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**THE CONCEPT OF LOVE IN FRANCIS SCOTT FITZGERALD’S
“THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON” SHORT STORY
AND THE FILM**

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PREFACE

The concept of love may differ when a comparison is made between a book and a film based on it. The topic of the present study is the concept of love in Francis Scott Fitzgerald's short story "The curious case of Benjamin Button" and its film version. The study has both, the book and the film in its focus, and it is aimed to reveal and define the concept of love in literature in the 20th century; to study short stories by Fitzgerald in critics' opinions to devise criteria for comparison of the story and the film; to conduct a comparative study by analysing differences in characters' relationships supported by the literary analysis of the story and the movie.

The thesis consists of the Introduction, Chapter I, Chapter II and the Conclusion. The Introduction gives an overview of the main issues of the concept of love, Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald's opinion about love, and what is said about love in the movie and the short story. The first chapter, which is the theoretical part of the paper, discusses the concept of love in general in literature of the 20th century, and its realization in the short story and the movie. The second chapter presents the comparative analysis of the descriptions of the concept of love in the short story and the movie. The conclusion sums up the results of the research and comments on the hypothesis.

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INTRODUCTION

The Concept of Love

There are many interpretations of the meaning of love. Every time people write different things because love can be called a changing concept. Chałońska (2014: para. 5) additionally explains that “love means different things to different people. For some, love can be purely romantic, for others real love truly exists only between family members, and for some love is everywhere and can concern anything. Nonetheless it seems inevitable that love is one of the most beautiful and strongest feelings in the world”.

Cero (2017: para 2) writes about love that “the concept of love has changed alongside humanity. In the Middle Ages it was understood from two perspectives: sentimental and sexual. On the one hand, there was love centered on passions, also known as worldly love, for it was associated to the earthly. On the other hand, courtly love had to do with a more contemplative aspect; it was an unattainable love that only existed on an abstract level. Texts and poems of the time, like *Troilus and Cressida* by Geoffrey Chaucer, and even works belonging to the Arthurian Cycle, portray through their characters and forms of love the struggle between pure feelings and the temptation of bodily passions.”

During different times and various interactions the meaning of love varies. Chałońska (2014: para. 1) reveals that “love appears to be a variety of different feelings, states, and attitudes which ranges from interpersonal affection to pleasure. It seems to be three distinguishable types of love: conceptual love, love to family members, and love to a partner”. According to Chałońska (2014: para. 2-4) there are three types of love: “conceptual love is a feeling toward objects such as jewelry, shoes, and a wide variety of other items usually closely connected with people’s hobbies and interests. Very similar feeling can be perceived toward animals which are frequently treated as family members; nonetheless this affection is not as strong as an attachment between people in one family; family members trust each other, rely on each other, and take care of each other; however there is a special relationship which pretends to be the strongest one in family relations, namely: parent’s love for a child. This emotional bond comes from a natural instinct to protect the offspring and what is more, this love can often start before the baby is even born; the last type of love, which is very often believed to be the most beautiful one is the affection between partners, people of any description, be they married or cohabiting, boyfriend and girlfriend, straight or gay, young or old. This love

is a relationship of mutual understanding and respect”. It can be concluded that love is a highly complex notion, which has always perplexed people during all the times.

Hepburn (1991) explains that the value of true love lies in what you are willing to give — which is everything, not what you are expecting to get. Ross (2015: para. 1) reveals that “philosophers have argued over the meaning of love for millennia, but a glance at literary history gives us the beginnings of a definition: Love can be a connection to something greater than ourselves, or the thing that shows us who we really are. It is the oldest feeling in the world, yet somehow always feels new. It is patient and kind, yet requires relentless dedication and hard work. It is at once our most comforting support and the thing that makes us lose our balance”. Bernieres (1994) wrote that falling in love can be compared to momentary rage. It comes unexpectedly, and then it weakens. And when it weakens, people have to decide whether they choose to forget or fight. People in love need to choose if they are going to stay together or never return to each other. This is a complex nature of love. Love does not mean instantly losing breath, it cannot be compared to thrill, it is not the urge to make love every day. True love is what is left from the state of falling in love and being in love.

Lewis (1960: para. 231) writes that “love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. However in that casket - safe, dark, motionless, airless - it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, and irredeemable. The alternative to tragedy, or at least to the risk of tragedy, is damnation. The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers and perturbations of love is Hell”.

To conclude, the concept of love, depending on its definition at different times, can be expressed in many ways – from love to objects to love to partners, family members, country, etc.; in literature the concept of love can be then followed in the relations of characters and plot happenings.

Francis Scott Fitzgerald’s Interpretation of Love in his Works

Fitzgerald (1925: para. 3) writes about love that “first love — this was only first love! What must love itself in its fullness, its perfection be. He did not know that what he was experiencing then, that unreal, undesirous medley of ecstasy and peace, would be unrecapturable forever”. This means that according to Fitzgerald, first love is something

that turns the whole world upside down and there will never be anything similar to compare first love to.

Fitzgerald reveals an idea about love in his book “The Great Gatsby” (1925) which gives an overview about what love is: “he smiled understandingly-much more than understandingly. It was one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it that you may come across four or five times in life. It faced--or seemed to face--the whole eternal world for an instant, and then concentrated on you with an irresistible prejudice in your favor. It understood you just as far as you wanted to be understood, believed in you as you would like to believe in yourself, and assured you that it had precisely the impression of you that, at your best, you hoped to convey (Fitzgerald 1925: 53).

