

University of Denver

Digital Commons @ DU

---

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Graduate Studies

---

1-1-2016

## Incarceration Memoirs and the Captivity Genre

Vincent James Carafano IV  
*University of Denver*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/etd>



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Carafano IV, Vincent James, "Incarceration Memoirs and the Captivity Genre" (2016). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 1250.

<https://digitalcommons.du.edu/etd/1250>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Studies at Digital Commons @ DU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ DU. For more information, please contact [jennifer.cox@du.edu](mailto:jennifer.cox@du.edu), [dig-commons@du.edu](mailto:dig-commons@du.edu).

Incarceration Memoirs and the Captivity Genre

---

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of Arts and Humanities

University of Denver

---

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

---

by

Vincent Carafano

August 2016

Advisor: Dr. Billy J. Stratton

© Vincent Carafano 2016

All Rights Reserved

Author: Vincent Carafano  
Title: Incarceration Memoirs and the Captivity Genre  
Advisor: Dr. Billy J. Stratton  
Degree Date: August 2016

## ABSTRACT

The captivity genre has a rich history in fiction and memoir. In this work, I argue that the expansive parameters of the captivity genre should include an additional subset of texts: incarceration memoirs. Working with two canonized Indian captivity narratives—Mary Rowlandson’s *Sovereignty and the Goodness of God* and Sarah Wakefield’s *Six Weeks in the Sioux Teepees*—and two contemporary incarceration memoirs—Stanley Tookie Williams’ *Blue Rage, Black Redemption* and Sanyika Shakur’s *Monster*—I suggest that, across a range of thematic and contextual metrics, incarceration memoirs participate in the captivity genre. These equivalences include: the abduction of the narrator within a larger zone of violent conflict, and the power struggles—frequently over resources and territorial boundaries—that occasion capture, the acclimation to a different culture by the captive and the development of skills to survive, and the shaping role of captivity on personal identity through isolation, violence, friendship, and education, and how these features contribute to a “conversion” experience.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank my family, friends, and committee members—if not for your patience, insight, and support, this project would have never been realized.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: Introduction.....1

Chapter Two: Zones of Conflict.....17

    The Intent of Capture and Captivity.....18

    King Philip’s War – Mary Rowlandson.....20

    The Dakota War – Sarah Wakefield.....22

    Gang Origins and Growth in Los Angeles.....23

Chapter Three: Warriors in South Central.....31

Chapter Four: From Captivity to Conversion.....39

    Mary Rowlandson’s Capture.....40

    Sarah Wakefield’s Capture.....41

    Stanley Tookie Williams’ Capture.....41

    Monster Kody Scott’s Capture.....42

    From Acclimation to Conversion.....43

    Mary Rowlandson towards Conversion.....44

    Sarah Wakefield towards Conversion.....54

    Stanley Tookie Williams towards Conversion.....60

    Monster Kody Scott towards Conversion.....68

    Equivalences Revisited: Monster Kody, Tookie, Wakefield, and Rowlandson....76

    Veracity: Authentic Narrators, Marketability, and Personal Stake.....77

Conclusion.....84

Bibliography.....88

## CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

The forcible abduction of captives, and the resulting experience of a narrator in captivity, has featured in narratives as ancient as *Gilgamesh*. In this tale, Enkidu awakens from a dream and relays his seizure by a denizen of the underworld:

A creature appeared with a lion's head, his face was ghastly, he had a lion's paws, an eagle's talons and wings. He flew at me, he seized me by the hair . . . he bound [my arms] behind me and forced me down to the underworld, the house of darkness, the home of the dead, where all who enter never return to the sweet earth again. (Mitchell 143-144)

Enkidu's release is secured upon waking, and while Gilgamesh is hopeful Enkidu has misjudged the severity of his dream, this portentous slumber marks when his "strength began failing," occasioning Enkidu's death twelve days later (149). Beyond dreamscape captivity, albeit with life or death consequences for Enkidu, captivity is present in potent forms in many other ancient texts. Odysseus is held captive for a number of years by Calypso. In Biblical stories, captivity is present on literal and metaphorical levels, including the individual—Paul of Tarsus—the group—Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego—and the nation—the Jews in Egyptian and Babylonian captivity; additionally, the foundational tenet of Christian theology is Christ's freeing of captives from sin: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me . . . He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives" (*English Standard Version*, Luke 4:18). Touching this spiritual domain, Martin Luther

King, Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" and 17th century French Quietist, Jean Guyon's, *The Prison Narratives of Jean Guyon*, represent a subset of spiritually-informed captivity narratives overlapping with protest literature. For some authors, captivity was not manifested in memoir, but found expression in their works of fiction; held captive for five years by Barbary pirates, critics agree that captivity profoundly influenced Miguel Cervantes' writing. María Antonia Garcés summarizes scholarly criticism of Cervantes' captivity experience: "Juan Bautista Avalle-Arce argues that the capture by Barbary pirates in 1575 . . . [is the hinge which forcefully organizes the entire life of Cervantes]. . . . Armando Cotarelo Valledor claimed the theme of captivity was a fountain of inspiration . . ." (15-16). Indeed, as Nabil Matar and Rudolph Stoekel note concerning authorial fascination with North African captivities:

Captivity and kidnapping ruled the waves. . . . From Spain to England, Cervantes and Lope de Vega, Heywood and Massinger depicted numerous captivity scenes in their work - and the tensions of religious conversion, miscegenation and cultural transformation. (242)

Matar and Stoekel also point to the influence of these narratives on *The Tempest*, noting this title, "could well fit into the captivity literature that described the Barbary coast" (242). Other classic works from Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* to the Brothers Grimm's Rapunzel further establish captivity as an engine of narrative.

Beyond fictive device, captivity narratives, "began to form a distinctive genre in Western literature when European explorers and colonizers recorded tales of capture and return" (Carroll 185). Overlapping with Barbary captivity accounts, where, "a million to a million and a quarter Christian captives entered the Maghrib from 1530-1780 . . . [and] numerous captive accounts were written . . ." (Clarence-Smith and Eltis 153), Indian



captivity narratives were served to a readership that viewed these tales as, “a new species of travel writing” (Carroll 185). The magnitude of these accounts are, “so numerous that the full corpus of texts has yet to be identified” but are suspected to run as high as several thousand supposedly veridical tales (Derounian-Stodola and Levernier 8-10). Into the earliest stages of these works, one of the first standalone Indian captivity narratives was recorded—Mary Rowlandson’s *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*—published in 1682. To this day, *Sovereignty* is a preeminent exemplar of the Indian captivity genre, and thusly positioned as one of the most significant texts in captivity studies.

Fueled by the manufacturing capabilities of the printing press, a hunger of the Europeans to digest news from abroad, and the immediacy of these narratives to colonists, the readership of New England and Europe was primed for the arrival of *Sovereignty* and subsequent narratives in the genre. Towards this success, Frederick Drimmer remarks in his anthology *Captured by the Indians: 15 Firsthand Accounts*:

For our ancestors, these remarkable tales had all the suspense and romance of the historical novel, the science-fiction tale, and the detective story hold for us today, with one important difference—these stories were *real*, and the same dangers and tragedies could befall the reader, for there were still hostile Indians on the prowl somewhere in the land. (10)

Drimmer’s distinction between popular fiction and the reliability of captivity narratives should be approached with scrutiny. Insofar as the majority of readers received and digested these “firsthand accounts” as veridical, Drimmer’s historical point maintains. However, some perspectives in contemporary scholarship consider both the veracity of narratives historically taken at face value, as well as what interfering forces—people, religious ideologies, and societal expectations—may have influenced a narrative’s

creation, structure, and reported events. Rowlandson's narrative has been investigated on both of these fronts. Most modern critics agree that the Puritan minister, Increase Mather, played some role in the production of *Sovereignty*—from ministerial encourager to authorial participant as the writer of *Sovereignty's* preface; other scholars suspect Mather had a deeper relationship to the text. Billy J. Stratton has analyzed the deft marshaling of Biblical citations and “specialized ecclesiastical concepts” (115) in Rowlandson's account, alongside the intertextual congruities between Mather's own body of work and *Sovereignty*, to argue that Mather exercised a heavier hand in the text's creation. Stratton concludes that there is sufficient evidence to suspect an enterprising Mather, “intent on publicizing and exploiting the experiences of captives for his own benefit, as well as for the broader colonial efforts of Puritan society,” capitalized on Rowlandson's captivity and was the primary author of the entire narrative (112-120). Further, a malevolent intent may rest in how later New England captivity accounts, building on the popularity of Rowlandson's narrative, achieved traction and were harnessed and coordinated for popular consumption—with colonizing undertones and ambitions. As Stratton writes, “The development of the Indian captivity narrative within the Atlantic context functioned as a particularly effective tool for the dissemination of knowledge concerning the so-called New World and its Native inhabitants” (17). With colonists' limited exposure to competing Native narratives, and the very structure of the captivity genre establishing a necessary “other,” Stratton argues that accounts of:

the involuntary forays into the surrounding frontier by captives such as Rowlandson served to deterritorialize Native lands and provided the justification for subsequent English incursions into wilderness landscapes consecrated through the captivity experience itself . . . (23)

Thusly, captivity narratives offered, at best, a liminal view of Native peoples, and at worst, established a confirmation bias and perceived justification towards continued colonial expansion through cause célèbre.

While men were taken captive, Lorraine Carroll confirms, “women’s stories represented an inordinately large proportion of the genre . . .” (186). The reasons for this prominence range from historical receptivity to the interpretation and reporting of captivity; towards this latter point, Derounian-Stodola writes:

The social construction of men saw them as active subjects, with public as well as private roles and the ability to make choices; the accounts with male subjects therefore emphasized their physical and mental qualities as individuals, particularly their strength, endurance, and intelligence. (xx)

One male account featuring a less “bound” captivity is found in James Smith’s tale, “Prisoner of the Caughnawagas.” After his capture and a period of trust building, Smith is permitted to hunt with Tecaughretanego, an Indian chief. Losing his way in a snowstorm, Smith takes shelter before eventually finding his way back to camp. Armed and separated from his captors, Smith is greeted with jubilee upon his return: “When I came in sight of the camp there was great joy. . . . No questions were asked, and I was taken into a tent, where they gave me plenty of fat beaver meat, and then asked me to smoke” (48). While male captives are sometimes reported as enduring initiation ceremonies or ritual torture—

Smith is forced to run the gauntlet<sup>1</sup>—frequently, male captives were allowed to hunt freely, carry firearms, and were often responsible for supplying rations for their captors.

Female captives' roles as recorded in captivity narratives, however, are frequently, “socially constructed as passive objects, with a predominantly domestic and private role” and “targeted women’s frailty and emotional nature” (Derounian-Stodola xx-xxi). Discussed in later chapters with regard to Rowlandson’s *Sovereignty* and Sarah Wakefield’s *Six Weeks in the Sioux Teepees*, while these women’s narratives communicate emotional distress, each narrator’s acclimation in captivity demonstrates, “variations on, and even reversals of, gender and cultural archetypes concerning identity” (Derounian-Stodola xxi) that belie surface, stereotypical characterizations. That is, while reported accounts may participate in, and emphasize, prevailing gender norms established with the readership of their time, women’s roles—from Hannah Dustan’s vengeance to Rowlandson’s enterprising trade efforts—often demonstrate a subversion of cultural expectation. The dedicated study of women’s captivity accounts as a subset of captivity studies is advanced by Derounian-Stodola’s collection, *Women’s Indian Captivity Narratives*. In the introduction to this text, Derounian-Stodola comments on the expanse of the captivity genre:

In the larger sense, “the captivity narrative” encompasses any story with a captor (usually from a minority group) and a captive (usually from a majority group). This taxonomy accommodates such distinct, but sometimes overlapping, forms as the slave narrative, the spiritual autobiography, the providence tale, the UFO abduction story, the convent captivity narrative, and the sentimental novel of seduction, as well as the Indian captivity narrative. (xi)

---

<sup>1</sup> The gauntlet was a form of torture where people, armed with bludgeoning weapons, formed two lines and the captive was forced to run between them while being beaten.

The disparate forms embedded in Derounian-Stodola's taxonomy—even without specific narrative representation—generate an intuitive awareness of captivity dynamics at work. Her assemblage is never purported to be exhaustive—a few pages later, she continues: “If we use the wider definition of captivity narrative, thousands of contemporary fictions continue to develop and modify the form” (xiv). Indeed, another group of texts not referenced in this taxonomy ought to be included in the captivity genre—incarceration memoirs—a subset of texts that, like the captivity genre itself—“when pared down to its essence . . . is all about power and powerlessness” (Derounian-Stodola xii).

My intent in this work is to track equivalences across four primary texts: two Indian captivity narratives—Rowlandson's *Sovereignty* and Sarah Wakefield's *Six Weeks in the Sioux Teepees*—and two incarceration memoirs—Stanley Tookie Williams' *Blue Rage, Black Redemption: A Memoir* and Sanyika Shakur's *Monster: The Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member*—to suggest that, across a range of thematic and contextual metrics, incarceration memoirs participate in the captivity genre. These similarities include: 1) the abduction of the narrator within a larger zone of violent conflict, and the power struggles, frequently over resources and territorial boundaries, that provide the occasion of captivity, 2) the acclimation to a different culture by the captive and the development of skills to survive, and 3) the shaping role of captivity on personal identity through isolation, violence, friendship, and education, and how these features contribute to a “conversion” experience. I use conversion in these cases as referencing religious transformation, but also consider a secular sensibility that encompasses social awakening and personal revelation. Congruous with this inclusive sense, Simon Rolston notes a

range of texts that “define prison as a site of spiritual redemption and personal transformation,” and also, “[define prison] as a site of radical, secular self-transformation that accords with the general paradigm of the religious conversion narrative ” (105). The impetus for self-transformation in Rolston’s latter sense is often intimately linked with epistemic enlightenment. Supplanting the perceived “property” of power, a captive’s conversion through knowledge functions as a counter-technique to the “effects of domination . . . dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques . . .” (Foucault 26). That is, employing Rolston’s second sense of prison’s role in metamorphosis demonstrates the insertion of liquidity into power relationships, poignantly highlighted in incarceration memoirs where conversion qua knowledge often results in the narrator raising questions about the legitimacy of the sovereign power instituting their captivity. Symbiotically, the sovereign inadvertently provides the source material for this inquiry; Foucault again: “We should admit rather that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful) . . .” (27). The agent’s transitional regard of power—that is, the process of questioning legitimacy—is not instantiated by the sovereign intentionally, nor immediately, but instead follows a traceable process as a new space of inquiry, carved out through knowledge, opens within that power relationship. Rolston considers Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson’s definition of the conversion narrative, noting that conversion: “develops through a linear pattern - descent into darkness, struggle, moment of crisis, conversion to new beliefs and worldview, and consolidation of a new communal identity” (104). While the power relationships, role of epistemic enlightenment, and the sense of conversion differ across

each of the four narratives, the trajectory of this conversion schema can be located within each text.

It may be asked what benefits will be afforded to the critical study of incarceration memoirs if they are considered a subset of the captivity genre; conversely, what is accomplished for captivity studies by this re-designation? For captivity studies, an in-road to the robust dialogue and annals of scholarship around incarceration is afforded. As the captivity genre is built on capture, unwilling detainment<sup>2</sup>, and power relationships, case studies abound in incarceration memoirs. Additionally, incarceration memoirs are written as “true accounts,” as are many Indian captivity narratives; a seemingly rarer quality across the range of captivity texts considering the expanse of the genre. Thusly, the source material is a familiar yet diverse addition ripe for critical inquiry by captivity scholars. Conversely, incarceration memoirs benefit in a number of ways by this designation. Analyses of historical machinations of power and the theoretical implications of a “captivity” reading provide an expansive frame for studying accounts of incarceration and the context of power from which those narratives are penned. Additionally, popular attention in the United States has shifted towards the phenomenon of mass incarceration. Smash hit television like *Orange is the New Black*, while an imperfect representation, has bridged concepts like “private prisons” to a wide, general audience. Socially and politically conscious hip-hop, from Kendrick Lamar to

---

<sup>2</sup> That is, unwilling detainment in most cases. Some of the most famous captivity accounts feature transculturation, where the captive ultimately remains willingly amongst his or her former captors. Nevertheless, this “conversion” outcome is a kind of culminating event to an initial unwilling captivity.

