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Review paper

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## **COMPARISON OF GRAPHIC AND TEXTUAL BIOGRAPHIES IN SLOVENIAN LITERATURE**

The paper compares two graphic biographies with traditional biographies of the same authors – renowned Slovenian writers Alma Karlin and Ivan Cankar. It compares the manner in which graphical and text-only biographies present the characters, the character’s emotions and expressions, which life events they emphasize, and how they address the criterion of objectivity. The results suggest that the biographies in the two Slovenian graphics are less objective than textual biographies due to the pictorial material. Textual biographies present more information about the subject, while graphic biographies focus more on individual events, statements, and emotions, and present them more appealingly.

**Keywords:** graphic biography, Slovenia, comparing graphic novels, Ivan Cankar, Alma K. Karlin

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This paper compares graphic and text-only biographies of two renowned Slovenian authors, Alma Karlin and Ivan Cankar. Karlin was a writer, poet, collector, polyglot, and one of the first European women to travel alone around the world. Cankar is widely regarded as the greatest Slovenian novelist. The paper explores how two graphic biographies differ from traditional biographies of the same subjects.

Specifically, the paper examines whether a graphic biography presents sufficient detail, whether it provides enough information expected from a biography, and whether it is objective, in the sense that it depicts events and characters as close to the truth as the textual biography. The paper compares the manner in which graphic and text-only biographies present their subjects' characters and examine what life events they focus on.

In the first part, there is an overview of historical evolution of graphic biographies and review of the literature. Afterwards, two pairs of biographies, firstly of Alma Karlin and then of Ivan Cankar, are introduced. The central part of the paper compares traditional and graphical biographies, showing how they present their subjects' characters, the events in their lives, and their influence on the world. Then, the paper examines how the writers' lives are included in each of the biographies and analyses each biography's objectivity. The structures of the biographies are then compared, showing how the genre affects the narrative. Furthermore, the author analyses which genre offers a more elaborate presentation of the subject's character and literary works. Finally, the author assesses whether the findings relating to these two examples of biographies can be used as a generalisation for all biographies.

## 2. THE HISTORY OF BIOGRAPHIES

A biography is a literary work that presents an individual's life, supported by evidence and pictorial material (Kendall 2021). When analysing a biography, we determine whether it is effective and whether it contains sufficient facts, and assess how it describes certain events (Study 2015). We try to identify the biographer's writing style, whether he or she concentrates on the subject's emotions or not, and how all of this affects the reader. We also observe the tone in which the biographer describes the subject. It can be humorous, funny, serious, or respectful (Study 2015).

Until the 18th century, biographies were regarded as a subsection of history, as their subjects were usually historically important individuals. In the 18th century they

emerged as literary works. It was then that James Boswell wrote *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, which is considered the greatest English biography to this day (Butler 2012; Ingram et al. 1998; Turnbull 2019). Biography reached its modern form at the turn of the 20th century (Kendall 1965; Kendall 2021). Modern biographies of the 20th century developed under the influence of new ideas about psychology, whereby biographers began psychological research of their subjects. In that period, autobiographies began to appear (Stone 1982; Casper 1999).

Shorter Slovenian biographies are published in biographical lexicons (2008, 2013). Igor Grdina is the leading Slovenian researcher of biographies and the author of several biographies (1992, 2002, 2010, 2015). In their book *Famous: Great Stories of Famous Personalities in Comics* (2020), Žiga Gombač and Jaka Vukotič collected several short comic biographies. The book briefly presents the lives of 30 great Slovenian and world personalities.

The literature often compares biographies of different people. Some authors compare people and their lives, while others compare the ways in which stories are told and presented. Linda Wagner-Martin, a leading biographer of influential women (1996, 2013), found that biographers describe men's lives differently from women's lives. The biographies of the American President F. D. Roosevelt highlighted his political decisions and the results of his presidency. The biographies of his wife Eleanor concentrated on family and social life at the White House. Readers felt that the president did not dedicate sufficient time to his young children, and they did not learn about his extramarital affairs. However, in the biographies of the First Lady, her important ideas, the influence on political decisions, and her leadership are omitted (Wagner-Martin 1996; Yow 2015).