Fitzgerald also writes that “it was an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person and which it is not likely I shall ever find again. No—Gatsby turned out all right at the end; it is what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams that temporarily closed out my interest in the abortive sorrows and short-winded elations of men” (Fitzgerald 1925: 4). This means that Fitzgerald thought love was something unique because he explains in “The Great Gatsby” that the type of romance experienced had not been previously found in any other person and unlikely would be found in somebody else. Fitzgerald also describes his character’s feeling by writing that “his heart beat faster and faster as Daisy’s white face came up to his own. He knew that when he kissed this girl, and forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath, his mind would never romp again like the mind of God. So he waited, listening for a moment longer to the tuning fork that had been struck upon a star. Then he kissed her. At his lips’ touch she blossomed like a flower and the incarnation was complete” (Fitzgerald 1925: 119).

In his book “A new leaf” Francis Scott Fitzgerald (1931: 15) writes about love “she saw him the first day on board, and then her heart sank into her shoes as she realized at last how much she wanted him. No matter what his past was, no matter what he had done. Which was not to say that she would ever let him know, but only that he moved her chemically more than anyone she had ever met, that all other men seemed pale beside him. “

Since Fitzgerald thinks that love is a unique feeling, he also reveals that love is a feeling that completes two people. Because of love, two people are connected and become one. It can be said that love merges the souls of lovers into one.

The concept of love manifests itself in relations of people in love: how long their relations last and how it influences their lives. In literature, the concept of love is realized in characters' relations and actions. In Francis Scott Fitzgerald's short story "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button", the concept of love is presented through the love story of its main character Benjamin Button. The modern interpretation of the story in the "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button" film (2008) considers the concept of love from the perspective of a modern person who lives in the 21st century. This research hypothesizes that differences/ contradictions between the short story and its screen version in their representation of love and relationships between the main characters are needed to increase the emotional impact on the viewing audience by adding specific details and additional events to connect the original story with modern ideas and views on love and relationships.

CHAPTER I “THE CURIOS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON” BY F.S.FITZGERALD: THE PLOT AND THE CHARACTERS IN THE SHORT STORY AND THE FILM

1.1 “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” Short Story by Francis Scott Fitzgerald: the Plot, the Characters

The short story “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” by Francis Scott Fitzgerald has been analysed by Harianja (2015). According to Harianja (2015-11), the story reveals around “a personal life conflict”, where the main character – Benjamin Button – is born to look like a 70 year old man. The main conflict of the story reveals around the process of growing older by becoming younger and the attitudes/relationships, including love and friendship, which become in the focus with this abnormality. His parents were ashamed, because his son was an unusual child. They made him behaved like a regular child. Although Benjamin’s body and mind were as of a mature person. Benjamin meets his first love, when he was fifty (he is actually 20 years). Love of his life is glorious and young Hildegard Moncrief. He falls in love with her. First time her parents forbidden him to marry Benjamin, because they had relevant difference in age. Hildegard was younger than Benjamin for 20 years. Hildegard never feels uncomfortable herself because of the age. She prefers a man who is older and independent and can take care of her. Also Benjamin is a hard-working person, he always tries to perform his household duties. All changes in Benjamin’s life start, when he grows up. His body becomes younger, and his wife concerns because of this. In the mirror he looks like he is thirty. This disappoints him. He hopes that, when his psychical and nature age meet, this process will stop. However, this is not true. Hildegard is annoyed, that this happens to her husband. Their relationships become worse. However, Hildegard cannot think about the change of her husband. Hildegard is trying to save their relationship. She tries to understand what he wants and does everything best for him. However Benjamin cannot stop this process and Hildegard thinks that he does not love her anymore. In time Hildegard struggles to maintain their relationship and leaves to Italy. Benjamin’s son Roscoe is married and settles down. He does not want to communicate with Benjamin, because he is a scandal teenage. Benjamin decides to study in St.Midas, this is a preparatory school where many of his friends study. Benjamin requires his father to take him to school and register him. In spite of this, Benjamin’s son Roscoe hopes that one day Benjamin can become a great father for him and a good grandfather for his son.

Also, Harianja (2015) explains that Benjamin is a person who is born old and his age is reverse. When he was a kid, he got some discrimination. Many people around him did not reciprocate to him. In time, Benjamin grows up and his body has some changes. He gets acquainted with Hildegard and she falls in love with the old man. Hildegard thinks the older man can take care of everything and will be reliable for future life. . She believes that when she becomes a Benjamin's wife she can get more care from her husband. On the other hand the reason why Hildegard prefers an older man is that she thinks that when she is a wife of fifty-years-old man she can get her husband's obligation and it is better than when she marries a young man: "I like men of your age," Hildegard told him. "Young boys are so idiotic. They tell me how much champagne they drink at college, and how much money they lose playing cards. Men of your age know how to appreciate women." Benjamin felt himself on the verge of a proposal - with an effort he choked back the impulse. "You're just the romantic age," she continued - "fifty. Twenty-five is too wordly-wise; thirty is apt to be pale from overwork; forty is the age of long stories that take a whole cigar to tell; sixty is--oh, sixty is too near seventy; but fifty is the mellow age. I love fifty." Fifty seemed to Benjamin a glorious age. He longed passionately to be fifty. "I've always said," went on Hildegard, "that I'd rather marry a man of fifty and be taken care of than many a man of thirty and take care of him. (Fitzgerald 1922: 16-17).

