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# Dance, Masculinity and Identity Development: Lessons from a closed institution in Buenos Aires

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**Dance, Masculinity and Identity Development: Lessons  
from a closed institution in Buenos Aires**

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**March 4, 2013**

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In the fall of 2011, I participated in a School for International Training (SIT) program in Buenos Aires, Argentina. As part of their Social Movements and Human Rights course, I spent the semester studying the historical social movements as well as human rights issues that continue to plague the country today. Each student had to complete an independent study project, in which we conducted our own research and wrote a concluding paper. Another student shared my passion for dance, so we decided to try and combine the art with human rights to create a blend of our interests. We had the privilege of teaching a hip-hop workshop at a juvenile detention center in Buenos Aires for boys ages 16 and 17 called Manuel Rocca. In addition to teaching dance, we included other elements of personal development in the workshop such as free-expression, leadership, and creativity. As an added research component, I looked further into how the institution fosters identity development within a closed institution. This experience had a profound effect on my life, career goals, and understanding of dance.

When I left Argentina, I felt that the project was not complete. I wanted to comprehend more fully how and why dance can affect a person's understanding of them self. As a dancer since age three, it has changed my life and I wanted to know if it could do the same for others in varying situations of incarceration or detainment. Judging from the results of the workshop, dance could be very freeing when the physical body is in jail. This is an important topic to explore, because juvenile detention is an area that receives much negative criticism due to the poor treatment of teens (Abrams, 2005). While an adolescent is in a closed institution, there is the potential for them to build upon their identities in positive ways (Campos, 2011), and perhaps change the behaviors that brought them into the detention center to begin with. Research has shown that dance can

be used in many different arenas to aid in the facilitation of self-healing and active coping (Millikin, 2008). A dance program in a jail setting partnered with an institution's strong commitment to encouraging law offenders to experiment with new behaviors is something that few facilities have tried, but is most definitely not unheard of (Milliken, 2008). Although based on current literature, it is a compelling idea that could hold a sliver of hope for incarcerated youth.

The boys that I worked with were a good example of a proportion of the urban Argentine population. They were constrained by many things that kept them in a subordinate position in comparison to individuals who may come from wealthier barrios, or neighborhoods. First, they are constrained by social opportunities and expectations. Since many of the boys are coming from backgrounds in which their opportunities for social advancement are very slim, there is not a strong emphasis placed on education or careers. The expectations placed on them socially are to be strong men, and this does not necessarily include the expectation of monetary or educational success. The second way in which they are constrained is by gender. For people coming out of this background, males typically express their masculinity in aggressive ways that translate into delinquent or violent activity. Martinez and Merino (2009) explain, "In discourses produced by children...from the lowest strata, there is an important tendency to connect masculinity to a gender identity that is mainly linked to the physical exercise of violence". Because of both of these constraints—class and gender—it is not unusual that the boys will find themselves in an institution like Manuel Rocca for either their protection or punishment<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> According to Law 22278 a minor can be placed in detention without due process because of their social situation. The law does not define between those who need extra care and protection and those that have violated the law (Library of Congress)

due to engagement in behaviors that are not legally or socially accepted. In this paper, what I intend to do is to show how the overarching social constraints that working class boys in Argentina face are expressed through their aggressive masculinity, and how dance might be a way for this aggression to be transformed into a more socially accepted manifestation. I suggest that if some of the programs in closed institutions can harness the energy of dance and the relationship between the body and the mind of these young men, they might be able to transform their perceptions of the self and their gender and reenter society in less damaging ways to both the community and themselves.

### **The lesson that got me thinking**

It was the last workshop and the three boys had just received their final challenge. Not only would they have to make up their own movements and perform them for us, but they also had to express a social issue that they wanted to change about their neighborhoods through movement. If they had been given these instructions three weeks ago, we most likely would have been met with blank, confused stares. Instead, the boys got to work creating a small masterpiece inside Manuel Rocca, one of Buenos Aires' 5 male juvenile detention centers (Lattanzi, 2011). The three boys had spent the last few weeks with my partner and I learning hip-hop, and trying to absorb the acquired skills that come along with it.

What took place that day was something wonderful and unexpected. Instead of coming up with a few simple movements as we had anticipated, this activity took much longer. First, they wrote a rap (see appendix A) to verbally express the desired change they all agreed upon. Next, they made up corresponding movements to visually articulate the meaning behind their words. They had combined everything we had touched upon

over the course of the workshops with ease and created something profoundly beautiful, in my opinion. Surpassing the artistic aspect, they also worked together, collaborated ideas, and reached a final product without arguing, giving up, or belittling the activity. They ultimately performed and enacted everything we had taught them in 30 minutes. The development the boys had undergone in the short time we had known them was inspiring. This lesson led me to embark upon writing this thesis.

### **Research, Background and Description**

In November 2011 I, along with another classmate, designed and implemented a dance workshop inside Manuel Rocca. My partner and I were permitted to do a series of classes in which we taught basic elements of hip-hop and were able to incorporate components of masculinity, leadership, social issues and emotional expression. At the end of the six workshops, the boys performed the dance we had been working on with them for the rest of the residents as well as the staff. They were so successful in this performance that the director of the institution asked them to perform their dance again at the graduation ceremony taking place the following week. As a component to the workshop, I also studied the work that the intervention team does in order to promote personal change and further cultural and identity development for each boy. They create specific plans for each resident in order to maximize the time they have in the center (Campos, 2011). Hip-hop was able to fit into their plans with ease, since it was in alignment with their goal of introducing new creative activities.

We were unable to gather extensive and systematic ethnographic data about the workshops. We were only in the setting nine times for around 2 hours each time; while we did collect notes, the time we had to do so did not allow for a total and conclusive

understanding of the institution. I took participant observation notes on each workshop and gathered information on the boys from a short survey (see appendix A). I also am using recordings of the interviews with staff members. Much of my information was from working directly with the boys and from my conversations with them during the workshops. The activities we planned were designed to encourage them to share their thoughts, ideas, feelings and opinions. I was able to conduct semi-structured interviews with the director (Lattanzi), the psychologist (Campos) and an operator (Cabezas), two of which are members of the intervention team. All of the data collected was in Spanish, which I translated into English for the purpose of this thesis. The language barrier made it difficult to understand the slang used by the boys, but we were able to communicate effectively so that all of us could express our ideas to each other. The difference in language added a challenging element, but after a few workshops the boys were used to our accents and we were better able to understand their quick remarks and jokes.

While the data collected in Buenos Aires serves as a basis and inspiration for this thesis, I will primarily focus on a theoretical analysis of how identity development and change is possible through the questioning of masculine identity and one's perception of the self through the process of learning and incorporating dance into an individual's life. The data I collected isn't extensive enough to talk about a number of people in-depth, but it serves as the core from which I have developed this theoretical analysis. By using the theories of Erving Goffman, Michael Foucault, R.W. Connell, and other academics and theorists on the topics of masculinity and dance, I will unpack the possible trajectories a male teen in a closed institution could follow to question and transform his views of himself.

In an interview with Pablo Cabezas (2011), one of the operators who spent a significant amount of his time working directly with the residents, he explained that the boys in the institution tend to be proud of their status as a “pibe chorro” or teen delinquent. In a community in which delinquency is related to masculinity (Cabezaz, 2011), there seems to be a confusing paradigm that names delinquency as something to be proud of when the boys are in their neighborhoods, but if they then are placed in an institution criminal behavior becomes something to regret. This environment of regret inside a closed institution actually allows for an opening to introducing alternative programming (Goffman, 1957). My partner and I created the program based upon this notion; that self-perceptual and behavioral change is possible while in a situation of incarceration. For my Independent Study Project for SIT, I analyzed the identity transformation possible under these conditions.

I was heavily influenced by Goffman’s theory (1959) of situational identity. He suggests that the self is situationally defined, and changes depending on the people and circumstances around us (Elliott, 2008). His theory on the total institution provides a framework in which the effects of instilling institutional values by means of creating routines and habits can be analyzed. I will use Goffman’s theories as a prominent part of my analytical process. Additionally, I intend to combine these ideas with those of Foucault, various dance theorists, and those writing on issues of the creation of masculinity.

