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Tychist Baker

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Puppetry and Inside Change

Al Tony Simon and Tychist Baker

[This presentation was part of the *Living Objects: African American Puppetry Symposium* closing session, "Next Steps," on Sunday, February 10, 2019, moderated by Paulette Richards.]

Paulette Richards: Al Tony Simon is a formerly incarcerated Brooklyn-born artist, organizer, and educator who is a Co-Artistic Director of Inside Change, an organization that engages people at every phase of life in art-making and creative exploration. Al is a certified HIV prevention educator and has been an artist-organizer with Great Small Works, Milk Not Jails, and the Aftselakhis Spectacle Committee, where he studied how to use storytelling and art-in-organizing to build the capacity of our prison abolition movement, the imaginations of our communities, and tell new stories that change how we understand reality, so that we can do something about it. He has also been an organizer with RAPP (Release Aging People in Prison).

Tony Simon works with Tychist Baker. Mr. Baker is a formerly incarcerated individual who co-founded the project Milk Not Jails with Lauren Melodia. He is the father of five, and he is a New York native who has been working to transform and rehumanize himself and his community, sometimes called the hood, for many years through creative expression, puppetry, boxing, entrepreneurship, mentoring, and art-making. He created the program One Foot In, One Foot Out: Identity, Purpose, and Direction through Puppetry, that has bloomed into a new multi-program organization called Inside Change, of which he is Co-Artistic Director, with visionary educator Carol Prudhomme Baker. Tychist has also worked with Great Small Works, Jason Hicks, Sam Wilson, Jenny Romaine, and many others. [...]

I started my keynote address with a story about my experience working in the Dekalb County Jail, and the suppression of the performing objects that I brought into that space, and how that made me even more aware of this amputation that occurred in the

period of slavery, where we were separated from the power to animate objects, and became objects ourselves. Because that happened in the context of the mass-incarceration system, it was a tremendous blessing to me, when we were organizing this last panel, to have the members of Inside Change show up and bring us home, to really talk to us about object performance, resurrection from social death, and freedom.



Fig. 1. Paulette Richards, Ra Malika Imhotep, Valeska Populoh, Al Tony Simon, and Tychist Baker. Pictured on screen: Akbar Imhotep. Photo courtesy of the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry.

Al Tony Simon: I have to say I was incarcerated; I had a twenty-five-to-life sentence; and I did thirty-two years. So, while I was incarcerated, I just want to touch on some of the programs that I participated in, because it's too lengthy and I don't have much time to cover the whole situation. So, while I was there I participated in some theater. You know, we would come out of Sing Sing and we did work, and we did do plays from that area. We did a play based on the street, that takes place on the street, and how the individual goes through the criminal system, once they get arrested, they go through that area, and we would just take on different roles, and I wrote the script. And then from there, during the Black History [Month], we did a Black history play, dealing with the Commit, and

what took place in that particular time, with Tahudi, and then the transition that took place from there before the invasion came, and broke up Egypt. And then from there, there was a piece dealing with AIDS. I used to do skits showing the H.I.V. transmission, and how that's transmitted, so the population would become aware of how it was actually transmitted in that area. So, we did a number of skits dealing with that. And after that particular time, going through thirty-two years, I finally was released.

And then I joined a program called RAPP: Release Aging People from Prison. Because what was happening was that the individuals that was inside the prison, like you say, they're lost. So, I used to say that I was Rip Van Winkle. You understood the story of Rip Van Winkle? He went to the woods and slept for twenty years. You know, so therefore I say I'm Rip Van Winkle because I went upstate and I was out there for thirty-some-odd years, so therefore when I woke up: a brand-new society. When I went in, they didn't even have beepers, cellphones, none of that. So, therefore it came out it was like a culture shock. So I had to deal with it from that perspective. And so then I got involved with RAPP, and we became the voice for the individuals that was incarcerated, that had been locked up for long periods of time, for like fifteen years, twenty-five years, thirty years, forty years. And what was happening was that the parole commission, when you went in front of the parole commission--because that was the only way you could be released--and what they do is that they don't look at the transformation that you made, they don't look at the changes that you made while you've been inside the prison system. They don't see that you're no longer that individual that walked in through that door at a young age. They don't look at you being an elder. And so what they do, is they bring out your record, and they look at your criminal record, and based upon your criminal record, this is what they make the decision on. And so therefore when you get denied for parole, that's another two years before you go back and see the parole board again. So a lot of individuals, like the individual that created RAPP, he had fifteen-to-life, and he did thirty-four years, and so that made that he got hit fifteen times going to the parole board. And so, this is what was happening with that.

