

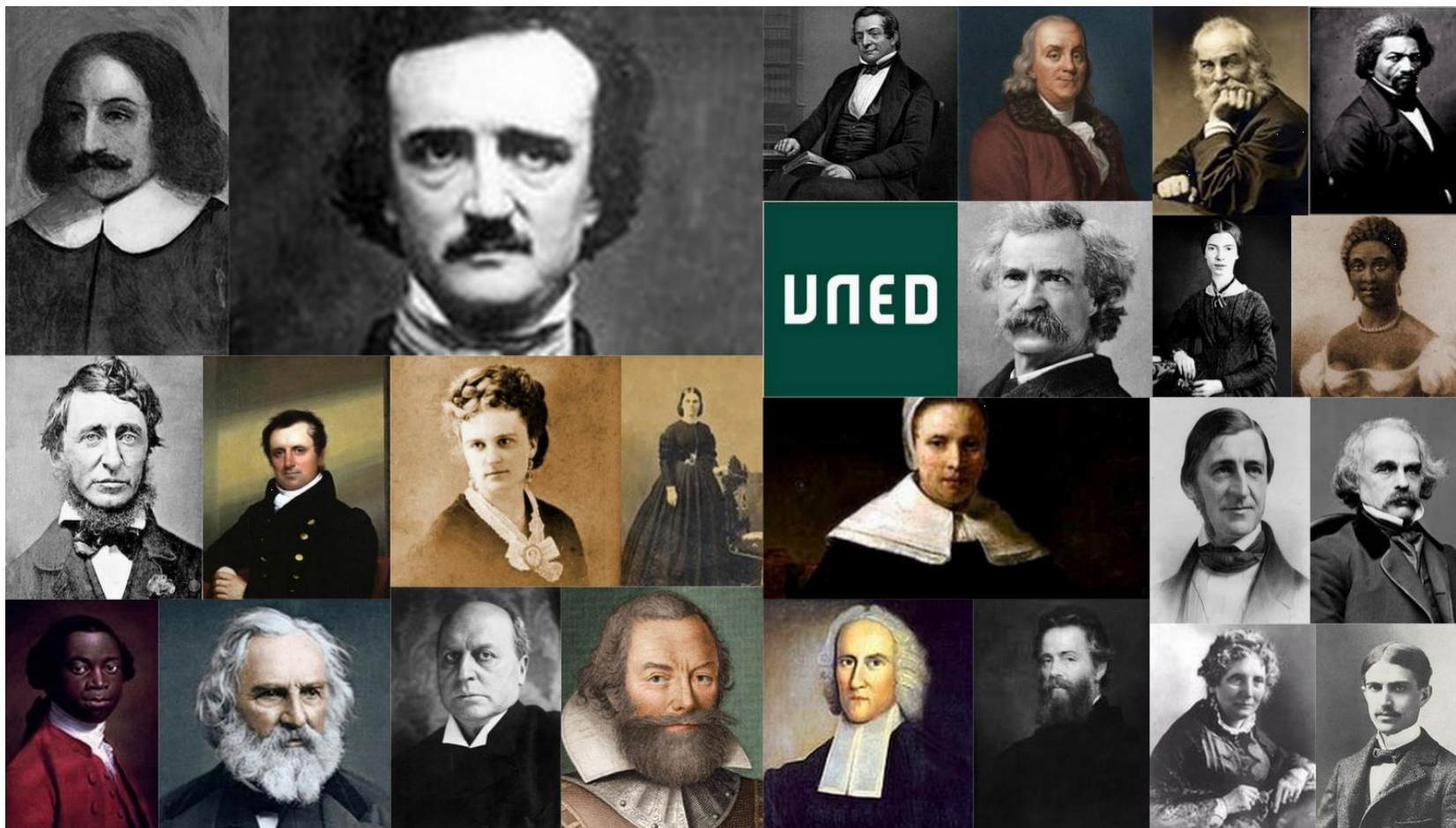
Literatura Norteamericana I

American Literature I

Ricardo Menéndez

10 ECTS Credits 2019-2020

UNED



Authors & Contents 2nd Semester

Study Block II

► Romanticism (part II)

- Nathaniel Hawthorne - Feb 19th
- Herman Melville - Feb 26th
- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow - Mar 11th
- Edgar Allan Poe - Mar 4th
- Frederick Douglass - Apr 1st
- Harriet Beecher Stowe - Apr 15th
- Walt Whitman - Mar 18th
- Emily Dickinson - Mar 25th

