

The grouping of philosophers is provided by the usual European conceptual framework. The author uses a simple, non-technical language, the most basic documentation is included in the text, not in the usual footnotes; this makes *SMP* painless reading for non-specialists. Some readers will miss the customary index of names and terms, but given that many such items are italicized, in bold, or otherwise highlighted in the text, the omission of such indexes is understandable.

The publication of *Slovenska modroslovna pamet*, together with the earlier works by Alma Sodnik and Ivan Urbančič, is in a certain sense a crowning achievement of Slovene philosophy, for in these works it has become conscious of its own beginnings and development through the centuries.

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Cvetka Kocjančič, *Gospodar Golega ozemlja*. Novo Mesto: Dolenjska založba, 1996. 235 pp. (paper).

This is a wonderful book, full of wonders: the perfect book to read *na zapečju*, precisely the kind we used to read there—almanac-like books that took us more places than today's Internet browser—curled up as kids with the cat, the wet clothes drying. Our minds were always the Beta version. What I, at least, learned from those books was that the distinction between fiction and fact was academic. The world was in my mind at any rate.

The book *Gospodar Golega Ozemlja* is many things. First, it is the story of Janez Planinšek (sensibly, he spelled his name Planinshek, which makes me wonder why we did not have the smarts to spell ours Lozhar), "Eskimo Charlie" from Dolenjska, who emigrated to Canada, where he lived among the Inuit, married an Indian, fathered two children, and, when his wife died, took them on an adventure from the Arctic to the Tropics by canoe. His is often an incredible story, but Kocjančič, in order to spin a good yarn, has bought most of it, and I am grateful that she did. Oh, she is a detective, too: she tells the Planinshek children their father was not Mexican (they are surprised, even adamant); no, she does not believe (the dates are wrong) that he fought in the Spanish-American war in Cuba; but once she goes on his

trip with Frank O'Grady and the children, she tells it as if Charlie were telling it.

On this trip you will find whatever interests you. Yes, I loved the images of various town mayors and colonial governors along the Mississippi and throughout the United States and in the Caribbean personally welcoming the curious expedition, the adventurer and lecturer, who comes on stage with a team of huskies pulling his children. Some of these adventures I was tempted to disbelieve, but there is Kocjančič with newspaper articles and photographs, and beyond that, whatever is not true, Who cares? For this is finally not just the story of Charlie Planinshek, it is also a work of art by Kocjančič. It is drifting off topic. Of course, we suspend disbelief. Of course, we are so busy learning and enjoying that to quibble would be like complaining that in operas for some strange reason all the characters sing.

The adventure is universal but so very Slovene. The trip down the Mississippi took place during the Depression. If you want a picture of America during this time, let Cvetka and Charlie show you one, while Charlie is charging a penny for his lectures. You do not forget he is Slovene—that is why Cvetka latched on to him—but his children did not know it; nor did the people he met. In New York, we are not surprised to learn that he spoke to the Croatians, and, yes, some Slovenes came to hear him, but, "*ga je večina rojakov imela za potepuha, ki Slovencem kvari ugled*" (169).

I have recently visited the Slovene church on St. Mark's place and I wonder if the good Lord did not cause that—how shall I put it delicately—*pisan sejem* to grow up around it in order to teach us charity, the lesson we need to be taught over and over again. In raising Charlie Planinshek to his rightful, heroic place, Kocjančič may be trying to teach us the same. The texture of the book is a joy. On p. 18 is a photograph of a monument to the treaty between the Cree people and the French supposedly signed by Jean Ballantyne, Planinshek's grandfather; and on p. 19 a photograph of Kamence, Planinshek's birthplace. Some of the photos are by Planinshek, who as a lecturer was, of course, a photographer. And the book is not only Planinshek's story, but the story of Kocjančič's search for the distinction between truth and legend. Thus it includes complete letters exchanged by Kocjančič and Charlie's children Inez and Tony. And this history, this

documentary novel, was first written in English for their sake, to tell them who their father was before they were born. Doubtless they knew already how extraordinary he was, but they must have been pleased to see the story in print now in this strange language, not Mexican, in which Charlie sometimes used to sing songs that nobody could understand. As a bonus, the book gives us the stories told by Eskimo Charlie and then cited by a *Toronto Star* reporter.

This is a great book to browse in. Another book in that tradition that says, "This guy was one of us," that process which we sometimes, with the best intentions, carry too far into distant generations. It is pretty clear Eskimo Charlie was a Slovene; on the other hand, these astronauts and congressmen? Finally, the book is interesting because in its mixing of genres, in its attempt to tell so many stories, in its effort to say all, it approaches poetry and tells us something beyond the story. Perhaps it is poetry because in a way it is also a book about Cvetka Kocjančič, not just in her search for Planinshek but also in her search for herself. We do not hesitate to call primitive painters such as Rousseau or Generalič just that: it is clearly understood as a compliment. Well, Kocjančič is a primitive writer; thank God she does not care about breaking the rules. What turns this into a poetic work is precisely its use of all the tools at hand—photographs, letters, maps, articles, songs, chronologies and the author's own energy and love—nay, obsessions, and doggedness and skill—for a portrait of one-of-a-kind Charlie. It seems to me that Kocjančič is as difficult to categorize as Charlie was; she tries to do as many things in her work as Charlie Planinshek did in his. *Gospodar*, incidentally, deserved better proof-reading, but we have all had this experience in Slovenia.

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Laura Silber and Allan Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia*. London: Penguin; BBC Books, 1995. 400 pp., \$29.95 (paper). *Smrt Jugoslavije*, translated by Barbara and Marjan Sedmak and Nada Pantić-Starič. Ljubljana: Co Libri, 1996. 384 pp. (paper).

The Death of Yugoslavia is the result of personal experience; it is an eyewitness account of the numerous phases of Yugoslavia's destruction. But it is also based on interviews, written and published records. Silber,