The boys I worked with live within a framework that Foucault might recognize as a total institution. Total institutions highlight one of the most important themes of Foucault, governmentality. Foucault defines governmentality as “the relationship of the

self to itself, and ... [covers] the range of practices that constitute, define, organize and instrumentalize the strategies which individuals in their freedom can use in dealing with each other” (Foucault, 1994: xvii). For Foucault, everyone lives under the strictures of governmentality at all times, because all of our thoughts and behaviors are structured by the way our societies are organized. However, within societies, there are places like the total institution where the processes that reflect governmentality are on display. The total institution is an example of one such place.

Governmentality is also defined as “the conduct of conduct” (Foucault, 1982). In other words, it is the way in which the laws from the governing institutions make their way into the minds of its subjects so that individuals impose the desired rules and regulations upon themselves. When inside a closed detention center, the boys are subjected to obvious state imposition since they are being controlled directly by the institution. In addition, the understandings of the staff and volunteer workers like myself are also a reflection of the assumptions that the structures have taught us to see. Governmentality, in theory, controls all of us in a way that is not as obvious as imprisonment. The boys are therefore controlled both consciously and unconsciously by the state as are the rest of us. Within the constraints of our own interpretations of what we expect those who are in total institutions to respond to, I will discuss how these boys respond to their own definitions of themselves.

In addition to the two forms of constraint mentioned previously, masculine and societal, Foucault also points out the constraint of how the boys see themselves (Foucault, 1984). For these boys, claiming the title of pibe chorro is a form of hypermasculinity that controls their lives within and outside of the institution. This form of exaggerated

masculinity is a part of Argentine machismo and is a strong contributor to how the boys see themselves and how they are seen by society. Both Goffman and Foucault discuss physical constraint, which is essentially confinement in a closed institution. What I intend to do, is unpack how each of these constraining elements in these young men's lives result in their existing perceptions of the self. I also am curious to see if dance, which undermines all of these constrains differently, can be an effective way of providing alternative perceptions of the self.

Due to the historical relationship between dance and masculinity in Argentina, the connection, in theory, should not be difficult to draw. The tango is Argentina's most popular cultural dance, and is based on the male's seductive abilities. It blends a mix of aggression and grace, which allows the male to show off his overtly masculine side but also contains an element of chivalry. The Tango began in the bars, brothels, and gambling houses of Buenos Aires, originally performed by men who were dancing to portray their dismal lives (Taylor, 1987). According to Julie Taylor (1987), a cultural anthropologist, the tango was taken very seriously by Argentines. They used it in "attempt to seek out and affirm self-definition" (Taylor, 1987: 482). The tango was a way to overdramatize the feelings of insecurity and doubt among Argentines, however the men had to maintain a strong façade that did not give away their vulnerability. Taylor explains that Argentines pride themselves on their ability to seem in control at all times, and the tango was a way for them to harness their complex contemplations on life and love. For the men, the character they embody while dancing the Tango tries desperately to not let his outer shell crack: "He tries to avoid revealing the naiveté inherent in the male sex...and he sees the rest of the world as mocking observers" (Taylor, 1987: 483).

The man must ultimately seduce the woman, while hiding his emotions and maintaining a level of suaveness and grace as well as aggression. Masculinity is not only apparent in the Tango, but also essential as men are encouraged to win the woman over by hiding their emotions. While the behavioral link between the Tango and masculinity is quite evident, so is the idea of using dance as a means of social mobility. The tango originated in the brothels, but was made famous and later brought to the upper class as well. Using dance to find a purpose, express one's self, and display gender is an idea that Argentine culture is extremely familiar with.

### **Constraining Masculinity**

Gender is a socially constructed institution, which is initiated by interactions with others (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Goffman (1976) refers to this as the gender "role", which has socially defined definitions and expectations (West & Zimmerman, 1987). West and Zimmerman provide the helpful concept of "doing gender" (1987). Using Goffman's idea of "gender display" they explain, "Our object here is to explore how gender might be exhibited or portrayed through interaction, and this be seen as 'natural', while it is being produced as a socially organized achievement," (West & Zimmerman, 1987: 129). The way the boys at Manuel Rocca do gender in their life outside the prison is by developing and enacting socially expected definitions of male behavior. These definitions tend towards hypermasculinity, and are a reflection of both the working class or lower class background they come from that are situated within the broader context of Argentine society. In order to "do gender" in this manner, there are certain activities one must engage in as well as an accompanying "look" that goes into being a "pibe chorro" so that ones intent and social identity are recognizable. For Goffman, this would be an

example of both a social identity that the boys are encouraged to assume in relation to their gendered performance, which establishes a certain set of expectations for them. None of these expectations encourage them to strive for mobility out of the context. The physical body comes into play, since the expectations are manifested in the physical arena and the outward display of masculinity. This idea is similar to Foucault who uses the physical body to center his theories of discipline and punishment (1995). The body becomes what he deems a “political anatomy” (1995). In other words, the body is something to be controlled, reformed and referred to as an object of knowledge (Foucault, 1995). One of Foucault’s suggestions is that the more one enacts this kind of social role, the more routine and “natural” it becomes. This reaffirms Goffman’s claim that routines and controlling activities are ways to impose structure on a person’s life. He claims, “the power of the norm appears through the disciplines” (Foucault 1995: 184). In other words, social norms become what characterize a “real” or successful pibe chorro. Hypothetically speaking, some of the situations which encourage a further development of hypermasculinity could include behaviors needed to survive on the streets, the need to uphold emotional stability in order to avoid being labeled a sissy, trying to be a providing father, and handling complex familial situations without being able to openly talk about the emotional effects.

Masculinity and its social expectations are placed upon men’s bodies (Connell, 1995). Connell makes the claim that the “masculine gender is... a certain feel to the skin, certain shapes and tensions, certain postures and ways of moving...” (1995: 45). Both Connell and Foucault describe how a hegemonically masculine man is made by society. Through the repeated instructions to be tough, be macho, and have no hopes of mobility,

the pibe chorro constitutes a definition of manhood that is dependent on the specific cultural norms that surround them as individuals. These boys in particular do not have a great chance of getting out their class situations (Lattanzi, 2011). Therefore their social mobility is severely limited. Class advancement through education is not emphasized nor is it a sign of masculinity in the culture specific to the pibe chorro.

Once the pibe chorro is recognized, apprehended and institutionalized for his delinquent behavior, his sense of masculinity undergoes an intensification process. Kivel (2007) points out that in a closed institution, an already hypermasculine identity is going to be encouraged to become more intense because of the stigma attached to being anything other than masculine in that environment. The boys in Manuel Rocca had to be careful, because they wanted to avoid the label of “sissy”. Their behavior inside the institution was expected to be hypermasculine for a group that already views itself as expressing a very hypermasculine sense of self in a country that is dominated by machismo. Within any all male institution, masculinities are at their peak (Connell, 1995). No one wants to be labeled a sissy, or a fag (Pascoe 2007). If you show your emotions to the wrong crowd, you could be met with ridicule, social exclusion or violence.

Hegemonic masculinity in Argentina is similar the United States, in the sense that traditional gender roles include the private sector for women and the public sector for men (Martinez & Merlino, 2009). In Argentina, the word “machismo” carries a complex definition that affects both men and women. The definition given on zonalatina.com claims machismo to mean, “that a man could not let anything detract from his image of himself as a man’s man, regardless of the suffering it brought on himself and the women around him” and whose characteristics are “exaggerated aggressiveness and intransigence

in male-to-male interpersonal relationships and arrogance and sexual aggression in male-to-female relationships". According to Blank & Tracey (2008), machismo in Mexico and Latin America is composed of two parts. The most studied aspect to machismo is the tendency toward hypermasculinity, objectification of women, and dominance. The other part is Caballerismo, which places value on gentle, emotionally connected, and courteous behaviors (Arciniega et al, 2008). Although for the delinquent boys the emphasis is almost always on the aggressive side of machismo, their cultural context provides a means for them to understand that other forms of masculinity do exist. Men in Argentina from less educated and lower class backgrounds tend to strive for the hypermasculine image that is related to violence (Martinez & Merlino, 2009). However, the double-sided image of machismo becomes important, because it opens up the possibility that behaviors that are not hypermasculine could be possible for this group of boys.

In a study of children from Córdoba, Argentina by Martinez and Merlino (2009), the formation of traditional gender roles based upon the observation of how children, ages 8 and 9, enact, perform or discuss gender was investigated. They found that traditional gender roles were mostly followed, but masculinity in the children among the lower socioeconomic statuses was more related to violence and strength, correlating to the cultural values placed upon masculinity by the boys in Manuel Rocca. The physical body was the epicenter of gender identity, and boys observed valued the development of strength and an image of aggression (Martinez & Merlino 2009; Connell 1995). Men in working classes are less likely to prove their masculinity through educational and financial success due to limited access and opportunity, so they turn to their bodies as a site to perform their machismo (Bourdieu, 2000). This becomes a crucial piece of

information for those who may want to provide opportunities using the notion of machismo. This idea is manifested in juvenile detention settings, as the boys use their bodies to display their masculinity.