► Realism and Naturalism

- Mark Twain (Samuel L. Clemens) - Apr 22nd
 - Henry James - Apr 29th
 - Kate Chopin - May 6th
 - Stephen Crane - May 13th
- Review past exams - May 20th



“

“It means”, he answered lightly, “that the child is not white; it means that you are not white”

”

Kate Chopin (1850 - 1904)

- ▶ Biography
- ▶ Works by author
- ▶ Online resources
- ▶ Q&A



Objectives of the Unit

- ▶ **Learn** about regionalist or local-color fiction a post-Civil War genre that was a commercial success and addressed regional differences among Americans
- ▶ **Trace** the complex historical reception of Kate Chopin's writings (from her early success, followed by a long period of obscurity to being discovered by feminist scholars and her current controversial reception due to her treatment of gender, race and class)
- ▶ **Interpret** Chopin's Louisiana short stories as illustrative examples of the literary movements of realism and naturalism, considering that the author subversively used the conventions of local-color fiction in order to undermine and dismantle the conservative ideology that this traditional genre nostalgically supported
- ▶ **Focus** on the polemical reception of *The Awakening*, a complex narrative about a woman's growth from being her husband's possession to achieving self ownership
- ▶ **Closely** examine *Désirée's Baby*, a deceptively simple short story which subverts the idyllic images of the Old South offered by plantation novels



Biography

- ▶ Born in Saint Louis (Missouri) in 1850
- ▶ Bilingual and bicultural. Now considered the first major American author formed outside the Protestant Anglo-Saxon mainstream
- ▶ Her parents were Irish and French. Her birth name Katherine O'Flaherty
- ▶ Her father died in a railway accident
- ▶ She married Oscar Chopin at the age of 20 and went to live to New Orleans (Louisiana)
- ▶ Her husband died in 1882 due to swamp fever (malaria) and forced her to take over the family business while taking care of her six children
- ▶ Her literary career took off a few years after returning to her home town
- ▶ However she was unable to make a living only through writing
- ▶ She earnestly sought literary recognition



Works of Kate Chopin

- ▶ Her work had almost been forgotten in the twentieth century until it was rediscovered by Norwegian scholar Per Seyersted, who edited her complete works in 1969
- ▶ Previous to her revival only a few short stories remained in print. They were mainly considered examples of regionalist or local color fiction
- ▶ Now the scope of her work is more widely appreciated and categorized within realism and naturalism
- ▶ Recurring Themes in Kate Chopin: *love, marriage, sex* (mostly liberating sex), *elitist creole culture, Cajun culture, the French South (Louisiana), personal liberation, race, and class*
- ▶ She used local color devices to subvert the genre and dismantle conservative ideas
- ▶ She went beyond capturing a local atmosphere and beyond just representing speech patterns in order to explore the values of southern society
- ▶ She showed no nostalgia for the past and did not represent a South with harmonious gender and race relationships



The Awakening

- ▶ Now Chopin's most famous work and widely acknowledged masterpiece
- ▶ Originally titled *A Solitary Soul*
- ▶ Dubbed the *American Madame Bovary*
- ▶ Complex narrative. Main character is Edna Pontellier a discontented wife & woman
- ▶ One of the first works of fiction to deal with women's issues without condescension
- ▶ Process of self-discovery that makes her yearn for sexual freedom and artistic fulfilment
- ▶ There were many hostile reactions to Chopin's sympathetic treatment of her female protagonist
- ▶ Critics disapproved of the author's handling of the theme of adultery
- ▶ Such criticism caused her publishers to cancel the publishing of her third collection of stories, which had less of setting and were in a great deal about sex, love, and marriage.



Online Resources for Kate Chopin

- ▶ The Awakening Audiobook

<https://librivox.org/the-awakening-version-2-by-kate-chopin/>

- ▶ Kate Chopin Audiobooks <https://librivox.org/author/433>

- ▶ Désirée's Baby Audiobook

http://www.archive.org/download/short_story_035_0812_librivox/shortstory035_desireesbaby_lm.mp3

- ▶ The [Cambridge Companion](#) to Kate Chopin

- ▶ Kate Chopin on [LION](#) (Proquest Literature Online)

- ▶ [Resources and Links](#) suggested in the Curso Virtual



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Remember to complete
Self-Evaluation &
Exploratory Questions
from the Book
[Online Self Evaluation Quiz](#)

Questions?

Thank you