

Francis scott key fitzgerald english literature essay

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



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2013 Author Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald was born in September 24, 1896, in Saint Paul, Minnesota in The United States. He studied in Princeton University but never finished (<http://www.lecturalia.com/autor/2453/francis-scott-fitzgerald-España> 20/04/13), instead he joined the army to fight in the final days of World War I. When he was working in advertising in New York, he published his first novel *The side of paradise* (1920). He earned some money so could convince his girlfriend, Zelda Sayre, to marry him and soon they had a daughter. They moved a lot until they finally settled in Europe. They led a nomadic, expensive bohemian lifestyle, full of alcohol, wastage and debts. In 1930 Zelda started having nervous breakdowns and she was committed a mental-health clinic in Switzerland, while their nine year-old daughter, Scottie, remained in Paris with a nanny. Fitzgerald was travelling from one side to another to see their family and writing short stories -as " Babylon revisited"- in order to get money for sustaining them. He was also fighting with Zelda's sister for the child's custody. After some years lots of alcohol and depression he died of a heart attack on December, 1940 at age of 44. (Booth, A., Hunter, J. P., Mays, K. (2005), *The Norton Introduction to Literature; Ninth Edition*, W. W. Norton Company, New York [1973]) Fitzgerald wrote almost all of his more successful works as *Great Gatsby* (1925), *The*

Beautiful and the Damned (1922), " Babylon revisited" (1930) and " Tales of the Jazz age" (1922) by taking his life as an inspiration. The author was in his twenties when America entered the ' 20s. This period, after World War I, when economies were recovered, it was called the " Happy ' 20s" or " The age of Jazz". It was related to the years of Tango, Charleston, sports, cinema ([http://www. arthehistoria. com/jcyl. es/vz/contextos/3152. htm](http://www.artehistoria.com/jcyl.es/vz/contextos/3152.htm)), night-clubs and Cabarets -" The most expensive orgy in history" said Fitzgerald- and it is clearly represented in his books. Also, his writing was influenced by the Great Depression in 1929 -" The spectacular death of Jazz age" wrote Fitzgerald- when stocks had fallen leaving thousands of businesses incomplete and thousands of people unemployed, and when the elites had become as poor as the poorest families in The United States. ContextFrancis Scott Key Fitzgerald was a foremost writer within World Wide and American literature, as well as, in the Lost Generation, that literary movement consisted on several writers who had strong experiences related to times in European cities during the periods of World Wide I and the Great Crash. Babylon Revisited takes place on Paris on the late 20s. At this time there had been many social issues which defined the lifestyle of many people in the United States of France. These circumstances are shown by the narrator, and one good example of this is when he mentions cocottes, cabarets, casinos, bars, bistros and other places where luxury, excessiveness and a marked style of music feature the distinctive atmosphere of nigh life in ParisIn this Paris there is a clear-cut division between the two sides of the Seine river and the social movements round there. By the right bank there were all that thing that make people feel enjoyment regardless of whether they are good

or bad. Title " Babylon revisited" is named after an actual but ancient city which is located in what nowadays is Iraq. But maybe what's more important than the city itself is the way it is depicted in biblical accounts. In the bible, Babylon is regarded as a city of indulgence, extravagance, and sin which is in many ways quite similar to the Paris where our main character lived in an out-of-control, irresponsibly fashion. The " revisited" part of the title is an allusion to Charlie's coming back to Paris after having settled down in Prague.

External structureTo describe the external structure, Babylon Revisited is divided into five sections where Fitzgerald relates different facts at different times and describes the feeling of the main character and also the places where he is situated.

