UCF Russian Club

Advisor: Dr. Alla Kourova

Tuesday, February 23, 2001

**Black History Month/African American History Month:**

***Context, Themes, Personalities & Reference Highlights***

Barry J. Morris, PhD.

Lecture Notes & Reference Highlights

***One Context***:

* Big History (*Origin Story: A Big History of Everything, 2015; The History of Our World in 18 Minutes* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yqc9zX04DXs> David Christian*; Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind,* Yuval Noah Harari,2015).

***Two Themes:***

* Pushkin
* The Harlem Renaissance

***Two Personalities:***

* Harriet Tubman
* Frederick Douglass

***Reference Highlights:***

**Science & Technology**

Sample of important names in science & technology:

* George Washington Carver, botanist and inventor
* Mae C. Jemison, astronaut and medical doctor
* Neil deGrasse Tyson, *Cosmos: A Space-Time Odyssey* (2014) Documentary Film update of Carl Sagan’s *Cosmos; Astrophysics for People in a Hurry* (2017)
* Paul Julian (1899-1975) Pioneer in the chemical synthesis of medicinal drugs such as cortisone, steroids and birth control pills, regarded as one of the most influential chemists in American history.
* Alice Ball (1892-1916), chemist who developed the first successful treatment for Hansen’s disease (leprosy).
* Gladys West, mathematician who contributed to the invention of an accurate model the Earth which was used as the foundation for the creation of the Global Positioning System (GPS), inducted to the United States Air Force Hall of Fame.
* Mark Dean, holds 20 patents that led to the invention of the personal computer and other key advances in information technology, an IBM Fellow and inductee into the National Inventors Hall of Fame..

**Arts**

**Art: Literature**

* *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature,* Editors, Henry Louis Gates and Nellie Y. McKay, (W.W. Norton & Company: New York) 1997
* *Their Eyes Were Watching God,* Zora Neale Hurston, novel 1937, I highly recommend the audio edition performed by Emmy and Grammy award-winning actress Ruby Dee.
* The Collected Works of James Baldwin by the Modern Library Association: *Collected Essays, Early Novels, Later Novels.*
* *Invisible Man* Ralph Ellison
* *Black Boy* Richard Wright
* *Sula* Toni Morrison
* *Alexander Pushkin & his African Ancestry:*

1. https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2017/dec/19/pushkins-pride-how-the-russian-literary-giant-paid-tribute-to-his-african-ancestry
2. *<https://daily.jstor.org/how-alexander-pushkin-was-inspired-by-his-african-heritage/>*
3. *<https://jordanrussiacenter.org/event-recaps/those-crazy-americans-of-course-pushkins-not-black/#.YDPp2hNKgUE>*
4. *<https://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/features/blackeuro/pushkinback.html>*
5. *<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/secret/famous/pushkingenealogy.html>*
6. *Under the Sky of Africa: Alexander Pushkin and Blackness <https://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/file%20uploads%20/catharine_theimer_nepomnyashchy_nicole_svobodnybookos.org_.pdf>*
7. Марина Цветаева. Мой Пушкин <http://www.lib.ru/POEZIQ/CWETAEWA/pushkin.txt_with-big-pictures.html>
8. Axmatova on Pushkin <https://www.culture.ru/poems/9082/pushkin>, https://www.culture.ru/poems/10348/smuglyi-otrok-brodil-po-alleyam

**Art: Poetry**

The works of: Phillis Wheatley, Paul Lawerence Dunbar, Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Brooks, Nikki Giovanni, Maya Angelou, Amiri Baraka, Amanda Gorman

**Art: Theater**

The plays of Pulitzer Prize winning playwright August Wilson

The plays of Lorraine Hansberry, winner of the New York Drama Critics’ Award.

The plays and poems of Langston Hughes.

The plays of Amiri Baraka (nee Leroi Jones).