The juvenile detention center is a place where these young delinquent men end up for either their own protection or for the possibility of punishment. Because they enter the institutional context with their hypermasculine identity intact, and because the institution itself encourages even more intensification of this hypermasculinity by the foundational fact that it is an all-male institution, it would seem that the closed institution would not actually be a good place to transform masculine identities of these pibe chorros. However, given the knowledge of the expanded possibilities of Caballerismo, it's possible that providing platforms to redefine male identity through their bodies is precisely what might be successful in this context. The most effective way to create a real possibility for transformation may be to target the physical body, since that is the foundation of hypermasculinity as well as a venue for masculine expression that is culturally relevant. Connell's idea of body-reflexive practices can aid in connecting the relationship between the body and masculinity. He explains that the body is essentially the point around which social life is organized (Connell, 2000). Gender is related to the processes our bodies are involved in, which help dictate our lives and are "governed by, and constitute, social structures," (Connell, 2000: 59). In other words, society and its functions are very closely intertwined with the human body and its needs.

According to Connell, body-reflexive practices account for the link between masculinity and the body. The body enjoys certain pleasures and can be molded into different forms, which lead to new social relationships (Connell, 2000). Connell discusses

one example of how the body and a person's relationship to it can determine certain social behaviors. He unpacks the idea of an athlete, and how life revolving around exercising the body leads to a decreased social life, less drinking, more negative opinions of opponents, and a narcissistic attitude that also affected his social life (Connell, 2000: 63). In this example, the athlete's body determines his social experience. In relation to the boys at Manuel Rocca, using the notion of body-reflexive practices can aid in my argument that dance could bring about new behaviors, as well as social mobility. If the body finds pleasure in dancing, then there is a great chance the individual will seek out more opportunities to engage in the practice. This could lead to more social relationships in settings other than the streets, as well as provide a means and a desire for the individual to seek more opportunities outside the current socioeconomic status.

In addition to Connell's idea of body-reflexive practices, Goffman's notion of gender display is also vividly seen inside the detention center. How a person dresses their body, exercises it, and presents it to others all contribute to ways in which masculinity is displayed. If the body is presented to another person in a way that demonstrates strength and dominance, he is engaging in a body-reflexive practice that contributes to society's definition of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2000).

Based on all of this information, it's clear that the delinquent boys in Manuel Rocca are inevitably going to be influenced by the pressures of their society in general which requires them to play their masculine and social class roles convincingly. When they come into the institution they are expected to play these roles more intensely, but if we take seriously Connell's notion that the body is crucial to the essence of male identity, focusing on transforming bodily images through dance might also help up break down

the elements of masculinity that are inextricably related to delinquent behavior. Could it really be possible to use dance or any other set of rehabilitative techniques within a closed institution to benefit the individuals, not just the society?

Maria Inés Laje looks at how a correctional institution in Córdoba, Argentina is responsible for cultural reproduction inside the center, and how confinement can be used to potentially benefit of the lives of adolescents. She uses both Foucault and Goffman's theories to explain how a total institution environment can be harmful when in the wrong hands, but she maintains it might be possible to show adolescents new ways of perceiving themselves. She recognizes that breaking down the individual in order for them to be rebuilt is a form of social control and governmentality (Foucault 1995). The government has the opportunity to "enter the bodies" and fill them with "predetermined identities" (Laje, 2006: 7). She has a difficult time finding the line of beneficial and harmful when it comes to introducing new habits. Any new habit introduced could be argued as a state-imposed agenda, but some may help adolescents maintain a socially normative lifestyle post-institutionalization. In fact, some might actually result in the re-definition or amplification of images of masculinity and possibility. Dance, as I will strongly argue, is a preferred form of governmental structure that although is imposed institutionally, offers benefits beyond just a time-filling activity.

### **The Powerful Potential of Dance**

The idea of using dance to undermine the social and cultural ideals placed on an individual to re-define masculinity is not unreasonable. First of all, in looking at hip-hop and its historical roots, we can see that its development has been closely lined to gang violence and masculine expression. Hip-hop has developed alongside masculinity and

provides a means of non-violent expression that still harnesses the aggression and dominance of violence (LaBoskey, 2001). Part of the reason we chose to implement a hip-hop workshop rather than a ballet workshop for example, is because of its relationship with masculine ideals. Hip-hop has always been tied to competition, and since it is a primarily male dominated arena, it provides a space for males to gain respect and recognition through competition (LaBoskey 2001). It began on the streets of the Bronx, where teens would come to “battle” it out, and ultimately gain recognition and status from the ability to out-perform the other boys (LaBoskey, 2001). It is described as, “a translation of gang warfare into the language of dance and physical expression,” (LaBoskey, 2001: 114). Male sexuality is also clearly on display in hip-hop, as many movements resemble sexual behaviors and draw focus to the male anatomy (LaBoskey, 2001).

Hip-hop is a culture of its own: one that represents rebellion and transformation (Chang, 2007). It is a language that can go further than culture or geography, bringing young people all over the world together (Cheng, 2007). According to Cheng (2007), hip-hop is about creating “urgent, truth-telling works that reflect their lives, loves, histories, hopes, and fears of their generation”. Although the initial purpose of hip-hop was to reaffirm status and masculinity non-violently, it also both holds the potential and encourages self-expression. This idea is similar to the Tango, as both styles of dance stress masculine composure as well as the expressions of deep inner emotions. Dance battles have been made popular by the media on shows such as America’s Best Dance Crew. Each crew tries to out-perform the rest, in order to gain the title of champion. In workshop 4, we showed the boys a video clip of a recent winner of America’s Best

Dance Crew, the Jabbawockeez, to illustrate teamwork as well as the fame and respect that could come with the mastery of dance. They decided the most important element to the team was precision and working together. Not only does hip-hop foster group development, but it also allows young boys to show off their masculinity and channel their aggression in ways that can gain them respect and status without resorting to violence (LaBoskey, 2001). Dance can dually work to provide a way for males to move their bodies in both highly aggressive and dominant as well as non-traditionally masculine ways. In terms of identity formation, it allows a person to grow their range of selfhood while being prompted to seek new and creative movements that expand the perception of the body.

Jeff Cheng (2005) explains the origins of hip-hop, reporting that it was born in a place that was ruled by crime and violence. In the 1970's the streets of the South Bronx were ridden with gangs from the African American, Puerto Rican, Latino and Irish communities. They formed gangs for survival at first, but then it just became something to do. As more and more youth of different backgrounds were forced to live in close quarters, they were brought together over shared social issues such as police oppression. They attended the same block party scene, which eventually gave rise to hip-hop competitions and dance battles. It became an explosive movement that included DJ's, break dancers, graffiti, and ultimately its own culture. Gangs were now battling with dance instead of violence. Hip-hop offered a way out of a path to self-destruction, as well as gave a powerful voice to the oppressed youth (Cheng, 2005).

Because of hip-hop's history, the notion that dance could be substituted for violence in a hypermasculine context seems very clear. This is perhaps why it worked in

our workshops in Argentina. However in addition to this, there are two other things that need to be mentioned about the power of dance that suggest its transformative possibilities. First dance has always had a strong degree of cultural power and significance. Gerald Jonas discusses the cultural significance of dance in relation to the history of many different populations. Many traditional cultures involve dance in some way for a number of reasons including communicating with ancestors, worshiping gods, in times of celebration or need, or for entertainment. It was a ritualistic part of life that held meanings deeply connected to cultural values and beliefs (Jonas, 1992). In this way, dance might be viewed as having the potential to undermine or transform the existing powerful structures of governmentality. Traditional Native American tribes such as the Hopi continue to this day to use dance to establish the legitimacy of their communities:

“The potent relationship between the dancer and audience is at the heart of one of the world’s oldest uses of dance- the dance performed for an invisible audience of spirits, ancestors and deities whose goodwill is considered necessary to the well-being of the community” (Jonas 1992: 26).

Dance in these contexts provides a somewhat fluid element of maintaining and therefore also transforming the rules that govern communal living.

