving a state of maturity are enough for a person to achieve such a state today: namely the public use of one's reason, overcoming one's cowardice and laziness, and the development of one's freedom of thought. On the first, it seems right to assume that the oppression by despots and the suppression of one's speech, whether publicly or privately, would prevent a person from developing their reasoning. Today, this qualification seems to be a non-issue as there are rights afforded to citizens in many societies that allow for them to express their views publicly and even criticize aspects of their nation without retaliation. On the development of one's reasoning, it appears true that a person cultivating their autonomous thought is a necessary condition to achieving a state of maturity. In addition to this, overcoming one's fears, whether of retaliation or embarrassment, and laziness to express their genuine and authentic views are also intuitively necessary to becoming mature. However, while these qualifications do seem to be necessary conditions, they are not sufficient because Kant's maturity lacks a comprehensive account of the role of emotions within a mature individual.

To Kant, an action is considered moral so long as it expresses the "good will", which means utilizing one's reasoning to perform actions that are good in themselves as their duty requires. In the *Groundwork for the Metaphysic of Morals*, Kant develops his idea of a "categorical imperative," which defines the essential aspect of morally good actions as capable of being universalized, and thus as specifying duties that must always be fulfilled for their own sake (Kant 5, 7). He is also clear about how he understands the role that emotions and motives play in performing moral actions, specifically how they detract from the moral worth of actions and, consequently, the good will:

> Yet [emotions and passions, self-control, and calm deliberation] are very far from being good without qualification—·good in themselves, good in any circumstances·—for

> without the principles of a good will they can become extremely bad: ·for example·, a villain's •coolness makes him far more dangerous and more straightforwardly abominable to us than he would otherwise have seemed. (Kant 5)

While it is true that emotions and motives can obscure or thwart the proper actions required by the exercise of the good will, it is unrealistic of Kant to believe that any person has the ability to disregard them in any decision-making process completely. Though he acknowledges that cowardice and laziness are necessary emotional states to overcome, their antitheses states aren't sufficient accounts of the full emotional range of humans. Emotions and motives are essential aspects of people that affect practically every aspect of our lives and cannot be done away with in favor of relying solely on reason and universal moral laws in rational activities. While this isn't to say that Kant is incorrect in claiming that emotions can be detrimental to acts expressing the good will, it is simply unrealistic to believe that proper reasoning and universal moral laws are the only factors that can and should be used to determine the actions of mature people. In fact, as we have previously stated, it seems that a mature individual is compelled by their proper motives and emotions to begin to act in most situations that call for the use of their reasoning. In this way, motives and emotions are the initial force that compels a mature individual to act in any given situation requiring them to utilize their reasoning. As such, it is more reasonable to assume that a mature individual engages in activities of moral worth in a process that has them employ their motives, emotions, and reasoning harmoniously to determine the most appropriate course of action.

Furthermore, it seems that emotions and motives not only are innately involved within the process of engaging in rational activities but are also crucial aspects of mature individuals' actual character and personality. Since Kant only attributes maturity to the use of reason and moral agency, he presents mature people as bland and emotionless people driven solely by their

intellect and duty to others with no uniqueness of character. This isn't how human beings are in reality, we possess our own distinct personalities and character traits developed throughout our lifetimes from our individual experiences, shining through in our engagement in rational activities. Mature individuals' actions and interactions with others demonstrate a very authentic and genuine personality that is noticeably mature, seen especially in their acts of kindness towards others. Additionally, these actions and interactions show that they possess a great degree of control over their emotions, have proper motivation within the situations in which they find themselves, and are also able to act in a reasonable way. Thus, a mature person isn't the emotionless, rational moral agent that Kant presents them as, but an authentic and unique person who utilizes their emotions and motivations to both compel them to act and perform appropriate actions in situations requiring moral discernment.

In summary, while Kant's conceptualization of maturity houses attractive features like the development of one's reasoning and autonomy, his disregard of emotions and presentation of a mature person as bland and inauthentic proves an unrealistic conceptualization of the trait. As such, Kant's maturity proves insufficient, though it was helpful in expanding on previous ideas. Knowing, then, that a lack of emphasis on the role of emotions within a mature person proved fatal for Kant, it seems appropriate to examine maturity through another ethical field that requires their usage: virtue ethics.

Aristotle and Maturity

Pioneered by Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, virtue ethics is a field of ethical thought that promotes the idea that every person's life goal is to strive for the greatest good and end of happiness (Aristotle 1097b20). According to Aristotle, happiness, also known as eudaimonia or flourishing, is a state entered by a person through the realization of their full potential by

cultivating and habituating excellent character and intellectual traits known as "virtues" (Aristotle 1100a5). The concept of maturity, at least initially, seems to be intimately related with Aristotle's theory. Specifically, the concept of virtues, on which this section will primarily focus, share similar qualities with those that we have identified within mature individuals. As a result, Aristotelian virtue theory may provide a more complete philosophical account of maturity than Kant's deontological conceptualization or, at least, expand upon our existing understanding of maturity. Before analyzing maturity's relation to Aristotle's theory, it seems appropriate to describe several aspects of virtues.