Run the Jewels, vocalize carceral realities from their platforms that may go otherwise undigested by the masses-portion of their audience. Recent comprehensive works of scholarship on incarceration such as *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* have mobilized critical discussion as well as “next generation” exposure to existing African American carceral realities and their historical context.<sup>3</sup> And President Obama’s 2015 visit to a federal prison, and subsequent public reflections, challenged the methods and approaches of the United States’ criminal justice system from the highest office in the land.

Thusly, for incarceration memoirs, the opportunity for a captivity genre reading supplies a provocative and supplementary critical posture harmonious with the threads of scholarship already interrogating the practices of mass incarceration, the nature of power, racialized bias in law enforcement and legal proceedings, and generalized social concerns like poverty and education. Additionally, considering capture, detainment, and sovereign conflict is usefully informed by a number of theoretical positions including, as this work will discuss, the arbitrations of sovereignty and the state of exception as found in the work of Giorgio Agamben. Another approach—to borrow from Foucault’s historical tracing of the disappearance of public torture—the degree that present popular culture can be understood as “resurrecting the spectacle.” While certainly less graphic than Foucault’s *Damiens*, “broadcasted” carceral realities—from television’s *Gangland* and *American Greed*, to the high-profile death row text featured in this work, *Blue Rage*

---

<sup>3</sup> Brown University’s “First Readings” program included this text as required reading for its 2015 incoming freshman.



*Black Redemption*<sup>4</sup>—are re-orienting public attention to juridical proceedings and their aftermath by reintroducing new versions of the public spectacle.<sup>5</sup> Thusly, the Foucauldian shielded punishment of the soul is forced back to a platform of exposure by way of focus on the incarcerated body; in the process, exposing often questionable carceral practices.<sup>6</sup> Another incisive perspective is supplied by Critical Race Theory’s conception of “counterstorytelling.” Richard Delgado and Jean Stefaniec consider “counterstorytelling” as possessing a “destructive function” against unchallenged societal norms of belief (48). Incarceration memoirs can be read as participating in this tradition in the summoning of personal experience contesting a range of established preconceptions, including the context of criminal behavior, the narrators’ relationship to juridical proceedings and the exacting of their punishment, and the interior experience of prison life. Simultaneously, incarceration memoirs reassert the narrator’s own humanity into statistical and abstract conversations; a positioning that instates what Delgado and Stefaniec refer to as a “process of correction” (49-50). Before turning to the texts, I will briefly discuss other choices in terminology and the rationale for selecting these works, beginning with the use of

---

<sup>4</sup> With an eye toward public spectacle, Tookie’s incarceration memoir functions something like a “gallows address” to readers “witnessing” his very public incarceration and execution; a detailed report of the latter was transcribed by Barbara Becnel and included in the Epilogue of *Blue Rage*.

<sup>5</sup> Historically state-sponsored, it is notable that spectacle in this context is non-state affiliated, although those economic interests involved in the production of this content could potentially raise additional questions of motive and accuracy.

<sup>6</sup> That pop culture may expose unsavory dimensions of criminal justice by reintroducing spectacle should not be prematurely deemed a righteous cause, and the veracity of these representations must still be weighed by viewers.

“incarceration memoir” in place of other designations such as “prison autobiography” and “prison narrative.”

Incarceration memoirs are frequently referenced in two somewhat obvious determinations: “autobiographies” and “prison narratives”; categories which include landmark texts like *Soledad Brother*, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”, and, as H. Bruce Franklin includes in *Prison Writing in 20th Century America*, “Songs of the Prison Plantation” like “Go Down Old Hannah,” “Midnight Special,” and “Easy Rider” (29-34). The autobiographical category is sensible, but I object to “prison narratives” as a designation because of the label’s emphasis on location rather than experience; while prison narratives take place in culturally familiar places—San Quentin, Folsom—they are not limited to a literature of place as the designation would impose. Instead, by considering the texts to be discussed under the capacious label of “incarceration memoirs,” a more robust context for personhood, history, social and political dynamics, and ideological shifts is made possible. While the “prison” in “prison narratives” or “prison autobiography” can be subsumed under incarceration memoirs in most cases, the dismissive potential of the “prison” label, and the grounding of the text into the physical location of imprisonment, are extinguished and replaced with narratives imbued with their author’s lived experience. It is noted that, given memoir’s traditionally less-stringent, impressionistic parameters, “memoir” may suggest questions concerning the veracity of the narrative.<sup>7</sup> Further, some scholars point out that “prison autobiography” may be a welcome label for reasons of authorial intent while also affording audience

---

<sup>7</sup> This line of criticism is addressed in a later chapter.

receptivity benefits; in addition to the veridical connotation of autobiographies, Auli Ek argues that some African American writers of prison autobiography “do not see their political agency as diminished by the fact that they are writing in prison, but, on the contrary, consider their texts as even more consequential instruments of change because they testify to the unjust treatment of black Americans” (51). Ek’s point is well made, and while an acceptance of the “prison” designation could sensibly be adopted, and supply an impactful connotation in the aims of some authors, the two texts I work with in this piece—*Monster* and *Blue Rage, Black Redemption*—contain a further attribute that suggests “incarceration memoir” may better describe their events and narrative arc. That is, to the extent causality is present in these narratives, it is grouped into episodic events with less attention paid to calendar year and more towards how the author’s reported experience establishes their legacy. Though interspersed with documentarian landmark events, these events are organized around the narrator’s path to personal conversion; each memoirist building their legacy, frequently through violent criminality, but then reckoning with what they’ve built as a consequence of incarceration. Towards this trajectory, I favor Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson’s distinction: “The term *memoir* . . . seems more malleable than the term *autobiography*, foregrounding historical shifts and intersecting cultural formations” (4); however, memoir appears to go even further in allowing for a *culmination* of events towards conversion; a stronger sense than foregrounding.

For the scope of this project, I have selected *Monster* and *Blue Rage, Black Redemption* for their authors’ shared historical relationship to the Crips, the mutual

setting of Los Angeles, and their respective narrators' incarceration in the same facilities. As the Indian captivity narratives I discuss are from women's perspectives, these selections create a dissonance in their masculine experience of captivity. There are several reasons for this disparity. The first is that the overwhelming amount of incarceration memoirs are from men's perspectives, and while women's voices have played a prominent role in the production and distribution of these narratives, including Angela Davis' theoretical and lived experience around incarceration and Barbara Becnel's championing of Stanley William's children's literature and memoirs, there is a disproportionate amount of published memoir concerning female incarceration; especially works that feature a shared overlap like Shakur and William's Crip history and connection. Corresponding to this imbalance, the largest portion of the small set of scholarship on incarceration memoirs is concerned with the most established players in the genre. Thusly, while interventions like *Inside This Place, Not of It* and *Interrupted Life: Experiences of Incarcerated Women in the United States* are correcting this gendered imbalance, the presence of long-form memoirs, including those with a connector like Tookie and Monster Kody's Crips, will be necessary arrivals to a still emerging set of contemporary incarceration memoirs. Lastly, in *Blue Rage, Black Redemption* and *Monster* familiar inquiries concerning the narrative's production may be levied; specifically, how the engine of marketing and audience expectations affected craft and the degree of authorial commitment to truth when penning the account. Here, incarceration memoirs and allegedly veridical Indian captivity accounts share critical overlap.

Before turning to the texts, I will briefly discuss my rationale in selecting Rowlandson and Wakefield's narratives. The shaping role *Sovereignty* has played in the captivity genre, and the reported shifts of identity as filtered through a Puritan worldview that determines captivity as a "Wilderness condition" for spiritual penitence, necessitate the inclusion of this text. As a second narrative, I have selected Sarah Wakefield's *Six Weeks in the Sioux Teepees* for its unique perspective on the circumstances leading to her captivity. While sharing a context of war with *Sovereignty*, Wakefield's narrative can be read as a foil to Rowlandson's; both women were Christians, however, their respective religious frameworks demonstrate a radically different interpretation of the causes and purpose of their captivity as evidenced by their reported "conversion" experiences. Wakefield, also expresses notable purposes in the publishing of her narrative: to set the record straight concerning her experience in captivity, to argue for the humanity and moral character of many of her captors', and to denounce her own peoples' misdeeds as contributing to the Dakota War of 1682. Thusly, Wakefield's narrative ambitions concerning themes of social justice, but also rhetorical craft and awareness of audience receptivity, share common ground with the selected incarceration memoirs.

## CHAPTER TWO: Zones of Conflict

Derounian-Stodola frames the theoretical underpinnings of the captivity genre thusly: “when pared down to its essence, the genre is all about power and powerlessness” (xii), establishing a necessary condition of the genre that undergirds its variance. While this condition could be satisfied from a power relationship as specific as the kidnapping of individual(s) by an individual, a common theme between the selected texts is a context of overarching group conflict through which captives are taken.

In this chapter, I will discuss King Phillip’s War, and its role in *Sovereignty*, and the Dakota War of 1862 that sets the stage for *Six Weeks in the Sioux Teepees*. Afterwards, I will consider the geographical history and policy that precipitated the birth of state intervention into the gangland of Tookie and Monster Kody, along with a discussion of specific LAPD initiatives. In each narrative, it is the crescendoing tension of *Native / Settler— or —Crip-on-Crip / Blood / US law enforcement* relations that serve as the fields in which captivity occurs, regardless of the individual captive’s degree of complicity in these conflicts. To begin, I will highlight several important features related to the intent of taking captives in these narratives.

## The Intent of Capture and Captivity

The capture of Tookie and Monster Kody hinges on their status as lawbreaking menaces to society, and their corresponding incarceration is grounded in punitive intent. Neil Salisbury, by contrast, offers an overview of the expansive Native' rationale for the taking captives:

Captives might become full members of their adopted families, remain in subservient positions, be given or traded to other households, be held as hostages to be ransomed or exchanged for opponents' captives or gifts from opponents, be killed instantly, or—in relatively rare instances—be tortured and executed. (31)

Interestingly, Sarah Wakefield offers another perspective on why some children were taken captive: Native kindness in wartime. Writing of the care that she has witnessed these children given, she says:

It seems very strange they should spare so many helpless children and murder [sic] their parents, when they are such a trouble to them. I have seen squaws carry white children nine and ten years old on their backs, and let their own walk. Now this was out of real good feeling, for they certainly had no selfish motives in so doing, and the world does the Indian great injustice when they say they saved *persons only for selfish purposes*. (297)

Wakefield, as will be discussed at length in later chapters, displays a remarkably balanced perspective, and in one thought assigns blame to the Indians for murder, postulates the mystery of children's care in the tribe, and solves it by lauding Native humanitarian wartime efforts while condemning stereotypes of her own captors' motives. Nevertheless, Salisbury's overview holds true. As the narratives show, Native American warring parties appear to predicate the taking and keeping of captives with razor-sharp utilitarian consideration. Mobility, resource scarcity, and the potential trade value of the captive were evaluated for the duration of captivity, and if the captive fell foul of tribe

members, expended their value, or were a hinderance to rigorous travel, the captive risked being “knocked on the head,” Mary Rowlandson’s euphemism for execution. This constant threat of violence features most prominently in *Six Weeks*, in which the resilient Sarah Wakefield is in a perpetual state of peril from hostile members of the Dakota Sioux, and is preserved by the kindness of her beneficent Native keepers, Chaska and his family. By contrast, the arrest-to-captivity model of incarceration memoirs is predicated on sovereign intervention caused by an offender’s violation of the rule of law. As the historical overview shortly addressed will argue, this juridical ideal is often missed, but more significantly, is subject to sovereign revision as a state of exception. Secondly, however, it would be shortsighted to consider state-directed captivity as exclusively derived from aims of prevention or punishment. Recent scholarship emphasizes the economic considerations of modern incarceration; in *The New Jim Crow*, Michelle Alexander outlines both the growth of private prisons as well as the monetary interests of powerful figures who “are deeply interested in expanding the market—increasing the supply of prisoners—not eliminating the pool of people who can be held captive for profit” (230). However, this situation, as Alexander argues, is mired beyond the stake of these investors; the tendrils of economic consequence stretches past the immediacy of private prison expansion and into the industries that benefit from their sustenance and growth, including health care, police supply items, and the production of military goods by prison labor (231-232). Alexander incisively profiles another economic motivator instituted in the US’ War on Drugs:



[I]t was not until 1984, when Congress amended the federal law to allow federal law enforcement agencies to retain and use any and all proceeds from asset forfeitures, and to allow state and local police agencies to retain up to 80 percent of the assets' value, that a true revolution occurred. (78-79)

Thusly, the practice of taking of captives as tied to asset seizure, even if the arrested person was not charged or was found innocent (79), was federally blessed with localized economic benefits, introducing a secondary motivation that could be guised as the enforcement of law. Although the private prison phenomenon post-dates the selected incarceration memoirs, and only the seizure intent could potentially overlap with *Monster's* experience as Tookie was incarcerated, these economic considerations help sketch the modern role of the taking of captives, and are valuable in considering the "big picture" of incarceration memoirs' relationship to captivity studies beyond the selected works of *Blue Rage* and *Monster*. Still, sovereign intent is present in other forms in each text. Rowlandson's account demonstrates multiple senses of Native rationale for taking captives, and here I will begin a discussion of the four narratives by briefly considering the historical contexts in which captivity occurred.

#### King Philip's War - Mary Rowlandson

King Philip's War began in 1675, just over twenty years after Mary Rowlandson arrived in Lancaster. Though only a fourteen-month contest, the ferocity and resulting casualties were weightier than many other famed wars; Neil Salisbury writes, "In proportion to total population, the bloodiest and most destructive war in American history was neither the Civil War, World War II, nor the Vietnam War. It was, rather, a conflict known as Metacom's (or King Philip's) War" (1). United under the great sachem, Metacom, called King Philip by the English, an alliance that included Nipmuc,

Narragansett, and Wampanoag Native American forces attempted to drive the Puritans from their settlements. The occasion for the uprising was “a complicated event, characterized at once by the antagonist’s familiarity with one another, the English feeling of superiority to Native Americans, and by a deep mutual contempt” (Salisbury 4-5), that finally ignited after the buildup of an “accumulation of injustices perpetrated by the Puritans against the Indian tribes of the region . . .” (Washburn xi). Plead with great conviction in the 1836 lecture “Eulogy on King Philip” by William Apess, these transgressions included resource loss by colonial expansion: “Philip’s complaint was that the Pilgrims had injured the planting grounds of his people,” as well as the stripping away of land via lawsuits and underhanded politicking (14, 18). Apess also cites outright violence against the Indians: “a number of Indians went on board of a ship, by order of their chief, and the whites set upon them and murdered them without mercy . . .” (29). Fueled by mistreatment, and with no evidence of the engine of expansion slowing down, “Philip and all the Indians generally felt indignantly towards whites” (Apess 25). However, the forming of an alliance towards war was ultimately driven by, “the execution of these three Indians, supposed to be the murderers of Sassamon” a Christian-convert. Afterwards, “he [Metacom] could no longer restrain his young men” from violence (34). Apess reports the exhortation of war delivered by King Philip:

You now see the foe before you, that they have grown insolent and bold; that all our ancient customs are disregarded; the treaties made by our fathers and us are broken, and all of us insulted; our council fires disregarded, and all the ancient customs of our fathers; our brothers murdered before our eyes, and their spirits cry to us for revenge. Brothers, these people from the unknown world will cut down our groves, spoil our hunting and planting grounds, and drive us and our children from the graves of our fathers, and our council fires, and enslave our women and children . . . (Apess 36)

What followed from the Native resistance was the death and dismemberment of Metacom, the captivity and subsequent narrative of Rowlandson, and as Billy J. Stratton notes as a consequence of the intensity of the war, “an indelible impression on the Puritan body politic and nationalist colonial identity” (95). Thusly contextualized, *Sovereignty* rests within a framework of territorial and resource crisis as Native Americans mobilized resistance to Puritan violence and expansion.

