



Arts & Humanities
Research Council



NORTH WEST CONSORTIUM DOCTORAL TRAINING PARTNERSHIP

Standard Application form for students applying for a 1+3, +2 or +3
studentship in the Arts and Humanities

(September 2018 entry)

1. Studentship applied for (please tick):

- 1+3 (Masters + PhD)
 +2 (PhD - current students)
 +3 (PhD)

2. Institution in which you have been offered a place/or have applied to:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lancaster University | <input type="checkbox"/> University of Liverpool | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> University of Manchester |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manchester Metropolitan University | <input type="checkbox"/> Keele University | <input type="checkbox"/> University of Salford |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royal Northern College of Music | | |

3. Candidate's details:

Name:	
Application / Registration number:	
Address:	
Town:	
Postcode:	
Country:	
Telephone:	
Email address:	
Nationality/Resident Status:	<input type="checkbox"/> UK National <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UK Settled status <input type="checkbox"/> EU National not resident in the UK <input type="checkbox"/> EU National resident in the UK for the past three years <input type="checkbox"/> Other



4. Project details:

Award Type a. Full award b. Fees only

Mode of Attendance a. Full time b. Part time

Institution:	University of Manchester
Proposed Masters Programme (1+3 only):	
Project title (+2/+3):	Phd French Studies: The Manufacture of Nostalgia in Court Ballet

5. PhD Proposal (to be completed by all students):

5a) Please provide between 6 and 10 keywords that describe your research

DANCE	STATE
NOSTALGIA	POLITICS
EMPIRE	COURT
PROPAGANDA	BALLET
ARTS	FRANCE

5b) Please describe the proposed research using up to 1,500 words, referring to the guidance. Include a word count.

The Manufacture of Nostalgia in French Court Ballet

Today's political discourse drips with nostalgia for lost empires. We have a US president promising to "make America great again", and a Russian leader whose popularity rests on his supposed ability to restore his country's lost prestige. Nostalgia for a past Britain, even the Britain of empire, appeared to inform some of the rhetoric in the lead-up to the Brexit referendum, and arguably remains an undercurrent in the ongoing debate on this issue (Johanson, 2016). By manufacturing a longing for an unrecoverable past that may never have existed, political leaders are playing a potentially dangerous game. Having presented themselves as the saviours of their countries, there may well be serious consequences if they fail to restore their nations to greatness.

French kings in the seventeenth century also made liberal use of nostalgia for lost empires, and one of the key vehicles for this was court ballet. Ballets frequently invoked a notional glorious past that shed a flattering imperial light on the present reign, particularly at times when religious conflict, rebellion and war created an urgent need for the country's restoration. Court ballets would often feature pre-eminent moments in France's history such as the empire of Charlemagne (McGowan, 1963); events and protagonists borrowed from Ancient Greece and Rome whose imperial prestige somehow adhered to France (Apostolidès, 1981); or empires of peace and harmony from classical mythology – Arcadia, Cythera, Parnassus – that could be conflated with or contrasted to the present (Coward, 2008). A standard trope of such ballets was that the reign of the present monarch was destined to be a new and even more glorious golden age.

My research into court ballet exposes how and why a state chooses to manufacture this type of nostalgia, and how, in the process, history is re-appropriated and mythologised to meet the needs of the



present. Close analysis of a representative selection of ballets forms the nexus of broader political and cultural interrogations. This includes an examination of the political imperatives that motivated the invoking of nostalgia, and the factors dictating the selection of historical or mythic elements to be recycled. My research also comprises an exploration of the relationship between nostalgia and aesthetic trends of the period, including Italianism, the gallant style, and pastoral art and literature.

Nostalgic discourse in seventeenth-century France formed part of a wider royal propaganda effort employing all the arts. In particular, it was vital for the monarchy to secure the loyalty of the fractious nobility in order to stave off rebellion, neutralise rivals to the throne and guarantee funds and men to fight wars. Because court ballets were produced, danced and watched by the aristocracy, they emerged as a prime medium for state propaganda. Ballet performances were not just entertainment. They were major political and diplomatic events. With foreign ambassadors and visiting dignitaries in attendance, their messages could be transmitted far beyond the confines of the French court (Cannova-Green, 2010).

'Nostalgia' in this context was more than longing for an unrecoverable past: it was a self-aggrandising identification with past eras, real or imaginary. Nostalgia allowed French aristocrats to view themselves through a consoling feudal or classical lens as their privileges diminished (Apostolidès, 1981). It could also cast a golden glow over the repression and violence of absolute monarchy. Like political leaders today, however, the monarch was playing with fire in conjuring up an ideal past that contrasted starkly with the imperfect present. In the short term, he could use this contrast to his advantage by promising to save the country from its current woes. However, the manufacture of nostalgia could work against him in the long term if he failed to deliver the promised golden age (Coward, 2008).