Speaking about Hildegard, Harianja (2015) writes that Hildegard's family does not accept her choice, because the age difference between Hildegard and Benjamin is so big. As a wife, Hildegard always tries to be the best wife for Benjamin and perfect mother for their child. Hildegard does everything for them. The conflict happens when Benjamin starts to change, Hildegard is afraid that Benjamin finds another woman that he loves. She thinks that she cannot save their relationship because she cannot adjust to her husband's changes.

Additionally, Hsu, Hsu (2010: 9-10) analyse the character of Benjamin Button, and write that when a reader sees the book cover, s/he already has many meanings of the short story. On the book cover there is depicted a clock and a few gear wheels. Benjamin Button is a person who has a reversing life. He cannot do things in time. For example, he was not be able to go to university when his psychic age was twenty because his appearance was different from other people. By following the story of Benjamin, the reader can feel happy of leading a normal life.

The short story did not depict so much that happened with Benjamin in his life, but attended the feelings other inflicted on him. At first, Benjamin tried to tell the truth

about his age and his feature, but nobody believed him. In addition, people thought that this was a joke and disregarded him. After some disappointments, Benjamin decided not to tell about his real age but to cater to things people loved. People are not ready to connect with new things that have never emerged in their life.

1.2 The “The curious case of Benjamin Button” Film: the Plot, the Characters

Revealing the plot of the movie “The curious case of Benjamin Button”, Hsu, Hsu (2010) denote that Benjamin Button was born on the 11th of November 1918 right after the end of World War I in the city New Orleans. Benjamin’s father, Thomas, did not want to raise the child and left him on the doorsteps of a rest home. The attendant in that rest-home, Queenie was unable to have her own children, and she decided to adopt the child and named him Benjamin. While Benjamin was born old, as he grew, he started to become younger day by day. One day he met Daisy, a grand-daughter of a woman who lived in the rest-house. Daisy and Benjamin quickly became friends and found many things in common. But later, in 1934, Benjamin felt he needed to leave the rest-house since he considered himself grown enough. He found a job on a tugboat of a tattoo craftsman, Captain Mike. They sailed to Murmansk, where Benjamin met Elizabeth Abbott with whom he developed a love affair. During their stay in Russia, Captain Mike’s boat was assigned to participate in World War II, but since Captain Mike died, neither Benjamin nor the rest of the crew were sent to the war. As Daisy had already turned 21, she was a ballet dancer in New York, while Benjamin decided to return to New Orleans. However, Daisy did not pursue her ballet career due to the car accident. In 1962 Daisy decided to return to New Orleans. Benjamin and Daisy met again, being physically the same age, they fell in love and had a daughter named Caroline. Benjamin was yet convinced that he could not fulfil his role of a father because of his reverse aging and left the family. Many years later Daisy received a phone call in which she was informed that a 12-year-old Benjamin had been found. Benjamin had dementia and could not remember anything about his past. Daisy moved into the same rest-home where Benjamin grew up and took care of him there. During the spring of 2003, an 84-year-old Benjamin who physically looked like an infant passed away. When Benjamin died, Daisy could tell from his look that he had recognized her for the last time. Two years later, in 2005, Daisy also passed away in the hospital with Caroline being there.

Ortolano (2018) writes that Benjamin’s story not only anticipates that, like Caroline, viewers will have deep discontent, but it suggests psychic facilitation and creates aesthetic enjoyment by giving hope that our life, success and faith are in our

hands. This idea is achieved in the film by focusing on Benjamin who has an unusual position in his environment. Benjamin was born at the end of World War I, this event helped America take a prominent place at the world stage. In the movie this happening was depicted like a wild and patriotic celebration in the city of New Orleans. Benjamin's birth is a catastrophic event which happened on the day of all America's joy. Benjamin's mother died and Benjamin's father abnegated him. Fortunately, his father left him on the doorsteps of a rest-home, where Benjamin was found by Queenie, an African-American woman, who would be for Benjamin like mother. One day young Benjamin asked Queenie about his unusual characteristic, and Queenie affirmed that everybody was exceptional and strong: "Everybody feels different about themselves one way or the other. But we all going the same way; just taking different roads to get there, that's all. You're on your own road, Benjamin" (1925:54). Benjamin's diversity from others is not bad, just Benjamin's way is more unique and he should take it, not to avoid.

Meanwhile, Goldberg (2018 para. 9) writes that the emptiness of Benjamin Button means that everything in him is "untidy" and messy - love, death, and regret combine a sole spectrum of grief. As Benjamin refuses to make love with Daisy during their first date as adults, he explains "our lives are defined by opportunities; even the ones we miss." Except it was not an exactly missed opportunity. A missed opportunity means something that was once lost and then gone forever. Yet, an accurate example is "our lives are defined by opportunities; even the ones we delay".