So now what was happening is that we were saying that the parole board had to take on a different view on how they approve an individual when they come in front of them. So they have to review them for the changes that they made with inside the prison

system, and realize that they're no longer the same individual that was there, and look at the progress that they did while they was in. A lot of creative programs help individuals that didn't have that much time to turn their life around so therefore they didn't get caught up in that revolving door. And they came out and became productive tax-paying citizens, and getting jobs, and participating in different organizations. And so, we was dealing with that, and then we had petitions, and we used to go to the community and explain the situation to the communities and they would sign the petition, and then we would take those petitions, and send them to [Governor Mario] Cuomo. And then dealing with how the parole commission should change their attitude.

Because the commission that was sitting on the promotions come from [Governor George] Pataki, and that's when they talked about getting tough on crime. And that's when mass incarceration took place, from that area, and so therefore it was like "lock them up and throw away the key." And now they realize they have a major problem. The prisons have become overcrowded. So, America became the leading part of the world in populating their prisons. It used to be China and Russia, but now, it's the United States that outnumbered them.

And so now what happens is that we started advocating for that, and then we was networking, so in the process of networking, this is when I ran into Milk Not Jails. They used to come in, and that's where that community organization, non-profit group, they'd all work together and see how we've got the same common cause, how we going to deal with that. So, when I got with Milk Not Jails, what they was doing was they was writing a survey that the parole board should use when they are interviewing the individual, that gives them a humanistic more point of view when you are talking to an individual. But the record ain't never going to change, that's going to be the same no matter what.

And so therefore now you have to look at the individual from what they did, and if they take the evaluation, based upon the sentiment of the evaluation, would determine who would be a parole risk. Because when the commissioners are sitting there and they're talking to the individual in front of them, they had no idea whether that individual, that they believed, was going to come back or not. It's just how they feel at that particular time, based upon who they want to release. And so, doing that; and so we started making some inroads in that area. So now we are seeing that individuals that had been locked up

for a long period of time, and then what we were saying too is that the elders, now we are saying that what is happening is, that you to depopulate the prison population; well how can we do that and make it safe for the community?



Fig. 2. Al Tony Simon and Tychist Baker. Photo courtesy Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry.

And so what they are saying is that what we could do is look at non-violent felon individuals, and we can release them. But, because of tough rules and regulations that they had, we had more violent felon individuals inside the prison system than you had non-. And then when the non-violent individuals came home, and they hadn't went through the proper training because they wasn't there that long, they wind up coming back, and now they become violent felon prisoners. And so therefore we said sooner or later they are going to have to start addressing that issue. And so what we were saying is that the elderly in the prison system is fifty-five and up; because the say the prison robs you of ten years. So instead of being sixty-five, they felt like fifty-five, and so fifty-five and up and is considered the elder individuals. And now we're having, as you know, once you start getting old, you can't do those things you was doing when you're younger, so your health becomes deteriorated, and so therefore sometimes you become incapacitated. I mean, I had guys that was in there in a wheelchairs, and they still was denied parole.

And so now what's happening is they start taking on a different perspective. And so we start making inroads with that. And so now when I started working with Milk Not Jails going up into the Albany area, in relationship to getting them to support the evaluation in relationship to the parole system. That's when Milk Not Jails introduced me to Great Small Works. And so, I went over to Great Small Works, and that was my introduction to puppetry.

Now, remember, [I'm] New York, Brooklyn-born, in jail for that period of time, and I'm sitting there, and first I'm cutting out blocks, with marionettes, for the Purim that's going to be; that's a carnival that they put on around the Jewish time. And so we was making puppets for that. And so now I'm cutting out the blocks, I knew how to use the jigsaw machine; I'm cutting that, ok. So I had all these blocks, and I said, all right. And so now came time to start assembling; and, ok, this piece goes here, this piece goes here: when I put my first puppet together, I was like, "oh, wow, this is something else right here!" You know, now I'm starting to see all that was coming together, and now I'm starting to see it work. And then I was like, wow, if someone told me a year ago that I'm going to be sitting here making puppets, I'd say you've got to be joking.