Virtues are dispositions and activities concerned with either a person's intellect, known as virtues of thought or intellectual virtues, or their character, known as virtues of character or moral virtues. Both types of virtues are acquired through practice but virtues of thought are developed through learning while those of character require habituation, "Virtue of thought arises and grows mostly from teaching; that is why it needs experience and time. Virtue of character results from habit…" (Aristotle 1103a15). While no person is innately born with possession of the virtues of character, most people have the capacity to acquire them through engaging in activities related to a given character virtue (Aristotle 1103a20). Additionally, virtues of character are related to a person's emotions and reasoning that are expressed through action. For an action itself to be a virtuous one, it must be performed in a way that expresses a mean state, the virtue itself, between two extremes of excess and deficiency known as "vices" (Aristotle 1106b17). For example, a comedian learns to hone and express their virtue of wit by performing a stand-up comedy routine. However, if they find that a crowd that they are performing to isn't enjoying their routine, they may decide to change up their set. In this situation, they originally were acting in a boorish manner, the deficiency vice of wit, and so

changed their routine in a way that accommodates to the context of the situation to properly express the virtue. This example demonstrates the relative nature of the mean state of virtues, specifically being relative to a person and the situation in which they find themselves (Aristotle 1106b1). Thus, the decision for how to act is made solely by the person involved in a given situation; furthermore, the person must be in a proper state, "...the agent must...be in the right state when he [acts]. First, he must know <that he is doing them>; secondly, he must decide on them, and decide on them for themselves; and, thirdly, he must also do them from a firm and unchanging state" (Aristotle 1105a30). The expression of virtues by a person is also considered a rare occurrence; Aristotle notes that people often view the virtues as praiseworthy and desirable states as they are difficult for any person to acquire (Aristotle 1109a30). In acquiring all of the virtues and habituating them, a person is considered to be in a state of flourishing which once achieved must be maintained through consistent practice because "happiness requires both complete virtue and a complete life" (Aristotle 1100a5). Having described some of these essential aspects of the virtues, we can compare some similarities between them and maturity.

As previously stated, maturity, like the virtues, is a desirable and praiseworthy trait that every person seems to have the capacity to develop but is only possessed by few. In addition, it is expressed through an individual's engagement in rational activities that require them to utilize their reasoning. It also seems likely that a mature individual utilizes their emotions in such activities from a proper state similar to that of the virtues, thus providing an account of the role that emotions play within a mature individual. Moreover, it seems that the expression of maturity in rational activities is one that is unique to a given mature individual who utilizes their independent and authentic reasoning to determine the best course of action, something very similar to the expression of the mean for a virtuous agent. Finally, it also seems likely that

maturity, as it is a life-long process, is a state that requires constant practice and vigilance, lest a person fall out of practice similar to the virtues. In this respect, maturity could be understood as an individual virtue. To determine such, this view requires answering a question: is maturity a virtue of thought or one of character?

We have already discussed how maturity is expressed through a person's actions concerned with emotions and reasoning from a proper state; thus, it seems that maturity would best fit the category of virtues of character. However, this doesn't seem to be completely accurate as it also seems that a mature person is someone who possesses the virtues of thought as well. Additionally, it doesn't seem that maturity is a singular trait of character. This is evident when we think about the many different situations in which maturity can be demonstrated and the number of descriptive qualities that a mature individual evinces in those scenarios. For example, it seems likely that a mature individual can be someone who is temperate and expresses such through their activities but can be courageous as well. Due to this, we can not reasonably assume that maturity is a singular virtue. However, due to its multiplicity of traits, it is instead possible that it can be understood as the equivalent of being in a state of flourish. If this conception is correct, then a mature individual would be someone who possesses all of the virtues and is essentially the Aristotelian virtuous agent. To determine whether such a conclusion is accurate, we need to evaluate some commonalities between maturity and flourishing.

In our intuitive understanding of maturity within Western culture, mature individuals are those who stand out to us through their expression of situation-appropriate actions. It is reasonable to assume that the reason for why these actions stand out is that they, like the virtues, are excellent ones. These excellent actions of the mature individual aren't expressive of a singular virtue of character or intellect though, rather a multitude of desirable and admirable

traits. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that a mature individual, being highly self-aware and possessing a great level of self-control, is someone who has honed their character traits to the point of habituation and can express them in an demonstrably excellent way. Therefore, a mature individual seems to be a virtuous agent. If this assertion is correct, the mature individuals that we observe engaging in rational activities in their unique and praiseworthy way are a contemporary version of the Aristotelian virtuous agents. If this is the case, it seems that Aristotle's centuries-old virtues are ever-present and respected within Western society.[2] To accept such a view, however, requires addressing the question - if Western society's understanding of the virtuous agent has changed since Aristotle's time to be understood today as a mature individual, does that mean that the concepts of maturity and flourishing are culturally and temporally relative?

