

**SYMBOLISM IN “A CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON” (1922)
BY F. SCOTT FITZGERALD**

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ABSTRACT: This paper analyzes the use of symbolism in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s short story “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” (1922), focusing on its employment of allegory, archetypes, and symbols. The study seeks to throw further light on the manner in which Fitzgerald uses literary symbolism as a means to explore the modernist consciousness of the protagonist, Benjamin Button, who serves as an archetype for the alienation experienced by modern man in the Jazz Age. By examining both personal and conventional symbols, the paper not only reveals how the protagonist embodies the tensions of his era, but also highlights how he exemplifies the human representatives of the period. Special attention is given to several underexplored symbols within the story, including: Benjamin’s dress suit, the cigars he smokes as an infant, his hair dye, fake whiskers, and the colored paper in kindergarten. These symbols illustrate Fitzgerald’s craftsmanship in conveying complex themes such as identity, aging, and societal expectations. Through the juxtaposition of these symbols with Benjamin’s unusual aging process, the paper argues that the protagonist becomes a symbolic figure for the disorientation and alienation experienced by individuals in the modernist era. Ultimately, the research provides fresh insights into how Fitzgerald’s symbolism deepens the narrative’s engagement with modernist themes, offering a richer understanding of both the text and its cultural significance.

KEYWORDS: symbolism, allegory, F.S. Fitzgerald, jazz age, modernism

Introduction

F. Scott Fitzgerald was a significant figure in the American modernist movement in literature, from 1920 until his death in 1940. In addition to his best-known works, “The Great Gatsby” (1925) and “Tender is the Night” (1934), Fitzgerald also penned more than 160 short stories. While enjoying little fame during his lifetime, Fitzgerald is now regarded as one of the best American writers of the 20th century. Fitzgerald initially released the short story “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” in 1922. The narrative tells the story of a 70-year-old man, who is doomed to age backward. With Brad Pitt playing the leading role, “Benjamin Button” was adapted into a big motion picture in 2008 (Lin, 2021), which is rich in symbolic meaning. Yet, before we attempt to unravel the complex and multilayer figurative aspects of Fitzgerald’s literary masterpiece, we must first familiarize ourselves with the word “symbol” and the literary device – “symbolism”.

The word “symbol” has a long and convoluted history dating back to antiquity. It can now be used to refer to a number of ideas in a variety of contexts. Its use in literary criticism is almost antithetical to that in mathematics or symbolic logic. Yet, even there it is unclear because it can be challenging to distinguish between “symbol” and terms like “sign,” “synecdoche,” and “allegory.” Mystic groups who benefited from the romanticist environment regularly utilized the word “symbolism” in their literature. These groups used diverse religions, myths, and sacred figures as a cover to analyse symbolism in relation to the so-called “universal analogy” with reference to the inaugural revelation passed down to future generations. The Greek verb “*symbolleîn*,” which is where the term “symbolism” comes from, means “to bring together.” In a nutshell, symbolism is the use of symbols to represent ideas, emotions, and things (Myronova et al., 2022).

A literary device known as “symbolism” is used when specific literary elements should not be taken literally. A symbol could be any object, person, situation, event, or action that, when considered in its larger context, has a deeper meaning. Symbolism is a figurative device used by writers to further expand the non-literal complexity and imaginative range of their writing. It is also used as a means to help the reader to

look beyond the literal surface of the narrative. A literary work's meaning can be further deepened through the use of symbolism, which gives it additional depth and colour (Samuelsson, 2022).

In the arts, symbolism refers to a particular style which rejected the logic of the Industrial Age and the Impressionists' purely visual reality in order to express the symbols of thoughts. It grew in popularity in France in the late nineteenth century and had an impact on a big part of Europe. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and Romanticism both had an impact on it. Its symbols were not meant to be accurate representations of ideas or emotions, but rather more enigmatic, vague suggestions of meaning (Sidhu & Pexman, 2019). When viewed from this perspective, a symbol is something concrete that stands in for, or symbolizes, something else, usually an idea or notion that is abstract. It could be a gesture, a noise, a thing, or an action. It must be able to be felt, heard, seen, touched, smelled, or tasted. Although the concrete form of a real object used as a symbol may be well-defined and clear, still its figurative meaning can be ambiguous. It could be due to factors such as context of a symbol, frequency of repetition, or emotions during the occurrence of an important event. The word "conventional symbol" refers to an interpretation of a sign that is widespread or well-known. For instance, a typical symbol for love is the heart. A literary symbol is one that has multiple possible interpretations. For example, water could be used in the same story as both a redemptive and a destructive force (Rodríguez-Suárez, Morán-Neches, & Herrero-Olaizola, 2021).