#### The Dakota War - Sarah Wakefield

Similarly, Sarah Wakefield’s *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees* is occasioned by a concentrated uprising of Dakota Sioux suffering from the neglect of broken accords, including the Traverse des Sioux and Mendota treaties. After a period of rising tension, a, “minor incident between several white settlers and starving Dakota youths escalated into the conflict known synonymously as the Dakota War, the Dakota Conflict, and the Sioux Uprising” (Derounian-Stodola 237). The incursion was led by Little Crow, a Dakota chief and negotiator who had begun a process of personal assimilation: “he had exchanged his breechclouts and blankets for trousers and brass-buttoned jackets; he had joined the Episcopal Church, built a house, and started a farm” (Brown 39). Initially resistant to attacking the settlers who “were everywhere like locusts,” the “ten years of abuse by white men—the broken treaties, the lost hunting grounds, the unkept promises, the undelivered annuities, their hunger for food while the agency warehouses overflowed with it, the insulting words of Andrew Myrick . . .” grated on Little Crow’s, and the Mdewakanton Dakota’s, resolve (Brown 42-45). Little Crow ultimately led attacks on, amongst other locations, the Lower Agency, taking more than two hundred captives

(Derounian-Stodola 237); however, Wakefield and her children were abducted separately while attempting to flee the impending war.

### Gang Origins and Growth in Los Angeles

Centuries after Rowlandson and Wakefield's narratives, marginalized peoples—responding to a climate of injustice and exclusion, as well as to gain the protective benefits of strength in numbers—solidified into groups within the Los Angeles cityscape. These groups include the early 1940s-1950s Pachuco gangs—Mexican gangs who adopted the “zoot-suit” as a form of protest—and the advent of the Black Panther Party in 1966; the group most commonly referenced in the causal history of the selected incarceration memoirs. In his work, *The History of Street Gangs in the United States*, James C. Howell traces the organization and congealing of gangs in multiple regions throughout the US, and, following Alex Alonso's research, tracks the genesis of African American gang growth in Los Angeles from the juvenile gangs in the '20's-30's through to the 1960's “segregated housing conflicts” (33). Located in five principal projects, including the storied Watts project, Howell draws on Alonso's findings to argue that, “the effects of residential segregation (particularly in public housing projects), police brutality, and racially motivated violence in the aftermath of the 1960s Civil Rights conflicts created a breeding ground for gang formation in the early 1970s” (34).

The connection between the Black Panther Party and the formation of street gangs, including the Crips, has been explored with a range of synthesis on its precise relationship. Howell acknowledges these competing accounts, and cites the Crips' origin story as supported by Steven R. Cureton: the ex-president of the Black Panthers, Bunchy

Carter, along with Raymond Washington, “formed the Crips in 1969 out of disappointment with the failure of the Black Panther Party to achieve its goals” (35). Josephine Metcalf, in *The Culture and Politics of Contemporary Street Gang Memoirs*, surveys additional positions, including the efforts of Raymond Washington, with Tookie, to “unite his neighborhood and defend it against the police, emulating Panther models of insurgent resistance” along with Schatzberg and Kelly’s argument that, “the Crips filled the void left behind when the Panthers were crushed by law enforcement” (Metcalf 21). This is an interesting relationship as Tookie notes a portion of the growth of the Black Panthers was from the: “older gangs—the notorious Slausons, Gladiators, and the Business Men—[who] had become ethnicity-conscious and were absorbed into the Black Panther Party . . .” (*Blue Rage* 80). In his work, *Inside the Crips: Life Inside L.A.’s Most Notorious Gang*, Colton Simpson describes a schism in the “Crip Nation” decades later along ideological lines, confirming the continual thread of Black Panther influence into the 1980s: “CCO [Consolidated Crip Organization] ideology is attributed to the Black Panther Party and is pro-Black. The BNO [Blue Note Organization] is more centered on Cripism and not involved with Black nationalism” (90). One dissenting voice comes from Richard Valdemar, decades long veteran of the L.A. Sherriff’s’ Department:

Young Raymond [Washington] was a charismatic but troubled kid who was kicked out of one school after another. He had no grand revolutionary ideas or Black Panther-like organization. He and his friends were just kids hanging together for protection in the violent streets of South Central Los Angeles . . . (Valdemar n. pag.)

Concerning the Crips' origin, Metcalf locates a platform of synthesis, arguing that the majority of stories, "stress the issues of the era: radical politics and responses to police harassment" (21).

Howell's identification of dismissed, minority youth in the condensed space of L.A.'s projects contributing to the formation of 1970s street gangs is a complementary conclusion to scholar, H. David Brumble's, suggestion that the alienation in "some of our urban subcultures" has "reinvented tribalism—and the warrior culture that is often associated with tribalism" (158-159). Confirming the causal results of this inequity and marginalization from his interior perspective, Tookie writes how, even to the African American community, he and his comrades were: "Misabeled by some as a 'lost generation'. . . . Though we must share the blame, we were products of a culture that bastardized us" (*Blue Rage* 85). Accusers citing an institutional posture of dismissal towards the primarily minority population of South Central are supported by the galvanized response to a singular event—the murder of Karen Toshima, a non-gang affiliated art-director—in January of 1988 (Corwin n.p.). While the law enforcement response to Toshima's death post-dates the years the narrators were on the streets of L.A.—Tookie was on death row in San Quentin and Monster Kody incarcerated in Folsom until late '88—the marked response, and comments by officials about this watershed moment, justify inferences as to what the minority experience in South Central was like in the preceding decades when Tookie and Monster Kody roamed the streets.

An innocent bystander shot in a dispute between the Rollin 60's and Mansfield Hustler Crips on an affluent Westfield Village street, Karen Toshima's murder awakened

the city to the possibility of gang violence creeping beyond South Central. In response, in the spring of 1988, LAPD Chief of Police, Daryl Gates, escalated one of the LAPD's most controversial initiatives, Operation Hammer, "a massive series of indiscriminate 'gang sweeps' " during which streets were barricaded, police poured into the corralled area, and "at least twenty-five thousand mostly young black men were arrested" (Domanick 324). Of the first raid, James C. Howell notes that a force of one thousand police officers: "swept through the area . . . arresting presumed gang members on a wide variety of offenses, including existing warrants, new traffic citations, curfew violations, illegal gang-related behaviors, and observed criminal activities" (37). While the manpower deployed was enormous<sup>8</sup>—the LAPD displaying its military might in the wake of Toshima's murder—"only sixty felony arrests were made, and charges were filed on just thirty-two of these" (Howell 37). Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair note the "commando-style raids" of Operation Hammer:

More than 50,000 suspected gang members were swept up for interrogation based on factors such as style of dress and whether the suspect was a young black male on the street past curfew. Of those caught up in such Hammer sweeps, 90 percent were later released without charge . . . (77)

The surge of police into South Central, along with city's administration swiveling their attention towards pre-existing gang violence, caused L.A. Assemblywoman, Maxine Waters, to remark in an *LA Times* article titled "A Murder That Woke Up L.A.":

---

<sup>8</sup> In *The New Jim Crow*, Michelle Alexander notes earmarked resources for localized law enforcement incursions: "SWAT teams originated in the 1960s . . . but until the drug war, they were used rarely. . . . That changed in the 1980s, when local law enforcement agencies suddenly had access to cash and military equipment specifically for the purpose of conducting drug raids" (74).

The black community has known for years that a problem is not a problem until it hits the white community . . . There is a deep feeling in the black community that the philosophy of the police department was, 'Let 'em kill each other in South-Central L.A.' (Glionna 1)

Joe Domanick indirectly supports Waters' position when noting the distinct attention paid to Toshima's murder:

It should have been no big deal. Toshima was just one of ninety-six homicide victims to die at the hands of alleged gang members in the city of Los Angeles in the first five months of 1988. Nevertheless, Karen Toshima's death would prove different from the other ninety-five. Hers would count. (322-323)

The degree this killing registered in L.A.'s consciousness is further evidenced in the aforementioned *LA Times*' article through quotes from prosecutors to city councilmen. Zev Yaroslavsky, whose district included Westwood, acknowledged the social impact of Toshima's homicide: "You knew instantly that the press would blow this thing into a cause celebre . . ." (Glionna 2). Michael Genelin, a former head of the Los Angeles Gang Division, commented: "I went to Washington and within two days got a million and a half dollars for a prevention program. . . . Before Toshima, they wouldn't even have talked to us. They would have laughed in our face" (Glionna 3). The L.A. legal swell from the fallout was significant as well; Glionna reports: "The district attorney's gang unit, understaffed with only 16 attorneys, had already more than doubled to 35 and would soon rise to 50" (3).

This case study, culminating in a concentrated state intervention, wherein the aforementioned prejudicial housing policies quarantined African Americans to the territories of South Central and produced the economic and social conditions for an emergence of criminal activity, resonates with Giorgio Agamben's discussion of



sovereignty and his revitalization of the Roman figure of “Homo Sacer.” The subject of sovereign exception—the sovereign’s ability to transcend its own laws when it suits sovereign aim—homo sacer references a figure divested of political standing, and the protective benefits afforded in political life. Rendered to a state of “bare life”—a preclusion of personal and political rights and participation in the political community—the historical homo sacer could be targeted for violence without sovereign punishment as homo sacer lacked any recognizable status. Yet, as the subject of this sovereign ban, homo sacer is paradoxically included in the realm of the *polis* through this negation. Agamben suggests an inquiry that, “thematically interrogates the link between bare life and politics, a link that governs the modern ideologies seemingly most distant from one another, will be able to bring the political out of its concealment . . .” (4-5). The question arises: are those persons in the territories of South Central rendered to a state similar to homo sacer; removed from participation in the *polis* by sovereign exception? Historical exclusionary policies that negated entrance into the political community form one argument that this could be the case. Incurative law enforcement practices form another. A law enforcement posture composed of neglect as captured by Maxine Water’s quote above, but then enforced arbitrarily as the exaggerated arrest directives of Operation Hammer exhibit, demonstrate two extreme examples of prolonged sovereign exception; the sovereign’s ability to transcend its own established rule of the law. While Agamben’s homo sacer is explicitly banned to a state of bare life, persons in South Central have not been so ceremoniously labeled; in other words, these persons’ general status, save for prevention from involvement with specific exclusionary practices or felony convictions,

allow involvement in the *polis*. Additionally, Agamben's homo sacer in a state of bare life can be killed without penalty; contrarily, the arrest and prosecution of persons within South Central seems to demonstrate a more robust form of sovereign inclusion in this regard, and thusly undermines considering those persons extricated to a state of bare life. However, the evaluation of such cases must be undertaken within the context of the state of exception. Agamben deploys Carl Schmitt's discussion of this concept: "The exception is more interesting than the regular case. The latter proves nothing; the exception proves everything. . . . the rule as such lives off the exception alone" (16). Thusly, evaluating persons' inclusion in the *polis* can not solely be identified in the official sovereign rendering, nor in cases where the established rule is upheld, but where there exists a state of exception. While the narrators of the selected incarceration memoirs may not satisfy an Agambian definition of homo sacer, their narratives operate within a notoriously marginalized geographical region—one that evidences sovereign states of exception—and inherit this historic deprivation of Black political agency. Thusly relegated to the fringes of an "outside," historically-exclusionary society, Monster Kody, Tookie, and the prodigious amount of gang sets throughout Los Angeles seem to operate apart from general sovereign rule, adopting the language and disposition of soldiers in their own violent inner city conflicts; activities that invite sovereign intervention. These wars were waged against rival sets of Crips, Bloods, and the looming shadow of the LAPD's CRASH unit, complete with territorial negotiations, peace treaties, and violence ad nauseum in the territories of South Central.

### CHAPTER THREE: Warriors in South Central

Monster Kody's achieving "O.G."—Original Gangster—status in the Eight Tray Gangster Crips is obtained within a zone of violent contention; a conflict Kody describes throughout *Monster* with military themes and terminology. Early in the narrative, Monster Kody identifies the glowing embers of the "initial stages of a war that would forever change the politics of Crippling and the internal gang relations in South Central" (27); a reference to the the ferocious enmity between the Eight Tray Gangster Crips—Monster's set<sup>9</sup>—and the Rollin 60's Crips. When an O.G. 60's brother is murdered, shots are traded and "war was ceremoniously declared" with significant territorial impact as, "Seemingly every Crip set erupted in savage wars, one against the other, culminating into the Beirut-type atmosphere in South Central today" (29-30).

For Monster Kody, two aims occupy his mind: "the Sixties' total destruction" (30) and achieving O.G. status, through "putting in work," gang activity that does not always "constitute shooting someone, though this is the ultimate" (52). In these missions, Monster feels a "sense of duty" (52) as "the war between the Eight Trays and the Rollin

---

<sup>9</sup> The term "set" is used by gang members to denote a subset of a larger group; these groups are usually identified by territorial boundaries. Monster's set is the Eight Tray Crips; Monster's enemies, the Rollin 60's, are also Crips, but from a different set.

Sixties” is fully realized in 1980 (55). Over this fall season of strife, “Escalation was the order of the day. Entire streets were turned into armed camps to be used as liberated territory” where “combat soldiers”—retaliatory ground-troop gangbangers (60)—could gather for “meeting and mounting up” and assemble raiding parties to “invade enemy territory” (55). Daryl Gates recalls this peripatetic strategy and the unique challenge it presented to law enforcement in a PBS Frontline series:

the Crips . . . they were highly mobile. They did not stay in their communities. They moved about. They tried to establish some kind of territory, but they were very, very aggressive, and they moved about. They committed crimes all over the city, and then went back to their particular community as refuge . . . (L.A.P.D. Blues)

Monster Kody’s military language such as, “I negotiated each corner” and “[I] entered their ‘hood on the left flank” (63) grounds this territorial aggression. Additional use of martial terminology like “combat black,” and Monster’s admiration of a fellow Crip’s “professionalism in handling a prisoner of war” during a prison “debriefing” situates Monster’s perspective on the psychological severity of gang warfare alongside large-scale conflict (148-149); as he writes: “gang members who are combat soldiers are subject to the same mind-bend as are veterans of foreign wars” (104). Of this animus, Monster recounts: “The aggression displayed in 1980 was unprecedented. We set a decibel level in violence that still causes some to cringe today” (56). The LAPD’s structural response to this period of escalating gang activity was the creation of the infamous CRASH unit in the mid-1970s, a specialized law enforcement unit dedicated to infiltrating gangs, collecting useful intelligence, and disrupting gang activity through a mixture of direct crackdowns and precise positioning of slim law enforcement

resources.<sup>10</sup> Hindsight on CRASH's methods constellates a grim picture of institutional law enforcement-overreaching and pre-crime antagonism, as evidenced by Chief Gates' comments on the LAPD's policing practices in the aforementioned Frontline PBS series:

I will admit, we were a very aggressive police department. We went after crime before it occurred . . . . Our people went out every single night trying to stop crime before it happened, trying to take people off the street that they believed were involved in crime. That made us a very aggressive, proactive police department. (L.A.P.D. Blues)

A combination of this policing philosophy and a lack of accountability and departmental oversight resulted in CRASH becoming, "in effect, the most badass gang in the city" (Starr 92). Citing personnel challenges—"We didn't have more cops, so we had to specialize" and "We had to use new police officers, young police officers," Gates acknowledges that "CRASH . . . today has gotten a bad name. It should not have a bad name, because they have done a magnificent job. . . . An awful lot of gang killings were solved because of the expertise that the CRASH units had" (L.A.P.D. Blues). Later, Gates offers a defense of CRASH's intent: "We're out there trying to save their communities, trying to upgrade the quality of life of people. . . ." (L.A.P.D. Blues). Gerald Chaleef, a defense attorney and former President of the L.A. Police Commission, when speaking of the later abuses in the famous Rampart Scandal, had a less favorable perception of CRASH:

Many people who would say that the CRASH unit in Rampart became just another gang, and that's how they dealt with things (sic). If some of the things that are alleged are true--and I'm certain that some of them are--they were as violent as gang members are, and they cut corners. (L.A.P.D. Blues)

---

<sup>10</sup> The origin date of CRASH varies from source to source; however, Gates, then acting LAPD Chief of Police, cites the mid-1970's in *Chief: My Life in the LAPD*—p. 292.