So therefore, they started getting into puppetry, and that dealing with that area, and then learning how they work, from that process, and then they was going into youth detention centers; like Horizon Detention Center for the youth; and over there, dealing with those that got in trouble, before they got sentenced from the court; some of them come back home. So, we would go in there, and we start teaching them the puppets that [Tychist] going to explain to you a little later on. So we went in there and started teaching them the hand puppets, and marionettes. And so therefore then I started doing that. And so now I was like, ok; so now what's happening is that individuals from my environment, they don't know nothing about no puppetry. They got that hard mask, you know: "Puppets? What, are you stupid? You must be insane!"--seeing a puppet.

And so therefore now what's happening is that when we started explaining it to them, because now what's happening is, that this puppetry gives you a voice. Because sometimes people want to speak, but they're afraid to say something, because they don't know how it might sound; or being in front of people and talking. And so now what happened, if you move behind the curtain, and your puppet is out front, that gives you an

expression to speak, because the puppet is doing the talking for you. So therefore we started explaining that to them, so they was like, "ok," and then, like I said, once they start realizing how the puppets work and what they do, they start gravitizing towards that situation.

And then we start going to a middle school in the Bronx, a transitional school in the Bronx, and we was dealing with 11-to-14[-year olds], right? And the same thing: when we start talking about them, showing them how to deal with sock puppets and marionettes; we're going to work with the sock puppets first, and then we're going to the marionettes. And then at the end, we're going to put a performance on. And we said now with the situation that we're dealing with here, is that *we're* not putting on or writing the script, we're here to show *you* how to do it. So we show them how it can be yours: you're going to make your own puppets, you're going to dress the puppets up how you like, and you're going to write the script, and we're going to have this day, and you're going to deliver that to your peers in the auditorium.

And so they start duct taping, you know they're coming to it, and when they start looking at it and seeing what they was making: "oh, wow!" We had to show them how to make the sock puppet; we had a lot of trinkets that go along with it, like you're going to see one of those things, however you want to design, you put it here. So they did it like that, and what color puppets they want to use, as far as the sock was concerned. And so when they started doing that, and then they were like, "ok;" and then when we took them to the marionettes, they really got it, you know? "Oh wow, I want to do this!" And then you say, ok, this is the skeleton, now you've got to dress it up, put your clothes on it. And they're "ok, I'm going to make mine like this; I'm going to do that," and you know what I'm saying, this is going to take place in that area, so they was really strong with that.

And so then what happened is that we dealt with the One Foot In and One Foot Out. And so therefore, being that we're going to at-risk communities, because the communities that we're going to in the Bronx, you've got one foot in, if you make the wrong decision, you're going to have both feet in, and go to the penitentiary system. Or, if you make the proper decision, you pull that foot out, then you become a productive member of society. So that's what we're talking about: identity, purpose, and direction. So therefore when they get to understand that, so then they realize that, ok, so they're making

conscious decisions about what they're going to do. And now they're learning how to think, and then we show them not only are you putting on the puppets for the school, but this is going to become a career for you.

So therefore, depending on how well you like the puppets, and if you want to follow, and you want to pursue it, you've got an idea, and you can get with individuals that do that work, and then you can line up, and turn that into a career. And then we point out something like the Muppets, and dealing with it from that end. And so, we know puppetry goes way back, as we all learn, through the course of this seminar. I know that the first puppet that I got introduced to was Howdy Doody: Howdy Doody, Knucklehead Smith, and then Lamp Chop. So I was looking at those, so I said, ok, but I just used to look at that as entertainment. You know, laugh and so forth with the song, but I never realized that that could be a career; you know, coming from that end.

So I said, ok, so now we are realizing we're taking the puppetry down, and then dealing with the mindset, showing them how they can go from a negative attitude to a positive attitude, and become productive in that situation. And then it helps them to, critically, think more, to put a challenge in their thinking, in that area. And so therefore we start going through middle school, and then we were dealing with that. And then we say, ok, so we was working under Shadow Box Theatre. So we said, ok, now it's time for us to create our own. And that's what we call Inside Change, and so therefore with Inside Change, we start going around talking to particular councilmen, and we trying to get back into the detention centers for the youth, and then they were talking about putting us into homeless shelters. Because they're saying, what happens, even though a person is living in a shelter, they're working, but they still don't have the money to pay the rent and things of that nature. And they have kids, and so therefore the activities that we can go and take in there will help in that particular area. So these are the things that we're looking at, from that perspective. And then some of the long-range goal is providing a shelter for the individuals that come out, and then train them, in particular, for the workforce, from that end. So this is the goal that we're striving for, and these are the things that we move from that end. And so now what I'm going to do--this is the man who created it all [gestures to Tychist]--I'm going to let him talk about what he has in front of him.