In recent decades, several works have analysed and compared biographies of women, leading to its classification as a particular genre (Dowd and Eckerle 2016; Styer 1982; Spongberg and Walker 2020; Booth 2004). There are no resounding comparisons of text-only and graphical biographies of the same person. Therefore, this research is the first of its kind in Slovenia and beyond, to the best of the author's knowledge.

In Slovenian language, both comics and graphic novels are called "strip". In this paper, the term "graphic biography" is used, although one could argue that statements attributed to characters in speech bubbles are fictitious and thus not biographical. When reviewing Slovenian literature, the term "strip" will be translated as comics.

Groensteen (1996) and Grove (2004, 2010) analysed European autobiographies in *Bande Dessinée*. Manu and Neaud (2021) recently analysed current developments

in the genre of comic autobiographies (2021). However, graphic biographies that were not autobiographies, apart from individual books, were rarely studied as a genre (Gorman 2007). Since 2008, however, Candida Rifkind has been systematically analysing them and is undoubtedly the leading scholar in the field of graphic biographies (Rifkind 2008, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2020). Rifkind also developed research methods for studying graphic biography (2019).

In her article *Drawn from Memory: Comics Artists and Intergenerational Auto/Biography* (2008), Rifkind focused on father-son relationships and intergenerational problems. She chose three graphic novelists for the paper and examined some of their notable graphic biographies. Rifkind analysed *Art Spiegelman's Maus I and II*, Seth and John Gallant's *Bannock, Beans, and Black Tea: Memories of a Prince Edward Island Childhood during the Depression*, and Chris Ware's *Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid on Earth*. Her research concluded that all three projects not only showed a reconciliation between fathers and sons but also questioned the politics and practices of representing oneself and others in graphic form (Rifkind 2008).

In 2005, Rifkind compared two graphic biographies about Robert Oppenheimer which used "visual strategies to overcome some of the narrative problems of prose scientific biography" (Rifkind 2005: 7). She argued that scientific graphic biography should be considered as a specific genre that installs a biographical eye as opposed to the "auto/biographical I" to explore the complex relationship between empirical knowledge and affective experience that shapes lives caught between science and politics (Rifkind 2015).

Together with Linda Warley, Rifkind published a volume (2016) of eleven authors' critical essays on contemporary Canadian cartoonists and their works. Said authors examined graphic works, including biographies, and analysed their aesthetics and narrative while examining the visual styles, different storytelling techniques, and how they present real-life experiences. While the book focuses on Canadian graphic works, it significantly contributes to global knowledge. Rifkind and Warley (2016) proposed new ways of reading the intersection of comics and an (auto)biography.

In her further research, Rifkind (2020) analysed Lauren Redniss's *Radioactive: Marie & Pierre Curie: A Tale of Love and Fallout* (2010). Rifkind used biographical theory and comics studies to explain the visual sequences, such as expressive drawings, layouts and colouring used in the graphic biography. The paper concludes that not only does Lauren Redniss's *Radioactive* challenge traditional biographical conventions, but it also represents an experiment that expresses the lines between atomic science, biographical narrative, and visual storytelling (Rifkind 2020).

Besides the works in which Rifkind analysed and compared graphic novels and biographies, she also worked on and later developed research methods for studying graphic biographies. Her chapter *Research Methods for Studying Graphic Biography* (2019) was the first work to examine the optimal manner to study experimental, innovative graphic biographies that explore the visual-verbal possibilities of representing famous lives in this form. She elaborated on how to explore the genre, paratexts, style, and affect, looking for research methodologies for graphic biographies, together with literary, film, comics, and life writing studies (Rifkind 2019).

Whitlock and Poletti (2008) defined the ‘autographic’ as one’s own life narrative fabricated in and through drawing and design. Gardner (2008) analysed the development of autobiographic comics over four decades. The past decade has seen a proliferation of graphic medicine comics by individuals, revealing their personal experiences, living with a particular illness or disability, either their own or one of their family members or patients (La Cour and Poletti 2022).