This question isn't an uncommon one within the virtue ethics field. Many virtue ethicists debate whether the list of virtues and qualifications for flourishing are relative to a given society, or even an individual, with some even proposing their own interpretation of the theory in response. If we are to accept that maturity is the equivalent of being in a state of flourishing, then we run into this issue of relativity in which we must assume that our understanding of such will change in future generations. Moreover, we would also have to grapple with the possibility that the values of a person's society determine the virtuousness of certain actions, thus making the list of virtues subjective. By accepting such, we lose objectivity because the qualifications for being in a state of flourishing become dependent on the contemporary values and customs of a given society.

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[2] Investigating the place of Aristatelian virtues in contemporary society is a separate topic that I won't cover in this paper.

Around the world, it seems to be correct that different societies and cultures have their own unique understanding of what it means for a person to be in a state of flourishing or maturity. Furthermore, the key factor that determines what it means to be in such a state does seem to be determined by the values and customs of a given society at a certain point in time. For example, in his 1952 article *The Mature Personality*, Gordon Allport believed that a person wouldn't reach maturity until they had experienced marriage, childbirth, and the associated struggles (Allport 19). While a greater importance was placed on marriage back then as a cultural milestone in Western society, the CDC has reported that marriage rates since the 1950s have greatly fallen. Nowadays, it seems as though the great cultural and societal emphasis that had been placed on marriage is no longer as highly valued as it was during Allport's lifetime. Here, we can see how the cultural perception of marriage has changed over time and isn't an essential event in one's life that assists in their journey to becoming mature. The values within any given society change over time and those that were once held in high esteem decades ago aren't necessarily valued in the same way today. It would be naive to assume that any values or cultural practices from hundreds or thousands of years ago are valued and practiced in the same way today. Prior to beginning this paper, I acknowledged that this may have been something to consider which is why I have grounded my intuitive conceptualization of maturity within Western culture because I have grown up in such a setting. It wouldn't be reasonable for me to universalize my understanding of maturity to the rest of the world. As such, it is reasonable to assume that our conceptualization of the virtuous agent has changed over time and that it isn't understood in the same way as when Aristotle was alive. Nevertheless, while some may think otherwise, I believe this to be a nonissue.

Every society holds different values which, reasonably, guide and dictate how a person within it is supposed to act. As such, some actions viewed as virtuous within one society may not be viewed as such by another. Despite this, I believe that the essential aspects of Aristotle's theory remain unaffected by cultural or temporal relativity. For one, the individual virtues are all unaffected by the values of a given society because they are determined by the dispositions of a human being and are not socially-shaped. While it is true that people are educated from a culturally relative perspective about the customs and norms of their society, it is important to recognize that the virtues are related to the inherent emotional states and inclinations within humans. As such, while the verbalization of a virtue may change or be expressed in a certain way based on the customs of a given society, they are still determined by our states concerning our inherent emotions of pleasure and pain that compel us to act in activities concerning the virtues (Aristotle 1105a15). As such, our emotional responses to feelings like that of hunger are determined by the dispositions of humans themselves and not that of the society that we live in. For example, we recognize that the virtue of temperance is the mean state related to bodily pleasures. Eating too much or too little food involves physical drawbacks that will take their toll on the human body and, due to this, there has to be a balance that results in the mean state relative for a person. Temperance, being related to the body, isn't something that is determined by external forces like the society that one lives in. Rather, a society may tell a person what is too much, too little, or the appropriate amount for them to eat to be acting virtuously in line with societal values, but a human who is hungry cannot be told that they aren't by the society and then no longer feel such. In this way, there are limits to the control that a society's values have over a person, specifically that they are unable to control the inner dispositions of a person which form the virtues but may guide or dictate their expression.

Furthermore, as all cultures and societies possess some level of control over the expression of the virtues in accordance with their values, it is fair to also assume that they must possess some inherent conceptualization of what it means for a person to be in a state of flourishing. This is most evident when considering that every culture possesses their own unique view of what proper conduct and actions are within their society. To engage in such conduct also requires another essential aspect of Aristotelian virtue theory: the use of one's reasoning to determine and act in a situation-appropriate manner. A person cannot engage in an excellent manner without knowing what is appropriate conduct within their society, which is dictated by the values and conceptualizations of society. Thus, most, if not every, society must have some conceptualization of flourishing which is expressed by an individual acting in a proper manner. If every society has some form of flourishing and if the customs and values within them are unable to affect an individual's dispositions, it's reasonable to conclude that maturity and flourishing being culturally and temporally relative is a nonissue because the essential aspects of the theory are preserved.

In summary, the view that maturity is a contemporary, culturally relative interpretation of flourishing in Western society is a nonissue because the essential aspects of the virtues and flourishing aren't affected by a given society's values. Despite putting this perceived issue to rest, there's another issue to address in attributing maturity to Aristotelian virtue theory: namely Aristotle's intuitively incorrect conceptualization of interpersonal relationships within the virtuous agent's life.