The second element of dance that has an important implication is about its individual therapeutic benefits. The simple notion that ideas and emotions can be expressed through motion has always been recognized. In a situation in which an individual has a lack of access to vocabulary, dance could be a medium in which the individual now has unlimited and infinite ways to express a sense of self. Sometimes, words are just not enough. Words are so governmentally constrained that we have the

ability to express things nonverbally that we can't verbally. Andrew Ward takes the idea of ignorance of non-verbal communication even further, and says, "verbal forms are prioritized in 'logocentric western societies but perhaps this provides an individual place to break out of existing structures of masculinity and class and express a different version of the self. Hanna references Elliot Eisner and John Dewey's research, as they have witnessed the possibilities for learning dance possesses: "They have established the significance of the expression of agency, creativity, lived experience, transcendence, learning through the body, and the power of arts to engender visions of alternative possibilities in culture, politics, and the environment," (Hanna, 2008).

In addition, Judith Lynne Hannah also studies the uses of dance in an educational setting for grades K-12. She discusses the many benefits dance can have in expanding the mind and its abilities. She expresses her concern that in an educational setting, verbal communication is prioritized while "non-verbal cognition has been overlooked" (Hanna, 2008). In an interview with the psychologist at Manuel Rocca, Campos, she said that the boys do not like to verbally discuss what they are feeling. Some of the boys also told us at the end of the workshop that the activities they enjoyed the least included writing, while the ones they liked the most were only based on movement. This is an example of dance's ability to move beyond the constraints of verbal language. Hannah suggests, "Dance may be a vehicle, or an open channel, for purposeful communication," (Hanna, 2008). As exhibited in workshop 6 (See appendix A), dance was used more effectively and fluently than words in communicating feelings, hopes, and possibilities for social change.

### **Dance at Manuel Rocca**

The main goal of the workshop began as an instructional series of classes in which we planned to introduce basic elements of hip-hop and cumulatively teach a final piece of choreography. Once we began making our plans however, we saw that much more could be included that could aid in the transformation of the boys' self-perceptions as well as expand their tool-kit of masculine expression. After the first meeting that took place between our academic director, the assistant director of Manuel Rocca, my partner and me, we had the impression we would be working with around 12 boys. The assistant director explained that the boys would be chosen to participate based on interest, behavior, and in relation to existing plans made by the intervention team. The boys would have little to no dance experience. We left the meeting feeling confident in our ability to design and implement an engaging workshop, but full of questions at how the experience would transpire.

The first day we arrived at Manuel Rocca during a visitation period. My partner and I were mistaken for girlfriends of the boys, and were abruptly told to wait in line with several girls our age or younger and their young infants. This strongly put into perspective the situations of the boys we would be working with, as the babies we were looking at belonged to them. After we made it to the front of the line, the guards realized the confusion and let us in right away. It was an interesting start to our time at Manuel Rocca, however grounded the experience in reality in the sense that we were able to have a small glimpse into the realities of some of the boys.

Workshop 1 had the theme *Hip-Hop Americana, Sí Se Puede*, or American Hip-Hop, Yes You Can. It was a day designed to get to know the boys and begin in a fun way. When we entered the building, my partner and I had the sense that the guards were

doubtful of our intentions. When the 11 boys entered the small classroom, which was to serve as our dance studio for the day, each one greeted us politely with a standard kiss on the cheek: a demonstration of their Caballerismo. The activity for the first day was to introduce types of hip-hop that were currently popular in the United States. It was not a serious activity, and we showed them YouTube videos of the jerk, reject, dougie, shuffle, cat daddy and beernie man. With each dance, we verbally gave a short history of the rapper and its social context. Part of the reasoning for showing the videos was to emphasize the cultural popularity of hip-hop. In addition, we wanted to highlight the males performing each dance. They seemed to enjoy watching the videos, and even the more reserved boys participated. Throughout this activity, the most dramatic change that occurred was the mood in the atmosphere. When we first arrived, the room was tense. No one knew what we were going to be doing or how the boys would react. By the end, everyone including the operators who were guarding the door appeared to be enjoying themselves

We took a short break halfway through so the boys could rest, and gave them each a piece of paper with a few questions that asked what their favorite music was, what was a goal for the future, and if they could travel outside of Buenos Aires, where would they go. Many of the boys enjoyed Los Wachituros, which was a group of young male singers. One of the songs had its' own dance, which one of the young men performed for us. The love that the boys had for Los Wachituros was very significant in observing the relationship between self-expression and dance. In response to the question of what was a goal for the future, some of the boys said they wanted to be professional soccer players or singers. Los Wachituros were a group of young male singers that came from lower

class barrios. Music and dance represented an avenue of social mobility for the young group. Through the small survey, it seemed that music and athletics were the ways in which many of the boys strived to achieve success. None of the intended goals involved education, which could indicate a lack of emphasis placed upon it by their families or peers.

The choreography for the day was slightly difficult and several of the boys did not want to continue to participate. With more challenging movements there was a correlating loss of interest, which highlighted the masculine ideal of being in control and maintaining a “cool” appearance. The boys that went to sit down would then make fun of the boys who were trying the steps. It seemed that their aim was to assert their masculinity by mocking those who made themselves more vulnerable to moving their bodies in new ways. Less than half of the boys remained standing for the whole workshop, although most of them got up and tried the dance when we did it the last few times all together, when no one was watching from the side. The clear discomfort of several of the boys threatened their masculinity so much that they removed themselves from the situation to avoid ridicule. At the same time however, the boys who were able to do the steps were praised, their masculinity rewarded. As we were leaving, one of the members of the technical intervention team told me that he has not seen the boys that happy in a long time. This comment seems to indicate the power that dance has in its ability to eliminate stress (at least for those with some proficiency) and improve, even if only temporarily, the mental state of the participants. In addition, the saliency of the masculine undertones present in the workshop dynamics gave my partner and I new ideas of how to tailor the future workshops.

In the second workshop, there were more boys than in the first. This day was based around expression. For the activity, we taught a short piece of choreography that they then performed to three different songs. Each song had a different emotion, such as happiness, anger and sadness. We sat in a circle and discussed the meanings of the lyrics and the feeling behind each one. After, the boys used the same choreography to convey the three different emotions. The reason we wanted to do this activity, was so we could show how emotions can be portrayed through body language and by changing the steps to fit the desired emotion. For example, the sharp movements from the happy song could be changed to represent sadness by making the movements softer.

The majority of the boys liked the song that portrayed sadness the most. This could be analyzed in several different ways. The first is that hypermasculinity does not allow for the expression of sad emotions. Perhaps they relished in this opportunity to connect to a song about learning to love. We could also guess that societal standards do not encourage the portrayal of emotional sadness, and therefore they enjoyed this reprieve this song gave them. On the other hand, it could also be explained because the sad song was much slower than the others and easier to dance to. It could have been a small piece of insight into their identities, but it could have also been because of other reasons that were not measured. The sociologist commented on this activity, and said that it was good for the boys to be able to make connections between lyrics to songs and different feelings. It was a successful activity, and we finished the day with free style in a circle in which some of the boys took the opportunity to be the center of attentions, and receive cheers and applause. The environment was very supportive during this time, and even the boy who walked into the circle and stood there received praise.

The third workshop was dedicated to leadership. Because of the constant movement of boys in and out of the facility, there were only four boys in total. We divided into two small groups to discuss the lyrics to the song "Not Afraid" by Eminem. There are two voices speaking, and after my partner and I read them a translated version of the lyrics, each group analyzed one of the voices. The lyrics are related to leadership and taking a stand, and the feeling that you are not alone when going through hard times. They also speak about overcoming obstacles. The comments the boys made during the small group discussions indicated that they could really identify with the feelings the lyrics portrayed. One of the boys read the lyric, "I want to know if you feel like you've been down this same road", to which he responded "Like us". I asked what he meant, and he responded that all the boys in Manuel Rocca were going down the "road" together. Another lyric says, "if you are trying to escape this place" and a boy said "like us, in this place". It was very clear in this situation that the boys understood the connection between these lyrics and their own lives, and also were able to relate the lyrics directly to their situation of incarceration.

This activity was exciting for us, because some of the boys took initiative to put their ideas out there and take the lead. Aside from this, the conversations that took place during workshop 4 were some of the most important in terms of understanding how the boys perceive themselves. In my partner's group, they had many questions as to what the two of us were doing at Manuel Rocca. One of the boys asked if we knew what they had done, and why they were there. They asked us if we knew what kind of place Manuel Rocca was, and if we have similar places in the United States. They also asked us if we

enjoyed coming to see them. It was almost as if they wanted to situate their identity in the context of our lives, and to make sure we knew that they were “different”.