Researchers have analysed the truthfulness or authenticity of graphic novels and biographies. While “the slipperiness of truth and fiction in autobiography and other narratives is not a new line of investigation” (Bliss 2015: 165), in autobiographies and even more so in biographies, the reader expects the truth (Bullough and Pinnegar 2001). Weber and Rall (2017), who assessed authenticity in comic journalism by analysing 20 journalistic comics, have acknowledged that comics are inherently subjective, but so is any photographer or journalist. They remind us that any photographer interprets the truth in terms of “camera angle, field size, picture detail, line, colour, shape, space, form, or arrangement” (2017: 383). Despite their efforts to write objectively, journalists instil their own beliefs and have opinions that may impact what stories they tell and how these stories are told. Any work of print, radio or TV journalists also bears silent subjective traits because reporters can show only one segment of the reality (Weber and Rall 2017).

### **3 SLOVENIAN COMICS AND GRAPHIC BIOGRAPHIES**

Iztok Sitar has comprehensively described the development and the history of Slovenian comics in his book *History of Slovenian Comics* (2017). Slovenian comics first appeared in the second half of the 19th century, when political and mainly satirical comics and graphic biographies emerged in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Their originator was Hinko Smrekar, a cartoonist who wrote his first comics in German (Dobida 1957; Sitar 2017).

Sitar (2017) describes Slovenian comic book authors from the beginning of the 20th century as the first generation. At that time, translated Disney comics and other American comics were being published in Slovenian newspapers, strongly influencing Slovenian comics. That first generation of Slovenian comics included Saša Dobrila and Marjan Amalietti. Dobrila created the first comic book with text bubbles and published his work in Slovenian newspapers, while Amalietti, an architect, published short and entertaining comics (1977).

Miki Muster, another member of that first generation, created one of the most famous Slovenian comics, *Zvitorepec*. Muster soon became very popular, and his comics attracted readers with its themes of adventure, history, and fantasy. The first specialised comics magazine in Slovenia was named after the famous Muster hero, *Zvitorepec*. The magazine, which was published weekly between 1966 and 1973, terminated its publication due to political contradictions and the opinions of various socialist authorities (Sitar 2017).

Imitating American comics in theme and style, they established various heroic, satirical, and above all realistic comics. Soon thereafter, almost all newspapers published comics, mostly with historical themes.

Due to American influence, many significant changes were made in comics' styles, forms, and techniques (Sitar 2017). In addition to *Zvitorepec*, the encyclopaedic magazine *Politikin Zabavnik* was published, initially intended only for young people. Later, its comics and stories were also read by the elderly population. It included adventure stories and historical articles (Sitar 2017).

Sitar places authors born in the 1960s in the third generation of Slovenian comics. One of the most important authors is Tomaž Lavrič, who created one of the most recognisable Slovenian comic book symbols in *Youth* magazine: *Diarrhea*. This form is made of at least two pictures, often humorously commenting on Slovenian politics (Sitar 2017).

In addition to Sitar, other Slovenian comic book artists have presented comics history, such as Ciril Horjak (2019) and Tina Klemenčič. Klemenčič (2019) published a historical review of Slovenian picture books and comics without text.

## 4 . THE COMPARISON OF BIOGRAPHIES

### 4.1 *Alma Karlin: A Citizen of the World*

*Alma Karlin: A Citizen of the World* (2009) is a biography of the Slovenian writer and traveller, Alma Karlin (1889–1950). Author Jerneja Jezernik describes her life,

from birth to death. The chapters are divided into subchapters on Karlin's work, or important events in her life. The book first describes her childhood, introduces her family, and covers various important events from her youth. The readers are informed about her first European trips, to London and Scandinavia, and then the world trips, including Japan, China, the countries of both Americas, and New Zealand. At the end, the book describes Karlin's return to her birthplace, Celje, and the final adventures in Slovenia.

Karlin's literary works, summaries of her stories, historical circumstances and her location at the time are described in detail, including many quotations from her works. The book also describes the places she visited on her travels, and the adventures she experienced. There is also a lot of pictorial material: photographs, maps, postcards, and various items from Karlin's travels. There are testimonies and reflections from people who were her personal acquaintances or who were inspired by her works.

The biography is 231 pages long. The biographer, Jerneja Jezernik, is a writer, translator, and editor who has been mainly researching the life of Alma Karlin, writing memoirs, and translating some of her works (P. G. 2022).