Moreover, Goldberg (2018) explains that Benjamin behaves like his father when left own family. It was a terrible decision in many ways. Benjamin thought that his daughter needed a father, not a best friend. As if it was impossible to tell the daughter that Benjamin had an unusual condition that forced him to age reverse. Better than to stay with the family, Benjamin decided to leave in order not to cause any problems. However, even though Benjamin's feature does not enforce him to enjoy his life and feel life to the fullest. Benjamin could be deplored for having left his daughter Caroline, but the movie tells Benjamin was so egoistic. At the end of her life Daisy confessed that Benjamin behaved correctly and it would have been impracticable to take care of both Benjamin and Caroline. Daisy said that she was not that strong, though when she realized that she could not be a professional dancer after she had hurt her leg, she worked as a dance teacher. By reason of own weakness, Daisy was married again, but she never loved her husband as much as she loved Benjamin. However, her new husband becomes a good father for Caroline. Daisy's second husband spent his life

being with Daisy though she kept loving Benjamin. After Benjamin came back younger Daisy cheated on her husband with a young and handsome Benjamin.

Hsu; Hsu (2010) analyze the movie «The Curious case of Benjamin Button». In the movie Benjamin Button was played by Brad Pitt. He was born like greybeard man and he became younger for his strange life. His father was shocked when he saw Benjamin. He left Benjamin on the rest-home's doorsteps. There Benjamin spent his childhood and met interesting people such as Mrs. Maple and Mr. Oti. They opened the Benjamin's mind. Also, in the rest-home Benjamin acquainted with Daisy, who was the love of his life. Benjamin's first job and first feelings made him nearer to usual life. Benjamin finished his infinite traveling when World War II started. After he went back to the rest-home. There he met Daisy again. Soon Daisy and Benjamin fell in love, and they had a little girl, whose name was Caroline. Benjamin started to become younger and he was diagnosed with dementia. He forgot everything that happened with him. At a later date, when Benjamin died in Daisy's hands in the rest-home, he looked like an infant.

Regarding the character of Daisy, Hsu; Hsu (2010) write that Daisy was a beautiful and young girl. She was endowment in dancing. She was so talented in dancing that Daisy was the only American dancer who performed in the Bolshoi Theater. However, she harmed her right leg in a terrible car crash and she was not able to dance anymore. Daisy met Benjamin, when she was a child. In the beginning they were friends, and Benjamin sent to her postcards from his voyages. They were not married, but they had a daughter Caroline.

Concerning the concept of love, Hsu; Hsu (2010: 11) write that

if the movie was revealed in front of a sophisticated person, he might be touched a lot; while being innocent people, we can't not help but think "Why Benjamin was so persistent in love, but evaded at times?" Love and death are both the most controversial assignment and challenges in our life. We have no eternal life; as a result, we couldn't do nothing but wait for true love to come. We should be on the initiative to pursue happiness, just because time flees in a twinkling of an eye. We must take advantage of our sights and sounds of spring in our life, indulge ourselves in our affection, only for fear that it will be too late.

James (2013) notes that the very important and different diversity between movie and short story is the time of Benjamin's birth. The period the film starts is the end of World War I. Benjamin Button was born in 1919. The short story claims that the date of Benjamin Button's birth was 1860. In short story we read that Benjamin Button was born in the mature proportions ("a baby whose feet hung over the sides of the crib

in which it was reposing”), but in the movie we watch that Benjamin Button’s size was like a normal baby. Also Benjamin Button cannot communicate and his crying sounds of an infant. In the short story baby was able to speak correctly and properly and make up sentences, also he knows his own last name. Secondly, Benjamin had a very irreducible relationship with his father “Thomas Button”. When Benjamin was born and outcast by his father on the doorsteps of a house. He was later found by nanny, who named him.

The short story offered that Benjamin did have connection with his father Roger Button, and in the beginning their relationship was very uproarious and unshakable. During the time it got better. The film does not mention that Benjamin studied at Yale College. He also spent most of his time in his adoptive house in Louisiana, in a nursing home. Whereas in the short story he was with his father at home. The short story describes that at the age of twenty Benjamin worked with his father and served in the American-Spanish war at the end of the 1800s. In the film, Benjamin worked as a seamen and travelled in the world from where he wrote postcards to his love.

1.3 Differences in the Plot and the Characters of the Short Story and the Film

	Short Story “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button”	The Film “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button”
The characters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benjamin’s father is Roger Button. • Benjamin’s father left family business to Benjamin, and he worked there. • Benjamin first love’s name was Hildegard Moncrief. • Benjamin and Hildegard had a son Roscoe. • Hildegard prefers a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benjamin’s father is Thomas Button. • Benjamin worked a boatman. • Benjamin’s lover was named Daisy Fuller • Daisy gave birth to a daughter. Her name is Caroline. • Benjamin was loved