Jesuit priest and president of Homeboy Industries, Gregory Boyle, notes the presence of a certain kind of police philosophy; that of a “poisonous police culture that demonizes ‘the other’ and holds in stark tension the ‘us versus them’ dynamism,” suggesting that historical CRASH policy, though improved by the penning of his 1999 article, “represents the most pronounced manifestation of this mind-set” (Boyle). Monster comments on gangland perception of CRASH: “During my next scheduled court date, three gangs filled the court—the Crips, the Bloods, and the LAPD CRASH unit” (*Monster* 24)<sup>11</sup>. CRASH’s tenure in L.A. spanned over two decades—participating in daily policing and the previously discussed Operation Hammer—before the Rampart Scandal of the late 1990s led to its dissolution.

Beyond gang sets’ protection and expansion of their territorial boundaries, sets in South Central also concerned themselves with economic development and solvency—including drugs and arms trade. Additionally, some gangs made concentrated efforts toward unifying under a banner of nationhood; this last point evidencing their regard of US sovereignty as well as their own burgeoning political ambitions. Over Monster and Tookie’s incarceration, a widespread initiative takes place within the Crips—the establishing of the C.C.O. or “Consolidated Crips Organization,” headquartered in San Quentin (Shakur 305). By redefining “Crips” as an acronym for “Clandestine Revolutionary Internationalist Party Soldiers” (304), the C.C.O. endeavored to unite Crip

---

<sup>11</sup> See *Monster* pgs. 175-176 for more on Monster’s “collaboration” with CRASH officers; Monster claims officers tipped him off to where he could find—and hunt—Rollin 60’s members.

sets into a socially conscious Black-power influenced coterie, and in the process, quash Crip-on-Crip violence. Monster Kody's first mention of the C.C.O. is in reference to, "A sort of détente [that] existed between the sets, since the Consolidated Crip Organization . . . had members sprinkled throughout the module keeping the peace" (279). Monster recalls, "They [members of the C.C.O.] were upright, respectful, physically fit, and mentally sharp. They used 'Afrikan' in place of 'Black,' and never said nigger. They were socially conscious like Muhammed, but they weren't Muslims" (304).

A gangbanger, Killer from 107 Hoover Crips, informs Monster that: "Crip is a bad word only because we have turned inward on our community, preying on civilians and turning them against us. We are our own worst enemy. So C.C.O has set out to re-establish CRIP as a positive influence in our community" (305). This direction is confirmed: "They began to transform Forty-eight Hours into a training station teaching military science, political science, Kiswahili, and Crip history" (Shakur 305). Although some dissenters were "dealt with and removed," Monster writes, "Together we were a nation—The Blue Nation. The tribalism all but ceased" (306).

While the C.C.O. achieved some traction, Richard Valdemar, the aforementioned L.A. Sheriff, noted: "There have been many attempts to unite the Crips under the 'Consolidated Crip Organization' (CCO) and the 'Blue Notes' but all have failed" (Valdemar n. pag.). Monster confirms: "In 1987 we disbanded the C.C.O. in San Quentin. It had failed to evolve . . ." (352). What a fully realized C.C.O. or B.N.O. would have looked like is open to conjecture, especially as only minimal tenants of their

“constitutions”<sup>12</sup> are recorded and the ambitions of these groups’ respective leadership are somewhat shielded topics<sup>13</sup>. However, it’s clear that, at minimum, an elimination of Crip-on-Crip violence was a guiding philosophy; Monster is sternly warned by C.C.O. leadership: “you’ve done too much damage to the Crip Nation. We can’t let you continue to kill our citizens . . . hook up [with the C.C.O.] or you must be destroyed for the good of the C-Nation” (312-313). Although the C.C.O. failed to endure, senior Crip leadership succeeded in identifying the untenability of violence amongst themselves, although as Shakur cites above, the C.C.O. is willing to secure that peace through violence means. Supplemented by a pupil-relationship towards specific texts<sup>14</sup>—a Foucauldian pursuance of knowledge affecting power relationships—the alienated mindsets of Monster, through proximity to the C.C.O., and Tookie, in friendship with other inmates, are awakened to questions of sovereignty and their own self-identity.

The preceding discussion outlines the historical context of L.A. gangland conflict primarily in *Monster*, where Monster Kody was physically present for the unveiling of the LAPD’s incursive programs. From a subset of citizens suffering neglect and dismissal

---

<sup>12</sup> From Colton Simpson’s *Inside the Crips*: “The Crip Constitution, what we call ‘paperwork,’ maintains order and rules for the module. . . . They’re [groups like the C.C.O.] . . . created to stop ‘set-tripping’ (Crip civil war), supply us with guidance, and teach us sophisticated ways to influence the pigs for food, phone calls, showers to make our time go by smoother” (90).

<sup>13</sup> From Monster’s encounter with the constitution: “When I got back from court, the constitution was on my desk . . . I read the constitution and afterward burned it, as instructed” (313).

<sup>14</sup> This list of revolutionary writers includes Castro, Mao Tse-tsung, Amilcar Cabral, Ho Chi Minh, Kim II, and George Jackson (*Monster* 348)



under a sovereign power, a warrior class — ala Brumble’s theorizing — emerges as members of a marginalized group band together for protection, territorial establishment, vengeance against enemies, and economic solvency. As a consequence of historical policy<sup>15</sup>, the territories of South Central are rendered a zone of neglect within a larger sovereign context. The psychological effect: “poverty and joblessness are the major causes of inner-city despair” (Bell 303). Mike Davis, in the often-quoted *City of Quartz*, offers this indictment of the governmental posture towards the youth of South Central:

Southcentral LA has been betrayed by virtually every level of government. In particular, the deafening public silence about youth unemployment and the juvenation of poverty has left many thousands of young street people with little alternative but to enlist in the crypto-Keynesian youth employment program operated by the cocaine cartels. (309)

Thusly, the geographical boundaries in South Central designate neighborhoods, but also demarcate the continuance of covert discrimination and racial abandon that is illuminated by watershed moments — such as Toshima’s murder — in which the provoked sovereign distinguishes the former political norm with newly-marked intervention. One incursive strategy is the arrest of the offender; the taking of captives. While the power influences differ between Indian captivity narratives and incarceration memoirs, this capture in combat supplies a shared platform to begin tracking the effects of captivity.

---

<sup>15</sup> Gang expert, Alex Alonso: “Areas outside of the original Black settlement of Los Angeles were neighborhoods covered by legally enforced racially restrictive covenants or deed restrictions. This practice, adapted by White homeowners, was established in 1922, and designed to maintain social and racial homogeneity of neighborhoods by denying non-Whites access to property ownership” (73).

## CHAPTER FOUR: From Captivity to Conversion

As L.A.'s Operation Hammer resulted in the arrest of bystanders, so do many Indian captivity narratives feature non-soldiers, like Rowlandson and Wakefield, who are captured. The degree of complicity in each narrative varies—as deliberate lawbreakers, Tookie and Monster Kody invite specific arrest by contesting the rule of law. Rowlandson and Wakefield, however, occupy an unusual space. They are not soldiers, nor are they guilty of transgressing any colonial law that would subject them to incarceration by their own sovereign; however, by virtue of their presence in the colonial enterprise, they arrive, with grave consequence, in a conflict not necessarily of their own will or direct contribution. Rowlandson appears to stand closer to the line of participation than Wakefield. The Rowlandson household served as a military fortification in the event of an Indian attack, marking a familial commitment to warfare if necessary. Additionally, it is Rowlandson's husband who rides for reinforcements when the rumors of an attack surface. However, attributing these factors to Rowlandson as an indicator of military participation would be an overreach; further, it is necessary to acknowledge that gender dynamics in both Rowlandson and Wakefield's eras would have likely suppressed any objections raised to overall colonial activity. Additionally, specific choices—like designating the Rowlandson residence a defense fortification—were likely out of Mary

Rowlandson's realm of influence. Nevertheless, Rowlandson and Wakefield are present in the colonial machinations of sovereign power, regardless of their degree of complicity in their respective wars. Thusly, the uniting theme between all four narratives is not "criminal or innocent," but "human experience in captivity." I now reference the forcible abduction of each of the four narrators in turn before discussing his or her reported human experience as a captive.

#### Mary Rowlandson's Capture

In *Sovereignty*, Mary Rowlandson wastes no ink, beginning her narrative with the siege on her home; one of the established garrisons in the settlement. She writes: "On the tenth of February 1675, Came the *Indians* with great numbers upon *Lancaster*: Their first coming was about Sun-rising; hearing the noise of some Guns, we looked out; several Houses were burning, and the Smoke ascending to Heaven" (68). After a defense lasting roughly two hours, the Indians fired the house, forcing those inside to quit their shelter:

But out we must go, the fire increasing, and coming along behind us, roaring, and the Indians gaping before us with their Guns, Spears and Hatchets to devour us. . . . Thus were we butchered by those merciless Heathen, standing amazed, with the blood running down to our heels. (69)

While Rowlandson recalls advice that she should "chuse rather to be killed by them than be taken alive," she elects to, "go along with those (as I may say) ravenous Beasts" (70) along with twenty-four others, including her three children, one of whom is wounded in her arms.

### Sarah Wakefield's Capture

While Rowlandson's captivity occurs in battle, Wakefield's is a relatively quiet affair. Despite rumors of rising Indian anger and several reported skirmishes, Wakefield's husband sends her and their children to nearby Fort Ridgley accompanied by Mr. Gleason, a clerk. Towards Wakefield's mounting nervousness, Gleason adopts a mocking tone—"Mr. Gleason made great sport of me," and, "when I would chide him and tell him how I felt, he would say I was nervous, and told me he would never take me anywhere again" (252-253). After passing by the house of an acquaintance, Gleason broaches conversation with two Indians headed in the opposite direction in their own wagon. Sensing the distressing possibilities, Wakefield's fear is realized when Mr. Gleason is shot twice, the first charge "striking Mr. Gleason in his right shoulder. . . . [and the second] striking him in the bowels as he laid across my lap" (253). The horses bolt at the shots, but are soon subdued by the Indian, Chaska. Toward a second Indian, Hapa, Wakefield writes, "I begged Hapa to spare me, put out my hands towards him, but he struck them down. I thought then my doom was sealed . . ." (254). Chaska manages to dissuade Hapa from violence against Wakefield and her two children, and the captured Wakefield family is removed to the encampment of the Mdewakanton Dakota.

### Stanley Tookie Williams' Capture

Stanley Tookie Williams' first experience with captivity in *Blue Rage, Black Redemption* is the result of an overdose after falling in with a pimp named Lil' Tony, "a mean little sucker who beat down his girls with a heated wire hanger, a baseball bat, or his fists," and hosted an apartment that, "looked like the set of a motion picture, including

a junkie's shooting up gallery, a hard-core burlesque show, and a favorite spot for local criminals [sic]" (66). Before his freshman year, Williams overdoses on the steps of a gymnasium. Rushed to the hospital, he is transferred to Central Juvenile Hall, a dangerous place "festered with unwashed you, chaos, hostile attitudes, random fighting, and the nastiest food I ever tasted" (66). There, Tookie reckons with a host of physical and psychological pressures: "As a ward of the court outside of parental jurisdiction, a youth could be subjected to involuntary psychotropic drugging and testing, prolonged isolation, bodily harm, degradation, sodomy, and even death at the hands of a turnkey or another youthful offender" (67). The psychological effect on Tookie is profound: "It was my first time in Juvenile Hall, and for a while I felt sick, terrified, trapped, and as though the walls were closing in on me," leading Tookie to a state of spiritual vigor: "For seven straight weeks I prayed and read the Bible on my knees, hoping I'd go home any minute" (67).

#### Monster Kody Scott's Capture

Monster Kody's first arrest is for a firearm altercation, where he fires six shots at a hot dog stand hoping to hit an employee inside. The next day he is "captured . . . and given sixty days in juvenile hall" though he only serves nineteen because of overcrowding (18). Perhaps the short sentence rendered Monster's time there unremarkable as it is his next capture that Monster dwells on; an arrest on a false charge for shooting a rival Blood gang member. After questioning at the station, Monster is taken to: "The Hall (juvenile hall) . . . another territory to conquer." There, he fights, "against Bloods whose sets I had never heard of and, of course, against those who were

our worst enemies” (23). Three months later, Monster attends trial where the Blood he allegedly shot surprises the courtroom by vindicating Monster’s innocence. Despite dodging jail time, that night Monster, “led an initiation party into Family ‘hood and dropped two bodies. No one was captured” (25). Not a year later, when Monster Kody is fifteen, he reports he is, “captured for assault and auto theft. I took a car from a man by striking him over the head” (26). Arrested and put on trial for assault and grand theft auto (27), Monster Kody is sentenced to nine months in “Camp” because of his age:

Camp is the third testing group in a series of ‘tests’ to register one’s ability to ‘stand firm,’ the streets, of course, being the first and juvenile hall the second. With each successive level—the Hall, camp, Youth Authority, prison—comes longer, harder time. This, coupled with greater danger of becoming a victim, pits one hard against the total warrior mentality of ‘Do or Die.’ Here, the slogan ends and the reality sets in. (27)

Recidivism marks the memoir, and Monster Kody consistently employs the language of captivity when reporting the seizures of himself and his comrades, such as when he and Crazy De were, “eventually captured and hauled off to jail” (195). In a later arrest that lands Monster Kody in county jail, his “door was kicked in by soldier-cops” (278).

#### From Acclimation to Conversion

While Rowlandson and Wakefield’s shorter captivities are generated from one taking, Tookie and Monster Kody’s violent exploits expose them to multiple occasions of capture with varying degrees of length and severity. As Rowlandson reports her “Removes”—the traveling from one destination to another that introduces new contingencies—so are Monster Kody and Tookie familiar with transfers; the uprooting of a prisoner to another prison, or to solitary confinement. This fragility of place heightens the uncertainty in each narrative as new dangers emerge in unfamiliar terrain.

Additionally, the totality of incarceration—especially with the perpetual threat of violence—poses a unique challenge to the captive: acclimate or perish. From alliances to economic enterprise, I will now, beginning with Rowlandson, turn towards each narrator’s process of acclimation in captivity. As significant as the actual taking, external forces of captivity affect rending shifts in the identity of the captive; and as the captives acclimate, they reckon with worldview and moral questions; they modify; they revise. Thusly, I identify the “conversion” experience—in some cases a spiritual revelation; in others, a personal metamorphosis without reported religious impact—of the captive as a consequence of acclimation. This discussion is not to argue that a revision in identity is a necessary condition of captivity narratives; the range of experience and belief within captivity should not be linked to conversion that unequivocally. Nevertheless, many long-form captivity stories feature this trajectory.