A number of studies note that the term 'nostalgia' actually dates from the seventeenth century. Swiss physician Johannes Hofer coined it in 1688 to describe the symptoms of extreme homesickness suffered by Swiss mercenaries, joining 'nostos' (to return home) with 'algos' (pain, or sorrow). After establishing its origins, these studies shift their attention to the nineteenth century, when nostalgia underwent a semantic transformation from a disease connected with yearning for a particular place to selective memory associated with yearning for a particular time (Lowenthal, 2013; Niemeyer, 2014). Scholars have examined its presence in many areas of modern life, including advertising (Jameson, 1991), media (Niemeyer, 2014) and literature (Hutcheon, 2000). A prime focus for many working in this area, however, is recent history and contemporary issues, for example post-Soviet Russia (Boym, 2001), the Iraq War (Gorin and Niemeyer, 2009) and feminism (Doane and Hodges, 1978).

Other scholars including Lowenthal (1985), Santesso (2006) and Johanson (2016) have turned their attention to early modern nostalgic discourse. No studies of nostalgia in court ballet have been undertaken to date to my knowledge. My research seeks to uncover what Dames (2010) describes as 'the complex emplotment of nostalgic yearning in discrete historical and political circumstances'. In other words, I argue that rather than being a universal, ahistorical emotion, nostalgia is a historically and culturally situated phenomenon whose precise functions need to be examined in context. My research focusses particularly on its use as a propaganda tool, drawing on the work of scholars such as Lasch (1984) and O'Shaughnessy (2004). It explores the ways in which nostalgia can be used to reinforce the dominant ideology, and the opportunities it presents for resistance to it.

The study of the manufacture of nostalgia in court ballet leads inevitably to an examination of the relationship between the state and the arts. After all, dance has been a propaganda tool of many empires – political, cultural and commercial. The dazzling artistry of the Russian ballet during the Cold War, the technicolour energy of big Hollywood dance movies, the massed ranks of dancing drummers at the Beijing Olympic ceremony - all exemplify dance put to the service of empire, be it the Soviet empire, the empire of American popular culture or the empire-building powerhouse of China. From my research, court ballet emerges as a complex, inventive and multi-faceted early example of dance as imperial propaganda, at a time when France's actual colonial empire was still in its embryonic stages.

My research addresses a range of questions about the interrelationship between artistic production and



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the state: Does the fact that dance is used as propaganda have an impact on its artistic value? How is the status of dance affected when the fall of empires propels it into the commercial sphere? Is state patronage of dance and other performing arts possible without compromising artistic freedom or quality? Most importantly, my research seeks to find answers to the urgent question: what effect is the prevalence of manufactured nostalgia in today's political discourse having on politics, on the arts and on our culture as a whole?

Bibliography

Apostolidès, Jean-Marie, *Le Roi-Machine: Spectacle et Politique au Temps de Louis XIV* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1981).

Bowen, Ralph H., 'American Cultural Imperialism Reconsidered' in *Revue française d'études américaines*, 24/25 (1985), 179-193.

Boym, Svetlana, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001).

Canova-Green, Marie-Claude, *Ballets pour Louis XVIII: Danse et politique à la cour de France (1610-1643)* (Toulouse: Society de Littératures Classiques, 2010).

Cowart, Georgia J., *The Triumph of Pleasure: Louis XIV and the Politics of Spectacle* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008)

Dames, Nicholas., 'Nostalgia and its Disciplines: A Response', *Memory Studies*, 3, 3 (2010), 269-275.

Doane, Janice and Devon Hodges, *Nostalgia and Sexual Difference: The Resistance to Contemporary Feminism* (London: Methuen, 1987).

Ezrahi, Christina, 'Beyond the Iron Curtain', in *Swans of the Kremlin: Ballet and Power in Soviet Russia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012), pp. 137-168.

Gorin, Valérie and Katharina Niemeyer, 'Spectre du passé et enjeux géopolitiques du présent: la mémoire américaine du Vietnam dans la guerre d'Irak', in *Mémoire, histoire et médias*, ed. by M. Michel and R. Latouche (Brussels: Bruylant, 2009), pp. 239-254.

Hutcheon, Linda, 'Irony, Nostalgia and the Postmodern', in *Methods for the Study of Literature as Cultural Memory*, ed. by Raymond Vervliet and Annemarie Estor (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), pp. 189-207.

Jameson, Fredric, *Postmodernism or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

Johanson, Kristine, 'On the Possibility of Early Modern Nostalgias', *Parergon*, 33 (2016), 1 -15.

Lasch, Christopher, 'The Politics of Nostalgia' in *Harper's Magazine*, 269, 1614 (1984), 65-70.

Lowenthal, David, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

— 'Nostalgic Dreams and Nightmares', *Change over Time*, 3, 1 (2013), 28-54.

McGowan, Margaret, *L'Art du Ballet de Cour en France 1581-1643* (Paris: Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique, 1963).