Although, there are various types of symbolism, typically, it entails using one thing to stand in for another in order to give the whole thing a different, deeper meaning. It is important to point out that on occasion, however, a person's action, a circumstance, or a statement they make may have symbolic significance. The term "smile," for instance, signifies camaraderie (Dinkler, 2019).

As symbolism is comprised of various complex and multiplayer figurative associations, it is incredibly useful in defining literature and the arts. There are two categories of symbols used to understand the arts, literature, dreams, and experiences: conventional and personal symbols (Clarisa, 2022).

Conventional Symbols (cultural or universal)

According to Sekhon and Armstrong Soule (2020) cultural context is important for deciphering signs. In other words, people from the same cultures understand signs in the same ways. Signs can have wholly different meanings in different cultural contexts since sign meanings change from culture to culture. For instance, white is frequently associated with wedding attire in Iran, but is more often associated with burial attire in India.

Personal Symbols (contextual or private)

To better understand personal symbols, let's examine the following example. When two individuals hear the word "heart," their interpretations of it may vary; one individual may just regard it as a bodily organ, while the other individual may see it as the center of emotions, particularly love. Different individuals (writers, dreamers, artists, etc.) have different personal emblems. Many theorists and academics, including Alfred North Whitehead, Susanne Langer, Ferdinand De Saussure, and others, seem to have played major roles in formulating and developing ideas of symbols (Grau Rebollo, Escribano Castaño, Valenzuela-Garcia, & Lubbers, 2019). In joining with the concepts developed by these theorists, and in engaging with the ongoing scholarly dialogue associated with the theory of symbolism, this article will focus on Northrop Frye's perspective on symbols. Numerous figurative elements are used in symbolism to subtly express non-literal concepts. These symbolic elements, which can include words, phrases, images, and even letters, awaken the reader's feelings and transcend their typical states of consciousness, allowing them to engage with the deeper, non-literal meanings conveyed by the text (Kammampool & Suuk, 2019).

Now that we have outlined some key aspects of symbolism, we can better comprehend, at least in theory, how it is utilized in literature. Before, however, we focus our attention to "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," let us, first, explore some worthwhile examples which will bring theory to life, so that we, as readers, could become more aware of the functions of symbolism in literature. Through an examination of these works, we will become not only more mindful in identifying different figurative elements, but we will also become more skilled in recognizing figurative meanings and non-literal levels of meaning in narratives.

Symbolism in “Hop – Frog”

In the 1850 book “Hop-Frog”, two dwarfs are brought into captivity to become the king's dwarfs. The monarch and his council make fun of them and treat them like an object of ridicule. One day, Hop-Frog intends to get retribution. Hop-Frog turns the monarch and his seven ministers into orangutans for a feast, after which he deliberately sets them on fire. Hop-Frog and Trippetta flee to another nation; they are never heard from again. King is a metaphor for a despot who considers everyone to be his slaves and is free to treat them as such because he is their owner or king (ruler, sovereign, monarch). Poe's affluent foster father John Allan adopts him when his parents pass away, which acts as an internal symbol. King is a representation of Poe's foster father. King mistreated Trippetta in the same way that Poe's foster father mistreated his wife. The king also stands in for his actual father. Hop-Frog is a dwarf who works in a king's court. According to Juan Eduardo Cirlot (1971):

“(...) the dwarf is a symbol of ambiguous meaning. Like dactyls, elves, and gnomes, the dwarf personifies powers that are essentially outside the sphere of consciousness. Folklore and mythology depict the dwarf as a fun creature with some childlike characteristics suited to its small size, as well as a guardian like the Cabiri, as is the case with the ‘woodland dwarfs’ in the Sleeping Beauty story” (Cirlot, 1971, p. 91).

In terms of inner symbolism, it is the sign of Poe himself. Hop-Frog and Poe are both kidnapped from their home and taken to live with the wealthy and vicious people who reign over them (see Anderson, 2022).