One question in particular caught our attention when one boy asked, “Do you know who we are?” This question was a very large indicator of the subjectivity of his identity. For this boy, the reasons that he was residing at Manuel Rocca created “who he was”. From a Goffmanian perspective, this makes sense. He is in the context of a juvenile detention center where he is treated more or less like a prisoner everyday. He receives reactions from others that perpetuate his cycle of thinking he is a “bad” kid. Phrases such as this are things that the intervention team tries to eliminate: the idea that a boy is only a juvenile delinquent. The confusing paradox of being both proud and regretful of the status as a pibe chorro was very visible. Based on the questions and the comments, this boy in particular had a perception of himself and the fact that he was incarcerated that was very negative.

In addition, he also asked me if I liked teaching and coming to Manuel Rocca. When I responded, “yes, of course,” he seemed very surprised. I believe that the fact I did not know what crimes they had been accused of and did not treat them as anything except teenage boys was beneficial, because they were able to spend time with people outside of the context of delinquency. We offered him a different “stage” from the other people that worked there, because we did not once ask the reasons behind why any of the boys were there. The environment was welcoming and accepting, and we worked to create a space for the boys to feel as if they had slightly more freedom than usual in terms of what they said or did. In offering them this new space, the goal was for them to feel like they could open up and let their guard down a little instead of always having to maintain a tough

appearance. Through the conversations we had, it became quite apparent that their delinquency defined them. One asked us what we thought of them, to which we responded we thought they were very nice and fun young men. Through our interactions with them and through dance, we wanted desperately to show them that they were more than delinquents, and that they could gain respect and status through dance.

After this workshop, a group of boys entered the front doors with handcuffs. It painted a fascinating context, because some of the boys had been in past workshops, dancing and participating with us. The contrast with the handcuffs was very profound, and the space of freedom that art can provide while being inside of a jailed environment seemed necessary. There is freedom in art, and one can try to escape slightly, if even for a few minutes, in a situation otherwise void of freedom. With the cuffs on, their heads were bowed and their shoulders were slumped. They did not make eye contact with us. Once they were removed, the smiles of the ones we knew returned, and they seemed to regain their masculine postures.

The fourth workshop was designed around practicing skills to improve teamwork. The number of boys decreased again, because one was released to go live with his family. Now three remained. To introduce the theme, the boys needed to put cut out letters that spelled “trabajo en equipo” (team work) in order, and after show its significance in a creative way. Looking back, this was not the best activity due to the discomfort some of the boys had with reading and spelling. One of them was clearly frustrated because he could not unscramble the words, and he needed extra encouragement. His frustration became more intense when one of the other boys was easily able to unscramble a word.

The boy struggling seemed to interpret the activity as a competition, one in which he was unhappily losing.

After the presentation of the theme and the words were unscrambled, we showed them a YouTube video of a hip-hop group called the Jabbawockees. They are very famous in the US for their incredible teamwork and precision, as well as known for wearing masks in order to all appear the same. We discussed the elements of a team, and the boys said that unity, strength, communication, and working together were the most important aspects. The topic of identity was important here, since the Jabbawockees all hide their individual identities. This also was an example of how masculinity can be expressed through non-violent movement. To call a group of people such as the Jabawockees un-masculine is unheard of by dancers. They are an idol to many young hip-hop dancers, and an example of how aggression, competition and gang-like camaraderie can be displayed in a non-violent way. The Jabawockees are very respected in the hip-hop world, and primarily come from lower social standings. Dance has provided them with a means of social mobility and removed them from a life of violence (America's Best Dance Crew, 2010). To finish the activity and also to create the feeling of a team, we gave the boys time to think of a team name for themselves. They finally chose La Rocca (the rock), because it represented first the place that they lived, but also their strength as a team.

The theme of the day for the fifth workshop was identity and free expression. For the activity, we played a game that would serve as both a tool to show how movement can be used to portray thoughts as well as for us to have an indirect interview. We would read a phrase and if the boy agreed, they would move in some way. If they did not agree,

they stayed still. Although the boys did not enjoy this activity, it was very beneficial to me in finding out more about them, even if there was the chance they would answer in the way they thought I wanted. Two participated while the other walked around the room and listened, but did not want to participate in the way we asked him to. That was enough for him however, so we respected that and appreciated his attention.

At first, the phrases were very basic such as "I like to dance". As we moved further into the activity, they became more personal such as "Someone has disappointed me in the past", and "I have disappointed someone in the past". For these phrases, both boys moved. Other phrases that they moved on which clued us in to how they feel about themselves were; "I feel I am more of a positive person than a negative person", "I want to make certain changes in my life", "I am scared to make those changes", "I do not like school", and "I have done something in the past that I regret". Everything revealed something to us about their identities, or at least how they portrayed their identities. They identified with some negative and some positive aspects of themselves. One of the boys for example indicated that he has both been disappointed and has disappointed others. He regrets something he has done. He is scared to change his way of life. At the same time though, he says he is a positive person, and wants to make changes. We noted that some of the statements they moved for could be representative of the way they should feel by society's standards, like regretting a past action. Perhaps the things they felt badly about were questions they had in relation to a wounded masculinity.

The activity was uncomfortable for the boys. They clearly did not want to share some of the things they were being asked, which would be natural for anyone who is being expected to open up and share things that they generally do not discuss. Goffman's

idea of a front stage and back stage (1959) was salient during the activity. We were asking them to share things from their backstage, but because they did not have to talk about it, they seemed more willing. By not asking them to verbally talk about their responses, only visually indicate if that was what they felt or not, we were able to reach their backstage without causing too much discomfort.

Before we began the activity, we had high hopes because it could give the boys time for self-reflection. We forgot, however, that it is not very easy for 17 year old boys to share their feelings. The boys had complicated pasts, and to think about and share with us how they felt about those things could be very difficult. This aside, they still participated but told us after that it was their least favorite activity. Even though it did not go as planned, the boys still ultimately achieved the goal of expressing their feelings and opinions through dance. The psychologist found this activity particularly interesting, because she said the boys had a very difficult time discussing their emotions and feelings. This could have to do with a lot of different factors including the societal norms related to masculinity, which do not promote the sharing of feelings. She thought it was beneficial for the boys to be able to show how they felt or what they identified with rather than talking about it.

The last workshop, as previously mentioned, was where everything came together. It was designed to blend all that the boys had learned into one activity. We made an invitation to a fictional "hip-hop battle" and after accepting and performing two challenges they would win a prize. The challenge was to think of an aspect about their neighborhood that they would like to change and to then to create movements to express that change. The rap and accompanying hip-hop dance they created was truly inspiring.

Their song had to do with the lack of a real road in their neighborhood, and how the children are not safe. This was a very profound moment for us, because the boys were able to do something very personal and full of creativity while expressing something they wanted to change about their community. This was the objective of the workshop, to give the boys a healthy way to show what they want, need, and feel.

The prize for completing this challenge along with another were matching team shirts we had made that said “La Rocca” on the front and their name on the back. They appeared to be very happy about their shirts and expressed excitement at wearing them in their final performance. We made shirts for ourselves too, to show that we were part of their team. This continued to build upon the feeling of community we were trying to encourage as well as indicate their status as performers during the final presentation.

During a break, we asked the boys questions in a non-structured group interview to get a better sense of how they felt about the workshop overall. In total, they reported to enjoy their time spent with us, but they didn't like the activities in which we had them write their answers down. They preferred to form movements instead of words. Movements were particularly helpful for them, because they could not express their ideas fully in written words. They lack the skills necessary to formulate complex written sentences due to their low interest and access to education. Therefore, dance could be used as a medium to express their ideas. One boy said that now if someone asked him if he knew how to dance, he would say yes. This signified that for him, “dancer” was a part of his identity. By introducing something new, he was able to absorb it and react to the situation. Since he enjoyed it and was open to letting his creativity become evident

through movement, he embodied the role of a dance student very well and clearly found something he enjoyed.

Overall, it was a perfect closing to the workshop. They mixed everything they had learned, and even though I have no way of knowing if they will use anything we taught them in the future, they had fun and had a new experience. In the interview with the psychologist, she said that as a result of the staff learning that one boy was so good at dance and found so much pleasure in it, they were going to look for a place for him to continue dancing in the future. He discovered a new aspect of his identity and for me that is a good result.