#### ***4.2 Alma M. Karlin: A Provincial Cosmopolitan Woman***

*Alma M. Karlin: A Provincial Cosmopolitan Woman* (2015) is a graphic biography of Karlin produced by Jakob Klemenčič and Marijan Pušavec. They present her life with pictures, dialogues in text bubbles, and short texts next to the illustrations. The story starts with Karlin's birth, her childhood and youth-related events, and later her travels, featured in dialogues. The graphic biography also shows many of the problems that Karlin faced as a female world traveller. Though often figments of the biographers' imaginations, the illustrations constantly depict her emotions and feelings through her travels. Life experiences and events are shown mainly with pictures, which emphasise them.

The book features conversations between people with text bubbles and illustrations; some conversations are written in German. In some places, only a picture describes an event. We can recognise the relationships between people from Karlin's life. There are also short texts outside the picture boxes, which complement the text bubble dialogues. They explain specific actions and present the background of events. These are written as a first-person narrative. The graphic biography ends with Karlin's funeral, and an epilogue in which pictures and texts explain the events following her death.

The script for the biography was written by Marijan Pušavec, who works in the local history department of the Celje library and writes historical texts, such as the biography of Alma Karlin. Jakob Klemenčič, an experienced graphic book author who often writes scripts, created the drawings (Knjigarna Bukla 2022).

#### **4.3 Ivan Cankar: *The Portrait of Genius***

*Ivan Cankar: The Portrait of Genius* (2019) is a text-only biography of the Slovenian writer, playwright, and essayist Ivan Cankar (1876–1918). Biographer Igor Grdina presents Cankar's life from early childhood until his death. The book is divided into seven chapters, each of which shows a different side of Cankar.

The book concentrates more on the writer's life and personality than on his works, so Grdina presents him as a student, artist, and creator. The book is dedicated to Cankar's youth, schooling in Vrhnika, his family, and his first publications. It elaborately presents the development of his personality, the influence of life changes and events on his works, and his love life. The biography also describes his involvement in the First World War and his works during that time. Grdina mentions many other artists who had a strong influence on Cankar, and his relationships with them. At the end of the book, he lists many of Cankar's acquaintances, friends, and others.

The biography has 252 pages. It contains many quotations from the writer's works, and photographs of Cankar and others. Igor Grdina, a historian, literary historian, university professor, writes mainly about the history of older and modern Slovenian literature (Beletrina 2022).

#### **4.4 Ivan Cankar: *Images from Life***

*Ivan Cankar: Images from Life* (2019) is a graphic biography by Zoran Smiljanić and Blaž Vurnik. The side texts next to the picture boxes explain events in more detail or add important information. First, the illustrations show Cankar's childhood, his attitude towards his family, and his own youthful experience. The biography shows how the writer felt about specific events and how he experienced them. It also explains how life situations affected his personality, which is well illustrated by the dialogues – the central part of the biography. The biography presents his relationships with people through dialogues and drawings which express Cankar's emotions and opinions about certain friends, opponents, and women. Apart from people and places, the sketches also show his important works, with added quotations.

Blaž Vurnik, historian and curator of the City Museum of Ljubljana, wrote the script. He deals mainly with modern history, and in Ljubljana he prepared an extensive exhibition on Cankar. The drawings were prepared by Zoran Smiljanić, a Slovenian comic artist, illustrator, cartoonist, and screenwriter, who has been publishing comics and graphic novels since the 1980s (Stripburger 2021).

## 5. THE COMPARISON OF ALMA KARLIN'S BIOGRAPHIES

*Alma Karlin: A Citizen of the World* (2009) and *Alma M. Karlin: A Provincial Cosmopolitan Woman* (2015) describe her life and the influence she had on the world, however, they present it in different ways. Dialogues are written in text bubbles, and short texts describing events are added next to the pictures. In the side text, the biographers mention the historical background of the events and some external data. These are told in the first-person narrative, with Karlin expressing opinions and feelings.

The textual biography is written in the third person. Jezernik describes Karlin's life from birth to death, including historical background and important information about events. There is less about Karlin's thoughts and emotions than in the graphic biography. Both biographies show the subject's character and behaviour, and the attitudes of others towards her. The graphic book focuses much more on her feelings and emotions, presenting her life from a more subjective point of view. The story is presented in a very interesting way by both of them: dialogues and illustrations complement the events in the graphic book, while the textual biography contains photographs, sketches, and maps.

