**“The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” Movie Analysis**

*The curious case of Benjamin Button (2008)* illustrates Benjamin Button’s stages of development from infancy to death. According to the movie, Benjamin is a boy who has different physical development than anyone else. In terms of physical appearance, he gets younger as he becomes older. However, in terms of psychological development, he has the same development as other people in the same age. Therefore, this movie clearly shows Benjamin’s development his behavioral, cognitive, and emotional development overtime.

During Benjamin’s infancy time, he acquired the baby behaviors even he looked like an old man. His skin was full of wrinkles and he couldn’t hear and see well. Although he looked old, he was still an infant. When his stepmother, Queenie stepped on him, he responded her by crying and moved his arms. If he didn’t cry, Queenie was not able to recognize him. So, he cried in order to survive. Although, he couldn’t speak in this period but he responded to the environment by moving his arms and legs. Furthermore, it showed Benjamin’s “Baby capacity” which it was Benjamin’s ability to cry in an uncomfortable situation and smile when he was comfortable. After time flies, Benjamin entered the stage of childhood. He had the cognitive development known as the “language acquisition” through read and speak. This action was related to the theory of “Vygotsky’s Zone of proximal development” because he learned how to read and speak from Mr. Weathers. He started to develop this skill by imitating Mr.Weathers’ actions. For instance, the way of how Mr. Weathers said the word and the way he said things. Apart from that, he started to develop his specific skills. He was taught by someone in the hospice to play piano. This was also part of the theory of “Vygotsky’s Zone of proximal development” When Benjamin started to play piano; he liked it and was happy to play with it. In this case, he developed his emotional development. In consequence, this was a period that he had greatly developed his behavior, cognitive and emotions. During his childhood period, many people who came to Benjamin’s life had taught him new skills and social values. For example, as “Piaget’s stage of cognitive development” has stated, Benjamin began to learn how to interact with the environment through crying. Moreover, he started to bang the fork. He learned the basic cognitive development, which was known as a part of “schema” when Queenie said he shouldn’t played with the fork. Then, he knew that fork is for eating. As he stayed with Queenie, there was a time that Queenie was busy or far from him. As a result, he started to be able to recognize danger in “accommodation theory”. Additionally, he developed his behavior since he felt safe when was with his stepmother. His actions showed “Mary Ainsworth’s theory of attachment” that he became attached to his stepmother and wanted her to be with him. According to his behavior, it showed that Queenie had raised him with kind and care. Fortunately, he grew up as a secure type of child. In addition, when Daisy came to visit her grandmother and she woke Benjamin up to play with her. After that, there was a person that said he and Daisy couldn’t play with each other. At first, he didn’t understand why he couldn’t play with the opposite sex. But this was the time he had a cognitive development to learned new social norms and value to adapt in the society. Things he learned from the people in hospice and his stepmother made him become more mature.

In Benjamin’s adolescence period, it was the time that he received and learned from the people outside his house. Benjamin took the part time job by went to work on a tugboat with Captain Mike. In this time, Captain Mike acted as Benjamin’s teacher. Benjamin learned from Captain Mike by imitated his behavior. Due to the imitation, he developed the “psychosexual development”. As a result, he acquired his new emotions and behavior towards the opposite sex. For example, he started to have sex with the girl and he felt he really like it. In fact, he also had the cognitive development through his learning about gender differences.

When Benjamin grew up and reached the adulthood period, this was the time he had more independence in his life. His behavior of seeking independence was part of “Levinson’s theory of male development”. Besides this, his behavior had changed by drinking casually since he became adult. In fact, Benjamin was mature enough to think by his own. By way of example, Captain Mike asked him whether he joined the war or not. Benjamin agreed that he would join the war. To clarify, Benjamin had reached the age of consent and gained “autonomy” to decide for himself. After he came back to his house, he realized that the person who taught him to play piano died. So, he went to her funeral. This was when his cognitive development occurred again according to “Piaget’s theory of cognitive development”. It made Benjamin learned to miss and feel sad when somebody died. Further in Erikson’s theory of Intimacy Vs. Isolation, Benjamin started to expect love from someone else. It made him became interested in woman and this was when he had first love. He had dated her during nighttime. They both went to eat together and Benjamin learned table manners. His development of his behavior this time clearly showed the “Social learning theory”. After he had dated her for a while, she left him. For this reason, he taught to loss somebody he loved and missed her. Additionally, after his relationship broke with his first love, he started to construct the new relationship with Daisy. He flew to New York to surprise Daisy but it wasn’t turned good when he saw Daisy dated with another man. By the same token, Benjamin sought for long terms relationship. In the situation that Daisy tried to have sex with him but he refused. Benjamin had the internal conflict inside his head, he asked himself “Is he good enough?”. When Benjamin started to get older and reached the last curve of adulthood period, he began to settle down in his relationship with Daisy. He left his family because he grew younger and younger every day. This part was the last past of Benjamin’s life; it was called “old age and dying”. Benjamin started to accept death by sold his business because he knew that he couldn’t handle it for long and knew that nothing last forever and his behavior showed “Erikson’s theory”. Apart from that, he started to forget things. However, it was normal for the old age to had Alzheimer’s disease because he lost an ability to think and remember. Finally, he died.

In conclusion, this movie shows how Benjamin had developed his behaviors, cognition and emotions. Even though, Benjamin’s physical appearance reversed with the normal person, he still followed human’s psychological stages of development. In my opinion, Benjamin had developed his maturity through the environmental factor and people in his society.

References:

Chaffin, C., Kennedy, K. & Marshall, F. (Producers).  Fincher, D. (Director). (2008). *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* [Video file]. United States: The Kennedy/Marshall Company.