Internal structureWhen talking about the internal structure, the author of the story begins describing in the first chapter Paris and a number of events in which Charlie transits and mentions details about the life of this character. Later, Fitzgerald focuses on Charlie and Honoria's lunch and the love between them. Then, in the 3rd chapter a moment of obstacles is recognized when the author relates the discussion between Charlie, Marion and Lincoln and about Charlie's desire to regain Honoria. After this, in the 4th chapter the story starts to rise to the climax when one night Charlie dreams with Helen who was wears a white dress and she says that she wants Honoria to be with him and confesses that she is proud of how he overcomes his dark past. At that moment is when Charlie starts feeling that he is finally forgiven. The falling action occurs in the 5th chapter when Marion and Lincoln accept the idea that Honoria return with his father. Later on, the story reaches a resolution when Charlie cannot stand the idea of losing Honoria once again.

CharactersMain character Charlie

Wales: Charlie is a good-looking 35 year-old man, who is in business in Prague representing a couple of concerns there and earns a lot of money. Three years ago he acted badly because of uncontrollable alcoholism, but nowadays he takes only one drink every afternoon. He has a daughter whose name is Honoria. They have a great and very close relationship. On the other hand, he was married with Helen, his deceased wife, but their marriage ended in a bad way. Even though there were many problems between them, Charlie always remembers Helen and asks Honoria to do the same. He extended himself to reach out for a new tolerance towards Honoria because he must be both parents to her. He is in Paris because he wants to reverse the situation and desires to have Honoria with him. We think that is why he changed his lifestyle. Also, he wants to distance himself of Duncan and Lorraine, his friends of his turbulent past. On the other hand, we can see on the story he wants to fix his relationship with Helen's sister, Marion.

Minor characters

Honoria Wales: Honoria is Charlie's daughter. A clever 9 year-old girl who lives in Paris with Lincoln, her uncle, Marion, her aunt and Richard and Elsie, her cousins. When she gets together with Charlie, they have a great time. Also, she wants to live with him because she loves Cahrlie better than anybody although she knows everything that sorrounds him. She likes Richard and Elsie quite well.

Helen Wales: Helen is Charlie's deceased wife. She appears in Charlie's dream and tells him she wanted Honoria to be with him and she was glad he was being good as well. Helen and Charlie loved each other, but a fight between them one night of February was the beginning of the end of their relationship.

Marion Peters: Marion is a tall woman with worried eyes who had once possessed a fresh American

loveliness. During the story, she has aggressive attitudes and no sympathy towards Charlie. Marion suspects that Charlie has something to do with Helen's death. That is the reason of her resentment. Lincoln Peters: Lincoln is Marion's husband. As his wife, he is glad to be able to help and take care of Honoria. He often supports Marion's decisions but also there are disagreements between them. Lincoln thinks Charlie's request is fair and he firmly believes he has not had something to do with Helen's death. Richard and Elsie Peters: Richard and Elsie are Lincoln and Marion's children and Honoria's cousins. They are fine children with good manners and also well behaved. Duncan Schaeffer: Duncan is Lorraine's companion and Charlie's friend from college. Lorraine Quarrels: Lorraine is Duncan's companion. She is a lovely, pale blonde of 30-years-old. On the story we can see there is a strong attraction between Charlie and Lorraine, although he always tries to avoid her. Paul: Paul is the head-barman at the Ritz bar. Alix: Alix is a bartender at the Ritz bar. SettingTimeWe don't know for certain when exactly the plot of " Babylon Revisited" takes place because it is never specified in the storyline. However, if we have some knowledge about the historical context in which Fitzgerald wrote this short-story we can assume that the events are set some time after the " market crash" of 1929 in the United States. We might as well figure out the time frame of the story through the characters, especially when they refer to these economic issues as " the crash" or when early in the story they talk about the stocks rising and falling. Considering that it had been 3 years in which Charlie had been sober and that 1929 was the ending point of his fast-paced lifestyle, we can come to the conclusion that the story is set some time around late 1932 and