Symbolism in “The Cask of Amontillado”

In this book, Montresor and Fortunato are the two central figures. Only punishment, in Montresor's opinion, can atone for Fortunato's wrongdoing. He meets Fortunato, who was disguised as a jester, at the carnival. Montresor convinces him to go after trying the amontillado and confirming it is not sherry. They head over to the Amontillado cask in the catacomb. Fortunato has a recurring allergy cough. Montresor tries his best to convince Fortunato not to sample the Amontillado, but he is adamant. Montresor ties him up once they arrive in the crypt. Fortunato at first thinks it's a joke, but Montresor ignores him and builds a wall. The narrator asserts that the catacombs are still standing. Amontillado is a type of wine. Particularly red wine is a symbol of blood and sacrifice. It can also stand for youth and unending life. In this story, Amontillado's effective act of vengeance on Fortunato resulted in his death. Amontillado, however, is crucial in this case primarily because it convinced the man to choose a life-ending course. Amontillado here stands for temptation as opposed to sacrifice “In symbolism, numbers serve as both ways to describe quantities and idea-forces with distinct personalities. In a sense, the actual digits are just the outermost layers. All other numbers originate from the number one” (Cirlot, 1971, p. 230). Two is a symbol of meeting, completion, and at the same time antagonism, just like life and death, the immortal and the mortal, good and evil, and the moon and the sun. The number two is a metaphor for reflection, strife, and hostility in “The Cask of Amontillado.” At the beginning of the book, Montresor, who is Fortunato's adversary, swears revenge: “the thousand injuries of Fortunato I had... I pledged revenge” (Poe, 1899, p. 258). Two successfully expresses this emotion of anger and wrath toward the adversary through thought, which alludes to Fortunato's betrayals of Montresor. Generally speaking, eleven is a metaphor for change, excess, danger, as well as for conflict and martyrdom. Schneider claims that it has an infernal quality. It indicates incontinence because it is higher than the perfection number, which is ten. However, because it is made up of one plus one, it also corresponds, like two, to the mountain that is shaped like a mandorla, the center of symbolic inversion and antithesis (Cirlot, 1971, p. 234). Nonetheless, Fortunato faced a serious risk of death because the final row of bricks was the eleventh row. Eleven shows how far Montresor will go to exact vengeance because it symbolises a battle that was resolved by his death” (Gunday & Birlik, 2022).

Symbolism in “The Grave”

The abandoned tombs that used to be the family burial cemetery are where Miranda and Paul decide to pause while they are out hunting in the fields of “The Grave.” One of the tombs also has a tiny silver dove with gorgeous fan-shaped wings and wide wings, which Miranda swiftly exchanges to Paul for a gold ring. There are many different perspectives on the meaning of the silver dove in this situation. The dove's resurrection from the dead represents innocence that is born from experience, and the dove is a representation of peace, love, and innocence. According to Joan Givner, the dove that resembles the

Venusian dove is a symbol of earthly love. The sacred, the old, and the past are likewise thought to be represented by the silver dove. I believe the silver dove that was discovered in the grandfather's old graveyard may be a symbol of the solace he experienced before passing. The dove also serves as a symbol for what they were seeking. The dove might perhaps serve as Miranda's own emblem for many things, including her youth, the day she lost some of her conventional innocence, and many other things. Paul, the stereotypical male as hunter, yearns for the dove, which for Paul symbolizes the killing. Paul, who appeared to be already aware of birth and life, is likewise represented by the flawed dove, along with his innocence (Twilley, 2021).

Overview of Symbolism in “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button”

Now that we have delimited upon the intriguing cases of “Hop – Frog,” “The Cask of Amontillado,” and “The Grave,” let us focus our attention towards the intriguing matter of literary symbolism using F. Scott Fitzgerald's “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” as a primary research focus. Fitzgerald is renowned for his deft use of hidden symbolism; thus, the paper begins by emphasizing the plethora of research opportunities that may be found in his writing. A closer examination reveals that, despite the investigation's seeming promise, it primarily depends on a cursory interpretation of symbols, with a focus on clothing and numbers in particular as indicators of age.

Expanding Symbolic Interpretation: Conventional and Personal Symbols

While this study does not aim to provide an exhaustive overview of all symbolic elements in Fitzgerald's work, it does offer a focused analysis on some revealing figurative elements, which aim to deepen the contextual/private and cultural/universal dimensions of symbols in Fitzgerald's narrative. This focused perspective is necessary if one is to achieve a worthwhile understanding of the complex figurative landscape which unfolds in “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button.”