When we arrived for the final presentation, each boy entered into the room with a lot of energy. They wanted to practice the dance over and over again, and made sure they could do it without our help. One boy was joking around while another wanted to practice and they soon began yelling at each other. The one who wanted to practice said the other always wanted to be the center of attention, but he wanted to know the steps and not look dumb. The fight dissipated quickly, however the nerves felt by one of the boys were obvious. If he were to mess up while performing, he could be made fun of. If he looked good, he would be praised. The staff all appeared very enthusiastic, and had prepared a stage by taping markings on the floor for the boys to dance on in the main entrance to the building as well as created a seating area for the audience which was to be comprised of all the other boys and staff.

Before going downstairs to perform, the boys seemed very excited. When we descended the staircase, all of the "audience" applauded for us as the boys took the stage with confidence. Before beginning, the director said a few words to the other boys. Her

message was that if any of them worked hard like the three boys had, they could have a chance to show their talents to others as well. It was a very positive message, and was said with the hope that all of the boys would realize that they have the potential to do new things also if given the opportunity. They performed very well without our help. The audience was involved and encouraging, and it seemed that everyone was very impressed with how much the boys had learned in such a short time. The boys were all seen so positively in those few minutes, with so much energy and happiness directed their way. None of the reasons of why the boys were in the center to begin with were present during their performance, and the entire room was cheering and clapping for them. After their performance, their peers were receiving and complementary of them. Their masculinity, it seemed, was proven rather than hurt. They went beyond the institution's expectations of them, using dance as a vehicle to undermine both masculine and societal constraints. They were able to show their machismo non-violently as well as put themselves in a new light in which the staff had the opportunity to see the boys in a way that was full of potential. This is proven by the intervention team's commitment to finding dance classes for one of the boys to take once he was released. Dance offered him a way out of the constraints placed upon him by society, which could keep him under the label of a delinquent.

As a male delinquent, you become fastened to a specific place in society. You do not have control over your own future, and your self-perception is confused. With dance, as the boys clearly illustrated, there is the opportunity to weave around the locked doors of society, masculinity, and prison, and prove yourself in a non-violent, socially acceptable way. Through the workshops, it confirmed my belief that for the right people, dance can be an escape to a better life, or at least a new way of thinking about the world and one's body. While the hip-hop workshop provided the boys with a non-violent way of enacting the role of a pibe chorros, it also was in line with the more general

view in Argentine society that upward mobility brings with it a responsibility to enact the cabellero element of machismo. Thus, the dance workshop got the boys to think both about their ability to redefine their masculinity and their class aspirations

### **Helpful Comparisons**

Other programs such as the workshop we implemented in Buenos Aires exist. In San Diego, CA the Probation Department's Youth Offender Unit is experimenting with dance as a way to reduce conflict and tension. The Youth Offender Unit is a center for girls who are facing charges for serious law violations and crimes. TranscenDANCE is a non-profit organization dedicated to using dance and art as a way to foster creativity, and connect with humanity to improve communities. They brought their mission to the unit in the hopes of engaging the girls in dance. According to the girls interviewed, they did not want to participate in the classes at first. They would hold back and watch, some tentatively attempting to learn the movements. As they attended more classes however, they began to enjoy themselves and have fun with it. One of the residents even said she would probably look into continuing dance classes once she is released from the unit (San Diego County News Center). In terms of conflict resolution, Seiha Vor, associate artistic director of TranscenDANCE expresses her reasoning for using dance as a way to bring negative feelings under control: "You can't perform when you're angry. You just forget about all negativity" (Vor, 2012).

The probation officer's logic for bringing TranscenDANCE to the unit seems to be in line with Goffman's theory. She reports that she wanted to give the girls new experiences, and although not everyone will connect with dance, there is the possibility that someone might (San Diego County News Center). This is the sentiment we had when

going in for our workshop. The probability that dance will drastically transform the lives of every teen in the center is unrealistic. But if it changes one person's life course and gives them hope for a future filled with things other than criminal activity, new ways of communicating with others and way to reduce stress and confrontation, that is one more teen removed from the justice system. This is exemplified by both of the residents from Manuel Rocca and San Diego's Youth Offender Unit, who wanted to continue dancing after their release. This gives me hope that with a bigger group of boys, more would have found enjoyment from dance.

Another program similar to that in San Diego is implemented at a youth detention facility in Santa Clara, CA. Stanford professor Janice Ross has been teaching dance and bringing students to assist for 8 years (Stanford News). In the Stanford News' article about her work, interestingly writer Jess McNally comments on the posture that the inmates must stand in while inside the facility, moving from room to room: "In Juvenile Hall, the inmates are required to walk single file, with their hands clasped behind their backs" (McNally, 2010). Ross explains the purpose for this behavior is to limit the chance of sudden action, but says it is just "part of the performance going on in prison all the time" (Ross, 2010). The performance of prison reads directly from Goffman's theory as well as Foucault's. The body postures inmates must adopt are just part of the show. The posture is learned over time and limits the freedom of movement. Part of the program is centered on the interactions between the residents and the Stanford students. The article states that movement is the medium of expression and communication rather than verbal exchanges. According to McNally, the officers reported less behavioral problems during the weeks of the dance classes since removing the privilege to attend was punishment for

behavioral misdemeanors (Stanford News, 2010). Looking at both the program in San Diego and Santa Clara, it is clear that this line of thought, which says dance can impact the lives of incarcerated youth in ways concerning creativity, emotional capacity, relations with others, communication, expression, and promotes spending time in a fun and meaningful way is becoming more popular and widely accepted as a real form of intervention.

Throughout this paper, dance for social change has been mentioned in the form of inspiring an incarcerated individual to use the newfound skills to think about and initiate desired changes. Some forms of incarceration reach beyond those in jail. For people in war zones, poverty or risky environments, mental incarceration or the limitation of ways of how to live can be just as trapping. In Vigário Geral, one of Brazil's favelas or shantytowns similar to Argentina's villas, the community is known for its heavy participation and involvement in drug trafficking and violence. As a young child, the options available to you as you grow up are extremely limited. Essentially the only options are to join with the drug lords or live in fear (Favela Rising, 2005). Vigário Geral is an extremely impoverished and corrupt favela, known as Brazil's Bosnia. It is out of the question to request government assistance in handling the drug war, since the police officers are sometimes funding the drug lords with money and weapons (Favela Rising, 2005). Children see that the individuals with money are those involved in the drug war, so therefore that becomes a promising goal and something to aspire to. Governmentality in this sense, is the force that control individuals, and limits their perspectives (Foucault, 1979), which allows them to only truly understand what is available to them.

In 1993, an alternative route separate from the drug violence was created. Anderson Sá, a resident of Vigário Geral, founded the Afro Reggae Movement. As a child, he grew up “dreaming of becoming a revolutionary drug lord” (Buendía, 2009). In 1993 however, Sá’s brother was among the 21 victims of a massacre by the police death squad in retaliation of the deaths of several officers at the hands of drug lords. This moment is the beginning of Sá’s quest to end the violence, and create a different way of life. The methods decided upon to create and embody this new form of activism was art and creativity. Workshops in dance, art, music and theater were beginning to be offered to “lay the foundations for social advancement through artistic and cultural education for the infant and teenage dwellers of the favela” (Buendía 2009). The idea behind the workshops was to offer an alternative lifestyle to that offered by the drug lords.

Part of this movement was to encourage the exercise of culture and citizenship. Music was the main source of attraction for teens and kids in the favela, and they all collaborated to make Banda Afro Reggae. It was seen as a social project as well as a musical group (Buendía 2009). Although the Afro Reggae movement was successful in keeping many kids out of the violence, in the documentary *Favela Rising*, Sá explains that for every 1 kid that joined the movement, there are 3 more being picked up by the drug lords (Sá, 2005). He also reported however that one drug lord thanked him for what he was doing, because his child was a member of Afro Reggae and he felt it was a much better alternative to the life he was leading personally (Favela Rising 2005).