#### Mary Rowlandson towards Conversion

Rowlandson’s worldview is grounded in fervent religious belief. A minister’s wife, the text of *Sovereignty* is skillfully interwoven with scripture, as well as Puritan social mores, expectations, and even dietary considerations contrasting with her captors’—frictions that exacerbate Rowlandson’s trauma in the aftermath of the attack on Lancaster. Disconsolate, wounded, and isolated, with, “no Christian Friend near me, either to comfort or help me” (73), Rowlandson laments the absence of regular Christian counsel as further evidenced in the Third Remove in a moment of fellowship with the captive, Goodwife Joslin: “we opened the Bible and lighted on *Psal. 27 . . . Wait on the Lord, Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart, wait I say on the Lord*”

(77). Reminiscent of carceral “visiting hours,” the community of refreshment Rowlandson longs for is accommodated only briefly with permission-based visits with her son and other captured Puritans, to whom she usually renders small services, such as reading the Word, making a fire, or picking lice from her son’s head (89-90).

Rowlandson’s resolve is further tried by physical needs. She has been wounded: “the bullets flying thick, one went through my side” (69) and she writes frequently of the lack of “refreshment”—food or water—for her or her child: “there being not the least crumb of refreshing that came within either of our mouths, from *Wednesday* night to *Saturday* night, except only a little cold water” (73-74). One of Rowlandson’s first indicators of acclimating, however, is found in the Fifth Remove in her willingness, through hunger, to accept refreshment: “they boyled an old Horses leg . . . and so we drank of the broth,” (79). Rowlandson reports accommodating to her captors’ diet thusly:

The first week of my being among them, I hardly ate anything; the second week, I found my stomach grow very faint for want of something; and yet it was very hard to get down their filthy trash: but the third week, though I could think how formerly my stomach would turn against this or that, and I could starve and die before I could eat such things, yet they were sweet and savory to my taste. (79)

Unlike Tookie who dedicates a chapter of *Life in Prison* to lamenting his prison diet, the remainder of *Sovereignty* shows Rowlandson not only more agreeable with the diet of her captivity, but savoring dishes she would have previously despised. She remembers, “There came an *Indian* . . . with a basket of *Horse-liver* . . . I laid it on the coals to roast . . . I was fain to take the rest and eat it as it was, with the blood about my mouth, and yet a savory bit it was to me: *For to the hungry soul, every bitter thing is sweet*” (81). Despite this scriptural caveat, Rowlandson eats horse feet, bear, the thought of which, “made me



tremble: but now that was savoury to me that one would think was enough to turn the stomach of a bruit Creature” (85), and “a *Deer*, with a young one in her, they gave me a piece of the *Fawn*, and it was so young and tender . . . and yet I thought it very good” (93). While Rowlandson defers to the Divine in making these unfamiliar dishes palatable—“Thus the Lord made that [horses’ feet] pleasant refreshing, which another time would have been an abomination,” (96)—she also marvels at the Indians’ supplication and endurance; designating Native resourcefulness as supernatural provision. In a passage relating the nature of Puritan scorched-earth war tactics, Rowlandson writes:

*It was thought, if their corn were cut down, they would starve and dy (sic) with hunger: and all their Corn that could be found, was destroyed, and they driven from that little they had in store, into the Woods in the midst of Winter; and yet how to admiration did the Lord preserve them for his Holy ends, and the destruction of many still amongst the English! Strangely did the Lord provide for them; that I did not see (all the time I was among them) one Man, Woman, or Child, die with hunger. (105)*

Contained in this excerpt, and for a fair section of *The Twentieth Remove*, is the complicated duality Rowlandson assigns to the Indians as a consequence of her worldview; they are sustained by God, but unmistakably heathen; His harbingers of judgment and tools to produce repentance in the redeemed. To this point I will return, but will first discuss additional textual evidence of Rowlandson’s acclimation.

Far from suffering emotional paralysis, Rowlandson reports events of her own industriousness and entrepreneurialism within the war party, even interpersonally with high-ranking members like Metacom himself. Although containing the “emotional” features—familial loss and compounding trauma—indicative of Derounian-Stodola’s

discussion of women's captivity narratives, Rowlandson leverages her skillsets to her advantage in a number of intriguing circumstances; the first, a successful negotiation for her family's lives: "The *Indians* laid hold of us, pulling me one way, and the Children another, and said *Come, go along with us*; I told them they would kill me: They answered, *If I were willing to go along with them, they would not hurt me*" (70). Later, in the Eighth Remove, when Rowlandson is taken to see Metacom, the great sachem commissions custom clothing from her: "*During my abode in this place, Philip spake to me to make a shirt for his boy, which I did, for which he gave me a shilling . . . I bought a piece of Horse flesh. Afterwards he asked me to make a Cap for his boy, for which he invited me to Dinner*" (83). Rowlandson's craftsmanship finds favor with the Indians: "There was a *Squaw* who spake to me to make a shirt for her *Sannup* . . . Another asked me to knit a pair of Stockins" and in the Thirteenth Remove, she repairs a pair of "Stockins" for a different Indian in exchange for roasted nuts (83, 90). At one point in the narrative, Rowlandson is resistant to expending herself making clothes and refuses to give over a piece of her "Apron" to "*Philips Maid*" (89) showing an agency and spirit indicative of a restoring sense of self; although Rowlandson is suffering in captivity, she makes a stand within the small economic domain of which she has limited control. Nevertheless, Rowlandson hands over the entirety of her apron once realizing the severity of her Mistresses' anger (89). Further instances of participation in the Indians' trade economy come by way of two Christian Indians, Tom and Peter, who served as liaisons between the English and Natives. Though she has been commissioned for another round of clothing, when Tom and Peter bring news about negotiations for her possible release,

Rowlandson's, "heart was so full that I could not speak to them" (97), and receiving a gift of "two Biskets and a pound of Tobacco," Rowlandson dispenses with the bartering savvy she was otherwise employed: "The Tobacco I quickly gave away" (97). The possibility of impending release supersedes the skillset Rowlandson has developed in captivity, at least momentarily, as the value of this gift is shown later when she sells another pound of tobacco for nine shillings (102).

Rowlandson's negotiating acumen is displayed in two final short sections in the Twentieth Remove. First, when Mr. Hoar arrives to broker Rowlandson's release, King Phillip, as Rowlandson relates, was "smelling the business," and calls on her to, "tell me some good news, and speak a good word for me." Rowlandson expresses that anything she has is his, and Philip names his terms. While Rowlandson is aware Mr. Hoar is presently securing her release with a separate trade, she plays a careful hand, and: "thanked him for his love: but I knew the good news as well as that crafty *Fox* [King Philip]" (104). As Tookie and Monster Kody appear before numerous legal authorities to plead their cases, Rowlandson must go before the Indian's "General Court" to "consult and determine, whether I should go home or no" (104). Rowlandson refrains from detailing these proceedings; however, it stands to reason any cunning developed in her captivity was deployed to its greatest degree as release loomed in sight. And when her judges vote: "they all as one man did seemingly consent to it" (104).<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Rowlandson's treatment in this proceeding strikes a sharp contrast with the colonists' judicial disposition in Wakefield's account of Chaska's trial as discussed in the following section.

From dietary revision to trade acumen, Mary Rowlandson demonstrates a growing participation in her captors' culture and environment. It is worth noting, however, that there is a Biblical precedent for resistance to acclimation of which Rowlandson may have been aware: the story of Daniel's refusal to defile his body with the meat and wine of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 1:3-21). Does Rowlandson consider her participation in a captive culture a sign of spiritual weakness? She appears to answer this question through scriptural affirmation of God's preservation in a number of places: "*Psal. 94:18. When my foot slipped, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up*" (96) and "*Psal. 118. 17,18. I shall not dy but live, and declare the works of the Lord: the Lord had chastened me sore, yet he hath not given me over to death*" (82). And of course, the Lord is credited for increasing the palatability of her refreshment: "I broiled it [the castaway guts of a horse] on the coals; and now may I say with *Jonathan, See, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey, 1 Sam. 14. 29*" (95).

In looking towards conversion, it is necessary to establish the spiritual lens through which Rowlandson frames the cause, the context, the purpose, and the players of her captivity. Rowlandson deems her acclimation purposeful, and her piety and Puritan worldview situate her present distress as providential trial or judgment; a vacillation woven into the narrative through scriptural citations. Thusly, Rowlandson's acclimation serves her worldview by her assuming the posture of a humbled and suffering vessel; in subservience in captivity, she is submitting to Divine ordinance. Likening herself and her son to the Biblical Job, Rowlandson writes:

We had Husband and Father, and Children, and Sisters, and Friends, and Relations, and House, and Home, and many Comforts of this Life: but now we might say, as Job, *Naked came I out of my Mothers Womb, and naked shall I return: The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, Blessed be the Name of the Lord.* (81-82)

This loss is a part of what Rowlandson refers to in a unique passage that deepens the theological roots of the narrative while also establishing additional analogs to frame her captivity. After the Indians have pointed out where they buried her youngest daughter, Rowlandson writes: “I saw the ground was newly digged, and there they told me they had buried it: *There I left that Child in the Wilderness, and must commit it, and my self also in this Wilderness-condition, to him who is above all*” (75). Scholars of the West, including Frederick Jackson Turner, have explored this first sense of “wilderness” as an ecological stimulus for the revision of exterior trappings, but also an internal impetus to “rise above:”

The frontier is the line of most rapid and effective Americanization. The wilderness masters the colonist. . . . It takes him from the railroad car and puts him in the birch canoe. It strips off the garments of civilization and arrays him in the hunting shirt and the moccasin. It puts him in the log cabin of the Cherokee and Iroquois and runs an Indian palisade around him. . . . In short, at the frontier the environment is at first too strong for the man. He must accept the conditions, which it furnishes, or perish, and so he fits himself into the Indian clearing and follows the Indian trails. Little by little he transforms the wilderness. . . . The fact is, that here is a new product that is American. (188)

While Rowlandson’s physical experience pushes opportunity for acclimation, and as Stratton has argued, consecrates the land for Puritan expansion (23), it is her second sense of a “Wilderness-condition” that is uniquely tied to her spiritual “conversion” and is accompanied with weighty Biblical resonance. Many Biblical heroes were made to endure both the physical wilderness, but also a “Wilderness-condition” as part of Divine

command, including Moses and the Israelites, sentenced to wander, and Christ himself in His temptation in the desert: “Then Jesus was *led up by the Spirit* [my emphasis] into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil” (Matt. 4:1). Uniquely encapsulated through these two references are God’s judgment, in Moses’ case, and God’s testing through suffering, in the case of Christ. For Rowlandson, this duality in suffering is furthered with her poetic expression: “Yet the Lord still shewed mercy to me, and upheld me; and as he wounded me with one hand, so he healed me with the other” (74). Thusly, the “conversion” in *Sovereignty* is one of spiritual re-connection located within a Puritan framework that renders suffering as either Divine testing or judgment. For Rowlandson, conversion is towards a deeper relationship with Christ, a more profound spirituality refined through torment and showing oneself approved; chastened and repentant. Towards the end of the narrative, after she is freed, Rowlandson relates a kind of “affliction fantasy”—a “wish” she had to be tried, and found true, the way she believed her spiritual forbearers and fellow Puritans had:

*Before I knew what affliction meant, I was ready sometimes to wish for it . . . seeing many . . . under many tryals and afflictions, in sickness, weakness, poverty, losses, crosses, and cares of the World, I should be sometimes jealous lest I should have my portion in this life, and that Scripture would come to my mind, Heb. 12.6. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son who he receiveth. . . . The portion of some is to have their afflictions by drops . . . but the dregs of the Cup, the Wine of astonishment: like a sweeping rain that leaveth no food, did the Lord prepare to be my portion. Affliction I wanted, and affliction I had, full measure . . . (112)*

Following this expression of Divine discipline in Hebrews 12:6, Rowlandson confirms the acceptability of her torment: “yet I see, when God calls a Person to any thing . . . he is fully able to carry them through and make them see, and say they have been gainers

thereby” (112). This sentiment is elsewhere affirmed through scripture: “*I know, O Lord, that thy Judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me*” (86), and later Rowlandson musters multiple verses to create a theodicy of affliction: “*Shall there be evil in the City and the Lord hath not done it? They are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph, therefore they shall go Captive, with the first that go Captive. It is the Lords doing, and it should be marvelous in our eyes*” (105). While Rowlandson is willing to accept God’s decree of affliction, she does not extend the same grace towards the instruments she believes He has chosen, acknowledging the resilience of Native Americans, but attributing their survival to God’s preservation as a weapon of judgment. Rowlandson writes: “I can but stand in admiration to see the wonderful power of God, in providing for such a vast number of our Enemies in the *Wilderness*” (106) and “But now our perverse and evil carriages in the sight of the Lord, have so offended Him, that instead of turning His hand against them [the Indians], the Lord feeds and nourishes them up to be a scourge to the whole Land” (106). Rowlandson references Indians as merciless heathen (69), *miserable comforters* (74), a crew of Pagans (82), and likens the Indians to Satan: “So like were these barbarous creatures to him who was a lyar from the beginning” (89). While grief and anger are sensible, expected responses given the trauma of war, and the desolations, including the death of a child, Rowlandson suffered personally through the raid at Lancaster, a troublesome dynamic is introduced by her willingness to detail numerous acts of individual kindness throughout the narrative while appearing to preclude these instances of Native generosity and empathy from impacting and modifying her, or her reader’s, global view on Native people. From kind Indians,

Rowlandson is comforted and given food when scared for her life: “No, said he, none will hurt you. Then came one of them and gave me two spoon-fulls of Meal to comfort me, and another gave me half a pint of Pease” (82), is cooked for by Indians who are not her direct captors (83, 85, 95), granted multiple audiences with Metacom who personally gives her assurance of release (96-97), and is given a Bible by an Indian, arguably her greatest comfort in captivity (76). Further, Rowlandson’s insistence of the “righteous Puritan and heathen Indian,”—a distinction so firm she even has trouble accepting “Praying Indians,” Christian converts—despite the contradictory evidence of Puritan aggression of which she is aware—the aforementioned corn burning—ultimately appears as a consequence of her theological framework. Insofar as God leverages outside forces to drive his people to deeper levels of faith, then Rowlandson’s conversion is found in her acceptance of Divine affliction to pass towards this more profound level of belief regardless of the objectivity of violence leading to—and throughout—King Philip’s War.

#### Sarah Wakefield towards Conversion

While Rowlandson’s conversion is constituted by internal shifts within her own faith, Sarah Wakefield’s conversion is socially-focused, recoding her position from passive observer to social challenger. Despite reporting a much hotter temperature of violence than many other captivity narratives, Wakefield strikes a balance of perspective not found in Rowlandson that allows her to distinguish and separately frame both the kindness and inhumane treatment she receives, and indict violence by both parties in the war. I will first consider the degree to which Wakefield acclimates to captivity, and how that experience invigorates her conversion towards social consciousness. This aids



Wakefield in resisting dogma and the pressure to report a skewed captivity experience upon release; a phenomenon she identifies in other captives:

One lady very often visited me, and she often complained of being uncomfortable from eating so heartily, but said the squaws forced her to eat, as that is their way of showing their kindness towards a person. Now many times I have listened to her telling the soldiers that she was nearly starved by the squaws, going days without food of any kind. It shocked me, and I reprimanded her severely for telling such untruths. (310)

Wakefield's sanguine disposition has been previously noted—a mindset that functions as a survival strategy. Admitting she is “ignorant of Indian customs” (243), once captured, Wakefield adopts a participatory attitude, citing a piece of advice from a “half-breed” she deploys as a principle of protection: “as long as I was with them I must try to be pleased, and not mistrust them; make them think I had confidence in them, and they would soon learn to love and respect me . . .” (256). Wakefield overviews her strategic approach:

If they were telling any of their plans or of their exploits, I would laugh, and say, ‘That is good; I wish I was a man, I would help you.’ When they were making preparation for a march or for going to battle, I was as busy as any. I prepared the meat for the warriors, pounding it in leather. . . . I helped paint blankets, braided ribbons to ornament the horses, and in short tried by every way to make myself useful, hoping by such conduct to gain their friendship. (256)

Wakefield, like Rowlandson, participates in trade and employs skills such as sewing in exchange for goods—“they [the Indians] brought me books and papers to read, and I would make them shirts, so as to return their favors” (290)—however, the primary currency in Wakefield's captivity-economy is friendship, and she relies on those positive sentiments to sustain her and her family. Wakefield preferred the safety of the teepee of Chaska's mother: “I felt as if this was my home, and I stayed there all the time I was in captivity, and was much better than any other female on that account” (270). Other

Indians were similarly lauded: “they [the squaws] proved to be good, true friends. Poor women! how I pity many of them! driven from their good homes, their families broken up and divided. Many of them are as much to be pitied as the whites, and many of them no more to blame” (262). Wakefield relays nights with “a tepee full of company,” where over a meal, “they would smoke, (I must take a whiff with them, or they would be offended) then they would play cards . . .” (290). Further, several times when danger is imminent from her own people’s soldiers, Wakefield makes a, “run for the woods with the squaws, thinking the soldiers were very near, and they said Sibley was going to shell the camp” (291). While reasonable under threat of gunfire, Wakefield’s fleeing alongside her captors *away* from her own people demonstrates a subtle decision in selecting a preferred peril; she would choose extended captivity rather than chance rescue.