	<p>man who is older and independent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hildegarde and Benjamin got married. • Benjamin was a lovely person, but nobody understood him. <p>Benjamin's body and mind were as of a mature person.</p>	<p>by everybody everywhere</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benjamin and Daisy were never married.
The plot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benjamin was born in 1860. • The events starts in Baltimore. • Benjamin meets his first love, when he was fifty (he is actually 22 years) at dance. • Hildegarde's parents forbidden to marry Benjamin, because they had a big difference in age. • Hildegarde left to Italy and they never met again. • Hildegarde was annoyed, that her husband became younger. Hildegarde did not attract Benjamin, when she became older. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benjamin was born in 1918. • The story began in New Orleans. • Benjamin met Daisy (they were 6 years old) at the nursing home. • Benjamin's mother died during giving birth. • Benjamin and Daisy were never married. • Daisy and Benjamin lived together until Benjamin's death. • Daisy and Benjamin always love each other. • Benjamin did not have high education. • Benjamin and his daughter did not communicate.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benjamin participated in the Spanish-American war. • Benjamin studied at Harvard. • Benjamin's son Roscoe was afraid that Benjamin being younger than he was, might ruin his career. 	
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To sum up, there are significant differences in the plot of the short story and its screen version. In the short story Benjamin was born in 1860, but in the film his birth date was 1918, on the victory day in World War I. It was the big celebration in the USA. The creators of the film make this change to make it more emotional and significant - they show the father's grief whose wife has died in labour to give the birth to a very unusual child against the background of a great holiday. There are many changes in the line of relationship between Benjamin and the girl he loves. In the short story Benjamin and Hildegard met at the age of 22 at a dance party. They were married and had a son Roscoe. Benjamin communicated with his son. However, their relationship was broken and they never saw each other anymore. In the film, Daisy and Benjamin met in childhood, and their relationship lasted throughout their life. Despite that they were never married and also had to part with each other. The creators of the film added some details, which show that their love was eternal. When Benjamin worked as a boatman, he travelled in the world and sent to Daisy postcards. Also young Daisy was interested in dancing and wanted to spend her time at parties with friends, but Benjamin at that time was already too old. However, the viewers of the film can see their eye contact and can understand how strong the feeling between these two people was. Daisy and Benjamin had a strong connection, unlike Hildegard and Benjamin in the short story. Their love ended when Hildegard became older. Daisy and Benjamin attracted each other at any age.

Also the film and the short story have some differences in characters. Names are changed – Benjamin's father's name is Roget in the short story and in the film he is Thomas. Benjamin's love is Hildegard, in the film her name is Daisy. The difference between children's gender – in the movie Benjamin and Daisy had a daughter Caroline,

but Benjamin and Hildegarde had a son Roscoe. In the short story the relationship between Roscoe and Benjamin is strained, Benjamin and Caroline did not communicate. Having a daughter in the film might increase the emotional bond between Benjamin and his child. The soft voice of the daughter is the voice of the narrator in the film. One of the reasons why the names of Benjamin's lovers are different is that Daisy's and Hildegarde's tempers are very different. Daisy is a stronger person. She has many problems: in her career, when she broke her leg and could not dance; in her family, when Benjamin became younger and they could not live together anymore, but she tried to find a better way to solve the problem. She loved Benjamin all her life, but lived with another man, because he was a good father for her daughter and loved Daisy.

In conclusion, there are differences in the plot and characters of the short story and the film, though they both show how difficult the life of an unusual person might be. In the short story Benjamin is a very lonely person, and nobody tries to understand him. Benjamin's life in the movie is not easy, but people around him want to communicate with him, they support him, they admire him. The film's society is friendlier and more supportive than the one described in the short story. With additional details in the plot and characters film makers tried to make some connections with our society and discuss the problem of an unusual, different from the others person of being or not being accepted by the society, of being or not being loved by his beloved person and his close family.

CHAPTER II THE CONCEPT OF LOVE: THE SHORT STORY VS THE FILM

2.1. “Love” in “The curious case of Benjamin Button” Short Story and the Film

Love in Fitzgerald’s “The curious case of Benjamin Button” (movie) is depicted through the whole life-time of Benjamin and Daisy. For instance, Wagner (2010) clarifies that Benjamin spoke about his first love as almost a chemical change that seemed to resolve and recompose the very components of his entire body. Wagner (2010: 26) also adds that “when he [Benjamin] encounters first love at the dance he enters into a moment of pure duration where any sense of time ceases to matter”. It can be concluded that the book and the movie differ in terms of interpreting the concept of “love” in its expression in characters’ lives. In the book Benjamin ends up lonely and depressed because he had lost the faith in love and himself. While in the movie Benjamin is loved by Daisy until he passes away as an infant.

According to James (2013) important discrepancy between the short story of Fitzgerald and the film is the passion of Benjamin Button. In the short story, Benjamin meets Hildegard Moncrief when they are twenty years old. Hildegard is a woman, who sympathizes older men. When they meet, Benjamin looks like he is fifty years old. In the film Benjamin met love of his life Daisy Fuller for first time, when he was 11. She and her grandmother attended Benjamin’s home during Thanksgiving. In the short story Benjamin and Hildegard were married and they lived together for a long time. In the film, they are never married and their relationship is not constant. Their relationship goes on and off each time they meet. Benjamin and Daisy have a daughter Caroline. Caroline does not know, who her father is. In the movie, she is partially a storyteller. She reads Benjamin’s diary for her mother, who is ill. However, in the short story Benjamin and Hildegard have a son Roscoe. Benjamin and Roscoe have a good relationship, they bear a resemblance to Benjamin’s and his father’s, Roger’s, relationship.