The importance of the Afro Reggae Movement in relation to dance in a closed institution is to show that dance and art can be used to create social change on a societal level. Vigário Geral may as well be a closed institution; there is no way out, life is ruled

by routines which keep people safe in the ways necessary, they are limited possibilities for ways of life, and for many, violence is all they know. In *Favela Rising*, Sá talks to a little boy who says that he wants to grow up to hold a gun because those men are rich and powerful; in essence the object of masculine desire for young boys. Sá tries to explain that the little boy can become rich too by getting a job and staying away from violence, but the idea is so far-fetched to the boy that he looks at Sá full of disbelief. Like many of the boys at Manuel Rocca, they have the desire to be delinquents because to them, that is the way to achieve social status and power. Also similar to how the boys at Manuel Rocca used dance to facilitate their ideas of social change, Sá uses music and dance to initiate social change on a bigger level in the favelas. As discussed earlier, hip-hop and dance can bring about the same forms of respect and status. Alternate means just have to be introduced and supported.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

The results from the workshop at Manuel Rocca could have been very different. It could have failed, and none of the boys could have expressed an interest. They could have rejected dance completely, and therefore the reasons for which I am basing much of my desire to defend the use of dance so thoroughly, would not exist in my personal realm. I agree with Foucault's idea of governmentality as well as the notion that claims the governing institutions find their way into our thoughts and essentially promote self-surveillance and control. Introducing dance as a way of expression could be seen as a new form of governmentality, because it is deemed appropriate behavior. In today's society however, an individual who cannot express him or herself in non-violent or socially acceptable ways, or who does not know anything else other than to grow up to become a delinquent, could have a very difficult time surviving outside the penal walls. Juvenile detainment should not be about changing an individual to control them; it should

be about expanding their knowledge and abilities so that they are able to function in every day life. Even if the workshop in Manuel Rocca had failed, based on Goffman, Foucault, Connell and dance theorists, there is still the potential for a program like it to work.

My passion in this area of study is sparked by my personal experiences at Manuel Rocca, but even without the boys to give me inspiration to encourage the use of dance in closed institutions or in places in need of other opportunities, there is still enough evidence that supports its success. Whole communities can be affected, as seen in Vigário Geral, and many lives can be removed from violence when given a peaceful alternative. Individuals can express themselves and develop relationships that otherwise would not have existed outside the realm of creativity that dance and art offer. That is not as impossible as it seems, judging by the residents of San Diego's Youth Offender Unit, and the youth participants in Banda Afro Reggae. The worst that could happen however, is that an interest is not sparked. Like some of the boys who participated in only some of the workshops, they did not feel that it was something they would enjoy. Perhaps the risk of putting their masculinity on the line made them feel too vulnerable. Their form of participation was watching the three boys work with my partner and I. Even though they did not stay in the workshop, there were still many moments during our time with them that they were actively engaged. They still were exposed to a way to undermine the bindings placed upon them.

The ideas of Goffman, Foucault, Connell, dance theorists and scholars have combined efforts to bring me to the complicated conclusion that it is not as straightforward as I had first imagined. In my personal experience, dance has led to my freedom. In the situation of a closed institution however, it takes a more complicated route to wind around societal expectations, masculine constraints, and the physical barrier of the institution. The theorists do give us, along with many complex and interfering ideas, small arenas of hope. Goffman gives us hope that by offering juvenile law

offenders different stages, or experiences, they may realize new aspects to their identities, which aid them in expanding the perceptions they have of themselves. Foucault tells us that we can un-train the masculine body, to make it understand less aggressive postures and movements, and essentially rehabilitate an individual to include new routines and habits into their life. Total institutions have the opportunity to provide a young person who is having trouble existing in a way deemed acceptable by society with tools to aid in his or her success post-confinement. The total institution, while it can be a place to strip an individual of his identity and replace him with the values of the state (Goffman, 1959), could also be a place to expand upon the existing identity, and show an alternate means of displaying masculinity, gaining status and undermining societal expectations in a way that includes creativity and non-violent masculine interactions. As seen in Manuel Rocca, dance was used in place of verbal communication to share ideas and emotions as well as strengthen the meaning behind what they were trying to say. Looking at how their peers received them after their final performance, their masculinity was reaffirmed without having to engage in violence. Further, the staff saw avenues of potential for them that had not existed before. Both personally and on a greater social level, dance opened the door of possibilities.

All the experiences we have change us in some way, and therefore perhaps an individual can adopt the new ideas learned in a closed institution and use the new knowledge in the future. Dance theorists have shown us that time and time again, movement is used to transcend the boundary of words, and express meanings that resonate deeper than spoken or written communication. By offering dance and opportunities for creative expression as an aid to constructing a positive identity development, it creates a space for change that will reach some individuals and help them improve the condition of their lives and the way they see themselves.

## **Appendix**

### **A. Description and schedule of workshops**

#### **Workshop 1- November 14, 2011**

The first workshop was designed to get to know the boys as well as introduce hip hop in a fun and engaging way. We began with an activity in which we all went in a circle and said our name and did an accompanying movement. After a name and movement was given, the rest of the circle had to copy the person. The activity was called Hip Hop Americana, Sí Se Puede! We showed them popular YouTube videos from the US and taught them the corresponding dances. It was a way to break the ice and get them feeling comfortable being silly and open while in the workshop.

#### **4:00-4:30 Introduction**

Name

Where we are from

What we are doing in Buenos Aires

Our goals: To share one of our passions and introduce a healthy form of expression and creativity

Schedule: We will meet 6 times and at the end, the boys will perform the dance we teach them for the rest of the residents and staff.

Name and movement activity: To introduce each person

#### **RAP**

Yo Yo Yo, yo espero que

Tu tu tu , te gusta el baile

Estamos entusiasmadas,  
y esperemos que tengas ganas

Nuestro español es terrible,  
Pero podemos enseñarte como plie,

También aprenderás el baile hip hop,  
Como dougie, jerk, reject, y pop lock y drop.

Vamos todos, levántate y mueva,  
Es un comienzo de algo nueva

#### **4:30-4:45: Warm up**

#### **4:45-5:15: Theme Activity: Hip Hop Americana, Sí se puede**

-Jerk/Reject: By New Boyz, a group of men around 20 years old from California

-Dougie: By Cali Swag District, a group from California

-Shuffel- It began in Australia in the 80's in clubs, now it is popular in YouTube videos and parties

-Cat Daddy- another form of the dougie

Bernie man- it was started by a comedian and now is popular, mostly as a joke

-All together

5:15-5:20: Break

5:20-5:55: Choreography

5:55-6:00: Closing

Challenge: Each workshop, we will present a challenge. They are not mandatory, but a way to continue dance outside of the time with us.

Today's challenge: Make up your own movements to your favorite song and perform it for us next workshop.

### **Workshop 2- November 15, 2011**

The second workshop had more meaning behind its design. We wanted to show the boys that it was possible to express emotions through movements. We first taught them a small piece of choreography. Then, we played them three different songs that all had very different emotions. We discussed the lyrics to each one, and found where the boys could relate. Then, they performed the choreography we taught them to each song, having the opportunity to see how their body feels when portraying sadness, happiness and anger.

4:30-4:40: Introduction to call and response

Warm up

4:40-5:05: Expression activity

- Introduction of the theme
- Activity: If movements could speak...
- A short piece of choreography with three different songs. Each song expresses a different emotion. This activity is to show that movement can have meaning depending on the context it is used.
- Songs: Sad (How to love), Happy (It girl-Jason Derulo), Ager (Till I collapse- Eminem)

5:05-5:10: Break

5:10-5:20: Review of Workshop 1

5:20-5:55: Choreography

5:55-6:00: Closing and discussion of challenge

- Challenge: Practice the choreography so you can show it to us with a partner without our help on Thursday  
Make up about 8 movements that express a feeling

**Workshop 3- November 17, 2011-**(No workshop today due to an incident involving an overdose of drug snuck in the center by a visitor)

### **Workshop 3- November 21, 2011**

The third workshop was the day centered on leadership. We wanted the boys to have the opportunity to feel like a leader, and have his ideas heard. The first song of the final dance we taught them was *Not Afraid*, by Eminem. At the beginning of the song, there are two voices speaking. We translated the lyrics to both of the voices, and split the boys into two groups. Each small group discussed what the lyrics meant. They then choreographed their own movements to represent what they thought the meanings of the lyrics were. Each group performed their choreography for the other and after, it became the opening to their final dance. We also had them answer some questions in order to see how they thought the workshop was going as well as to get to know them a little better.

4:30-4:35: Introduction of the incentive

Presentation of challenges

4:35-4:45: Warm up and across the floor combinations

4:45-5:15: Activity: Follow me

RAP:

Tú no sabes adónde ir,  
No sabes cómo llegar,  
No te preocupes,  
Yo puedo ayudar.

Porque soy un líder,  
Y juntos podemos hacer,  
Cualquier cosa del mundo,  
Y será un triunfo!

