

“DANCES OF MAGYARFALU”

– ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON THE DANCE CULTURE OF A HUNGARIAN COMMUNITY IN MOLDAVIA

The doctoral thesis examines the transformation, social embeddedness, and functions of dance culture in a single North-Eastern Romanian village, Magyarfalu (Arini) populated by a Roman Catholic, Hungarian ethnic group. The transformation of dance life and dance repertoire of the local community is discussed in the context of ecological, political, economic, and sociocultural processes within the period of 1940–2010. Along with highlighting a dynamic relation between society and dance culture, this study aims to prove that the theoretical and practical frame of functionalism, the method of social anthropology, can be adapted for dance anthropological research.

In opposition to comparative and formal analyses of dances, the doctoral research puts more emphasis on examining the dancing community, the social network that keeps the dance culture alive and how dance events fit into the wider system of customs. Three theoretical and conceptual systems defined the interpretation frame. Based on the assumptions of British functionalism, recognized in the field of social anthropology, dance culture was considered to be an adaptation system; in accordance with the interpretation methods of dance anthropology, dancing was analyzed as a sociocultural practice; and leaning on the capital theory of economic anthropology, dance was regarded as a resource. Having the arbitrary differentiation of the terms dance, dancing, and dance culture kept in mind, *dance* was interpreted as a total social fact which has organic connections to various elements of culture.

The research was based on three hypotheses. The first suggestion is that a local dance culture is undergoing a continuous transformation in the context of various ecological, political, economic, and socio-cultural processes or events affecting the community. According to the second hypothesis, the dance culture is socially embedded, so there is a close interrelationship between the social organization and the dance culture of the given community. Finally, it began the analysis on the assumption that parts of the dance culture are organically connected to the culture as a whole, where they meet certain needs through their functional role. Based on all this, the dissertation basically sought the answer to what processes may be behind the transformation of Magyarfalu's dance culture; how local society determines dance culture; what functions dance culture plays in the life of the individual and the community; and how all this can be examined with the theoretical and methodological tools of social anthropology.

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