

Vasil Iljoski. *Svadba*. Skopje. Sovremenost. 1976. 94 pages.

Vasil Iljoski is surely one of the leading figures of modern Macedonian literature. Born in Kruševo in 1902, he was writing in Macedonian sixteen years before the official codification of the literary language in 1944. His first play, *Begalka* (The Runaway Bride), published in 1928 under the title *Lenče Kumanovče* (Lenče of Kumanovo), was one of the earliest literary works written in modern Macedonian and has become a classic of the Macedonian stage. Examples from the works of Iljoski, along with those of Marko Cepenkov, Risto Krle and Stale Popov, constitute those most often cited in Blaže Koneski's authoritative grammar of literary Macedonian. In view of Iljoski's important position in Macedonian literature, any new work by him is worthy of attention.

Iljoski's newest play, *Svadba* (Wedding), like his first drama, is a story of young people who want to marry for love rather than according to their parents' wishes. While *Begalka* is set in the Turkish period of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as are all of Iljoski's early plays, *Svadba* takes place in the 1930s. This is probably part of the reason why its dialogue has a more modern, urban sound than the more old-fashioned, folksy character of the speech of his earlier plays. The plot revolves around Stefče, the son of Kozarko, a nouveau riche merchant, and Zlata, the daughter of the old, established merchant Tudžarot, who has fallen on hard times and become Kozarko's debtor. Zlata is in love with the poor painter Darko, and Stefče is in love with the poor seamstress Cveta. The girls are childhood friends, and the young men are comrades. Using his financial leverage, Kozarko forces Tudžarot to make Zlata agree to marry Stefče while he simultaneously breaks up the relationship between Stefče and Cveta. Wives, friends, neighbors, Serbian officials and other characters contribute to the plot, and there are obvious political overtones relating both to Macedonian nationalism and to class struggle, clearly expressed in the dialogue. In the end Kozarko is foiled and the others are happy.

Iljoski's use of language is particularly interesting, but the effect would be almost impossible to translate adequately, since it is so specific to the linguistic environment of Yugoslavia. The Serbs speak Serbian and the Macedonians speak Macedonian, although they attempt to speak Serbian to the Serbian official when they are flattering him or being intimidated by him. The fractured Macedonian of the old Turkish bey and the modern vocabulary sometimes used by the young people also contribute to the total effect of the language.

Another important factor in *Svadba*, as in *Begalka*, is Iljoski's use of folk songs. Various characters sing folk songs appropriate to different moments in the play, and ~~these songs constitute an integral part of the identification~~ of characters and emotions. The songs that Iljoski has included in *Svadba* are so well known to Macedonian audiences that simply playing their tunes is enough to evoke the appropriate response.

Thus Iljoski's newest play constitutes a significant contribution to a growing young literature. It is a very specifically Macedonian play. It represents an interesting development in the course of Iljoski's work, and in it can be seen both continuity and change in relation to his writing.

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