James (2013: para. 5) reveals that

going back to the relationship between Benjamin and his love, in the movie, we see Daisy Fuller and Benjamin being madly in love with each other from start to finish. Even though many events and people changed their lives and separated them from each other momentarily, they always found each other and enjoyed the company of one another. The symbol of their love was represented by their daughter Caroline. In the story, we see Benjamin and Hildegard as a very wavy relationship that had a lot of troughs and crests. At the outset, we see Hildegard being very attracted to Benjamin, who was young in years but old in looks. Benjamin was a very shy person and was usually persuaded by Hildegard to go out for social events and dances. However, as Benjamin Button grew older in years but younger in looks, and Hildegard grew older in years as well as looks, there was the apparent age disparity between them as now the

roles were reversed and he was persuading her to attend events and dances. This was a major source of disappointment for Hildegard who was angry at Benjamin for aging backwards. The movie tells a very emotional tale of two lovers who had been through everything and at the very end, Benjamin ceases to exist in her arms.

James (2013) adds that the most significant and swinging difference between the short story and the film is a long separation between trials of Benjamin Button. In the film, Benjamin was loved by everybody who knew him. Everywhere he went and everyone who he met him were friendly with him. Queenie, who found him on the doorsteps, she loved him like her own son. Also, Daisy Fuller loved him with all her heart. They met in young age and stayed happy together for a long time. Actually, his father, who neglected him, tried to become friends with Benjamin and left his fortune to Benjamin after dying. The film and the short story have a deep contrast. In the short story Benjamin is lonely and loveless person. He was constantly criticized, other people did not understand him he was hated by everybody. When Benjamin died, nobody attended his funeral. Benjamin's wife abandoned him. His son Roscoe was afraid that Benjamin being younger than he, would ruin his career. His dreams and hopes were crushed, although, his ambitions were not succeeded. Everything he worked on did not satisfy him. The short story is a story about a person who started with everything and ended with nothing. The film, on the other hand, depicts a more peaceful and happy ending.

James (2013: para. 6) states that

there are many conflicting differences between the movie and the story (like the narrator, the setup of the story, the place, the time, the people and the work). These, however are some of the main differences that matter. The movie however, is a very nice take on the story and should not be discredited because it different. It is a very enjoyable and good movie which complements the amazing masterpiece written by F. Scott Fitzgerald.

The film and the short story have many differences regarding the relationship between Benjamin and his love. In the film Benjamin meets Daisy at young age while in the short story Benjamin meets Daisy in their twenties. In the film Benjamin's and Daisy's relationship lasted during their whole life whereas in the short story Benjamin's and Hildegard's relationship ended when she left to Italy, because she understood that their relationship had come to the end. Also in the film Daisy loved Benjamin all her life, and was with him when Benjamin died. However in the short story, Hildegard left Benjamin and never returned to him.

Otolano (2018) notes that the versions of Benjamin Button in the short story and in the film eventually appear as a resource for people's own wishes and purposes. The film refers to the concern of older baby boomers, concentrating on the aspiration to be young. Even so, the film also shows more extensive concern that exceeds the baby-

boomer generation. Benjamin's converting from a winner of the rule to an incarnation of change shows that "move forward" is no longer unconventional and free but now demands important individual compromises with the reality. This movement has established emptiness in the life of society who sacrifices their own interests to make popular professions that carry little intrinsic significance; because of the meaning of real "self" has been lost. As a result, there appear the psychological and real concerns that can only be resolved by the way of getting their real "self" significance. In other words, the first version of Benjamin Button (the short story) gives culture-related possibilities, while another version (the film) suggests that person can support own value of self in the face of the prevailing socioeconomic structure.

Bonilla (2013) notes that movie's producer, David Fincher, changed Francis Scott Fitzgerald's original text for the aim of offering a story of his own, and in the way he has to rebuild the text's logic. For example, differences in Benjamin's love story emphasize the literal distinctions and inconsistent features of both texts. In the short story Hildegard Moncrief falls in love with Benjamin Button because he was adult and his behaviour was ripe. She thought that fifty is the best age for a man. Whereas Francis Scott Fitzgerald takes unexpectedly realistic position - his characters, Benjamin and Daisy, fall out of love with each other over time. Hildegard had a childish appearance and it is contrasted by her fast aging. She becomes too demanding in attitudes, and intolerant. Such position annoys Benjamin so much despite of Hildegard's preposterous request to stop Benjamin's process of rejuvenation.

Ortolano (2018) writes that Fitzgerald refers to the reality when social judgment about Benjamin Button and his wife Hildegard changes because it starts to seem that a young and distinguished man has married a superior woman. Therefore, the pattern of their relationship is changed to correspond the common stereotypes. Benjamin Button observes that years have taken her youth and he is despondent about her natural decline when she becomes jealous, unlovable and grumpy. Realizing that their relationship contradicts to public norms, Benjamin begins to hate to appear in society with Hildegard. Benjamin relates to Hildegard negatively instead of encouraging her, similarly how Hildegard supported him. Benjamin tries to fit to his natural state. In contrast to their relationship where Hildegard was younger than Benjamin, they cannot have a respectable social area for a young man and an old woman to have a lively. In the end their feelings are decreased and Hildegard leaves him. The story of Benjamin's and Hildegard's love is ended.