Tychist Baker: The first thing I would like to say is, I'd like you to give yourself a clap, and applaud because I came to Connecticut, and I see people waiting for a change out here. Anybody came from a different piece of land, anybody fighting to change: change their communities, change the people, the way of thinking, spirituality, Blackness, and society, period. So, you all clap your hands. [*Applause.*] Number two is, which is something very important to me, every day I want to shout out to all the Black fathers that's in here, that could be like a ghost, we're like Casper, nobody notices us; we don't get that recognition. And we're teaching our children on top of that. So, it's a hard job, and you're all looking good doing it.

Now I'm going to jump into a little quick bio of me, and then I'm going into why I started this. I started puppetry basically because I realized I was a puppet with no strings for numerous years of my life. And I wanted to teach the children to take the strings, and you take control, and you have your own strings, and you do your own puppetry yourself. You understand, that's the reason I joined puppetry. I grew up in Brooklyn, the five boroughs, period. To make a long story short, my moms was using drugs, my father died, my moms was using drugs, I was raised by my grandmother. I had to go back to my mother while she was using drugs. My moms was a hit woman; meaning like, a hit man--she was like that. She was down with 50 Cent, the Wiz, knew Calvin Klein, all these individuals that was running around, and she fell. My grandmother died, that raised me; she fell, and she started using drugs. She threw me out, because I was like my father, a young man at that time; he told me to take care of home. I hit the street at the age of eleven years old. My heart grew cold. I didn't give a damn about life. I was out there in the streets, living in the streets, and being in the streets. I was still going to school though, 'cause my father wanted me to go to school, so I still was going to school. I started hating children that was in my school. They came with their parents; I got awards, I looked in the audience--who was out there for me? You understand?

So I grew hate for other children. So I started to do other stuff to other children. I was that individual. You understand what I'm saying? I got kicked out of a lot of schools. I got introduced to drugs, guns, and everything else. This is how I lived. My street name is Evil; that's my street name. The woman that loved me, my mother's sister, she sent me to L.A. Be out there; I came back here, and I became Blood. I'm one of the individuals

that run the Blood Nation out here, you understand, to these streets. I went to prison. I served seven years, four months, and fourteen days in prison. I ran into an individual named Choice, which I named my son after; my son's name is Ayumi, which means choice. He became, like, a brother that I never had. He educated me; I bet he could read; I could count with money. I got my t.v., I got things to get my father. He brought me to who I am, my legacy, which is me being an Egyptian. You know, he started teaching me about Imhotep, and I started studying, reading books, and I read hundreds of books. My last four years I did nothing but study.

So, I came out with an identity, purpose, and direction in prison. When I hit the streets, I ran into two individuals, which was Lauren [Melodia] and Sam [Wilson]. They was white. Now, I'm going to say this much: when I came out of prison I looked at women differently. Because the women I was around for seven years and a half was authority figures. And them same women that was around got a lot of young Black men--or men, period--either half-way beat to death, or killed. They wrote a letter home: "he hung himself." This is stuff I witnessed with my eyes. So I looked at women different when I came home. So now, I met [Lauren] and Samantha, and they had the same goal. They were white. I didn't like white people at the beginning. I had hatred towards white people. Of me studying so much, and seeing the visual images of the Black women being murdered, the Black men being raped, the Black child being raped; babies thrown overboard. So all these things in my head; I never been around white people before, to be honest with you. I was in the hood. The whitest person I seen, they was Puerto Rican. You know what I'm saying?

So now I start being around white people. They understood they had the same fight that I had, so we created Milk Not Jails. I was going out to the prisons. I was going out to promote reforms; I wanted to shut down prisons. So, I was starting to get with prisons; going everywhere. What helped me with that: I ran into--at the time I didn't know he was a senator--Eric Adams, and I was looking for a job, trying to tie my tie, I don't know how to tie a tie, and he brought me to his house to help me out with that. And he explained to me certain things; he told me that he was a senator, in Brooklyn, And I'm looking around in his house, "can you help me with this? Word, this is a beautiful house--I could rob you"; you know what I'm saying? [*Laughter.*] He let me in there. That

showed me something right there. So now, I started going to the jails, I started realizing; I was hitting the streets though; I was in the streets; not getting paid, for none of the things I was doing. I started anti-rape. Me and Bloods. I started getting all my Bloods together, I started getting Crips together, I started getting Latin Kings together, everywhere from Bed-Stuy to Bushwick, to the Bronx, to Harlem, I started to unite us. We started teaching anti-rape, which was teaching girls, in the beginning, young girls. I realized a lot of girls been touched. And "no means no." So I started teaching martial arts and boxing to little girls in the communities of Bed-Stuy and Bushwick, in the program One Foot In and One Foot Out; because the future is the future. Our Black youth are our future. I went in juvenile detention centers and started teaching the youth, and I seen myself in everybody. Can I get two people who can help me with this real fast? Can you come up real quick? The two youngsters? [*Two volunteers from the audience step up.*]