early 1933. Having said that, present isn't the only recurrent time line throughout " Babylon Revisited". Past plays an important role as well. Charlie is constantly looking back at the indulgent life which led him into so much trouble. The past which is relevant to the plot endures 1 year and a half, starting when Charlie becomes wealthy and ending 3 years before present time when the story develops. Place First and foremost; the location of the story is Paris, where there are two major, significant places to the plot. On the one hand, we have Charlie's in-law's house where his daughter Honoria lives, and where the climax occurs. On the other hand, Ritz Bar is a place where Americans hang out. It represents Charlie's former life of expenditure, indulgence, partying, etc. In addition, it is in this place where the story takes shape from the beginning and also where it ends. Allusions Babylon: it was an ancient city named in the Bible as a sinful city that needed to be destroyed for all the bad that means the city itself. Sinful behavior of the citizens, materialistic life. The revisit of this city means, for the author, going back to the origin of his past and his mistakes in, facing them in order to clarify his consciousness, causing a struggle within himself. Source: (<http://www.openbible.info/topics/babylon>) Ritz bar: it's the bar where he has his friends who are a barman waiter (Alix) and the head barman (Paul). This is where he feels belonging, the place where he starts the story and the place where he will be coming back at the end of it. For him, it's a place for thinking, reflection and, of course, having a few drinks. Source: (<http://www.sparknotes.com/short-stories/babylon-revisited/themes.html>) Stock Market Crash: also known as the Black Tuesday. This event took place in October 29, 1929 in the USA. A sudden fall of stock prices shocked the whole country,

setting the people into poorness and fear. This was the highest economic crash in USA, though there were many more events as the one mentioned, but not as hard as the Black Tuesday for society. The event took place after the World War I. Source: (<http://history1900s.about.com/od/1920s/a/stockcrash1929.htm>)

The Seine: long ago it was the fishing river of the original tribes from Paris, and it has always been Paris's heart.

This river delimits 2 sides. The left Bank and the right Bank. On the right side is where he used to go to the Ritz bar with his friends having drinks, hanging out. The fact that he now is sober enables him to perceive another reality of what he sees and feels in Paris about his past. In the other hand, the left bank, the provincialism is meant to refer low-income and traditionalist people. Source: (http://www.placesinfrance.com/river_seine.html)

Second Empire: It was founded and named by Louis- Napoleon Bonaparte after he declared himself Emperor Napoleon III during the Second French Republic since December 2, 1852, till September 4, 1870. Source: (<http://www.sparknotes.com/history/european/1871/section5.rhtml>)

La Plus Que Lent: classical piece of music composed by the French pianist Claude Debussy.

He's well known for avoiding a crisp style. This record is the proof of his unique and simple style. (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ir8snfWIU2M>)

Josephine Baker: After her second divorced she kept her husband's surname Baker. Famous for being an original dancer and jazz singer, surprising people at her shows for her beauty. She became famous after her performance in a jazz show La Revue Negre in Paris. Source: (<http://artistasoguerreras.blogspot.com.ar/2008/04/josephine-baker-1906-1975-un-corazon-de.html>)

Symbols: Dignified black dinner dress: this is a

hint that shows what is coming next in the story. An anticipation of Marione about Charlie and his strong desire of taking Honoria with him. Also it shows the way she speaks. Yelling, arrogant and none-listening to Charlie's arguments, bringing him into chaos and nervousness. White dress: Helen is the most important inspiration for Charlie in his struggle. The closer he sees her in his dream, the strongest he felt her presence. She is a powerful symbol of peace, love, pardon and comprehension for him. She, though she is no longer alive, now is the only one who can give peace to Charlie's memories and consciousness as he tries to fix all the bad he had done.

Theme: Redemption
Subject matter
Redemption is the act of saving or state of being saved from the power of evil (Oxford Online Dictionary - Eight edition 2011). Charlie has done some terrible things in the past but now is looking for redemption; like all of us, he wants to change for the better and step forward into a brighter path. By redemption we mean, he is looking for forgiveness to make amends with himself and the rest of his world. He has to prove that in order to get back his child, Honoria, he has become a better person.