Though perhaps an unintentionally promoted belief, Aristotle seemingly holds that the role of relationships within the life of a virtuous agent is based on that of utility. Many of his descriptions of how a person is supposed to achieve a state of flourishing emphasize the need for

a virtuous agent to engage in activities that require human interaction, such as with the virtue of generosity (Aristotle 1120a10). At face-value, this isn't an incorrect perspective as it would be unreasonable to assume that any person could live virtuously without some form of human interaction. However, when specifically addressing topics of interpersonal relationships within the life of a virtuous agent, Aristotle promotes an intuitively immoral message that forming such relations aren't worthwhile unless both individuals involved are virtuous and remain so. Nowhere is this perspective more evident than in his account of the virtue of friendship.

At the end of Book VIII and the beginning of Book IX in *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle discusses friendship and its place as a virtue yet proves contradictory in his explanation. To begin, he explains three different types of friendships and the differences between them: namely those of "utility", "pleasure", and the "complete friendship." To Aristotle, both utility and pleasure friendships aren't considered genuine or long lasting because they are based on an individual gaining something from another person, "Those who love for utility or pleasure, then, are fond of a friend because of what is good or pleasant in themselves, not insofar as the beloved is who he is, but insofar as he is useful or pleasant" (Aristotle 1156a15). Aristotle believed a complete friendship to be distinct from the previous two because both friends truly care for each other without qualification and wish goods on the other for their own sake, allowing for the friendship to endure:

> Each [friend] is both good without qualification and good for his friends, since good people are both good without qualification and advantageous for each other. <Hence they wish goods to each other for each other's own sake.> Now those who wish goods to their friend for the friend's own sake are friends most of all; for they have this attitude because of the friend himself, not coincidentally. Hence these people's friendship lasts as long as they are good; and virtue is enduring. (Aristotle 1156b7)

Aristotle then expands upon this by claiming that true happiness cannot be achieved by a virtuous person unless they have friends who are virtuous like themself because they are someone who, like them, is choiceworthy, meaning something is desirable in itself:

> If, then, for the blessedly happy person, being is choiceworthy, since it is naturally good and pleasant, and if the being of his friend is closely similar to his own, his friend will also be choiceworthy. What is choiceworthy for him he ought to possess, since otherwise he will in this respect lack something. Anyone who is to be happy, then, will need excellent friends. (Aristotle 1170b15)

This explanation of complete friendships and the role that they play in living a happy life seems to imply that a virtuous agent's life is incomplete without virtuous friends and, also, that both friends must remain virtuous in order for the friendship to be enduring.

This implication is made evident when considering the nature of the virtues and how friendship is expressed as a virtue: namely through activity (Aristotle 1157b6). If a virtuous person is someone who performs and engages in activities with the virtues excellently, then to express the virtue of friendship requires that a person be in a friendship with excellent friends. A person cannot express a virtue unless done in an excellent way. Hence, a virtuous person needs virtuous friends in order to properly engage with and habituate the virtue of friendship. Thus, complete friendships with virtuous friends are a precondition of happiness. While there are other forms of friendship, a virtuous one is the best one and the one that is necessary to have as a virtuous person.

By conceptualizing a complete friendship as a precondition for the virtue of friendship and, ultimately, flourishing, Aristotle seems to promote the idea that virtuous agents ironically view each other as means rather than ends of themselves. While he claims that a friendship based on utility is different, his explanation of complete friendships suggests that they are also based on utility because the habituation of the virtue of friendship requires a complete friendship with virtuous people. As such, a virtuous person cannot habituate the virtue of friendship without

developing a friendship with another virtuous person. While both virtuous people involved in the relationship may truly care for the other, this view appears to contradict Aristotle's belief that friends should be choiceworthy in themselves. However, in requiring virtuous friends as a precondition for flourishing, it seems that a virtuous person views others as goods or means and judges them based on their utility to their personal flourishing. In this way, Aristotle advances the idea that a virtuous person should evaluate other people, besides family members as they are unavoidable bonds, to determine whether they possess a worthwhile, virtuous character that makes a friendship complete. This view is in tension with Aristotle's belief that friends ought to be choiceworthy in themselves, implicitly promoting the idea that all people are goods that are either helpful or unhelpful means to the virtuous person's end of achieving a state of flourishing. Thus, Aristotle inadvertently concludes that all non-virtuous people aren't worthwhile relations and aren't ends of themselves. This seems an intuitively wrong perspective for any virtuous person, much less a mature individual, to adopt as people should be viewed as ends in themselves whom a virtuous person cares for without ulterior motives.