Overall, the graphic biography concentrates more on Karlin's personality, describing her life, events, and adventures, emphasising the most exciting events. We understand the events mainly from her thoughts, which are added to the pictures, described together with her feelings. Illustrations and first-person narratives depict events as she interprets them and remembers them from her own experience. As a result, she does not describe her travels objectively or add descriptions of places or present their historical backgrounds. Conversely, the textual biography describes all of this; the biographer describes places and adventures in detail.

An example is Karlin's arrival in London. The graphic biography shows her first opinion of the city and her feelings about it: “/.../ impeccable order, calm crowd, sobriety — all this attracted me /.../ At the same time, from the very beginning, I had the feeling that I have come to my true homeland” (Klemenčič and Pušavec 2015: 42). Conversely, the textual biography describes London in 1908, its population and

historical circumstances, and then presents her arrival there, her everyday life, and what she had been doing in London at the time (Jezernik 2009).

One significant difference between the two forms is that the textual biography has no envisaged dialogues between the characters, while the graphical book does. Dialogues are at the centre of each event in the graphic biography. We can understand most of the circumstances from them, as the texts outside the pictures are minor additions presenting Karlin's opinions in the first person. The textual biography contains no dialogues but does describe the relationships between Karlin and the people she knew, although they are only slightly emphasised. It presents the people she met on her travels, so we find out how they influenced her work and later life events.

The graphic book explains interpersonal relationships in more detail. One such example is the relationship between Karlin and her father. Both biographies record that their relationship was loving, that they had similar temperaments, and that they got along well (Jezernik 2009). The graphic biography shows these qualities even better with dialogues and pictures; we can recognise how they understood each other from the events. Even though it is not described in such detail, we can learn more about this relationship from the graphics, which is something that distinguishes graphical biographies from the textual ones the most (Klemenčič and Pušavec 2015).

The biographies differ in the amount of information they include about Karlin. Both present some important events in her life. These events take place during her journeys and in the places she visited, so both biographies show in great detail some of the events that influenced her development the most.

The graphic biography also features some of the less important events that affected not so much her life but her attitude towards travel, her emotions, and feelings towards others. An example showing her attitudes towards people and emotions occurred shortly before her death. When she decided to escape from Celje to Switzerland, she had to say goodbye to a good friend (Klemenčič and Pušavec 2015: 153): "Now I was fully aware that I was leaving a lot of love and that in this life, we might never see each other ever again". The illustrations add to the event showing Alma's experience, which cannot be found in a textual biography.

The textual biography often describes only the important details that influenced Karlin's works. It covers several events from her life and presents each of them as equally important. In contrast, the graphic biography covers only some of the events that affected her personality. Such descriptions of events make the picture-based biography more interesting. There are fewer events, and no description or mention of her works, but the story takes us through her life. One such event, which is not in-

cluded in the graphic biography, is a trip to Korea. The textual biography briefly covers the journey and describes her meetings with Korean people and their relationship (Jezernik 2009). The picture-based book did not illustrate this journey.

The graphic biography only includes sketches that show individual events from Karlin's life. The dialogues pertain to conversations she had with strangers, and her relationships with them. There are no such fictitious sketches in the textual biography. It contains a significant amount of pictorial material, portraits of the writer, and pictures of travels. The images of postcards and maps are evidence of Karlin's experiences and of the historical and political backgrounds of the places. In the textual biography, selected quotes from her books show her feelings and thoughts about a particular journey. It differs from the graphic biography, which does not contain many quotes from Karlin but it contains many fictitious thoughts and conversations.

Both biographies describe the influence the Slovenian writer had on the world. This is somewhat better explained in the textual biography, where her works are presented in detail. It tells us about the circumstances of creating the work, and how she influenced people. The graphic biography mentions the literary works but does not discuss their content. The textual biography shows her life through the books she wrote. It emphasises the presentation of her works and the circumstances of their creation. It describes the story and the main characters of a novel she wrote, and her circumstances at the time. It includes numerous photographs of the works.

An example of such work is the short story collection *Dragons and spirits*. The drawings-based book mentions it once, when listing some of her great literary works. But it is not described nor is there an additional representation of the work (Klemenčič and Pušavec 2015). The textual biography describes the book in detail, and it discusses individual short stories, setting out the circumstances in which it was created: "In Beijing in 1923, Karlin began to prepare her first short story collection, which was not published in book form until 1930 at the Frundsberg Verlag publishing house in Berlin" (Jezernik 2009: 82).

