Reaction Paper Week #2

Over the course of this week, we discussed a lot about the origins, themes, and how music spread over the United States through the 1700s and 1900s. I felt pretty strongly about Minstrelsy and the racist tones that came along with it. Additionally, I found interesting parallels between dancing forms back then versus now.

Although there were thoughts where Minstrelsy was viewed as a way for the white to express their affinity with African-American culture, at its core, I still find the idea of Minstrelsy to be primarily racist. I understand that white people who showed appreciation would be called “nigger-lovers,” but that doesn’t give them any right to put on black paint to essentially “ridicule” African Americans. If white people were to actually appreciate and approach the situation from a non-racist perspective, then they would just stand up and show how they enjoyed African American culture. The idea that you had to ridicule someone to show it is fundamentally flawed, so I find the idea of Minstrelsy being an appreciation of culture flawed as well.

Outside of Minstrelsy in this week’s readings, I also found it interesting how ballroom dancing was initially portrayed. Because ballroom was one of the first forms of couple dancing, it was viewed very intimately and some even argued, inappropriate. However, by the end of the century, the ballroom dance form was regarded as beautiful and romantic. It’s interesting how dance in the current generation is viewed the same way (although maybe grinding is a little too intimate). Under the same type of interpretation, does that mean our generation’s dancing will be viewed as romantic and beautiful in the future as well? And if so, what’s in store for the next generation? It just seemed interesting to me that every generation will have its parallels and how history always repeats itself.