Wakefield’s sentiments appear sincere, and her effusive gratitude for Chaska and his family’s guardianship permeates her account. Nevertheless, Wakefield is conscious in the advantages this friendship affords her—the leveraging of friendship for her family’s survival is intentional: “my sole object was while there to gain their friendship so as to save my life” (270). However, sincere affection that develops towards many of the Indians is a byproduct of her strategy. Wakefield’s acclimation, thusly, occurs organically through legitimate friendships, intensifying her sense of wrong as perpetrated against true friends once she has “converted” towards social justice. It may be asked how Wakefield was treated by her captors to provoke this spirited defense of their character. “The Indians were as respectful towards me as any white man would be towards a lady; and now, when I hear all the Indians abused, it aggravates me for I know some are as manly,

honest, and noble as our own race” (Wakefield 273). Indeed, even after Wakefield has been rescued, she champions the moral superiority of the Indians over the soldiers:

I was a vast deal more comfortable with the Indians in every respect, than I was during my stay in that soldier’s camp, and was treated more respectfully by those savages. . . . We had to cook our own food [in the soldier’s camp], exposed to the gaze of several hundred ignorant men, that would surround our fires as soon as we commenced cooking. . . . I have many times been forced to go to some officers and request a guard around us, so we could cook without molestation. (299)

Wakefield relates another story of protection of her virtue; in the middle of the night in their shared teepee, drunken Hapa is alternately threatening to kill Wakefield or force her to marry him (270-271). To assuage Hapa’s anger, Chaska assures Hapa he will marry Wakefield as soon as her husband is known to be dead, and then lies down next to her. Once Hapa is asleep, Chaska crawls back to his own bed. Wakefield expresses effusive gratitude towards Chaska, but even more significantly, extends a kind of salvation towards him in a moment of unorthodox theology. Having already established that, “he [Chaska] was not a Christian” but “he knew there was a God, and he had learned right from wrong” (255), Wakefield extols his virtue, considering his moral acts sufficient for communion with God:

My father could not have done differently, or acted more respectful or honorable; and if there was ever an honest, upright man, Chaska was one. He has suffered death, but God will reward him in Heaven for his acts of kindness towards me. . . . Very few Indians or *even white men*, would have treated me in the manner he did. (271)

Wakefield’s spirited defense does not belie the danger of her captivity, and her acclimation demonstrates impressive will in overcoming her “nervous, excitable disposition” (278). She reports that threats of violence “kept our minds in a perfect state of phrenzy” (278). A woman she knows does not recognize Wakefield as her, “hair

turned as white as an old woman's with fright the night I was taken prisoner" (285). At Red Iron's village, expecting her release may soon come from Sibley's long-awaited rescue, Wakefield receives word she will be killed; when hearing the news, she "dropped as one struck with apoplexy; I could not speak for awhile, my teeth chattered and I shivered with fear" (288-289). Passing by Mr. Gleason's grave, even after her rescue, Wakefield relates: "I got so nervous that my teeth chattered, and I shook like one with palsy" (307). Wakefield reports she had weighed two hundred and three pounds before captivity; when released, she weighed one hundred and sixty-three pounds: "My travels and anxiety had worn upon me so much" (299).

The critical balance Wakefield strikes between Native friends and foes, and those of the same designation amongst her kinfolk, is the culmination of her existing character and worldview revised by the harrowing experience of captivity, and the kindness shown by her Dakota protectors. The aftermath of rescue allowed Wakefield to weaponize her captivity narrative for her own vindication—rumors of impropriety abounded because of her protective posture towards Chaska—as well as defend the Dakota Sioux who participated in the uprising by contextualizing the violence and abuse done against them. Wakefield lambastes the Indian schools run by the agency, "the teachers feeding their own pockets more than they did the children's mouths" (244). Later, she cites the trader's immorality and misdeeds as creating an improper example: "All the evil habits that the Indian has acquired may be laid to the traders" (247). Wakefield even names the locus of responsibility for the Dakota War on the failure of the Agency to maintain annuities penned in the 1851 Traverse des Sioux and Mendota treaties: "all they [the Indians] cared

for was food—it was not our lives; and if all these Indians had been properly fed and otherwise treated like human beings, how many, very many, innocent lives might have been spared” (248). Wakefield is careful to qualify her comments. She writes, “I do not wish any one to think I uphold the Indians in their murderous work. I should think I was insane, as many persons have said I was” (250). Nevertheless, Wakefield feels compelled to point out that, “they [the Indians] were God’s creatures,” and in their long suffering, wonders, “how these poor deceived creatures bore so much and so long without retaliation” (250). From indirect criticism of Sibley, her rescuer, who took, “so long— Oh, so long!— in coming to my rescue ” (241) to the Agent, Major Galbraith’s, failures in disbursing treated rations and monetary compensation: “He did not understand the nature of the people he had in his charge” (251), Wakefield establishes a top-down criticism of Agency policy and firmly locates moral responsibility:

I asked myself, have these Indians lived quietly so long, and never, until this late day, done any wrong towards the whites? I could not think of any other cause than this—it may be right, it may be wrong; but such is my belief—: That our own people, not the Indians, were to blame. Had they not, for years, been sutlering? had they not been cheated unmercifully, and now their money had been delayed no troops were left to protect the frontier and their Agent, their “father,” had left them without money, food or clothing, and gone off to war. (286)

Wakefield’s awakening to the humanity of her captors while also being privy to the moral failures of her own kinsman sets the stage for her narrative. Despite assurances he will be safe, Chaska is arrested and charged as an accomplice in the murder of Gleason.

Lamenting Chaska’s innocence and the lack of credibility her testimony is afforded, she writes:

He was convicted . . . without any evidence against him. I was angry, for it seemed to me as if they considered my testimony of no account; for if they had believed what I said, he would have been acquitted. . . . I know he had no more idea of killing the man than I had, or did no more towards it than I did. He was present, so was I; and they might as well hang me as him, for he was as innocent as myself. (303)

After brief imprisonment, the innocent Chaska is hanged, so ending a second, undocumented captivity in Wakefield's tale. The official story as related to Wakefield is that there was a mistake.<sup>17</sup> Relayed via letter from Rev. S.R. Riggs, Wakefield remains skeptical of the official story, writing: "I am sure, in my own mind, it was done intentionally," and "It has caused me to feel very unkindly towards my own people" (308-309). Ultimately, the weight of obligation to bear witness to her moral treatment by the Indians, and the immoral treatment they received on the tribal and individual level, guides Wakefield's hand: "They were kind to me, and I will try and repay them, trusting that in God's own time I will be righted and my conduct understood . . ." (313).

#### Stanley Tookie Williams towards Conversion

In *Blue Rage, Black Redemption*, and also in his anti-gang "pamphlet" *Life in Prison*, Stanley Tookie Williams' stated intent is affecting social change—as Wakefield shaped her testimony to denounce Agency injustice, so Tookie leverages his narratives as cautionary tales to condemn gang participation. Before discussing how Tookie's acclimation to captivity contributes to his conversion, I will draw a comparison between Rowlandson's "affliction fantasy"—her idolization of sufferers of the faith who showed themselves approved—with Tookie's fetishization of prison most explicitly discussed in

---

<sup>17</sup> Another Indian, "Chaskadon," who had been found guilty of barbarous crimes was to be hanged, but Chaska stepped forward when the former's name was called.

*Life in Prison*. With both narrators, there is a desire for the perceived benefits of a “Wilderness-condition”—Rowlandson’s composed of, at a minimum, faith-development aspects—and Tookie’s found in the reputational benefits and “testing of manhood” that incarceration affords. Crafted for a younger at-risk audience, *Life in Prison* shows Tookie relaying his youthful fascination with prison with a paternalistic deployment of scare-tactic prison realities. Crafted post-conversion, *Life in Prison* features a narrator already reformed while *Blue Rage, Black Redemption* is the long-form story of Tookie’s transition in identity from notorious gang leader to anti-gang evangelist.

In the opening pages of *Life in Prison*, Tookie writes: “when I was your age, I thought it’d be fun to live in prison ” (*Life* 13) and recalls the older brother of a friend who told stories about Soledad, San Quentin, and Folsom:

He called these prisons ‘gladiator schools.’ He said prisons were places a man could prove his toughness to other men who were equally tough. . . . His stories made prison sound like a fun place to hang with your homeboys. Rock had most of us *wanting* to go to prison when we were old enough. I had grand thoughts of proving how tough I could be in one of those gladiator schools. (*Life* 13-14)

Tookie is impressed by the incarceration photos of Rock and his friends: “The men . . . were big and buff, flexing their muscles and smiling into the camera. Iron weights and benches were in the background” (*Life* 14). It is the inevitability of prison, however, that solidifies his acceptance of this fate from a young age: “For kids in my neighborhood, it was normal to expect to end up in prison. And Rock told us there was really no difference between being in prison and being on the streets” (*Life* 14). Similar to Rowlandson, however, Tookie’s perspective after achieving what he desired is, not surprisingly, significantly revised: “today, after so many years on San Quentin’s death row I know the

truth. Prison is no place you want to call home” and “Prison is hell” (*Life* 16). Tookie’s conclusion, based on his prison experience, shows an expected revision of his naive youthful beliefs. Positioning himself as a foil to Rock—even possessing the physique of this childhood hero—Tookie points the other way to at-risk youth who are “sitting wide-eyed on the porch” and listening to his words as a famous leader of the Crips: “My greatest hope is that the lessons the stories offer will help you make better choices than I did” (*Life* 16).

Turning now to *Blue Rage*, while Tookie has periodic run-ins with law enforcement, including probation and fines, over his street-Crip career he manages to avoid “the traps of the law” (*Blue* 197) until his arrest for the murders of a convenience store clerk, Albert Owens, and three members of a Taiwanese family, Thsai Shai Young, Yen-I Yang, and Ye Chen Lin. Although he maintained his innocence for these murders, at twenty-five years old, Tookie is “possessed by a Crip rage” and was “Playing my own version of Russian roulette ” when he is suddenly plucked from the territory where he, “got an adrenaline high from roaming the streets and terrorizing entire communities ” (*Blue* 217). Tookie is sent to ‘High Power,’ a special unit for high-profile criminals that had a reputation for “sadistic aggression” against Black men. To the guards, Tookie reports he seemed, “a gargantuan black beast” (*Blue* 220) and possessed with “Crip rage,” Tookie does not stand down against their abuse: “On occasions I would find objects in my food: staples, thumb tacks, paper clips, clumps of hair, and broken glass” and he reports he lowered himself to “primitive levels of retaliation” (*Blue* 220). In one confrontation, Tookie breaks his handcuffs and lunges at a corrections officer; an act of



rage that gets him tranquilized via sedatives in a tampered-with meal (*Blue* 221-222).

Tookie reports these continued sedations are opportunities for physical abuse by the guards:

On several occasions, despite being drugged, through force of will I remained semiconscious enough to witness the sheriff's ritual . . . I was thrown to the floor, then stomped and kicked in the groin and other parts of my body . . . I now understood why it often hurt in the groin area and why I sometimes urinated blood. (*Blue* 223)

Tookie also claims the tranquilizers damaged his mind, causing “oblivion for days” and “drowsiness, poor coordination, slurred speech, and general mental confusion”

(*Blue* 223). Pointing to his own familiarity with mind-altering drugs like PCP and LSD, the “psychopharmacology employed against me in High Power proved far more devastating. It was like being buried alive” (*Blue* 224). These drugs also affected

Tookie's ability to prepare for his preliminary hearings: “the nexus between my mind and voice and been severed. I possessed no defensive or offensive capabilities. All I do was sit there and listen” (*Blue* 225). Beyond this attack, however, a further bondage is

Tookie's internal captivation by a worldview of “blue rage.” He continues:

During that stage of my captivity, facing America's killing apparatus [the death penalty] meant no more to me than being given a speeding ticket. The truth was, I didn't care what happened to me or anyone else . . . long before this most recent arrest, I had retreated into the psychological death chamber of my blue rage. I had become a castaway within my own mind. I felt no hope, saw no dreams, expected no bright future. Death was the only reality I anticipated. . . I believed I was supposed to accept the tribulations inflicted on me while in captivity. (*Blue* 226)

So ends Part I. As evidenced by Tookie's despondency as a result of his “dys-education”—diseased education—and his misdeeds as, “a person who lived as foul as could be,” (*Blue* 227), the psychological captivity of “blue rage” to which he is bound

renders him incapacitated: “So I gritted my teeth and absorbed the injustices just as many of my slave ancestors had accepted their plight for centuries” (*Blue* 226).

After approximately two years in High Power, Tookie is convicted of all charges by an all-white jury (*Blue* 234). Sentenced to San Quentin, Tookie recalls the prison lore he heard from Rock: “I didn’t know the first thing about prison life except through word of mouth. I actually believed convicts fought toe-to-toe, gladiator style, with shanks and knives” (*Blue* 238). This atmosphere of violence forged an easier acclimation path for Tookie: “Here in prison there wasn’t too much of a psychological adjustment to be made for me. Any setting where treachery and violence dominate was nothing new to me—all I had to do was carve out a niche” (*Blue* 239). In this place: “many years would slip by as I languished in the utter darkness of apathy and dys-education. . . . I readily gravitated to the perils of disorder and the posture of a hardened convict” (*Blue* 238-239). This combative disposition quickly lands Tookie in the Hole, “a place for men involved in revolutionary movements, gangs, escape attempts, protective circumstances” with a promise from a counselor, “to keep me on B grade until he retired or was transferred” (*Blue* 239-240). Tookie’s wholesale dedication to the Crips is still firmly established, “Crip was my religion. I was its cocreator and star-crossed prophet” and “To me life after Crippen could only mean one thing. I was dead” (*Blue* 242).

Despite his Crip rage, intimidating physical size, and reputation, a process of acclimation was necessary to insure Tookie’s survival both from other prison threats and prison guards. Similar to Sarah Wakefield’s invigoration towards social injustice through friendships with Chaska and his family, it is friendship that facilitates Tookie’s

conversion from “dys-education.” Tookie connects with another Crip, Evil from Raymond Avenue Crips, who relays to him life or death prison subtleties in San Quentin’s C-section: “I spent time driving iron with Evil while digesting his analysis of the prison politics in C-section. Firsthand knowledge of your surroundings can prevent your being triple-crossed, hurt, or killed” (*Blue* 252). Beyond prison skirmishes, other potent dangers include encounters with prison guards; Tookie reports the gunning down of a Black man by a guard during a minor yard scuffle, a “moment of brutality that captured the attention of every prisoner present” (*Blue* 261-262). Akin to Rowlandson, both Tookie and Monster Kody experience “Removes,” inter-prison transfers, section transfers, cell transfers, and so on that complicate their process of acclimation. Tookie relates, “I was transferred to C-section. But it was like playing musical chairs: I wasn’t there more than a month when C-section was moved to East Block” (*Blue* 264). These geographical restrictions complicate Tookie’s proximity to friendships that chip away at his Crip ideology, thusly lengthening his conversion path.