Take, for example, a virtuous person in a complete friendship with another virtuous person who suffered a stroke and became comatose. With Aristotle's view of friendship, the virtuous person would recognize that their friend no longer presented the same virtuous qualities and, as such, would no longer be a worthwhile relation to maintain as virtue is no longer enduring. However, this perspective isn't how humans or a virtuous agent who cares for them would intuitively react. We build our relationships based on, as Aristotle has asserted, "loving" and we care for the people whom we enter such relationships with (Aristotle 1159a30). The endurance of relationships cannot reasonably be based on the endurance of virtue as that would neglect difficult times in people's lives that cause them great stress and make them lose

virtuousness. There are times in every person's life where we experience hardship and may unwillingly change as a result of such, whether that be due to events such as loss of a loved one or a crippling accident. In these times, it seems that a mature individual would be someone who would be able to empathize with, comfort, and care for the person experiencing such unfortunate events instead of allowing the relationship to dissolve. As evidenced by this discussion on friendship, Aristotle's view of relationships being based on utility within a virtuous person's life doesn't seem to be how a mature individual would intuitively view their relations. Rather, it seems that a mature person cares for those they develop bonds with regardless of their virtuosity. As such, Aristotle's virtue theory cannot wholly account for the qualities of a mature person as it lacks the aspect of selfless kindness and caring. Although, this issue may be solved by introducing the concept of "care" from the ethics of care to the existing Aristotelian framework.

Held and Maturity

The ethics of care is an area of normative ethical thought that places emphasis on the importance of interpersonal relationships and caring for others when performing moral acts. The theory recognizes that humans are dependent upon one another from birth and that, as such, we possess strong interpersonal bonds that drive us to act in a caring manner that attends to the needs of those who are dependent upon us or whom we simply care for. As such, while other normative ethical theories greatly emphasize limiting emotional responses when engaging in moral activities, care ethicists believe that emotions and interpersonal relationships should affect moral decision-making and actions, meaning that partiality in moral decision-making is acceptable and encouraged. This partiality is not completely irrational though, care ethicists believe that a person's raw emotions shouldn't guide all of their actions, rather that they are

cultivated and reflected on by a moral agent in order to perform moral actions properly (Held 10).

The ideas of partiality and the focus on the importance that interpersonal relationships play within every person's lives are certainly attractive ideas to adopt in trying to understand maturity. As with Aristotelian thought, it seems correct that a mature individual isn't someone who's moral actions are guided solely by their rational thought or universal moral laws, rather they engage in moral activities in a proper state in which they temper their emotions with rationality to decide upon and perform the best actions. Going further than Aristotelian theory though, the introduction of partiality within moral decision-making and the emphasis on the importance of interpersonal relationships within the life of a person could improve upon the existing Aristotelian framework of a virtuous agent that we are attempting to equate a mature individual to.

On partiality, it seems a likely possibility that the mature individual demonstrates partiality within their decision-making in order to further the interests or improve the wellbeing of those they care for. In this way, the mature individual isn't someone who is completely selfless and willing to sacrifice their own interests for just anyone, rather they choose to assist those whom they care for in a way that may, at times, prove self-sacrificial. However, it also seems true that a mature individual will assist those in need who they may have no past relation to so long as it doesn't affect them in a way that proves detrimental to their wellbeing or important interests. In this way, the distinct type of caring within a mature individual seems to be closely linked to that of the one proposed by Virginia Held.

Before describing Held's care, I think it is necessary to address the scope of this section. Though there is a great deal of debate by care ethicists on whether care should be considered a

virtue or not if adopted into a virtue ethical framework, I don't think that it is necessary to take a definitive side on this debate within this paper. The goal of this section is merely to attribute a specific form of care to maturity and then demonstrate how it improves upon the existing Aristotelian framework. To take a side and elaborate on this debate would take away from the subject of maturity unnecessarily. Thus, I will only attribute Held's caring in its general form as she describes it to maturity.

Held's specific belief of how care is best understood is as both a practice and value. As a practice, care is a continuous process that builds relationships in morally proper way:

> As a practice, [care] shows us how to respond to needs and why we should. It builds trust and mutual concern and connectedness between persons. It is not a series of individual actions, but a practice that develops, along with its appropriate attitudes. It has attributes and standards that can be described, but more important that can be recommended and that should be continually improved as adequate care comes closer to being good care. Practices of care should express the caring relations that bring persons together, and they should do so in ways that are progressively more morally satisfactory. Caring practices should gradually transform children and others into human beings who are increasingly morally admirable (Held 42).

Understanding care as a practice allows for us to identify caring actions as being morally excellent ones performed specifically for certain individuals who a mature individual has a past relationship with. On top of that, Held's care also leaves open the option for developing new relationships through selfless caring acts for people whom the mature individual may have no relation with, thus allowing them to be selflessly caring towards strangers. In addition to this, understanding care as a value allows for caring ideals to act as a primary factor of an individual's normative judgment, allowing for Aristotelian virtuous actions to be guided in a way that can prioritize the wellbeing and interests of others (Held 42). Moreover, care as a value fixes Aristotle's improper conceptualization of other people as goods used to achieve flourishing by having a mature individual view others whom they have developed genuine bonds with as a choiceworthy ends of themselves.

