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First Writing Assignment

David Fincher’s *“*The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” is a transcendent film that portrays love and coming of age, in a very unique way. Through Benjamin’s strange aging process we see him struggle with love and himself, as he gets older but progressively physically younger. Twain’s quote, “life would be infinitely happier if we could only be born at the age of eighty and gradually approach eighteen” is a wonderful thought provoker after watching this film. This film is a personification of Twain’s words, and depicts an accurate an example of what would be like if it we aged in a reverse order. I personally disagree with Twain’s position, and through witnessing Benjamin’s life, and pondering about life in general, I think that the aging process is how it should be.

It is important to first look at what Twain is trying to say in his age quote. From my eyes, he has a reason for thinking this and I think it is because of a common trait we humans have, being that we very easily lose track of time. This consequently correlates to the fact that we generally also lose track of the commonly accepted “best” time of our life. I believe Twain is arguing that since our younger years are the better, everyone would realize that much easier. Since our twenty’s and thirty’s would be our twilight years, all our lives we would be looking forward to then and probably enjoying them that much more than we do now in the conventional way we age. A testament to the famous saying “save the best for last”, that’s exactly what our life would be like. Our best, most energetic and youthful years make sense to be last. Wouldn’t we all want to die on a high note? Our last memories wouldn’t be from decades ago, and it would give humans a sense of peace if the last leg of their life was filled with joy, and not the opposite.

This only works however, is if everyone aged this way and it would not be a singular thing. Benjamin Button is a perfect counter argument to Twain, at least on this singular level. Since Benjamin was a singular case, his ordeal with life was of course drastically different from everyone else’s and I believe we have to take that into account. Throughout, he had to struggle with always being treated older than he actually was. This got better of course once it was realized that Benjamin was special and it was obvious he was not going to die at a young age. He himself experience childhood in a manner we all do, but just through a different appearance. He struggled to walk in his early years like we all do, and Benjamin enjoyed being read to even at the physical appearance of someone well into their seventies. The fact that our brain develops in a normal manner makes Benjamin’s life much easier. Life is not all that bad for him however until his love life with Daisy really picks up, in particular when it comes to raising a child and their latter years together. Benjamin realizes that he cannot grow old with Daisy and his child like everyone else could, and it leads him to leave his family shortly after his daughter is born and live alone. This is the main problem for me with again in reverse. If it is only you, then you could never live a normal life, and one that can not end on a good note in my eyes. Part of what makes growing old not so bad, is most of us eventually find someone to spend the later years of our life with. We have children, raise them, and watch life take it’s course as the cycle starts over again. Benjamin proves that this is impossible in his case. He is in love with Daisy and wants to be there, but in such a complicated case as his where death isn’t even the driving force of his solidarity is what makes it that much more depressing and grim.

Growing old in reverse works if it is universal among all people, but it still would not make it a better way to age in my opinion, as it makes the end of our lives everything we look forward to. Being born at eighty with a raggedy and beaten body would only make us want to be youthful and full of energy. Consequently, we would be looking forward to our lives when they are at a close and I think this would make us rush through life. I argue since we know that being young is usually better than being old, we look at life now with a different perspective and we make sure to enjoy the moment and deal with the future later. Aging in the opposite manner would quite frankly just make us look at life in an opposite way. Always fast forwarding our minds to the future, we would scarcely realize what is in front of us. I feel as if it wouldn't make our lives seem so fulfilled when we do eventually die. The way we age now makes one cherish their childhood, and notice the steady progression they have made as the years pass.

In the end Benjamin Button is a curious case indeed, and one that should makes us all question life and time as we know it now. It is a lesson in a sense of how we should value our time in this world maybe more so than we do, and gives us a unique perspective on how deal with gaining and losing loved ones as our life progresses. It makes a case like Benjamin’s believable, a person constantly learning from his mistakes, falling in love and yet falling in a love that no one but him can go through. Benjamin’s mind started and ended how most of ours do, but his body couldn’t complete a life like you and I face. Twain was right to ponder and joke that we should age backwards as thats what human curiosity, and stubbornness to accept what is true, entails. One way or the other however, as Button himself would say, “nothing ever lasts.”