**MA Thesis possible topics:**

* Black modernist magazines in the USA with a specific focus on female editors / Women’s contributions to the development of modern American literature, particularly in terms of publishing /Black women editors of modernist publications

**Abstract**

In the last weeks I worked on a possible theoretical part and I came up with some ideas which I think would be good as background for my MA thesis.

First of all, in my opinion it is necessary to give a general and cultural framework to my topic. In this respect, I would like to enlarge the spectrum of my research referring at the beginning to the notion of “modernity”. I would like to define this term taking into account the fact that the modern period was characterised by fundamental improvements and changes such as for example the shift of the population from the country to urban centres, economic developments (fist malls and department stores etc…), spread of the education, development of the mass-culture and improvements in the process of printing. All these factors and in particular the development of the the mass culture allowed changes in the publishing industry (—-> Adorno and his conception of “Mass culture” and maybe Marx and the concept of “commodity”)

Then, I would like to focus on  *Modernism* particularly in terms of publications because they had a fundamental role in the development of this movement. Indeed, the mass media that first appeared in the modern period were newspapers and magazines and all the audiovisual media we are familiar with arrived only later.

“We have made the claim that modernism began in the magazines. We know, of course, that it began in other places as well, including lecture halls, opera houses, art galleries, and even books, but magazines were so central to modernism that it is hard to imagine this movement in literature and the arts without them” (Scholes and Wulfman, 73).

From an historical point of view, this period was also characterised by the *Harlem Renaissance* “that dramatic upsurge of creativity in literature, music, and art within black America that reached its zenith in the second half of the 1920’s - *The New Negro* is its definitive text, its Bible” (Rampersad, IX). Alain Locke theorised this movement and he wanted to a establish a revised racial identity and Harlem became the “physical embodiment of New Negro consciousness” (Wall, 3). In this lively and energetic environment female intellectuals such as Jessie Fauset and Zora Neale Hurston elaborated their works and their activity shows that the *Harlem Renaissance* was not a mere male phenomenon but rather it allowed female voices to establish their authority.

During the *Harlem Renaissance* two organisations developed; the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) and the National Urban League and they had a crucial role in the success of this movement and also in the development of magazines and publications. *The Crisis* and *Opportunity* were two of the most important and widespread black publications at that time and I think it is important to describe both of them in terms of differences, topics, criticisms, ideologies etc. Moreover, I think it would be also relevant to mention some of Du Bois’ main thoughts and concerns since he was an influential figure and the founder of the magazine *The Crisis*.

This is a general overview of what I think would be important in my future theoretical part. In the second part of my thesis I would like to focus on black women and their roles in the publishing industry. I am interested in Jessie Fauset, editor of *The Crisis* but I realised that there are other female authors and writers to be taken into account.

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