In addition to this, while Held has openly stated her belief that the ethics of care should be its own moral theory and remain distinctly independent from virtue ethics, I see no issue adopting her definition of care alongside the Aristotelian framework (Held 20). This is because her definition of care seems to best encapsulate caring within a mature individual and is the only aspect of her overall conceptualization of care ethics that I seek to utilize. It could be argued that even adopting such an idea of care alongside any form of virtue theory would limit certain aspects of her understanding of care, but I don't believe this to be a realistic fear. By taking no definitive side in the debate of care as a virtue, Held's conceptualization of care remains in its original format and is able to act as an important value of the mature individual. In this way, care plays a paramount role in the moral discernment of a mature individual by influencing their moral decision-making and guiding their actions in a way true to its practice while allowing for such actions to be done virtuously as well. Thus, I perceive no issue by adopting Held's understanding of care alongside Aristotelian virtue theory because its qualities remain true to her conceptualization of the trait. With the adoption of Held's care into the existing understanding of a virtuous agent as a value and practice, we now possess a general framework for how to understand the mature individual.

The Mature Individual and Moral Decision-Making

Having identified a core framework for maturity, we now have the ability to attempt to conceptualize in detail how a mature person may act within rational activities involving difficult moral decisions. To do so, it seems appropriate to analyze a thought experiment that demonstrates how the qualities previously identified within a mature individual may have them act. For example, what should a mature individual do in the following situation called *Gas*

Station: a close friend and a complete stranger both request a mature person's last five dollar bill to buy some food from a gas station that the mature person and their friend have briefly stopped at. The mature person can only give the money to one of the two. I utilize this specific thought experiment because it explores an important and relevant area of ethics; in the real world, ethical dilemmas typically involve a difficult decision between one of two options in which resources are limited and can only be allocated to one party. This thought experiment seeks to highlight the ways in which the notion of care might allow us to better understand a mature decision-making process that solely utilizing the Aristotelian virtue theory framework was unable to.

In *Gas Station,* it is a reasonable assumption that the mature person would choose to give the five dollars to their friend because of their pre-existing relationship that is absent between them and the stranger. However, Aristotelian virtue theory wouldn't automatically come to this conclusion because Aristotle never provides a rule on partiality in moral decision-making and whether it can be considered virtuous to do so. In fact, Aristotle states that a virtuous agent oughtn't provide assistance in the form of base actions to their friends, specifically those involved in a complete friendship, because doing so leads to an unequal relationship between both friends similar to friendships for utility and pleasure (Aristotle 1159b5). This attitude towards caring for friends doesn't intuitively seem to be how a mature individual would view those they care for; rather, they value and perform caring acts for friends regardless of maintaining equality in their friendships or other relationships. Integrating care as both a practice and value into our understanding of how the mature individual thinks and acts can correct this base perspective of Aristotle's. This integration conceptualizes a mature individual's view of loved ones as genuine, intrinsically valuable relations, instead of "goods" or means to some end like flourishing (Aristotle 1159a7).

This integration suggests that partiality is able to become a factor in a mature person's moral decision-making process because the adoption of caring as a value becomes a morally-justifiable motivator. Thus, if the mature individual gives the money to their friend, and if they act in accordance with relevant virtues, their act of partiality still qualifies as a virtuous act. Adopting care as both a practice and value corrects the inadequate perspective of interpersonal relationships Aristotelian virtue theory promotes. It also allows for acts of partiality that favor a loved one over a stranger to be considered virtuous because the pre-existing relationship between mature individuals and friends are appropriate motivators that justify acting in a partial and caring way. Though, this conclusion invites a question: does a mature individual always prioritize a loved one's interests and wellbeing over that of a stranger's?

As we have asserted, it is possible for a mature individual to act virtuously in situations where they demonstrate partiality for someone they care for, but it doesn't seem right to assume that they will always choose a loved one's interests over that of another person's. This seems especially true when considering situations where a stranger's needs prove greater than a loved one's. To demonstrate this, I'll draw on *Gas Station* once again but change the situation so that the stranger is homeless and desires the money to feed themself for the day while the friend lives comfortably and only wants to buy a snack. Same as before, they may only allocate the money to one person. This modified example will be known as *Gas Station 2.0*. Would the mature person still give the money to their friend?

Here, the homeless person's needs obviously outweigh that of the friend's but, as we have asserted, decisions involving partiality can still be considered virtuous ones. So even in this situation if the mature individual chose to give the money to their friend it would still be considered a virtuous act. On the other hand, if they decided to give the money to the homeless

person then they would be acting in a virtuous manner because the homeless individual has expressed a legitimate need for the money and the mature person has the means to assist (Aristotle 1120b25). In addition to this, giving the money to the homeless person would also be considered a caring act because Held's conceptualization of care as a practice also advocates for the cultivation of caring relations within one's society if there is an opportunity to do so (Held 42). Thus, it doesn't matter who is chosen to receive the money in this situation because the mature individual will still be acting in both a caring and virtuous manner regardless of their decision.

At this point, it seems that only one conclusion can be drawn for how a mature individual would act in situations such as in *Gas Station 2.0*. With how I have framed the *Gas Station 2.0* example, there are no extenuating circumstances or factors that would prevent the mature individual from giving their five dollars away, such as any personal pressing needs requiring the money. If they chose to not give the money to either party, they would be acting viciously and in an uncharacteristically selfish manner because they possess the means to provide assistance to people expressing an immediate need. With no legitimate reasons to justify such a decision, they would perform such a selfish act in the wrong state and, thus, they wouldn't be acting virtuously. As a virtuous state is desirable for the mature individual, they would want to act in a virtuous manner to maintain such and would have to choose between the friend or the stranger in order to be acting in a virtuous manner.