## 6. THE COMPARISON OF IVAN CANKAR'S BIOGRAPHIES

The graphic biography *Ivan Cankar: Images from Life* (2019) differs from the textual biography *Ivan Cankar: a Portrait of a Genius* (2019) in the presentation of individual events in Cankar's life.

The graphic biography recounts his life, describes events, and makes no mention of any information which is not directly connected to him. It rarely adds any important

historical details, such as dates. In contrast, the textual biography adds a lot of historical data to events in the writer's life. These are often not directly related to Cankar but are still listed. Facts and additional data make the biography more objective, showing that an event is not only a part of Cankar's life by presenting it in a broader historical context. The biography does not mention only dates and influential people, but sometimes explains the past in even more detail.

One such event, for example, was a fire in Vrhnika. In the graphic biography, it is shown only from Cankar's point of view – how he was involved in it, what he was doing at the time, and what he said according to the author (Smiljanić and Vurnik 2019). The textual biography adds historical data, including the date of the fire, the consequences, its effects on the town's inhabitants, including a brief history of Vrhnika (Grdina 2019).

Both biographies describe Cankar's life and mention some of his essential works. The graphic biography, which covers his life through various events from birth to death, also mentions some of his literary works. The biographers use illustrations to show Cankar's view of his work, how he made it, and his thoughts while creating it. The textual biography gives a detailed description of his work and how external factors influenced him in creating it. It explains some events from his life and describes the content of the books he wrote at that time.

The textual biography also describes Cankar's unique writing style and explains the meaning of the work and its effect on his life. The biography in graphics concentrates more on his emotions, feelings, and experiences. It shows how he felt as his work was being written or published. The illustrations and dialogues play an essential part in this because they form a more subjective description of events, especially when they focus on Cankar's experience.

One example of this is the first staging of his drama *The King of Betajnova*. In presenting this event, the graphic book shows his anger, impatience and concern, and later his immense joy and satisfaction (Smiljanić and Vurnik 2019). In this way, the reader gains an insight into Cankar's personality (which is also presented in the textual biography) and also into his emotions and feelings.

The graphic biography mentions and describes only the most essential of Cankar's works. It mainly presents works that relate to significant events in his life, such as love, political events, and relocations. The textual biography gives detailed descriptions of many more of his works. For example, one work that the graphic biography did not specifically present is the play *Scandal in St. Florian Valley* (Smiljanić and Vurnik 2019).

The biographies also differ in how they present Cankar's personality, mental state, and emotions. In some parts, the textual biography focuses on his mental state and his well-being and presents his feelings. There are no detailed descriptions or analyses of Cankar's personality in the graphic biography, but it is shown in examples of certain events. Sometimes the illustrations themselves show his mental state, even without a dialogue.

Cankar's personality is shown in the graphics through events, where his character is seen in concrete examples. From the drawings and text bubbles, we can understand his personality, which is notably omnipresent throughout the story. In the textual biography, the book examines his personality only in certain parts. It presents the factors that influenced a specific character trait and discusses his prominent personality in his works. This is reflected in his collection of sketch stories, *My Life*: "... the connection between existence and creativity made Cankar an extraordinary person in everyday life" (Grdina 2019: 128). The textual biography also makes detailed presentations of Cankar's attitude towards religion, his political opinions, and intimate relationships. The graphic biography shows these characteristics with pictures, and at the same time focuses mainly on the interesting events of his life.

As a result, the biographies differ in their presentation of events. In the textual biography, Cankar's life is presented through important events, and it describes and explains them in detail. One such event, for example, was the fire that was such an important incident in his childhood. In contrast, the graphic concentrates on the more enjoyable and exciting events of Cankar's life, which are often less important. Nevertheless, the graphic illustrates them in an interesting way and focuses primarily on his experience of the event. One example of a childhood event, which appears only in graphics, was when Cankar spent his first penny to buy dates. The illustrations show that he felt humiliated, and the dialogue shows that he was sorry for what he did (Smiljanić and Vurnik 2019). The text from the graphic biography does not provide more detail, but it presents his personality from such concrete events.

