



Ústav světových dějin

## Master's Thesis Review

Student's name and surname: Stephen W. White

Title of the thesis: Integration and the Eurofighter: Harmonising Britain and Europe

Reviewer's name and surname: Jiří Janáč

**1. Heuristic** (please, evaluate by grade 1, 2, 3, 4 – in case of grading 3 and 4 the reviewer is obliged formulate critical points)

1.1 Evaluation of the selection of literature and sources	1
1.2 Complexity of used sources from the perspective of the state of the art	1

Short evaluation:

The thesis has been developed within the TEMA Erasmus Mundus Master Course framework, a highly demanding study programme with specific mobility requirements. Under these conditions many sources originally identified as promising (trade journals and magazines) proved hard to be obtained and Stephen had to cope with the challenge of narrowing down the source base to (mostly, but not exclusively) datasets available online. Despite such limitations, the thesis covers and compellingly analyses political and public discourses over a relatively long period of time (1980s-2010s).

**2. Research problém and its solution** (please, evaluate by grade 1, 2, 3, 4 – in case of grading 3 and 4 the reviewer is obliged formulate critical points)

2.1 Choice of the formulation of the research issue respects the task given to the student	1
2.2 The relevance of the goal from the perspective of research area methodology	1

Short evaluation:



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Building upon the methodology and narrative structure developed recently by researchers studying the contested processes of European integration through the lens of technology (Schot, Schueler etc.), the thesis analyses the (failed) “Europeanization” of the British identity through the lens of the big European technological project (Eurofighter Typhoon). From the very beginning Stephens interests lay in the history of the complicated relationship between Britain and Europe. After overcoming his original reservations about cultural history approach, he managed to develop over a good command of relevant literature and major theories and methodologies in the field.

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### 3. Thesis’ structure evaluation (please, evaluate by grade 1, 2, 3, 4 – in case of grading 3 and 4 the reviewer is obliged formulate critical points)

3.1 Is the structure of the thesis logical?	1
3.2 Does the thesis’ structure work along the methodology and methods declared in the introduction	1

#### Short evaluation:

The text is logically structured into four chapters. The first introductory chapter lays out main argument of the thesis and places it within the contemporary academic debate, combing two distinct bodies of literature – the first focusing on the role of technologies in construction of collective identities and production of cultural space on the national, but also on European level (hidden integration, Europeanization); the second concerns the role of Europe and European identity project in the articulation of the British national (imperial?) identity in the post-war period on the background of political history of the British relationship with the EEC/EU. The two following empirical chapters approach the topic from two different perspectives – Chapter Two looks at the political debates and discourses surrounding the Typhoon and analyses how this European project (as a symbol and embodiment of Europe and European integration en large) has been “sold” to the public and harmonized with the elitist project of British identity. Here, the author aptly demonstrates that instead of appealing to lofty ideas of shared European values etc., both the advocates and opponents of the project tend to articulate its value virtually exclusively in economic and geopolitical (national) terms. Chapter Three subsequently underlines this Milwardian interpretation, pointing out that British public discourse (museums,



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cartoons) represents Typhoons success as British, while its failures as European, thus retaining and reproducing the strict dividing line between the two entities. Chapter Four summarise conclusions.

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### 4. Quality of analysis and interpretation (please, evaluate by grade 1, 2, 3, 4 – in case of grading 3 and 4 the reviewer is obliged formulate critical points)

4.1 Analysis of sources and literature	1
4.2 Interpretation of sources and literature in their interaction	1

#### Short evaluation:

The thesis shows clearly authors' capability to work independently and think critically, and stand as a proof of his good command of methods of historical research (textual analysis). It is worth mentioning that Stephen has developed the analytical part with only minor guidance from supervisors.

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### 5. Quality of the text (please, evaluate by grade 1, 2, 3, 4 – in case of grading 3 and 4 the reviewer is obliged formulate critical points)

5.1 Style and grammar	1
5.2 Use of terminology	1

#### Short evaluation:

Authors style and grammar are almost impeccable, which is hardly surprising given the fact that he has British academic training and is a native speaker of English. Although Stephen has been initially struggling with methodological and theoretical vocabulary of cultural studies, the thesis does not suffer from this difficulty.



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**6. Synthetic evaluation ( 500 signs):**

The thesis focuses on the highly topical theme of British - European relationship. At the time when the United Kingdom moves away from the European project, the presented thesis offers an interesting insight into a (failed?) attempt at harmonization of European and British identity in a single technological project between 1980s and 2010s. The Eurofighter Typhoon project, designed (at least rhetorically) to enhance European dimension of British identity, failed to deliver on both levels – as a technological project (Chapter Two enumerates the gradual erosion of its economic promise) and as a symbolic materialization of European identity of the British people (see Chapter Three).

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**7. Questions and comments which should the candidate answer and discuss during the defense:**

- 1) Is it possible to see Eurofighter as a political project designed to forge Britons into Europeans? The thesis (logically, with respect to available resources and its focus on the British debate) does not really address this issue, but the original research design (overly ambitious as research designs tend to be) included also an analysis of the debates on European level.
- 2) In the public discourse around the continent European integration is often conflated with the activities of EEC/EU. However, formation of European identity (or Europeanization of national identities) and the parallel construction and production of European cultural and technosocial space is a much older process, which has taken place (and still is) largely beyond the sphere of control of these institutions. Is it possible to say, on the basis of your sources, if there has been any dynamic in the process of blending of these two categories (Europe/European Union) in the British public discourse?



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**Suggested grade: 1 (excellent)**

**Date: Prague, June 8th 2018**

**Signature: Jiří Janáč**