Niemeyer, Katharina, 'Introduction: Media and Nostalgia', in *Media and Nostalgia: Yearning for Past Present and Future*, ed. by Katharina Niemeyer (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).



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O'Shaughnessy, Nicholas Jackson, *Politics and Propaganda: Weapons of Mass Seduction* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

Santesso, Aaron, *A Careful Longing: The Poetics and Problems of Nostalgia* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press 2006).

Word count: 1,474

6. Qualifications:

Year awarded	Qualification type	Qualification Subject	Awarding institution	Level	Class
2017	Masters Degree	Arts, Languages and Cultures: French Studies (Research Route)	University of Manchester	MA	Distinction
2008	PGCE	Secondary Education: French	University of London Institute of Education		
1987	BA Honours Degree	Modern Languages (French and Russian)	University of Cambridge	BA	2:1
Description:					

7. Relevant Experience:

Description of relevant experience:	<p>I achieved a Distinction for my MA in Arts, Languages and Cultures (Research Route) at the University of Manchester. My dissertation explored the ambiguous relationship between enchantress and monarch in the early seventeenth-century 'deliverance ballet'. I also wrote on court ballet as a site of memory; the performance of gender in court ballet; the 1668 <i>Fête de Versailles</i>; and Molière's <i>comédie-ballets</i>. The MA also included courses on research methods and critical concepts.</p> <p>I have a BA Hons. in French and Russian from the University of Cambridge, where my studies centred on nineteenth and twentieth century French and Russian literature. I am a fluent French speaker, having attended the Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle, London, where I received a thorough grounding in French seventeenth-century literature. I have also trained and performed professionally in dance and drama, as well as researching, producing and scripting television documentaries.</p>
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8. Supervision

Please propose up to 3 prospective supervisors for your PhD:

Institution	Supervisor
University of Manchester	



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9. Research Training previously undertaken

9a) (+2 and +3 applicants only) Please give details of the Masters programme and research training undertaken:

The taught Masters programme in Arts, Languages and Cultures provided research training including identifying sources, compiling a bibliography, academic writing, producing a literature review, formulating research questions, planning and writing a dissertation proposal and reflective practice. The MA also included a course on Cultural Concepts, examining the work of theorists working in the areas of Memory, Narrative, the Unconscious, Visuality, Post-colonialism and Post-structuralism.

9b) (+2 and +3 applicants only) Relevance of Masters and other previous training to your PhD project (up to 100 words):

My PhD project will draw together many strands of my training and experience, including research, writing, French language and literature, theatre and dance. Researching seventeenth-century French court ballet during my MA provided exposure to a wide range of relevant scholarship and a variety of theoretical approaches. The MA has also enabled me to transition from journalistic to academic writing, and to develop practical research skills. I will also be able to draw on previous experience of archive research gained through working on documentaries for ITV and the BBC in my previous career.

9c) (1+3 applicants only) How will your proposed Masters training equip you with the skills necessary to undertake your PhD project? Refer to the guidance on eligibility for 1+3 awards (up to 250 words)

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10. Research Training needs

Please give details of the anticipated research training needed for your PhD project:

Academic archive research training.

Please give details of the kind of resources you will potentially need during your PhD. Please also indicate whether your research project will require you to undertake research abroad.

My primary sources will be the *livrets* (librettos) for the ballets held in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and available in digitised form via Gallica.bnf.fr. Other resources include newspaper reports, witness accounts and commentary, as well as costume designs, sheet music and theatrical ephemera. I will need to carry out archive research in institutions including The John Rylands Library (the Mazarinades collection and the Shackleton collection) and the Victoria and Albert Museum (collection of French court ballet costume designs). I will also need to visit archives in France, including those of the Centre National de la Danse, the libraries of the Comédie Française and the Opéra de Paris.

11. Collaboration with External Partners

11a) Is this or does it have the potential to be a collaborative PhD? See the guidance for a definition. If so, give the name of the partner organisation, and describe the planned collaboration, following the guidance. Indicate what discussions you have so far had with the partner organisation. You must also attach a letter from the partner organisation indicating its support in principle.

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11b) Other applicants: Please give details of any potential collaboration you may plan to develop with external organisations during your PhD programme (industry, cultural organisation, government bodies etc...).



12. Additional Applications

Have you been nominated for or applied for any other studentship this year?

If yes, please provide details:

13. References / Transcripts

Your institution will need to attach two references and your transcript(s) from your programme application to this application form.

14. How did you hear about us?

Please let us know how you have heard about the NWCDTP and its studentships:

Via the University of Manchester website.

15. Acknowledgement

I confirm that the information I have provided in this form is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge at this date. I fully understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the relevant forms are submitted to the relevant office in due time and that any missing information may render my application incomplete and ineligible. I authorise the North West Consortium DTP to disclose to the AHRC any information that is relevant to my application.

Signature: (Type Name if submitted electronically)	
Date:	8 th February 2018



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