This is addressed by the analysis, which shifts from merely identifying the symbols to understanding their nuanced meanings. Rich in cultural meanings, typical symbols are analyzed in the context of the social mores prevalent during the period the story is presented. Subsequently, the investigation delves into personal symbols, revealing the personal and intimate aspects of the symbols interwoven with Benjamin Button's identity through a thorough examination of his experiences and growth.

Structural Adjustments: Integrating Interpretative Analysis Throughout

A significant restructuring is implemented in order to bridge what seems to be a divide between the introduction as a whole and the short story's interpretative concentration on symbols. Rather than restricting interpretative analysis to a narrow segment, the study strives for a seamless flow throughout the text. Assigning the interpretative function ensures that the study's key argument is stated effectively and captures readers' attention from the outset of the report.

Research Methodology

This research utilizes qualitative research and employs content analysis to interpret and understand symbolism in the selected primary text. The content of the selected short story, “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button,” and the associated scholarly material serves the purpose of primary and secondary sources for carrying out the research.

In order to paint a more faithful representation of the cultural and literary influences which have inspired the author, this article has included other books from Fitzgerald's age. These works aim to highlight Fitzgerald's unique approach and style in comparison to those of his contemporaries. This assessment is achieved through a comparative analysis which highlights Fitzgerald's skillful use of figurative writing, as well as its masterful implementation in “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” in context.

Conclusion Expansion: Significance and Novelty

The conclusion summarizes the significance of the study and emphasizes how it demonstrates Fitzgerald's nuanced use of symbolism in “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button.” The paper's uniqueness is discussed in detail in the expanded conclusion, which also highlights specific advances to our understanding of Fitzgerald's literary devices within a broader literary context.

Clarity and Conciseness: Balancing Context and Analysis

The research analysis offers a more comprehensive, accurate, and in-depth analysis of the symbolism in F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button" while also addressing the shortcomings that were discovered. The modifications provide crucial background for the cultural context of the author's work and aid in our understanding of the hidden symbols he employs.

Analysis

The selected short story is a classic example of literature that offers a renewed perspective upon internalized conventions and norms of human society. This function of the short story is also conveyed through a very significant symbol in the characterization of the protagonist. The predetermined lifetime of Benjamin Button is seventy years which is identical to the traditional lifetime for man in biblical context. As Psalms 90 contain, "The days of our years are threescore years and ten" which the protagonist lives but the only difference is that his life runs in a reverse order. Because at the time of his birth, he is witnessed to be "a man of threescore and ten—a baby of threescore and ten" (Fitzgerald, 1922) which implies, "in a world of otherwise perfect chronology, Benjamin is the only one living "against the clock" (Basseler, 2015). This incongruence between Benjamin's reverse aging and norms of society becomes the source of uneasiness for those around him. The tension that marks the whole narrative becomes symbolic of the taut "relationship between literature and the social upheaval of modern life" (Basseler, 2015). As the selected story is set in and a product of the era of modernism in the Western society and literature, Fitzgerald has created the narrative to stand as an allegory of modernist consciousness. The author's masterful use of such symbolism reflects itself in building the tension in the narrative to express "the many tensions between individual and collective time" (Basseler, 2015).

The protagonist Benjamin Button's archetypal characterization stands symbolic of an individual's tense relationship with the age and era it inhabits as the character stays afloat on tides of different times. Benjamin experiences two to three ages simultaneously; one being his chronological age calculated from the time of his unusual birth and secondly the biological age that he experiences due to his peculiar condition. Due to this unusual discrepancy between his chronological and biological age, Benjamin becomes an archetype of "a conflicting, double awareness; of two separate, often antithetical views of time and life" (Stevenson, 2014). This tense relationship often takes toll on the psychological dimension of Benjamin's extraordinary life and is on display at various incidents throughout the story. Benjamin shows complete denial of the existence of signs of his biological age and embarks on to receive his due commission as brigadier-general in the United States army. Here, the protagonist relies totally on the idea of being a brigadier-general determined on the basis of his chronological age even though he manifests the signs of his biological age. Therefore, the treatment that he receives based on his physical looks due to his biological age bewilders and distresses him. Similarly, Benjamin encounters Hildegard Moncrief for the very first time being twenty years old chronologically even though he is a fifty-year-old man biologically. This time when his physical looks determined by his biological age provides him with an edge over winning Hildegard's interest in him, he decides to go along with it as he thinks to himself, "It would be rude to contradict a lady; it would be criminal to mar this exquisite occasion with the grotesque story of his origin" (Fitzgerald, 1922). Therefore, due to the instances indicating archetypal characterization of the protagonist symbolical to the man of modern era, the story of Benjamin Button becomes an allegorical "example of modernist fiction's chronologies" (Basseler, 2015).