As we have seen with the *Gas Station 2.0* example, it seems that there is no single correct decision for a mature individual to make in situations where both choices result in a virtuous and caring act. More importantly, it still remains unclear whether the mature individual would always prioritize a loved one's interests and wellbeing. However, regardless of care's introduction, this

outcome is to be expected when attributing maturity to Aristotelian virtue theory. Aristotelian virtue theory is often critiqued by ethicists for its perceived inability to be action-guiding, meaning providing definitive answers for how a moral agent is to act in any given situation, and for other similar faults as well. While these perceived issues are certainly present within virtue ethics, Rosalind Hursthouse's response to such effectively addresses and clarifies how the theory in practice may avoid this issue. I believe that briefly discussing her perspective will allow us to find the answers to the previously proposed questions about maturity.

To begin, there seems to be a common misconception that a virtuous person struggling with making a difficult moral decision will think of how another virtuous agent would act in their situation in order to make their own. Responding to the fourth critique of virtue theory in her essay "Virtue Theory and Abortion," Hursthouse addresses this misconception:

> So trying to decide what to do within the framework of virtue theory is not, as some people seem to imagine, necessarily a matter of taking one's favored candidate for a virtuous person and asking oneself, "What would they do in these circumstances?" (as if the raped fifteen-year-old girl might be supposed to say to herself, "Now would Socrates have an abortion if he were in my circumstances?" and as if someone who had never known or heard of anyone very virtuous were going to be left, according to the theory, with no way to decide what to do at all). The agent may instead ask herself, "If I were to do such and such now, would I be acting justly or unjustly (or neither), kindly or unkindly [and so on]?" (Hursthouse 227).

It wouldn't make sense, as Hursthouse points out, for every person to make their moral decisions based on what they believe a past or current virtuous agent would have done. Moreover, it is unreasonable to assume that a virtuous agent, much less a mature individual, would rely on such a decision-making process based on role models when they themself already know which actions are virtuous. This is especially true in situations such as *Gas Station 2.0* where both courses of action are virtuous and caring. If one virtuous agent, knowing all of the details of the situation, were to only observe another virtuous person making a decision within the *Gas Station 2.0* example, they would learn nothing as they are simply observing and unable to know the acting

virtuous agent's reasoning that brought them to decide between the two options. The same would be true if they attempted to imagine how a past virtuous exemplar would act as they would ultimately be speculating the thought processes of a person whose reasonings they could never truly know. In addition to this, imagining how another person would act and justifying your reasoning based on such an assumption seems to imply a lack of responsibility for one's actions, which wouldn't reasonably be how a mature person would act or justify their reasoning as they are someone who is autonomous of thought and, as such, makes decisions based on their own reasoning. Thus, as a virtuous agent cannot come to moral decisions based on observation or imagining virtuous exemplars, the decision for how to act in difficult moral situations must be made solely by the virtuous agent involved. Though this is an obvious conclusion to have come to, ruling out a mature individual's reliance on others for their decision-making allows for us to reasonably deduce possible ways for how they may decide to act in situations like *Gas Station 2.0.*

As we have asserted that the mature individual in *Gas Station 2.0* won't make their decision based on their observation of another or by imagining how a fictitious virtuous agent would act, there seems to be two likely options for how they may act. The first option is to simply base their decision on a similar, previous experience. This would merely entail thinking back on a similar event and acting in an appropriate manner based on the decision from that time. This option is only possible, though, if a mature individual had a relevant past experience to base their decision on which wouldn't result in any dilemma about how to act and is thus unnecessary to analyze. On the other hand, in the event of no such similar past experience, another likely option is that a mature individual would base their decision on their unique values and beliefs developed throughout their lifetime.

While it may seem as though the decision to be made in *Gas Station 2.0* is an unconstrained one with two appropriate courses of action, it seems likely that the mature individual involved wouldn't view the situation as such. That would be a conclusion to draw if the decision-making process was solely based on their reasoning; however, as we asserted when discussing Kant's maturity, that isn't the only factor that goes into the decision-making process of a mature individual involved in rational activities. It is important to remember that a mature person isn't part of some group of mature people with the same personalities that are indistinguishable from each other. Rather, they are an autonomous and authentic person who has developed their own unique outlook on life from their past experiences that set them apart from other mature individuals and people. Due to this, the decision made by one mature person isn't necessarily going to be the same one made for the same reasons as another. Instead, it seems likely that their decision would be made from their emotional response to the situation that comes from the values they've developed throughout their lifetime. In *Gas Station 2.0,* one mature individual may decide to give the money to their friend because their life experiences have ingrained within them a greater desire to care for their friends. Contrarily, another mature individual may have had life experiences that caused them to develop a greater desire to care for those in need and, thus, would allocate the money to the homeless person. In this way, it seems that the decision to be made in *Gas Station 2.0* is constrained by the given values and emotional response to the situation of the mature individual involved.