As Tookie’s dys-education is the root cause of his Blue rage, his re-education is a profound contributor to his Black redemption. In the Hole, Tookie, “was becoming a student of sociology and psychology,” and able to “hone [his] knowledge of prison interactions” (*Blue* 244). More important still, it is in the Hole that Tookie’s deeply-held Crip reality was challenged: “But occasionally conflict arose between Crippen and an intrusive question, ‘Where do I go from here?’ In retrospect it was a moment of skepticism that challenged the Crip reality I held to more than anything” (*Blue* 244). Tookie memorizes, “a large number of words and their definitions” and expresses his

desire to, “memorize the entire dictionary” (*Blue* 246). When relating how he and others would listen to: “ ‘bullology’ (braggadocio gossip on women, sex, money, drugs, and war stories),” it is a friend, Grandpa’s “political diatribe about death row being a racist slaughterhouse for society’s blacks and other poverty-stricken people . . . governmental collusions, assassinations, tainted history, COINTELPRO, and the black struggle” (*Blue* 247-248) that Tookie deigns significant enough to include in *Blue Rage, Black Redemption*; an indication of the importance he assigns to these topics once his interest in knowledge is awakened. In addition to Grandpa, Evil plays a significant role in Tookie’s re-education:

We [Evil and Tookie] shared a common interest in vocabulary development, so we exchanged lists and quizzed each other on enunciation, orthography, semantics, and correct use of each word in a sentence. The study of black history, law, psychology, math, religion, Swahili, spirituality, and other subjects became a staple of our daily discipline in the scheme of survival. (*Blue* 252)

Later, Tookie will establish a strong friendship with another inmate, Treach, “who also possessed an affinity for study” (*Blue* 255). At Treach’s suggestion, Tookie begins writing and studying, “a noble reality for me” and soon, “The prison cage was transformed into a study laboratory; a secluded place of challenge to mold an educated mind; a quasi-university . . .” (*Blue* 256). The long-term force Tookie must fight is “opposing the death chamber to stay alive” (*Blue* 239). Although he “failed continually to see the bigger picture,” his “life was adopting an alien concept: productivity” (*Blue* 259-260). Realizing his deficient knowledge, Tookie challenges himself: “To better understand politics and other topics” reporting that “Studying had opened a new world

for me” (*Blue* 263). Reconciling his Crip identity with a burgeoning, re-educated sense of self, however, remained a challenge:

I was embarking upon a task that had broken other men when they altered the course of their lives. A stumbling block was the shallow concern of how other Crips would view my change. To say I wasn’t interested in what my peers thought of me would be a lie . . . Still, the scariest thing to me was life after Crippen—and the idea of developing a conscience to counter the injustices of my own ignorance. (*Blue* 268)

Seeking the completion of a “mental and behavioral evolution,” the men in their “quasi-university” desired to, “set a standard others could follow, create a natural transition from criminal to black man of learning. We wanted most to understand why we Crips chose this path to take in life” (*Blue* 270). Tookie acknowledges the opposition from himself, “Everything was working against me: I was an imprisoned black man; condemned to die; cofounder of the infamous and hated Crips; and no one believed I’d ever change. Even I had doubts” (*Blue* 271). In 1992, Tookie is taken to the Los Angeles County Jail for an evidentiary hearing. Back in High Power, he:

began to revisit the devils of my past. This critical reflection exposed a litany of fiascos, scandals, mayhem, nihilism, and deaths of my homeboys, ending with the Crips entity fading into obscurity. At that moment I knew that my life as a Crip had come to an end. (*Blue* 279).<sup>18</sup>

Tookie’s accomplishments as a converted Crip imprisoned author were numerous, including a series of cautionary children’s books to steer children away from gang life, a schema for negotiating gangland peace treaties, the aforementioned *Life in Prison*, multiple Nobel Peace Prize nominations, and other community outreach contributions.

---

<sup>18</sup> Tookie’s lack of specificity on these misdeeds may be a rhetorical strategy; a line of inquiry that will be revisited later in this work.

Like Leonard Peltier's efforts, to whom Tookie includes in his dedication of *Life in Prison*, the remainder of his life was committed to leveraging his reputation towards a positive impact in his community; an offering Tookie hoped would provide a measure of recompense for injurious damage. Tookie's penitent evaluation of his past self confirms this harm: "I was a willing sinner of the highest magnitude" (*Blue* 235) and "I symbolized all that had gone bad, and, like a multitude of other imprisoned blacks, I was written off as worthless. The way I behaved back then, I can't blame them" (*Blue* 241). Nevertheless, once a newly established sense of identity is found in release from the bondage of his "blue rage" and "dys-education," Tookie's sense of injustice at his sentencing is piqued again. Though he expressed regret for his past gangland life, Tookie stalwartly maintained his innocence in the slayings of those four victims even until his execution by lethal injection in 2005.

#### Monster Kody Scott towards Conversion

Concluding a discussion on the four narratives with respect to acclimation, I turn to Monster Kody Scott and his "conversion" to New Afrikan ideology, including his name change to Sanyika Shakur. While it is a post-conversion Sanyika—so named by a fellow inmate, Salahudin, sometime around late-'84 to '85 (315)—who pens the memoir, it is within the identity of Monster Kody that the winding road from renowned Crip gangbanger, to member of the emerging C.C.O., to post-Crip New Afrikan community activist occurs. Comparable to Rowlandson, there is fervent religious influence that fuels this narrative; like Wakefield, Sanyika is compelled toward social involvement; and similar to Tookie, the thrust of this social effort is towards his own people, the Crips,

with implications towards other African Americans who do not yet “overstand” the politics and social dynamics of their history. As Tookie’s elimination of “dys-education” serves as the catalyst for his conversion, so does Shakur reach an “overstanding”—his term for a clarified, un-oppressed reasoning—through a similar education.

The arrest for a robbery he claims he did not commit lands Monster Kody in Youth Training School in 1981; a “maximum-security youth prison,” (204) divided by established racial lines and set-alliances. Describing the prison confederations in the Youth Authority Camps (205) between New Afrikans, Northern and Southern Chicanos, and racist white Americans, Monster Kody notes the prevalence of tribalism amongst the New Afrikans who were originally “one” before their split into Crips and Bloods (206-207); the focus on this dissension foreshadowing Monster’s impending Black awareness. By this time, Monster had, “become very egotistical. My reputation had finally ballooned . . . I had moved into the security zone of O.G. status. My rep was omnipresent, saturating every circle of gang life” (208). Outside prison walls, the Rollin 60’s murder Opie, a beloved member of the Eight Trays. Monster summons his incarcerated allies to a weekly Muslim prison service—a meeting place shielded from the scrutiny of the guards—to plot their vengeance (209). Monster’s coterie is uninterested in the screened film on slavery; however, when one of the ministers confronts Kody in “a black thobe<sup>19</sup> over black combat boots and leather jacket,” with a warning to stop “disrespecting our services” (211-212), Monster rounds up his set and leaves the meeting without further conflict. One of these ministers, Muhammad, remains a fixture throughout the rest of the account,

---

<sup>19</sup> a garment commonly worn in Arab countries

playing a foundational role in Monster Kody's conversion to Islam and in supplying him with key texts: " 'Righteous,' I replied, looking down at the pamphlet he'd given me, entitled *Message to the Oppressed*," (214). Awakened to new words and concepts—"struggle," "revolutionary," "jihad," and "colonialism"—Monster is "totally awestruck by his [Muhammad's] strength and language; not to mention his sincerity," experiences which get Monster, "totally high on Muhammad's revolutionary speech" (215-216). In tandem with Muhammad's message and charisma, Monster cites other formative captivity events that facilitate conversion—a friend on the outside accidentally shoots himself playing Russian Roulette, which Monster associates with the deterioration of his set (217). Later, he is chastised for Black-on-Black violence by Muhammad (219). Lastly, Monster is sentenced to the Rock, Youth Training School's version of solitary confinement, for championing the Muslim services; the skyrocketing attendance from gangbangers causing suspicion amongst the guards (221).

Monster cites confinement in the Rock as solidifying the spirit of *Message to the Oppressed*. While imprisonment restricted Monster to some degree, it was: "a bit too free. But on the Rock, the illusion of freedom vanished, and in its place was the harsh actuality of oppression and the very real sense of powerlessness over destiny" (223). The carceral irony here is clear; as Josephine Metcalf writes: "For the state, prison is the ultimate site in which to repress the black man. For the inmate, incarceration facilities can become the perfect place in which to learn about suppression" (110-111). In seeking the strongest punishment at their disposal, prison officials exert a dimension of power that Kody finds resisted within the very text he is incarcerated with. Malcom X's words



resonate with Monster's warrior mentality: "We declare our right on this earth to be a man, to be a human being, to be given the rights of a human being in this society, on this earth, in this day, which we intend to bring into existence BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY" (223). Paragraphs later, Monster employs the same language of revolution, but inverts the power relationship to comment on the depth of commitment of his oppressor:

most of us grew up in an eighty percent New Afrikan community policed—or occupied—by an eighty-five percent American pig force that is clearly antagonistic to any male . . . displaying this antagonism at every opportunity *by any means necessary* [my emphasis] with all the brute force and sadistic imagination they can muster. (223-224)

Monster disavows total conversion from the Rock; however, a dissonance in identity manifests between Monster's entrenched status as an O.G. Eight Tray Gangster Crip and his escalating identification with Muhammad and Malcom X. Monster asks: "Who is Monster Kody?...*I am Monster Kody...a person, a young man, a black man...Anything else? ...No, not that I know of...What is Monster Kody?...A Crip, an Eight Tray, a Rollin' Sixty killer...a black man...Black man, black man, BLACK MAN...*" (225-226).

Muhammad drives this conversion not exclusively towards Islam, but towards developing a sense of his own Black identity, teaching Monster: " 'When you were born you were born black. That's all. Then, later on, you turned Crip, dig?' " Although struggling to believe in a God, Monster is attracted to "the militancy of Malcom X and Muhammad, not by the spirituality of Islam" (227). Although Monster reports, "In this light I found clarity" (226), the source material for conversion is found within both the Islamic and Afrocentric, and Monster cites an awakening of conscience: "questions of right and

wrong now came to my mind immediately after every action I took” (232). Desiring to represent his set, Monster decides on a neck tattoo spelling out “Eight-Tray”—not in vogue for gang members in 1983—that furthers the “voice” of the set through a non-violent method. Monster Kody writes: “I wanted to make a statement for the set somehow, someway. But I didn’t want to do it in a physical manner, which seemed uncharacteristic of me. Actually, it was uncharacteristic of Monster” (232-233). His transformation in-motion, yet incomplete, this split in consciousness signifies a break in identity where the yet-named person of Sanyika references the alternate behavior of Monster.

Between his release from Y.T.S. and his next arrest, Monster deals drugs, smokes PCP, and procures a “hot” .38 pistol with “three or four” murders on it (245-246, 252-253); however, some form of personal change is visible to Monster’s set: “ ‘You seemed to have slowed down some,’ Huck [a gang acquaintance of Monster’s] said with a look of ‘I told you so’ on his dark face” (259). A paragon of leadership in his set, Monster is called on to quash rising tensions with the Hoover Crips. This potential conflict is useful as a case study in competing ideologies, for meanwhile, Muhammad, the cleric from Y.T.S., has reengaged Monster to develop his revolutionary identity alongside the Muslim faith: “Muhammad asked if I would attend Salat with him the following day. I agreed. He left me with two books—*Black Panther Leaders Speak* and *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*” (254). Monster digests their content, but when the discord Monster plans to settle with an organized fistfight is complicated by the Rollin 60’s attack on the Hoover Crips, Monster comfortably slips back into gangland warlord. Finding members of the 60’s in an alley, Monster, “let them get about twenty-five feet

before standing and taking aim. ‘GANGSTA!’ I yelled, and squeezed the trigger. Some ran, some fell, and others hollered” (268). Kody is arrested again when a .25 automatic is found in his mother’s house (278) landing him in County Jail in the 4800 Module, a Crip sector. Sequestered in this den of comrades and Crip-foes, Monster Kody encounters the expanding C.C.O. discussed in previous sections; an effort by senior Crip leadership to organize the warring sets, both in-prison and outside, around a group of core principles—at least one of those being a restraint from Crip-on-Crip violence (291). Monster also comes to “overstand” that his warrior disposition is best employed towards a cause:

Banging had taught me that I like the feeling of fighting *for* something. My greatest enjoyment from banging came from the sense of power it gave me. To be armed and considered dangerous felt good, but to stand in my turf that I fought to make safe was the climax of banging for me. So I knew that whatever I did after banging had to involve fighting for power and land. (278)

Monster Kody demonstrates a long path to his conversion rather than a single, Paul of Tarsus moment; however, Monster’s intervention in a fight between his two cellmates—B.T. and Fat Rat—is a strong indicator of the flux in his ideology tipping away from a historically Crip identity. Monster Kody believes B.T. deserves the assault as B.T. had been ostracized by his set for “inactivity” (292); further, Monster Kody has born witness to many street horrors that would make Fat Rat’s physical and sexual aggression just another story. However, it is only when Fat Rat—speaking to Monster after tying up B.T. in their shared cell, urinating on B.T., and preparing to rape him—names the inspiration for his aggression as “slavery” that Monster feels compelled to intervene. Fat Rat says: “ ‘I read that in a book befo’, ‘bout how the slaves wasn’t ‘loud to have clothes or wash they self so they lost they self...esteem, yea, that’s it. So I took his self-esteem, see?’ ”

(299). Monster responds: Naw, Rat, I can't let you trip that hard. Don't do cuz like that. . . . Stall cuz out, Fat Rat" (300). When Monster's competing worldviews—an established Crip philosophy that could accept this violence as just desert, and an influx of thought via Muhammad and Malcom X that Black-on-Black violence, especially with an expressed inspiration of slavery, is reprehensible—collide, Monster Kody acts on the latter; a decision that evidences the upper hand of his burgeoning New Afrikan ideology.

Upon transfer from Chino to Soledad, Monster Kody affirms his loyalty to the C.C.O., " 'I ain't left the set, I just think that we could be stronger combined as a nation than as a little set. After all, we all Crips' " (337). Further, Monster has internalized elements of Muhammad's teaching, "I ain't ashamed of being black, I know I come from Afrika. I am a soldier for my people, all citizens of the C-Nation" (338). Transferred to San Quentin, Monster Kody introduces himself as "Sanyika," and, "instructed those who knew me as Monster to call me by my Kiswahili name. The transformation had begun, and I made a conscious effort to make attachments, connections" (347). Similar to Wakefield who strategically forges alliances that benefit her captivity experience, Sanyika aligns himself with New Afrikans who teach him Kiswahili, math, and cultural studies (347). Sanyika takes on a leadership role in the C.C.O. and cites Castro, Mao Tse-tung, Amilcar Cabral, Ho Chi Minh, Kim II, and George Jackson as deepening his ideology; authors that "we read and were expected to write a book report about" (348). However, Sanyika's frustration with the C.C.O.'s ideological grounding is piqued, "I still wanted to know what movement we were attached to, and I complained to the cadre commanders about it. What was our goal as an organization, and who were we trying to

liberate? . . . I am an extremist, so I took our revolutionary premise seriously” (349). As the C.C.O. begins to dissolve—“We were making the same mistakes that the Black Panthers had made” (349)—Sanyika discovers the New Afrikan Independence Movement through Muhammad:

It gave me answers to all the questions I had about myself in relation to this society. I learned about how our situation in this country was that of an oppressed nation, colonized by capitalist-imperialists. I saw then that all the talk of the C-Nation was actually an aspiration of our nationalistic reality. Once I overstood the New Afrikan ideology and pledged my allegiance to the Republic of New Afrika’s independence, I began to see Crippling in a different light. (352)

Recognizing that a revolutionary consciousness focused towards the Crips was missing the bigger picture of “our nationalistic reality,” six months later, now in Folsom prison, “Talib and I left the Crips and threw our lot in with the Independence Movement” (352).