I don't know if you're familiar with sock puppets, but you put your hand in it; one person can do both of these, ok? And I need somebody that can demonstrate it with me. There were three phases: Identity, Purpose, and Direction. Every phase has a puppet, which is: the sock puppets go to Identity; Purpose goes with the marionette; and I don't have the other puppet here, which is the humanette; [it] goes with Direction.



Fig. 3. Tychist Baker and two audience volunteers; one performing the Healthy and Unhealthy Impulses sock puppets. Photo courtesy Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry.

Now this is what we go through in class; you go through a lot of scenarios. I don't do illusions at all. Or the fairy tales, I just say that when you're in my classroom, I let my children--they're the future, so I let them do what they want to do. I don't stop them, I don't care what they're talking about; not about you right now. What I did was, I created the scenario of a cartoon, which I got to watch when I was younger, and when someone make a decision, you know, the Angel pop up, and then the Devil pop up. But I changed that to Healthy and Unhealthy Impulses. So, I did this for critical thinking to our youth. We go into scenarios like "He Say, She Say." They come up with these scenarios. She [*gesturing to one of the volunteers*] is going to play my Healthy and Unhealthy Impulses; and against her [*gesturing to the second volunteer*]. "You [*to the second volunteer*] was talking about me, and I didn't like that. I don't know personally what you're talking about, but I heard through the grapevine that you had something to say about me that I didn't like." But before I approached you [*to the first volunteer*] I heard that... Put just put one there on one shoulder, and one on the other shoulder [*the first volunteer puts the Healthy and Unhealthy Impulses sock puppets on either of Tychist's shoulders*]. This is my Bad One, and this is my Good One. You understand? My Bad One was in my head: "I still be talking about you like that. You know, talking all this trash and all that." My Healthy One probably ain't going to say nothing. So now, I'm making a decision: what do I go with? I went with my Healthy Impulse, to just talk to her and get to know who she is; I don't know her; do you understand? Thank you so much for this. [*Volunteers return to their seats.*]

I also go into the fact of, like I said, Black children are the future. We, as Black people, adults, we go through feeling incapable. We go to feeling like, "I can't get it done!--I want to be like this!--I don't know!--I got three jobs!" We go through this as adults. So imagine what the youth is going through, as Black people. We act like racism, bias-ism, don't affect them. Do you understand? So these are things I do. I ask children some things that people don't ask Black children no more: "what do *you* want to be when you grow up?" I haven't heard these things. So, these are the things that I speak to the children.

Identity is critical thinking and achievement. So I go through the critical thinking and I go through achievement. What have you achieved, what have you accomplished? You understand? "I accomplished smacking the fire out of somebody yesterday." "Oh, let's talk about that, baby. How did that make you feel? Did any consequences come with that?" We talk about these things. Do you understand?

And Purpose: Purpose is dealing with experience, and form, and change. So now the marionette is for the reconstruction of yourself. It has so many pieces: arm, leg, leg, arm, head, you know what I'm saying; it makes you supreme, it makes you complete. So now, you could reconstruct yourself. "And what do you want to put in yourself? How do you even want to be in life? What do you want to be in life? How do you see yourself in life?" We go over these things, we talk about what is beauty and ugly. Because I like in puppetry, there ain't no such thing as beauty and ugly. All of this [*indicating the puppets*] is beautiful. I find a little piece of something and I put it on there, it was trash, but I'm not going to throw it out. I cut this out, and I make it into something. You understand? So we go over this because we've been taught through somebody else what is beauty, what is ugly. So our children are going through this, "what is beauty, what is ugly?" And it's in that phase now, so they're like "I don't know, I got two likes!" Things is happening now. I created a humanette--it's a puppet that you only see your head and your hands. Why did I create a puppet that you only see your hands and your head? I chose that puppet because I want people to know we are humans, builders, and creators. We don't have to be the mistakes we made.