Thus, the answer to the question of whether the mature individual would always prioritize their loved ones is subjective, which is in line with how Aristotle believes a virtuous person would act. Each mature individual is a genuine, autonomous, and unique person with their own values and decision-making process that affects their disposition towards the issues that they

face. This isn't to say that a mature person who has developed a greater value for their loved ones will always be inclined to choose them over another person though, as they aren't someone guided purely by emotions. Rather, it is fair to assume that in some situations, despite their values, they may be able to utilize their reasoning to recognize that the needs of their friends may be lesser than someone else's. In this way, the manner in which a mature individual handles difficult moral situations also sets them apart from a solely caring or virtuous person. They analyze all relevant factors to a situation from a caring perspective checked by their reasoning and personal values to come to an appropriate decision unique to them. Thus, a mature individual is someone who will act in an excellent and, possibly, caring manner that is uniquely based on their values developed throughout their lifetime and the context of the situations in which they find themselves.

Conclusion

Having now reached the end of this project, it seems appropriate to summarize and address what has been accomplished. Within the initial three sections of this paper, I primarily focused on a singular ethicist and analyzed how their works would assist in furthering our understanding of maturity as a character trait. From Kant, we were able to gain a better understanding of the type of reasoning that a mature individual possesses: namely freedom of thought. A form of autonomous reasoning cultivated by a mature individual that allows them to establish their own genuine and authentic beliefs that set them apart from non-mature or immature people who may be unable, or unwilling, to do so. From Aristotle, we learned that the specific type of behavior and actions of mature individuals that are so widely praised by others are those of a virtuous agent. This proved an especially important discovery because it allows us

to explain how a person is to become mature and predict some actions of mature people within rational activities. However, as Aristotle's conception of interpersonal relationships proved inaccurate to maturity, we had to adopt Held's conceptualization of care into our understanding of a mature person as a virtuous agent. In doing so, we were then able to analyze in detail how a mature person would act in rational activities involving difficult moral decisions. We specifically learned that a mature individual in moral situations involving partiality will typically choose the interests of those they care for over strangers, although they are also willing to choose the greater needs of strangers over those they care for depending on their personal values and discernment of the situation.

Despite being at the end of this undertaking, it seems proper to address a concern that some may have with this research on maturity: namely the subjective nature of its conceptualization. While we addressed the cultural and temporal relativity of maturity within the Aristotle section, it is important to acknowledge that the proposed aspects of this understanding of maturity is based on my own intuitions of the subject. Due to this, it is possible that my own beliefs of what a mature individual may be aren't necessarily the same as those of another person living within a different part of Western society. Being a straight, white, male from the suburbs of the East coast of the United States inherently gives me a different perspective of what it means to be mature than, say, a person who grew up impoverished, or homosexual, or of another skin color. In this way, the qualities of maturity that I proposed have the possibility of being disputed; however, I believe it is also important to recognize the way in which I have framed and grounded my research.

Both Aristotle and Kant's ethical theories have existed for generations and been well established within Western academia and society in varying ways. While they have both received

scrutiny and been interpreted in different ways over the years, many of their core concepts have remained true to their original foundations. In having attributed maturity to such historic theories, I have maintained a certain level of cultural and temporal objectivity that has been well established within our society for generations. As such, the qualities that I have outlined within a mature individual, save for care, are ones that seem to be grounded within Western society for generations and are those that most people would reasonably conclude are mature. The only quality which I believe can be reasonably disputed within a mature individual is how I have described and framed their caring qualities. Though it does seem to be an aspect of a mature person, it may be that some people may not believe a mature individual would be someone who, for example, would attend to the needs of a stranger or be self-sacrificial in performing their caring acts. This is a reasonable critique that I would welcome others to address if they chose to respond to my work in the future and would help to possibly clarify this conceptualization of maturity.

On that topic, I view this research as being the groundwork for possible future endeavors exploring the concept of maturity. Though I personally believe that I have identified and described a sufficient number of mature qualities within this paper, I had originally intended to go even further in my research and explore other areas of study but was limited in my time to do so. Thus, if future research was to be done, I would want to analyze ethical theories that could possibly be related to maturity such as those of consequentialism. There seems to be many possibilities for future research on this subject that could shed light on this previously obscured topic.

Finally, while this may be a disputed sentiment, I believe the study of maturity to be an important undertaking. The trait is often used to describe an ideal personality type within

Western culture that very few people, despite its idolization, are able to actually describe and explain how the greater population is supposed to become mature. As with flourishing, maturity is a process that guides people to develop their personalities, shaping how they conceive of themselves, others, and the world around them. It is a process that seems to lead towards self-actualization and the realization of a person's full potential, something that no person's life should go without if possible. Though I think I've laid an adequate foundation, I don't believe I've provided a complete account of maturity. There are so many nuances to the personality of mature individuals that have yet to be explored. As such, I think my work on this subject is far from over and I plan to continue research on this topic in the future.

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