Bonilla (2013) that the film shows romantic opportunities of this diegetic detail and uses it in his interest. He changes the name of Benjamin's love - Hildegard. In the film her name is Daisy. This name is lovelier and this alteration instantly enlarges sympathy to the character. Similarly, in the film there are two lovers, who meet in their childhood and support their relationship during all years until they meet again and create the family together. Over this time, Benjamin continues to become younger and younger, and his anxiety increases that he is a burden for his family. These thoughts compel him to leave his wife and daughter. Despite Benjamin's reactions to Hildegard's natural ageing in the short story, in the movie Benjamin surmounts natural appearances and celebrates Daisy's senescence body. When, after years Daisy and Benjamin meet again. Daisy said that she is an old woman, but Benjamin looks at Daisy by loving sight. Daisy's age changes and shortcomings are obvious, but Benjamin's adoration for her is undoubted. After an unsuccessful effort to renew the relationship with Daisy, Benjamin come back rest-home. However, he is younger than ever, he is embodied by a breezy. However when Caroline reads Benjamin's diary and he wrote that life was not all that complicated. In the end of Benjamin's life, Daisy spent time with Benjamin in the rest-home. She observes how Benjamin forgot how to walk, eat and talk. Benjamin's body looks like infant, but he is old and suffers from fatuity. However, when Daisy confusedly looks at his eyes, she knows that Benjamin knew who was she.

Also, the importance and strength of the feeling between Daisy and Benjamin was shown in the end of the film. When Benjamin's daughter Caroline finishes reading Benjamin's diary and Daisy closes her eyes, a heavy rain with strong wind begins outside the house.

Bonilla (2013) writes that in the film, the balance of the young/old is realised at the contact of Benjamin's and Daisy's deaths: Daisy dies of the old age, whereas Benjamin Button dies as an infant. Although the age difference between Benjamin and Daisy is clearly represented when Daisy and Benjamin have the first meeting, in the end of their lives, this difference is more emphasized. It is very significant that in his old age Benjamin comes back to his home place, the rest-home, where he grew up. Shortly Daisy resolves to move in it too for taking care of Benjamin Button and patiently waits for his death. Daisy sees how he becomes an old child till he finally passes away in her arms. Daisy's senility of her face splendidly contrasts the cute little baby that so sweetly goes to sleep. In the end, Daisy says to Benjamin good night, and she says it just before Daisy also goes to sleep for ever.

The producer of the film shows the connection between Daisy and Benjamin through nature itself. This means that Benjamin's imprecation was ended, Benjamin's life has battled time and has won.

2.2. Types of Love and their Realization in "The curious case of Benjamin Button" Short Story and the Film

	Types of love:	
	love to family members	and love to a partner
The curious case of Benjamin Button". The Short Story	<p>Benjamin's son Roscoe was not comfortable with the fact that his father was younger than he and because of that Roscoe was afraid that he would have difficulties at work. Benjamin and his father had a good relationship and the father left his business to Benjamin.</p> <p>People did not understand Benjamin's nature and struggles, that is why Benjamin was lonely.</p>	<p>Benjamin and Hildegard met when they were 20 years old. However their relationship was ended, when they stopped liking each other physically: when Hildegard became older, and Benjamin younger.</p>
The curious case of Benjamin Button" Film	<p>Carolaine did not communicate with Benjamin due to the fact that her mother Daisy and Benjamin separated when Carolaine was a child.</p> <p>Benjamin and his father did not communicate.</p> <p>Queenie raised Benjamin as</p>	<p>Benjamin and Daisy loved each other during all their lives. Despite their break up, because Benjamin was becoming younger, and Daisy can not manage with two children. However in the end of Benjamin's life Daisy was with him and he died in her hands.</p>

	her son and other residents loved and admired him.	The strength of their relationship is shown in the end of the film, when Benjamin's daughter Caroline ended to read his diary, Daisy closed her eyes and died. outside the window the heavy rain began. The creators of the film might imply their close connection and influence on each other's life.
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It can be summed up, that the concept of love in terms of the relationships between the main character and his family members and his love partner is realised differently. The comparison shows that the relationship of the main character with other people who surrounded him in the film differ from the one depicted in the short story. The main difference is in the fact that in the short story Benjamin is more lonely as nobody tries to understand him and to accept his very unusual nature of growing up to become a baby. The film with a new family and love story line shows how important close people are in everybody's life, and especially, when a person is different in his appearance and mind from other people around him. Such people need support and love even more than ordinary people. This idea is highlighted better in the film than in the short story with the help of a different focus in the love story of the main character Benjamin (with more events in the plot of the film and additional turns and character relationships).

CONCLUSION

Francis Scott Fitzgerald is a famous American writer, whose books have been popular for many years among its readers and film makers. Being famous for his “The Great Gatsby” novel, Fitzgerald is also well-known for his short stories, “The curious case of Benjamin Button” being one of them. Researchers (Harianja, 2015; Bonilla, 2013; Goldberg, 2018; James. 2013, etc) have discussed “The curious case of Benjamin Button” short story and its screen version to reveal similarities and difference to state that the film presents a more romantic version of the short story with a belief that there is hope for strange and different from others people to be happy and loved.

The concept of love is very important in “The curious case of Benjamin Button” short story and the film. There are many differences. However, both authors – Francis Scott Fitzgerald and the creator of the film, try to show the importance of love in people’s life. The concept of love in the story and in the film is analysed on the basis of the definition of the concept of love and what it includes (Chalońska, 2014; Cero, 2017; Hadley, 2011, ect), and the analysis comprises, firstly, the comparison of the story line (plots) and the characters. The results of the analysis are used to compare the realization of the concept of love in both stories via main character’s relations.

