

The Evolution of American Social Dance

Social dance is a fundamental aspect of American society. Dating back from pre-Columbian exchange to the present day, social dance has functioned as a form of self-expression, community engagement, celebration, competition, fulfillment, and more. Social dance is a dance done by two or more people for recreational purposes. Some common examples of social dance include waltz, foxtrot, and tango.

Over the years, social dance has gone through many changes, from the various dances of indigenous peoples, the strict rules of the Victorian Era waltz, the freeing 1920's jazz dances, and the swing dances of the 1960s. After this point, social dance participation declines, yet shows up in today's world through a new medium: social media. While these social media dances differ greatly from previous forms of social dance on the surface, examining social media dances at a deeper level reveals some similarities. This goes to show that social dance has not completely disappeared; it has simply changed with the times.

The purpose of my research is twofold: to better understand the evolution of social dance and to examine how social dance functions as a reflection of society. What do social dance traditions throughout history reveal about the overall health of society, including physical, mental, and emotional health? This research will be done through a review of existing literature on social dance. The information obtained will be used to construct a story of the evolution of social dance throughout the years and describe how it reflects our ever-changing society. So far, the research has pointed towards the idea that social dance changes to serve each generation's changing needs. As I continue to research, I hope to learn more about how social dance reflects the general health and needs of society. I believe that this is important because it will show how

dance has always been utilized as a form of human expression and is therefore important to learn and preserve.