Introduction of the theme  
Divide into two groups  
Read the lyrics in small groups  
Make up the movements  
Show other group  
Explain the lyrics to other group  
This will be the beginning of the dance!

5:15-5:20 Break/answer questions

1. What is your goal in the future
2. Do you have any comments or suggestions about the workshop?
3. Are you performing anything else in the final presentation?
4. Write three words that describe you.

Alejandro	Tener mi familia y ser jugador de cualquier deporte	No porque me gusta lo que hacemos	No	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. un hombre de familia</li> <li>2. un buen coopanero</li> <li>3. muy amistoso</li> </ol>
Daniel	Llegar a formar una familia y trabajar	Me gusta el taller y me divierte	No	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bueno</li> <li>2. lindo</li> <li>3. comprensible</li> </ol>
Lucas	Yo quiero ser futbolista	Es muy divertido y bueno	No	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. soy feliz</li> <li>2. me gusta ayudar a otros</li> <li>3. dejarme ayudar</li> </ol>
Luis	Llegar a jugar futbol profesionalmente	Tener estilo libre	Si	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Positivo</li> <li>2. Alegre</li> <li>3. simpatico</li> </ol>

5:20-5:30: Review

5:30-5:55 Choreography

5:55- 6:00 Close

Challenge: Make up warp up exercises

Free dance

#### Workshop 4, November 22 2011

Workshop 4 was about teamwork. First, we pulled our puzzle pieces we had made that they had to put together as a group. When assembled, the puzzle read "Trabajo en equipo" (teamwork). Next, we did several exercises that help build teamwork. We then showed a YouTube video of an American hip-hop group called the jabawockeez in order to show what a real team looks like. After, we discussed the element that goes into a team, and decided as a group that the most important aspects are unity and collaboration. They had a few minutes to discuss what they wanted our team name to be and decided on "La Rocca" to represent both the place that they share as well as the symbolism a rock represents. Last, together we all came up with a chant to unify us as a team. They decided on, "Bernie Man... Sí Se Puede!" to represent "La Rocca".

4:30-4:45

Challenge and warm up

Across the floor combinations

4:45-5:15: Introduction of the theme: Team work

Show the video: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/089356902101242288>

Exercise with visual contact

Back to back

Help each other remember the dance

Come up with a name to represent our team

5:20: Break

5:25-5:35: Review

5:35-5:55 Choreography

"I am woman" Introduction

5:55-6:00: Close

Challenge- Create a chant our team can use to get up energized and united

### **Workshop 5, November 25, 2011**

This workshop was designed to show the boys that it was possible to communicate emotions without having to speak. It also allowed us to informally and non-verbally interview them. In the activity, when we said a statement that a boy agreed with, he would move. If he did not agree, he would stay still. The questions are listed below.

4:30-4:45: Warm up

Challenge

4:45-5:20: Identity Activity and free style

Statements:

- I like to dance
- I like music
- I want to travel outside of Buenos Aires one day
- I like to go to school and learn new things
- I like to spend time with my family
- I have done something in the past that I regret
- I feel like I have the opportunity to succeed in the future
- I feel more optimistic than pessimistic
- I feel like I can make a positive difference in my community/the lives of others
- I feel like I have control over my own future
- I have learned from decisions I have made in the past
- Sometimes I give up when I am frustrated
- Sometimes I am scared about what other people think of me
- Someone has hurt me in the past
- I have hurt someone in the past
- I want to make changes in my life
- I am scared to make change in my life
- I am proud of an achievement I have done in the past
- When I have a goal, I do anything necessary to achieve it
- I have enjoyed the hip-hop workshop
- I have learned something in the workshop that I can use in my every-day life

### **Workshop 6- November 29, 2011**

The final workshop was for the boys to combine everything they had learned into one activity. We gave them three challenges and upon completion, they would receive a prize. The first challenge was to think of something about their community or Manuel Rocca that they would either like to change or were proud of. Then, they had to come up with movements to represent the change and how they feel about it. Next, they had to teach us the movements. Finally, they had to do the dance for the final performance

without our help. When all of this was completed, we gave them shirts we had made that said their own name as well as the team name.

This activity went above all expectations. Not only did the boys agree on something they wanted to change in their neighborhoods, but they also wrote a rap to go along with the movements they created. They worked together very well, and used everything we had taught them without us prompting them. The rap expressed their frustration that the kids in the neighborhoods are not safe, and that there are not safe roads for the children to walk on. It is written below, however remains un-translated because of slang and fear of skewing their words:

Voy caminando por mi barrio, miro para  
Un lado y para el otro  
Vuelvo ara atrás me pego una gira y  
Vuelvo caminar  
Me siento re sarpado y mire para ttodos  
Lados sin darme cuenta estaba  
Caminando y pendamdo que falta en mi  
Barrio  
**Son los pibes que no están seguros**  
De gire andaran hip hopiando  
Yo sigue caminando

Por los tres miembros de La Rocca

4:00-4:15: Talk about final performance

Warm up

4:15-5:00: Presentation of the final challenge-

Think of an aspect of your home community of Manuel Rocca that either makes you proud or that you would like to change. Make up movements to express your sentiments.

1. Teach us the movements
2. Show us the final dance without help
3. Receive shirts that say "La Rocca" on one side and their name on the back

5:00-5:30: Interviews and cookies

What did you like best about the workshop? Why?

In three months, what are you going to remember about this experience?

What did you like the least? Why?

Do you have doubts or fears about performing in front of your peers?

5:30: Close

B. Lyrics to songs used

*"Not Afraid"* by Eminem—Workshop 3

• Group 1:

No tengo miedo (*I'm not afraid*)

Para tomar una posición (*To take a stand*)

Todo el mundo (*Everybody*)

Ven a mi lado (*Come take my hand*)

Vamos a caminar este camino juntos, a través de la tormenta (*We'll walk this road together, through the storm*)

Sea cual sea el clima, frío o calor (*Whatever weather, cold or warm*)

Sólo quiero hacerles saber que usted no está solo (*Just lettin you know that, you're not alone*)

Quiero saber si te sientes como si hubieras estado por el mismo camino (*Holla if you feel like you've been down the same road*)

• Group 2

Sí, ha sido un paseo (*Yeah, it's been a ride*)

Supongo que tenía que hacerlo, ir a ese lugar, para llegar a este un (*I guess I had to, go to that place, to get to this one*)

Ahora algunos de ustedes, todavía podría estar en ese lugar (*Now some of you, might still be in that place*)

Si usted está tratando de salir, sólo sígueme (*If you're trying to get out, just follow me*  
*Te voy a llegar I'll get you there*)

“Till I collapse” by Eminem— Workshop 2 (anger)

Hasta que el techo se cae, hasta que los luces se apagan (*Till the roof comes off, till the lights go out*)

Hasta que mis piernas colapsan, no puedo cerrar la boca (*Till my legs give out, can't shut my mouth*)

Voy a extraer esta mierda hasta que mis huesos colapsan (*I'ma rip this shit until my bones collapse*)

Así que esto es como un ataque completo soplado que estoy lanzando en contra de ellos (*So this is like a full blown attack I'm launching at them*)

“It Girl” de Jason Derulo— Workshop 2 (happiness)

Finalmente encontré la chica de mis sueños (*I finally found the girls of my dreams*)

Mucho más de un premio grammy (*Much more than a grammy award*)

Eso es lo mucho que significas para mí (*That's how much you mean to me*)

“How to Love” de Lil Wayne— Workshop 2 (sadness)

Tenías un montón de estafadores tratando de robar tu corazón (*You had a lot of crooks trying to steal your heart*)

Nunca había tenido amor, no podía averiguar como amor (*never really had love, couldn't ever figure how to love*)

Tenías un montón de momentos que no duran para siempre (*You had a lot of moments that didn't last forever*)

Ahora estás en la esquina tratando de poner juntos, como amor (*And now you're in the corner tryin to put it together, how to love*)

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**Personal Interview**

**25 de noviembre 2011**

**Location: Manuel Rocca Classroom**

**Role a Manuel Rocca: Operator**

**Campos, Jimena**

**Personal Interview**

**25 de noviembre 2011**

**Location: Office at Manuel Rocca**

**Role a Manuel Rocca: Psychologist and coordinator for the intervention team**

**Lattanzi, Andrea**

**Entrevista Personal**

**25 de Noviembre 2011**

**Location: Office at Manuel Rocca**

**Role a Manuel Rocca: Director**

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