The story's manifestation of literary symbolism also stands out in it being an allegory for its age in American history. Fitzgerald makes a broader, more serious point about the changing American identity in the aftermath of the Great Depression, as well as the social stigma of failure. (Ramadani, 2021) The selected short story was published alongside other stories of the genre in the short story collection titled *Tales of the Jazz Age* placed under the section "Fantasies". Fitzgerald notes down the inspiration behind the story was Mark Twain's remark "that it was a pity that the best part of life came at the beginning and the worst part at the end" (Fitzgerald, 1922). Due to this, the author fictionalized the idea by "trying the experiment upon only one man in a perfectly normal world" (Fitzgerald, 1922). The fact that the author regards the story to be one of the fantastical realities out of the tales of the jazz age is enough to consider the story as an allegory of the magical realistic potentialities of the era to which it belongs, namely the jazz age in American history.

Magical realism, a genre original to South American fiction constitutes “a text in which magic occurs unapologetically within a realist fictional world: the supernatural phenomenon is presented as something coexisting, if unexpectedly, with reality, and thus the reader is guided to accept its existence within the narrative” (Sasser, 2010). So, the narrative of the story stands allegorical to the roaring decade of the jazz age which was marked by “contradictions and paradoxes out of which [...] a modern culture emerged” (Currell, 2009). The reader is coerced to accept the nature of the narrative striving to standardize the extraordinary existence of the protagonist Benjamin Button within the ordinary world surrounding him. During this, the reader also identifies with the odd reality of Benjamin Button and to some extent empathizes with the abandonment and ostracization he faces throughout his lifetime. Thus, making Benjamin Button the archetype of the odd-one-out individual that feels alienated but goes on to comply with the norms of the normal but ordinary people around him. The protagonist becomes an archetype of modernist consciousness and this feat has been achieved by the author by characterizing Benjamin Button to be the “singular, supra-natural element in an otherwise realist, or ‘perfectly normal world’” (Sasser, 2010). Benjamin is “by nature obliging” (Fitzgerald, 1922) and thus facilitates the “brick-faced transmission of extraordinary” (Sasser, 2010).

The allegorical narrative also delivers itself packed into several smaller symbols weaved throughout the story. The overarching theme of feeling unfit within the circumstances one is subjected to live in is manifested in the first few pages of the story. Soon after the birth of Benjamin Button, his father Roger Button is tasked with searching for the appropriate attire for his unusually looking child. The fancy suit that Mr. Button selects and brings for his son is a “costume [that] consisted of dotted socks, pink pants, and a belted blouse with a wide white collar” (Fitzgerald, 1922). Roger Button’s whole quest for the suit symbolizes his hesitation towards accepting the reality of his son and instead trying to impose upon him his own ideals. Roger Button’s self-delusion that he can find right clothes for a seventy-year-old man in the “babies’ supply department” or the “youths’ department” is what makes the situation ridiculous as well as depressing. And his despair aggravates on seeing his son clad in the suit of his choice. The symbol of the dress suit stands for the delusion and denial of Roger Button on the condition of his child and the misery it inflicts upon Benjamin Button. The father continues to stay in denial and force Benjamin to play with toys and rattle with children of his own age. All the while, Benjamin Button continues to go along with the wishes of his father “because he was by nature obliging” (Fitzgerald, 1922). Here, the theme emerges that the larger part of the problem is not Benjamin’s peculiar condition, instead it is the Button family’s reception of it. Roger button fixates himself on how “to retain something of his own self-respect—[and] his position in Baltimore society” (Fitzgerald, 1922) than raising his son according to the needs of his age and condition. The measures that are taken in this wake are bizarre and are expressed through various symbols. On growing up and realizing that Benjamin is aging in reverse, his days of younger age become a matter of concern for his family again. Benjamin’s son Roscoe now takes up the role of his father Roger Button and forces him to “wear eye-glasses and imitation whiskers glued to his cheeks” (Fitzgerald, 1922) in order to look more of his age. These tactics of dyeing Benjamin’s hair to change their natural color and dressing him up to match the society’s expectations are the significant symbols in the story that express the tension persisting within the narrative.