So now you only see why I can build and why I can create. Not just these fashionable denims I got on, you understand? So that's why I created One Foot In, One Foot Out, and Identity, Purpose, and Direction. I created a few other programs: the Fight of a Gangster, the Origin of a Warrior. Because I'm teaching my youth out there, I'm dealing with martial arts, and exercises, and boxing, and me teaching. And the reason why, because I gonna talk about the gangster, and what made this gangster, that we don't talk about. See, we're quick to call our children thugs, killers. We tell our children "I don't want to see you"--or our daughters--"I don't want to see you with them, over there." And they end up going over there anyway. So, instead of me saying "I don't want to see you"--I want to tell my children, so I said this: if I don't want them meeting them guys over

there--men, or pharoahs that my children; that could be beautiful for my daughter. If I don't want them meeting them guys over there--beautiful pharoahs, or men. That my sons can hang with them. So, I'm about the youth. I don't care how bad they may look, how thug, how gangster, how murderous: I'm a Black man, I've been told that all my life. And that don't mean crap. When people call me those names, that's who I am. I got to live that out. So, I explain to my youth, and I want to talk about that gangster and that warrior, because a warrior loves life. A warrior protects life. A warrior teaches life, about life. But when a warrior can't be a warrior, to protect his own, and do what he want, or things happen and he get hurt, he get broken up, he get beat down, she get beat down. Cause don't get it twisted: a warrior's a woman too. So, after they get beat down and hurt, and stomped up--and as adults we have felt it; pardon my language right now, I don't give a--eff it. But this what we did the effort. And we go out, we go where the wind blows. So, that's what turns a warrior into a gangster.

You know, and these things start from home. I came home from prison after serving seven years; I had a daughter I had left. I left her when she was six years old, I came back she was thirteen going on fourteen years old. I did everything. I came home in 2006. I tried to buy her, and then after five years of me working on buying her, I said, you know, I've got to put my foot down. "You'll learn to respect me around here,"--because she wasn't respecting me. I said "listen to me, I'm your father. You're messing up in school, and I was trying to tell you something here, I don't want you to go the same route I was." I was explaining these things. She looked at me and she said "are you serious?" She said "let me explain something to you. I looked up to you, I really did. I was getting raped and molested. And I told the man that was raping and molesting me, I said to him, 'if you only knew who my father was, you would be a dead man, and he would come and kill you.' And he'd get off me, and he attacked me, every time. And you never came. So now you got the nerve? I'm fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen years old; you got something to say to me now? When I needed you, you wasn't there. I don't think I need you now."

So, that registered, it still registers to this day. I still fought for her love, because I knew the chain, and I wanted to break the chain. Four years ago my daughter killed her mother's girlfriend. My daughter went stark crazy with her. She wasn't there for me

because I was too strict. I became too strict. I became too about positivity, at the time. So, she didn't want to be with me. She was supposed to go back home with her mom, and that's what happened. She was sent to ten years in prison. She had a baby, she had my granddaughter in prison. And my thing is like, I'm taking care of my granddaughter, I've got four children. I just moved up to North Carolina. Both my moms died: the mother that gave birth to me and my godmother. Before she died she asked me could I come to North Carolina to make sure the other siblings finished college. I did so; I been there three years and they finished college.

So my thing is, this is where my fight is. My fight is for them, right there [*gestures to Black kids in audience*]. Our future. What do we think our future is going to be like if we don't start fighting for it? We talking about fighting for freedom, we're talking about femininity, everything we fight for. When are we going to talk about fighting for our youth? And that's why I'm fighting, and that's what I'm going to do until I die, because I'm a guy who was ... before me that tried to guide me the right way. You know Black Power, I'm Black I'm Proud, and everything else, Five Percent Nation, they tried to guide me right. And what I did, I messed that up. And we do the same thing that they did with us to the generation that's out here right now. So that's why the Black men was not here to do that. The reason why the Black women, they had to pick up the boxes, they had to pick up the boots, they had to do it all because we didn't protect nothing. We ain't on our job. So I'm on my job. And goddess save the Black women, forgive me, for all Black men. Forgive us. I'm here as a representative for all Black men.

So, these are the programs that I do; this is what I do, you understand? I'm like Malcolm X, like he said in the Oxford debate, I'm willing to join anybody and be with anybody to change the wretched condition of this earth. And that's just what it is. If your mind is about change, and doing something about it, then I'm with you on that note. And I'm not about talking, I'm with *doing* it. And that is what it is; I'll leave you all with that, and thank you.