“The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” Movie Analysis

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (2008) is not just a drama, fantasy and romance movie but throughout the movie, the story is also linked to the development process of psychology development too. In the movie, the newborn named Benjamin was born in age reverse but this age reverse just occur with his physical appearance which make him look like 70-years-old man. His mental age is still like a normal people. Furthermore, his physical appearance gets younger at the same rate that everyone else gets older. This essay will discuss on the development process of psychology development of Benjamin Button’s life since he was born until the end of his life.

In the stage of infancy there are two psychology development theories that appear in Benjamin which are Baby’s capacity theory and Perceptual Development theories. Firstly, Baby’s capacity is a mental and physical ability or aptitude and skill in newborn baby to adapt or respond to the environment in order to survive. In the film, in the very first scene, Benjamin is hardly grabbed up from the cradle by his father. Suddenly, Benjamin starts to cry by that force. Another example is when Benjamin is stepped by Queenie, he cry out loud. These two examples demonstrate Benjamin react to the different situation by crying in order to let other people know that he is here when he is not able to speak. Secondly, Perceptual Development theory is about the newborn’s brain which can connect itself in response to environment stimuli such as light, color, sound and smell. They may respond to these things by laughing, smiling, touching or
crying. In the movie, Benjamin also has this kind of respond. He smiles when he senses the laughing sound of the aging people who is standing surround him.

Moving to the childhood stage, there are 2 main theories which can connect to Benjamin’s childhood which are Cognitive Development, and Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development theory. Beginning with Cognitive Development theory, it is the construction of thought processes such as thinking, recalling, and analyzing. There is two stages of Cognitive Development that occur with Benjamin. First stage, Assimilation, is when Benjamin is having fun while banging the fork because he thought it is a toy. Second stage, Accommodation, is when he learn that he cannot banging the fork because it is not a toy when Queenie tells him to stop banging. Furthermore, Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development theory explains that kids will function independently and feel confident to think for themselves when they have high level of challenge and competence. The kid will improve their skill faster when they have assistance to teach and guide them. According to the movie, Benjamin start to play piano and getting better when the old women teach him a technic which is to put the feeling in to the song he plays.

Entering adolescence stage, as Benjamin is growing up he develops his sexuality and learns new things by social environment. Sexual Development theory is introduced in this time period. Men teenager begin to have spermarche or the development of sperm in boys' testicles. And because of this development, it cause men to have their first ejaculation. During teenage period, Social Learning theory truly illustrates the social as a factor that impact teenage behavior. These two theories can be clearly seen in Benjamin. Benjamin follows Captain Mike’s behavior
who like to drink and party. He goes to the bar with captain Mike’s and having his first sex with a prostitute.

Next, the stage of adulthood, Benjamin is in mature age which mean he grow up enough to take care of himself and make his own decision. Levinson’s Theory of Male Development suggests that young adult who is in between the age of 18 and 20 will seeks independence by separating from family. In the movie, when Benjamin turns 18, he grows enough to live by himself so he leave the home and go to work with Captain Mike. In addition, entering adulthood, people will gain autonomy ability which is an ability to take care of one’s self, be able to make their own decision and achieve their goal in the future. Benjamin pass through his decision-making when he decides to go on war with some of the crews to help the United States Navy fight. He has achieved his goal after he is the one who survive and come back home safely.

Again with Levinson’s Theory, at the age around 28 - 32 in transition season, men start to adjust their lifestyle. In the movie, when Benjamin meet Daisy once again in spring, he decides to move out from Quieenie to live together with Daisy. Then when he is around 33-39 years old, he make his life more stable by sell his father's house and move into a duplex with Daisy.

Finally, the stage of old aged and dying, there are three mains theory that happen in these stage. Firstly, most of aging people will face a dementia. This dementia will decrease mental abilities such as memory loss, impaired attention and lacking sexual desires. Second theory is Emotional Development Theory. Old people tend to change their emotion quickly when they unsatisfied with something. For example, in Benjamin’s case, as he moving in an old age stage he doesn’t seem to know who or where he is. Moreover, when he is not believe that he already
has breakfast, he turns aggressive to the women. Third theory is Kulbler-Ross’s Stages of Dying. This is theory that Kulber used to describe the process of dying which has 5 total stages, denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. There is one stages that appear with Benjamin which is acceptance stage. In acceptance stage, Benjamin accepts that one day he will die peacefully as a baby. As a result he leaves his family and sold everything that belong to him and his father such as the summer house and Button’s Buttons to save money for Daisy and his daughter.

To conclude, all over The Curious Case of Benjamin Button movie there are various of psychology development theories that are presented in difference stages of Benjamin’s life. Baby’s capacity theory and Perceptual Development theories are shown in infancy stage. Next in childhood stage Cognitive Development and Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development theory are used to describe the development within Benjamin. During his adolescence and adulthood stage, he has develop mostly on his social skills. And lastly the old aged and dying stage, Benjamin’s mental abilities is decreased and he also accept that one day he is going to die. In my opinion, I think before we are going to understand other people minds or personalities, we have to know the basic development process of psychology. It is because at the certain age, every people will act in difference ways. Therefore, if we know why they act like that, we will definitely understand them.
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