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“The Curious Case of Benjamin Button”

The progression of life for a person is a plethora of experiences and emotions, both which mature for decades until the point of a natural death, usually being the result of physical or mental deterioration. For a person like Benjamin Button who ages backwards and becomes young over time is a sharp contrast to the normal life style of starting young and growing older until death. Conceptually, his mind would work differently than every other human in which he feels his life is going to consistently get better and can do more things as he gets older, or in his case become physically younger. Most people try to make the most out of every second because they don't know how long they will live for. People know that their deaths will be ultimately fulfilled, but, as Twain commented, he believes that life would be more fulfilling for those that progressively become younger; knowing that one will become happier over the prospect that life will end in a less painful or heartbreaking way through the ailments that come with old age.

Commonly, as time passes, what was once new, eventually becomes old until it slowly yet surely dies out from existence, only to be replaced by the new again in an endless cycle. To work in the opposite direction is taxing for the human consciousness to comprehend, and from a biological and a logical standpoint, it’s unfeasible. This is where the movie “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” tries to artistically showcase said concept, but from a personal level, I don't see how this connects with the human population. Benjamin is not be able to understand how people think, because the ways in which his life progresses is the complete opposite of the norm, both physically and mentally. I feel the movie does a great job of showing how he feels as an outsider to society, being physically senile but mentally mature at such a young age. However, I think his case isn't as simple as being an old man in a kid’s body. The way he lives his life is totally different due to his waiting to get younger to be able to do things that he never could before, which contrasts the typical advancement of becoming senile both physically and mentally. Thus his connection to Daisy is romantically and emotionally challenging for both of them since Ben is always getting younger and healthier, as she is going in the opposite direction. As a result of Ben aging in the opposite manner, it gives him an individual experience which inhibits his ability to connect with the people he holds dear, as well as the rest of humanity.

Wisdom is associated with old age due to the abundance of experiences a lifetime allows. When Benjamin was born, he could not partake in normal childhood activities due to inhabiting the body of an old man. Therefore he wasn’t able to experience life as everyone else does, making connections hard to come by. He never had a formal education to develop himself intellectually or socially, therefore lacking the basic skills needed to be a functioning member of society. This gave him a unique personal experienced that changed his outlook on life as he progressed towards death.

The only way for Twain’s quote to accurately reflect the daily occurrences of life would be to parallel it with Button’s experience. Experiencing life knowing that one is getting healthier and younger would be a contrasting experience to anticipating the inevitable deterioration that normally occurs. The only thing that would change is that people would be more intelligent due to them not being able to do thing’s a normal young person would. With the promise of becoming more physically attractive as life progresses, the appeals of both knowledge and romance become more enticing than before. This extends the optimism of life, making people want to live to their fullest potential. War would now be fought with the elderly so that young men wouldn’t have to lose their lives in battle. The ones who perish would be those that have lived almost a complete life, eliminating potential familial devastation due to the loss of their child. This point makes me agree with Twain’s statement that this would be an “infinitely happier” life.

Twain made this statement late in his life when he knew death was right around the corner. He was aware that he couldn’t write like he used to, so he came up with the concept of one’s experiences getting better while they grow physically older. But with the threat of death looming over him, the only action he could partake in was that of becoming nostalgic about the past. He did this while hoping that his legacy would still be intact due to his lifetime accomplishments and experiences. While still satirically welcoming the prospect of death, he contemplated what life could be with a experience similar to Button’s in the end.

The meaning of life is something no one knows the answer to. Twain made a valid statement that I think could help people understand life, for aging into something that is better is where happiness comes from. Growing up knowing everything is going to deteriorate is not what people look forward to. Living a life where “80 and gradually approaching 18” is the typical progression would bring a satisfying meaning to one’s life. Taking life for granted is a common trait man has exhibited throughout the ages. It seems that we never once stop to appreciate the miracle of life that was given to us. To have a different experience of life would enlighten our perspective and ultimately make us more appreciate of what we were given.