Individual plays: *Pipeline & Skeleton Crew* Dominique Morisseau; *Funnyhouse of a Negro* Adrienne Kennedy; *Choir Boy* Tarell Alvin McCraney; *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992* Anna Deavere Smith; *DOT* Colman Domingo; *Fetch Clay*, *Make Man* Will Power; *Ruined* Lynn Nottage; *Ceremonies in Dark Old Men*, Lonne Elder III; *Fairview, J*ackie Sibblies Drury*; Topdog/Underdog*, Suzan-Lori Parks; *The Mountaintop* Katori Hall; *Dutchman and The Slave* Leroi Jones; *Blues for Mr. Charlie* James Baldwin; *A Soldier’s Play* Charles Fuller; *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf* Notzake Shange.

**Art: Music**

Here’s a ‘microscopic’ sample of music references with important historical content and/or artistic significance:

* *Strange Fruit,* Billie Holiday, song on single record (B-side: *Fine and Mellow*), 1939, written by Abel Meeropol
* *Message From A Black Man,* Temptations, song from the album “Puzzle People” 1969
* *Alabama Blues,* J.B. Lenoir, title song from album, 1966.
* *Black Man,* Stevie Wonder, song on album “Songs in The Key of Life” 1976
* *Jazz,* Film series my Ken Burns, 2001
* *The Blues,* documentary film series produced by Academy Award, Golden Globe Award and Emmy Award winner Martin Scorsese, 2003
* *A Celebration of New Orleans Blues with Hugh Laurie,* film documentary, 2013 *<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5lJJz4qT1RQ>*
* *Music As Metaphor: Wynton Marsalis Lecture Series,* Harvard University, 2011 *<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iIktEE-N_Bk>*

**Art: A sample of important names in Dance**

* Master Juba (1825-1949)
* Bill “Bojangles” Robinson (1878-1949)
* Asadata Dafora (1890-1965)
* John W. Bubbles (1902-1986)
* Josephine Baker (1906-1975)
* Katherine Dunham (1909-2006)
* Fayard Nicholas (1914-2006) & Harold Nicholas (1921-2000)
* Janet Collins (1917-2003)
* Pearl Primu (1919-1994)
* Alvin Ailey (1931-1989)/Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (1958-Present)
* Dance Theater of Harlem (1969-Present)
* Michael Jackson (1958-2009)
* Misty Copeland (1982-Present)

**Art: Architecture, Painting, Photography:** Too massive to address in this short talk

**Culture, Society, Economics, Politics, Law, Education:** Too massive to address in this short talk; happy to consider focused questions in these areas and recommend a few sources according to Russian Club’s member interests.

**History: General**

* Carter G. Woodson (1875-1950) one of the first historians and journalists to study the history of the African diaspora, including African-American history; known as the “father of black history”, in February 1926 he created the celebration of *Negro History Week,* that latter transformed into *Black History Month.* One of his notable books is *The Mis-Education of the Negro,* 1933.
* *The Souls of Black Folk,* W.E.B. DuBois, 1903
* *The 1619 Project,* The New York Times, 2019 *<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/1619-america-slavery.html>* Project developer and writer Nikole Hannah-Jones received the Pulitzer Prize for Commentary for the introductory essay.
* *Letter From A Birmingham Jail*, Martin Luther King, Jr.
* *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration, 2010* Isabel Wilkerson
* Three volumes on the civil rights movement by historian Taylor Branch: *Parting the Waters, Pillar of Fire, At Canaan’s Edge*
* The Harlem Renaissance *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harlem\_Renaissance*

**History: Biography**

* *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave,* Written by Himself
* *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass,* Philip S. Foner, ed., 1950
* Speech, *What to the Slave is the Fourth of July,* 1852, Frederick Douglass
* Martin Bauml Duberman, *Paul Robeson: A Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf) 1989
* *The Autobiography of Malcom X*
* *Thurgood Marshall: American Revolutionary* Juan Williams, 1998. Thurgood Marshall (July 2, 1908 – January 24, 1993) was an American lawyer and civil rights activist who served as [Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Associate_Justice_of_the_Supreme_Court_of_the_United_States) from October 1967 until October 1991. Marshall was the Court's [first African-American](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_African-American_federal_judges) justice. Prior to his judicial service, he successfully argued several cases before the Supreme Court, including [Brown v. Board of Education](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brown_v._Board_of_Education).