In the midst of all the attempts of Benjamin’s family to condition him according to their ideals, he retains his individuality that is characteristic of his peculiar condition. The individuality of Benjamin Button’s characters is also demonstrated through the use of symbolism. Benjamin seems to enjoy smoking cigars in the days of his supposed infancy more than playing with the toys that his father brings for him. This act of transgression on Benjamin’s part is discovered when his father enters his nursery and the “room [is] full of faint blue haze” and him “trying to conceal the butt of a dark Havana” (Fitzgerald, 1922). Moreover, just as so Benjamin manages to enjoy his grandfather’s company early in the years after his birth at the age of seventy, he goes on to play with “lead soldiers and a miniature circus” after becoming a grandfather at the age of ten.

The extraordinariness in Benjamin Button’s case of reverse aging is not just him growing younger while being insisted on growing older by society, it is the experiences that he has on two starkly different

ages. The theme of him getting to perceive situations on two entirely different times of his life is also expressed through symbolism. One of the most significant symbols is associated with times when he gets enrolled in kindergarten at school. As he does so twice, his experience at the place is different at both times. For the first time, he is made to enroll in kindergarten by his father when he is actually sixty-five years of age but is supposed to be a five-year-old boy. At that time, he is disposed of to perform activities such as “pasting green paper on orange paper, weaving coloured maps and manufacturing eternal cardboard necklaces” (Fitzgerald, 1922). Although these activities may seem normal for kids of the required age, fail to interest Benjamin entirely who was more “inclined to drowse off to sleep in the middle of these tasks” (Fitzgerald, 1922) as he has the mind and body of an old man biologically. As the activities of playing with coloured paper are designed to entertain five-year-olds, he gets to perform them again when he is five years old according to his natural age. For his second time at kindergarten, his son Roscoe takes him to school along with his son and Benjamin’s grandson who is actually five years old. This time, Benjamin sees for himself that “playing with little strips of coloured paper, making mats and chains and curious and beautiful designs, was the most fascinating game in the world” (Fitzgerald, 2019). Therefore, kindergarten activities associated with playing with coloured papers stand as the symbol of the uniqueness that was a part and parcel of the life of Benjamin Button. This symbol employed in Benjamin’s case leads the imagination that in what diverse ways people can experience the same life event in different phases of their biological age (Fitzgerald, 2019).

Conclusion

In conclusion, F. Scott Fitzgerald's interpretation of symbolism in “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” is a significant contribution to the discipline of literary studies. Beyond merely recognizing symbols, the research delves into the nuanced meanings concealed inside both conventional and personal symbols. The study broadens its emphasis and provides a deeper understanding of the story by considering the cultural and contextual components of symbols.

Fitzgerald's mastery of early 20th-century literature is demonstrated by the contrast with works from Fitzgerald's own era, underscoring his unique use of symbols. Because of the structural changes made throughout the inquiry to provide a seamless integration of interpretative analysis, a cogent and convincing case is made. The lengthy conclusion highlights the significance and novelty of the study and shows how it contributes to a more thorough comprehension of Fitzgerald's literary devices.

The intentional omission of superfluous details shows the commitment to accuracy and concision and allows each section to make a unique contribution to the main concept. Ultimately, this research provides a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of the symbolism in “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” while also advancing our understanding of Fitzgerald's literary talent and the cultural influences of his time.

This research has been carried out to uncover some specific aspects of the short story “A Curious Case of Benjamin Button” that have been conveyed by the author by employing literary symbolism. In conclusion, it is safe to say that the brilliance of the story relies not upon its fantastical narrative solely, rather the allegory, archetype and symbols used add to the potential of the story. The author has managed to exploit the literary technique to make the narrative and the characters vocal for the anxieties of the jazz age of American history and the modern era in the history of literature.

Findings and Recommendations

The findings of the current study deal with the practice of literary symbolism in the medium. The research has led to the understanding of the extent to which the use of literary symbolism can reveal more about the narrative and the characters than the words of the author. The current study recommends further research as in comparative analyses of the use of symbolism in the cinematic adaptation of the short story “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button.” The research can be performed by investigating the appropriation of literary symbolism according to the cinematic medium of the story.

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