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Following her book "Riazhenie v russkoi traditsionnoi kulture" [Mummery in Russian Traditional Culture], Spb., 1994, the second masterpiece of the prematurely deceased folklorist Larisa Mikhailovna Ivleva (1944-1995) has appeared. This is her posthumously published candidate's dissertation, prepared by Vera Ken, "Doteatralno-igrovoi iazyk russkogo folkloġa: Problema teorii i tipologii" [The Pretheatrical-game language of Russian folklore: the problem of theory and typology], Dmitrii Bulanin, SPb., 1998. As it has been compiled by Vera Ken, the book also includes interesting materials from the discussion of the dissertation in November 1985 during the public defense at the Russian Institute of the History of the Arts (formerly the Leningrad State Institute of Theater, Music, and Cinematography); three of the author's articles written at various times (1974, 1988, and 1992) and published in various editions but thematically linked with the dissertation; and also a list of Ivleva's published works (about 55).

Ivleva's manuscript, even though the rough version was completed about twenty years ago, has not become obsolete in the slightest. Moreover, it presents and illuminates new tasks for the study of folklore -- "the quest for a formula in drama study that combines ritual, folk game, and theater" (p. 38). This is exemplary academic research on the theory and typology of an enormous stratum of folklore. The work is all the more valuable because, before Ivleva this area was variously called "folk or folklore theater," "theatricalness of individual elements of folklore," or even "carnival." With solid argumentation, Ivleva has rejected evolutionary theories about the origin of the theater from ritual and, in essence, has founded a new field of study -- "game culture" [igrovaia kultura]. "This culture at times is identified with theatrical culture and at times it is defined entirely as the culture of folk laughter (narodno- smekhovaia kultura), but it can not be placed entirely within either framework. This is not theater and this is not carnival -- this is a ritual that has existed in game forms and in many things connected with the tradition of ritual laughter" (p. 181).

I will cite some examples of Ivleva's reasoning. The first concern methodology: "The fact that the Russian theater did not develop directly out of a ritual or a children's game does not deny their similarity in essence nor the impossibility of their comparison according to some fundamental criteria, just as the assertion of a genetic relationship between them in the best case is capable of explaining their similarity, but at the same time this does not give an interpretation of existing differences. Thus, the relationship is only an individual case presupposing and explaining similarly; in other cases this problem must be solved in a more general form . . . . Such a justification and such a principle are evident for us in the structural- typological approach . . ." (p. 35). The second citations concern the specific interpretation of the personages in mummery: From our point of view, the mistake of many investigators lies in the fact that they

have perceived and analyzed the personages of mummery as types taken directly from life -- they perceived their social qualities and features as one-dimensional, which impoverishes them outside the prism of the mythological world being reflected by them. It is natural that in such a way "only the upper layers of semantics are 'counted,' and that the view of the investigator in general does not penetrate to its deep layers . . . . Precisely in this lies the fact that mummery is not an imitation of life and is not an elementary reflection of it. Mummery is first of all the embodiment of a specific idea about the world, that is, a reflection of a much higher order" (p. 92).

Thoroughly studying Russian folklore material, Ivleva theoretically and practically has founded a new scholarly discipline, which in principle goes beyond any ethnic framework, and which she has named "ethno-drama study."

Ivleva departs from that fact that although the problem of the approach to folklore-ethnographic phenomena through drama study has existed for a long time, the phenomena themselves have still not become the object of drama study as scholarship. For turning a subject into an object of the corresponding scholarship, the subject must be described in the "meta-language" of that scholarship. In the capacity of such a meta-language Ivleva takes the idea of "game," not of game in general, but of game specifically in its interpretation as drama study, that is, as a special language that, as a system, is determined by two obligatory tiers of features. The first is connected with "reembodiment" and the second with action as the graphic means of depicting a character. Everything else -- dialogue, gesture, mimicry, mask, costume, and scenery -- represents only secondary and occasional features. Ivleva elaborates a "general theory of the game" and delineates a system of game language. According to the author, and by its origin, "the world of game" turns out to be an extremely archaic type of human conduct. Ivleva's conception is formulated in a "theory of game language." The game language of folklore, the game model of the world, and the game form of expression, which encompass the heterogeneous strata of folklore material, are phenomena of a different order and dissimilar functions, and they become the "object" of her study. Ivleva organizes this study according to the requirements of typology, introducing these requirements methodologically correctly and consistently. The theory and methodology established in the first chapter find their practical application in the second chapter on the basis of material from Russian folklore. In the book the approach through drama study is combined with the principles of ethnographism, which is subordinated to the new purposes of the research. Structural-typological analysis prepares and precedes historical-genetic analysis as this approach was bequeathed by V. Ya. Propp, L. M. Ivleva's teacher.

During the defense of the dissertation, the work received the solid support of Boris N. Putilov (1918-1997), one of the most important representatives of the typological approach in the study of Slavic folklore. (His response is printed in the appendix.) He pointed out the innovative features which Ivleva had contributed to the typological theory. Among them is the

opposition of the so called "graduated" idea about the type, which assumes the delineation of "typological gradations," to the classificatory approach. This understanding of typology as a graduated description in contrast to the classification description is especially promising for the future. It permits the delineation and understanding of what is so characteristic for the folklore tradition, that is, mixed, liminal, transitional, and variation types, as well as the "consecutiveness of intermediate gradations which connect the two types with each other" (p. 62).

In a review it is not possible to cover the whole richness of L. M. Ivleva's book. The well thought out table of contents in itself conveys an idea about the questions that have been covered. I am convinced that the day is not far off when the book under review will be translated into English and other languages. The long awaited introduction of the original and talented conception of Ivleva into international scholarship can have great meaning for the study of folklore, ethnography, study of drama, and related disciplines in the humanities.

(Translated by James Bailey)