Both biographies mention and present individuals who were part of Cankar's life. The graphic biography includes some family members, friends, colleagues, women, etc. It briefly introduces some of the people who influenced him the most and explains their influence on Cankar and the nature of their relationship. This is handled quite differently in the textual biography, as it provides much more detailed presentations of people who were important in his life – for example, his mother, Neža Pivk. The biography describes her childhood and youth, how she started a family, and even mentions her parents (Grdina 2019: 52). In the graphic book his mother is not featured

in this way, as the biography concentrates on Cankar himself.

Relationships between people are also explained differently in the two books. The textual biography pays more attention to the description of individuals, rather than defining their connections with Cankar. In contrast, the graphic shows these relationships through specific events. The dialogues and illustrations show the relationship, what they experienced together, and what they talked about. For example, his attitude towards his mother is presented through concrete events they experienced together. The illustrations clearly and interestingly show the reader how they understood each other (Smiljanić and Vurnik 2019).

## 7. DISCUSSION, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The author of this paper finds the textual biography to be more objective, due to its inclusion of facts and its additional and historical data. Illustrations and conversations in text bubbles reduce the objectivity in graphics because they overemphasise and dramatise the character's emotions and actions.

The research confirms the findings of Williams. In his work, *The Case for Comics Journalism* (2005), while researching reportage comics, he found that a comic book creator displays certain things as if through his own eyes. Such a comic is therefore subjective (Williams 2005). Likewise, in his 1992 study of film, Branigan (1992) argues that it is nonverbal messages in the form of images and sounds that display the greatest and most intimate subjectivity in action.

A graphic biography seems to present less information than a textual biography. A textual biography indeed contains more information about the person and their life, but the graphic biography adds information which is not found in a textual biography. These data are usually less important, but they are entertaining and interesting, at the same time making the story more memorable.

It was difficult to determine which format better represented the character of a personality. A graphic biography with emotionally charged illustrations and dialogues certainly contributes to a more intimate and deeper analysis of the character. As Haramija and Batič (2016) found, the illustrations in picture books decisively affect the reader's perception of the characters' moods and personalities.

Graphic and textual biographies considerably differed in terms of how they presented the subjects' literary works. Neither of the graphics focused on the description and presentation of the great literary works of the writers. The textual biographies, on the other hand, discussed and described them in detail.

The biography format comparison shows that textual biographies follow the objectivity criteria better than graphical biographies. The latter are less objective because the illustrations focus on an individual's emotions and facial expressions and magnify them.

The study found that textual biographies contain more information about the lives of great personalities, and often describe events in a broader historical context. Graphic biographies do not provide a lot of data, but they add less important, yet more interesting information. The same applies to Cankar and Karlin's literary works, which graphics did not consider at all.

The research showed that the two graphical biographies described the subjects' personalities with illustrations and dialogues in concrete examples. They were not explicitly explained or analysed, the focus was instead on the relationships. The comparison showed that different forms of biographies pursue the criterion of objectivity to different levels, that the subjects' presentations differ, and that they put different life events to the forefront.

Two examples cannot be used to distinguish the two types of biographies in general. Further research could include more examples to confirm that this paper's findings are valid for all biographies. A broader study would be beneficial by covering examples from different periods and backgrounds. Further research could also include films, which are similar to graphic biographies due to their visual presentation of subjects and events but differ by presenting actual humans and realistic settings.

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## USPOREDBA GRAFIČKIH I TEKSTUALNIH BIOGRAFIJA U SLOVENSKOJ KNJIŽEVNOSTI

### Sažetak

U radu se uspoređuju dvije grafičke biografije s tradicionalnim biografijama istih tema: uglednih slovenskih književnika Alme Karlin i Ivana Cankara. Uspoređuje se način na koji grafičke i samotekstualne biografije predstavljaju likove, njihove emocije i izraze, koje životne događaje naglašavaju i kako pristupaju kriteriju objektivnosti. Rezultati sugeriraju da su dvije slovenske grafičke biografije manje objektivne od tekstualnih biografija zbog slikovnog materijala. Tekstualne biografije predstavljaju više informacija o temi, dok se grafičke biografije više fokusiraju na pojedinačne događaje, izjave i emocije te ih prikazuju privlačnije.

Ključne riječi: grafička biografija; Slovenija; usporedba grafičkih romana; Ivan Cankar; Alma K. Karlin

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