



OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Svetla Vladimirova Tsankova, PhD, Department of Media and Public
Communications, UNWE

(scientific position, academic degree, name, surname, educational / scientific institution)

for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor of Philosophy" (PhD) in professional field
3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences (Cartoons in the Media)

with a dissertation on the topic: Characteristics of Contemporary Cartoons in the Press (based on a
case study of the newspapers *Sega*, *The Guardian*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Le Monde*),
presented by Petar Borisov Shoylev, a self-study PhD student in the Department of History and
Theory of Journalism of the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication

with supervisor: Prof. Zdravka Konstantinova, PhD



I. Evaluation of the qualities of the text of dissertation

Petar Shoylev's dissertation on the topic 'Characteristics of Contemporary Cartoons in the Press (based on a case study of the newspapers *Sega*, *The Guardian*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Le Monde*)' explores the cartoons published in the electronic editions of these newspapers, in the thematic areas chosen by the author, in the period 2015-2021. The main objective, as stated by the author, is to identify characteristics inherent to the genre of journalistic cartoon in the context of significant current international events, but no less important are the other objectives which have been set and achieved: to present the national specifics of the political cartoons in the four newspapers; to prove that the cartoons published in the selected newspapers are also part of quality journalism; to emphasise the fact that cartoons as a form of illustrative journalism has not only informational but also artistic value, which makes it more impactful and memorable, as it can present complex ideas in a single image.

As early as in the introduction, Petar Shoylev points out that there is a lack of scientific research on the topic, but the first chapter shows the in-depth and comprehensive study of theoretical sources, on the basis of which he derived the main characteristics of the cartoon as a journalistic genre, outlined its specifics as a communication tool, presented the different types of cartoons paying particular attention to the functions of political cartoons. The methods used - semiotic analysis, visual analysis, discourse analysis, content analysis, comparative analysis, etc. - are a prerequisite for the qualitative process of research of the selected cartoons published in the four newspapers. The precise and multi-layered evaluation of the cartoons presented in tabular form for each newspaper is impressive – this allows him to draw significant and interesting conclusions during their comparative analysis on the thematic area, the means of expression used and their impact on the audience. According to Petar Shoylev, cartoonists can set the newspaper's political orientation; they not only follow the editorial policy, but they also shape or modify it, and in some cases they even conduct their own policy on issues that they consider to be of public importance. In the conclusion, the author rightly points out that cartoons are effective tools of commentary and criticism that enrich the public discourse.

Petar Shoylev's dissertation on the topic 'Characteristics of Contemporary Cartoons in the Press (based on a case study of the newspapers *Sega*, *The Guardian*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Le Monde*)' is logically structured, thus allowing the author to present his research in a quality



manner, to demonstrate his excellent knowledge of the problem, and to fulfil the tasks set. The high language competence and rich vocabulary of the PhD student also make an impression.

The dissertation summary meets the accepted standards and presents in a convincing way the results achieved by Petar Shoylev in the dissertation.

II. Contributions of the dissertation research

In the dissertation, Petar Shoylev pointed out several contributions, focusing on the fact that the research shows the importance of cartoons as a powerful tool for communication in the presentation of political and social topics and that cartoons have an important role in maintaining the image of the selected newspapers *Sega*, *The Guardian*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Le Monde* as quality media. Due to the multi-layered nature of the cartoon, the author rightly sees the contribution points of his research in several scientific fields – media knowledge, cultural studies, sociology, psychology, political science, etc., which makes the dissertation particularly interesting and valuable.

III. Notes and recommendations

In the introduction of the dissertation, it would be better to formulate a hypothesis of the study, which should be derived as a proven thesis in the conclusion based on the presented study results. It would be sufficient to reduce the contributions presented to 3-4 and to make them more explicit, focusing on the particular achievements of the scientific research.

IV. Publications and participation in scientific forums

The dissertation summary lists three scientific publications prepared by the author on the dissertation topic, as well as two participations in scientific forums of the FJMC, which prove that the PhD student Petar Shoylev has fulfilled the requirements of the Rules on Conditions and Procedure for obtaining scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at Sofia University "St. St. Kliment Ohridski" for the approbation and disclosure of the results of the research according to Art. 5, Para 5 and has met the minimum national requirements under Art. 63, Para 1, item 4 and Art. 69, Para 3.



V. Conclusion

The dissertation is distinguished by the quality of the empirical research conducted, by an original and thorough analysis of the problems, comprehensive and reasoned conclusions, and high language competence. This gives me reason to highly evaluate the dissertation on the topic 'Characteristics of Contemporary Cartoons in the Press (based on a case study of the newspapers *Sega*, *The Guardian*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Le Monde*)' and express my positive opinion of the PhD student Petar Borisov Shoylev to be awarded the educational and scientific degree "Doctor of Philosophy" (PhD) in professional field 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences (Cartoons in the Media).

Date: 11.01.2024

Reviewer: Assoc. Prof. Svetla Tsankova, PhD