

RESPONSE Jerneja Petrič

In *Slovene Studies* 15.1-2 (1993), in an article entitled “On Louis Adamic’s Translation of Cankar’s *Yerney’s Justice*,” Nike Kocijančič challenges the central thesis of my study “Adamičevo prevajanje slovenskih umetnostnih del v angleščino” (*Slavistična revija*, 26.4 [1978]), which concerns Louis Adamic’s translating work in the 1920s. In the study I contend that Adamic adapted rather than translated certain Slovene, Croatian and other short stories because his knowledge of English in the 1920s was insufficient to cope with Cankar’s high, Biblical style. Kocijančič claims that Adamic’s adaptation of Cankar’s *Hlapec Jernej* was deliberate, in order “to produce a socialist work, very close to a political pamphlet” (150). Further, “We may conclude by saying that his translation seems [my italics, JP] to be a deliberate remodeling of the original so as to create a new short story in accordance with his political and artistic views” (150). It is not my intention to initiate a controversy; I would simply like to comment on the above observation and conclusion by excerpting a section of Adamic’s *My America 1928-1938* so as to enable *Slovene Studies* readers to make their own judgment:

In my early ‘teens, between 1910 and 1913, just before I came to America, while a student in Lublyana, Ivan Cankar was my favorite author (and in some ways he is to this day). He was then at his apex as a creative writer; an authentic genius; a novelist, poet, dramatist, essayist, social critic, polemicist, and—with Oton Zupanchich—an important factor in the development of the Slovenian language as a means of communicating the subtlest and deepest feelings and most complex thoughts. Writing, he practically created a new language, fluid, limitless in its possibilities of expression, and profoundly intimate (which, unfortunately, makes it difficult to translate him adequately into another language), yet completely understandable to everyone who knew the words or materials out of which he made them.¹

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¹ Louis Adamic, *My America, 1928-1938* (New York: Harper, 1938) 131.