The comparison between the film and the short story shows that, in the film, love has more influence on characters, their relationships and the story about them, which could be done for the increasing of the emotional impact on the film audience. The relationship between Benjamin and Daisy (in the film) is more colourful and durable, than between Benjamin and Hildegard (in the short story).

The comparative study reveals the main idea of the short story and the film: the relationship between people and how it is important for all people. Francis Scott Fitzgerald tried to explain how difficult it is to live for a person who has some peculiar features which make him different from all other people and how it creates problems in his life. Fitzgerald did not romanticize the plot and tried to show the real life of unusual people –for such people, it is troublesome to find close people, who will support and help to deal with problems. In the short story Benjamin was very lonely and he cannot find a person who would support him and spend her/his life together with him. Francis Scott Fitzgerald shows the real life, where people’s relationship finished when a woman became older and a man does not like her anymore, which makes her jealous etc. Also he writes about Benjamin Button’s relationship with his son who rejects him.

The film is made to be more romantic to increase the emotional effect on viewers. The film also shows how difficult the life of unusual people is. This problem is

topical in our modern life, because now in society there are many people with special needs, refugees, homosexuals, etc. All these people need to be supported and people should be more tolerant and understand these people and how difficult it is for them to live. The concept of love in the film is realised through the relationship between Benjamin and Daisy, support and love they have. The concept of love in the film and in the short story is depicted differently. In the short story Francis Scott Fitzgerald explains by examples of Benjamin Button how hard it is to live without love, family, close people. In the film, love helps people face challenges and cope with them, the inclusion of additional details and changes in the story line make the film more optimistic and romantic, i.e. it give hope to anyone who is different from others.

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SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

Armastuse mõiste võib erineda, kui võrrelda raamatut ja filmi. Käesoleva uurimuse teema on armastuse mõiste Francis Scott Fitzgeraldi lugu «Benjamin Buttoni uudishimulik juhtum» ja selle filmiversioon. Uuringus on keskendutud nii raamatule kui ka filmile ning selle eesmärk on avaldada ja määratleda armastuse mõiste kirjanduses 20. sajandil; uurida Fitzgeraldi lühijutte kriitikute arvamustes, et töötada välja lugu ja filmi võrdlemise kriteeriumid; viima läbi võrdleva uuringu, analüüsides erinevusi tegelaste suhetes, mida toetavad lugu ja filmi kirjanduslik analüüs.

Töö koosneb sissejuhatusest, I peatükist, II peatükist ja järeldusest. Sissejuhatus annab ülevaate armastuse mõiste peamistest küsimustest, Francis Scott Key Fitzgeraldi arvamusest armastuse kohta ja sellest, mida räägitakse armastusest filmis ja lühilugu. Esimene peatükk, mis on raamatu teoreetiline osa, käsitleb 20. sajandi kirjanduse armastuse kontseptsiooni ja selle realiseerimist lühilugu ja filmis. Teises peatükis tutvustatakse lühiajalugu ja filmis armastuse mõiste kirjelduste võrdlevat analüüsi. Kokkuvõtte võtab kokku uuringu tulemused ja kommentaarid hüpoteesi kohta.

Kokkuvõtteks võib öelda, et lugu ja filmi iseloomulikud jooned ja tegelased on erinevad, kuigi mõlemad näitavad, kui raske on ebatavalise inimese elu. Lühikirjas on Benjamin väga üksildane inimene ja keegi ei püüa teda mõista. Benjamini elus filmis ei ole lihtne, kuid tema ümber olevad inimesed tahavad temaga suhelda. Filmi ühiskond on sõbralikum ja toetavam kui lühilugu. Täiendavate üksikasjadega prooviti ja tegelased püüdsid filmitegijaid siduda meie ühiskonnaga ja arutada ebatavalise, teistest erineva isiku probleemi, mida ühiskond aktsepteerib või ei aktsepteeri, olla armastatud või mitte armastatud isik ja tema lähedane perekond.

Võrdlusest nähtub, et põhihariduse suhe teiste inimestega, kes teda filmis ümbritsevad, erineb lühilugu kujutatust. Peamine erinevus seisneb selles, et lühikese loo korral on Benjamin üksindam, sest keegi ei püüa teda mõista ja nõustuda tema väga ebahariliku kasvuga, et saada lapseks. Uue pere- ja armastusluguga film näitab, kui tähtsad on lähedased inimesed igatüüpe elus, ja eriti siis, kui inimene on tema välimuse ja meele poolest erinev tema lähedastest inimestest. Sellised inimesed vajavad toetust ja armastust isegi rohkem kui tavalised inimesed. See idee on filmis paremini esile tõstetud kui lühijutte puhul, mille peamine tegelane Benjamini armastuslugu on erinevalt keskendunud.

Armastuse kontseptsiooni filmis ja lühilugu kasutati erinevalt. Lühikirjas Francis Scott Fitzgerald selgitab Benjamin Buttoni näidetega, kui raske on elada ilma

armastuse, perekonna, lähedaste inimesteta. Siiski näitavad filmiloojad, kuidas armastus aitab elavatel inimestel.

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THE CONCEPT OF LOVE IN FRANCIS SCOTT FITZGERALD'S "THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON" SHORT STORY AND THE FILM

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