Sanyika’s exodus from the Crips takes three years to sufficiently affect gangland’s perception of him (355). Revising his position on gangbanging—“It is . . . the extreme expression of hopelessness in New Afrikan communities: misdirected rage in the form of retarded resistance”—is one indicator of his shifted identity. Recognizing it would be a “betrayal” to not honor the sacrifices of his ancestors by working towards unity is another (357). Sanyika identifies members in his community to influence, greeting them in Kiswahili; they, in turn, inform him of the “capitalism” that has hit the gang world—the influx of dope and automatic weapons into the neighborhood (365-367). Invigorated by a sense of fatherhood—“Absentee fatherhood was despicable . . . I can’t imagine having children and not being able to raise them, to live with them”—Sanyika’s behavior and physical appearance reflect his change. Long since he had, “given up on weights in exchange for a sleek, defined, limber body,” and now, “usually wore a red,

black, and green fez, a black t-shirt, and black fatigues bloused over my combat boots. This was my standard attire in 1988 and 1989, long before hip-hop made it fashionable” (356, 372-373). Faced with the news that his closest gangbanging road-dog, Crazy De, sits on death row, Sanyika visits his old friend. Their paths in life have diverged. When their visiting time is over, Monster reports: “we simultaneously saluted each other—my salute was a clenched fist and his was the Eight Tray sign. The final chain had been broken ” (377).

#### Equivalences Revisited: Monster Kody, Tookie, Wakefield, and Rowlandson

Across four disparate narratives a common trajectory emerges: that of forcible removal from familiar territory in a season of sovereign conflict, resulting in involuntary detainment at the will of the captor. Agency, for the four narrators, is restricted and yet not removed. Each narrator demonstrates their own unique stages of acclimation towards their new environment, exercising what character dispositions, force of will, educational improvement, relationship building, and personal economic effort they are able to in order to prolong their own survival. In those efforts, each narrator reports shifts of their own identity as their pre-capture beliefs must reconcile to the new normal of captivity. Unique dynamics and notable differences are found in each narrative. Monster Kody is incarcerated, but has a release date on his sentences. Rowlandson and Wakefield hear conflicting reports of their possible release; they understand they possess bartering value, but are aware they could be killed if deemed necessary by their captors, or if they fall victim to unsanctioned violence. Tookie’s captivity is capped with an execution sentence, but he holds out hope for pardon. However, each narrative features agents acclimating to

an imposed powerlessness while shaping their limited influence to best advantage their state of captivity. Rowlandson, Shakur, and Wakefield's narratives are composed post-freedom; Tookie's is penned while he still hoped for clemency. These stages of composition assist in framing a final discussion with respect to incarceration memoirs homogeneity within the "true accounts" segment of the captivity genre.

#### Veracity: Authentic Narrators, Marketability, and Personal Stake

As each narrative reports common themes so do they share an avenue for criticism: the truth of the narrative. Lines of inquiry may interrogate the circumstances of production and what mediating presences influenced the content of the captivity account, assess how marketing forces impacted the presentation and delivery of the narrative to its readership, and ask what rhetorical strategies, or even ulterior motives, affected the narrator's selection, suppression, or exclusion of events. A representation of these arguments is necessary, however full coverage extends beyond the scope of this work. Notably, though provocative charges may be levied against each individual account, these underlying questions constitute an additional equivalence between incarceration memoirs and the captivity genre. Even in a scenario where a given account was proved to be fabricated outright, that narrative would necessarily be stripped of its positive truth value, but remain in the captivity genre by virtue of its content; albeit as a newly classified work of fiction. Thusly, that incarceration memoirs can be subjected to similar lines of criticism as Indian captivity narratives is congruous to the overall aim of reconsidering the former as a segment of the captivity genre.

Charges of intermediary forces tampering with the account have been discussed in this work with regards to *Sovereignty*; drawing on historical and textual evidence, Billy J. Stratton argues that *Sovereignty* is not properly attributable to Rowlandson as Increase Mather exercised sufficient directorial control to render him the author. Stratton does not argue that Rowlandson was not captured, but that the narrative, couched in one woman's tale on the goodness of God, was penned to marginalize Native people and justify colonial purpose. However, not every outside influence necessarily harbors such specific intent. Barbara Becnel—Tookie's editor, champion, and liaison to the outside world—reportedly discussed the general structure of each chapter with Tookie, then would transcribe his drafts as Tookie read them via phone, edit them, and send them back to Tookie to review and approve (Metcalf 38). While Becnel claims that Tookie's writing had advanced when drafting *Blue Rage* to “written entirely on his own and that she [Becnel] merely offered only brief revisions,” (Metcalf 38), these circumstances of production, and that *Blue Rage* was initially published through Becnel's Dammali Ltd, placed significant narrative influence into Becnel's hands. While questions concerning authorship are not a primary objection to *Blue Rage*, the truth value of certain claims have been contested by gang scholars. For example, gang expert Alex Alonso “refuses to believe the contents of *Blue Rage*, claiming that PCP . . . medically caused chronic memory loss” (Metcalf 118). Elsewhere, Alonso has criticized the accuracy of Tookie's claim to co-founding the Crips with Raymond Washington as Washington's Crips were active for several years before Tookie became involved (Krikorian). The impact of this claim—used by Tookie himself—is undeniable. In a book about transformation, the



subtitle reads “Crips Co-Founder and Nobel Peace Prize Nominee”<sup>20</sup> — “Crips Co-Founder” resonating with *Blue Rage* as much as “Nobel Peace Prize Nominee” supports *Black Redemption*. Careful labeling of this nature adds a weight to the narrative, while also affording marketing and audience receptivity benefits. The subtitle of Rowlandson’s *Sovereignty* — “written by Her own Hand for Her private Life, and now made Publick at the earnest Desire of some Friends, and for the benefit of the Afflicted” — suggests that popular consumption was never the motivation of penning the account, and, subtly, that a captivity memoir written for private use is shielded against claims of untruth. Wakefield, in her preface, indulges similar claims: “when I wrote it [her narrative], it was not intended for perusal by the public eye. . . . Secondly, I have written a *true* statement of my captivity . . .” (241). In *Monster*, the subtitle “The Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member” accomplishes comparable aims, parlaying a general assumption that “autobiography” can only be a true account. Further, Metcalf notes a disagreement between Shakur and his publisher, Morgan Entrekin. While Shakur, “wanted to focus his book on the history and development of contemporary ganges, Entrekin specified that Shakur should persevere with an autobiographical approach” (37). Further, Metcalf notes that, “Shakur wanted to use the title *Can’t Stop, Won’t Stop*, but Entrekin argued for the usage of *Monster: The Autobiography of an LA Gang Member*, highlighting the power relations at play between author and publisher,” as well as demonstrating what Metcalf calls a “keen awareness” of the relationship of the truth of texts like *Monster* to their popular acclaim (37). However, contrary to the implicit truth value contained in

---

<sup>20</sup> Touchstone 2007 edition

“autobiography,” some scholars, such as David Brumble, have turned a suspicious eye towards *Monster*, arguing that, “it is unlikely that Kody did all the killing he claims to have done” and citing Malcolm Klein’s point that “Gang members *talk* violence a great deal; they *do* violence far less” (Brumble 164). Further marketing and production considerations as tied to commercial success can be found in the cover image selections for *Monster*, *Blue Rage*, and Leon Bing’s pioneering gang text *Do or Die*. This latter title features an extremely muscular Monster Kody shirtless with sunglasses and a machine gun. Several editions of *Monster* features variations on this image, some cropping out his weapon and portraying a shadowy, ominous presence instead. This cover image can be contrasted with Tookie’s on the cover of *Blue Rage*. Metcalf cites an interview with Barbara Becnel where, “Becnel confirmed that she did not have final input on the marketing and design for the Simon & Schuster cover, though she did fight to prevent the company from using a picture of Williams in handcuffs for the newest edition . . .” (39). The resulting cover image is a muscle-bound Tookie, cleanly shaved but for a groomed goatee, with a contemplative expression. The disparity between these images speaks to marketing aims, but also authorial intent. Though converted from Monster Kody, Sanyika maintains a warrior persona as there is little incongruity with this identity and his new revolutionary ideology; Sanyika’s memoir can accommodate an image sensationalizing his violent past as he still presents himself as a soldier; albeit newly reformed.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Unique among the four narrators, a host of post-memoir source material is available featuring Sanyika Shakur, including numerous YouTube video interviews still being published at the time of this writing. Additional lines of criticism to *Monster* arise from

By contrast, Tookie, in solitary confinement with a death sentence, had a vested interest in minimizing society's perception of him as dangerous. His narrative, too, must proceed carefully as highlighting his misdeeds in any perceivable way would be counterproductive when his appeals were reviewed. Comparing the detailed and borderline-celebratory prose in which Shakur recalls his violent acts stands in sharp contrast to the suppressed mentions of violence in *Blue Rage*. When a friend, Buddha, tries to give Tookie a .38 revolver, Tookie protests, though he eventually "grudgingly accepted the gun" (*Blue Rage* 119). When Tookie later procures a 12-gauge riot shotgun, it is "for safety" as he is a "traditionalist" in street gang fighting" (*Blue Rage* 143). However, even hand-to-hand violence is minimized in his narrative, perhaps as Tookie's self-interest is served by glossing over his past. Interestingly, Governor Schwarzenegger referenced a narrative inclusion—the dedication of *Life in Prison*—when rejecting Tookie's appeal for clemency:

The dedication of Williams' book "Life in Prison" casts significant doubt on his personal redemption. This book was published in 1998, several years after Williams' claimed redemptive experience. . . . The mix of individuals on this [dedication] list is curious. Most have violent pasts and some have been convicted of committing heinous murders, including the killing of law enforcement. But the inclusion of George Jackson on this list defies reason and is a significant indicator that Williams is not reformed and that he still sees violence and lawlessness as a legitimate means to address societal problems. (Schwarzenegger 4-5)

Whether Tookie was unaware *Life's* dedication would negatively affect him, or felt compelled to pen the dedication regardless of the consequences, is an open question.

---

doubts about the authenticity of conversion based on this subsequent content, especially media that contains threats or endorsements of violence, alongside additional arrests.

However, it seems clear that there is a narrative freedom that Shakur exercises that is necessarily restrained in Tookie's account.

Writing the memoirs from a place of post-capture is afforded to Rowlandson, Shakur, and Wakefield, and questions around Wakefield's narrative inclusions, as well as whether social justice was the primary impetus for her account, can also be raised.

Wakefield recounts that a hyperbolic comment she made to Captain Grant that she would shoot him if Chaska was hanged was, "reported throughout the state" (301). Wakefield also writes, "I am particular in relating every interview I had with him [Chaska], as many false and slanderous stories are in circulation about me," including the "horrid, abominable reports" that Wakefield was "in love; that I was his [Chaska's] wife; that I preferred living with him to my husband" (303-304). Wakefield admits that reckoning with these rumors is one intent of her account, but renders this line of argument as a secondary purpose: "They [her captors] were kind to me, and I will try to repay them, trusting that in God's own time I will be righted and my conduct understood" (313).

Additionally, Wakefield's own guilt at Chaska's unjust fate may be a mobilizing factor in formalizing her account. Wakefield convinces Chaska he will be safe, and he takes her at her word. Begged by Chaska's mother to visit him while jailed, Wakefield, who, "knew it would make me feel sad to see those who had been so kind to me tied together like beasts, and felt that they would reproach me for not trying to assist them . . ." finally visits Chaska (304). There, she is chastised by Chaska who reminds Wakefield of his kindness towards her family. Wakefield reports she "at last convinced him that I was not to blame for his imprisonment," and their parting handshake is the last time Wakefield

sees Chaska (305). Wakefield does not explicitly name guilt as a generative force in writing, but this dynamic is important enough that she attends to it in her narrative.

The preceding discussion is incomplete, and long form treatments have been, or could be, written towards each of these inquiries. One reason for the importance of interrogating the authenticity of captivity accounts lies in how truth-value affects audience receptivity. Insofar as the account is considered “true,” readers may absorb the account and form beliefs about the content. When there is much at stake in how “true” captivity accounts are digested, as Stratton argues in *Buried in Shades of Night*, this scope of examination is necessary. Thusly, as “true” and even “authentic” accounts *Blue Rage* and *Monster* have their dissenters; nevertheless, these criticisms, do not debunk these texts’ status as captivity accounts, but establish another commonality shared with traditional captivity narratives.

## Conclusion

As I have endeavored to show, two L.A. gangbangers and two Christian settlers, though separated by centuries, underwent the mutual experience of being plucked from their established world and forced into a new paradigm of captivity. Despite extreme differences in their worldviews as Puritan pastor's wife, jovial homemaker, legendary Crip icon, and young gangbanger putting in violent work toward O.G. status, each of these narrators is profoundly marked by their captivity experience, undergoing a sundering of their established sense of self, and a process of regeneration towards a new identity. Taking place within an active and complicated context of violent conflict, each narrator is held by enemy forces; and yet, as the narratives show, sometimes the enemy cooks you food (Rowlandson 82), hides you in a teepee when danger is near (Wakefield 263), refuses to lock you in the Hole (Shakur 326), and lays down old grudges in favor of reconciliation (Williams *Blue* 278). That is, captivity presents complex human experiences and interactions that demand precision in their reporting; a metric met with varying degrees of success by the narrators in these four accounts. United, however, in their relation to danger and unfamiliarity, the narrators are forced into a position of robust redefinition of their experience and established worldview; each equipping her or himself with activity and purpose in order survive. Rowlandson busies herself with trade and

Bible study, and in distress, frames her personal captivity as her “Wilderness condition,” deferring to God to both sustain her and supply meaning through loss; Rowlandson’s textual identification with Job should not be glossed over too quickly, for as God allowed Satan to smite Job’s fortune, He renewed with even greater blessing; an implicit extension in the invocation of this Biblical forefather. Sarah Wakefield, fretful but intuitive, opens herself to friendship naturally by her own disposition, but is also an opportunist, building rapport wherever it may advantage her in the protection of her and her children. Tookie uncovers a sense of self that’s buried beneath his “dys-education,” and works against the psychological vice-grip of his own impending execution to improve his knowledge and impact his pre-conversion gang community. Monster Kody passionately rallies other incarcerated Crips and “puts in work” to raise his rep; however, this identity is chipped away over multiple captivities by the persistence of Muhammad, friendships he makes while in captivity, and a revision in perspective concerning the application of violence, gang life, and familial priorities; a process of evolution towards an invigorated sense of New Afrikan identity.

Ultimately, each captivity story leads to conversion. Monster Kody’s “overstanding” shifts his identity to Sanyika Shakur; freeing him from his commitment to the Crips and redirecting his warrior energies towards New Afrikan ambitions. Tookie, from an original state of “dys-education” promotes anti-gang initiatives for the remainder of his life. As these two narrators report, their conversion is an explicit paradigm shift from an inherited, racially oppressed worldview into a revised perspective of their own Black identity, history, and regard of their cultural experience. Locating epistemic

development as the cause of this conversion, especially while the narrators grapple with a very real carceral frame, is harmonious with Foucault's conception of the relationship of power; that it can be reckoned with, and in a power relationship, a sovereign cannot exercise a totality of control over agency. Contrary to this epistemological propelling towards conversion in the incarceration memoirs, Rowlandson adopts a posture of submission, seeking to understand her captivity only to the extent that she relinquishes its context and purpose to the guiding hand of Divine mystery and providence.

Rowlandson's conversion, then, takes as its measure of success the degree to which she perseveres through faith in that state of Divine ambiguity; working to show herself approved so long as God's mercy and preservation is bestowed upon her. Sarah Wakefield's relationship to knowledge, however, stands as observer to her sovereign's past misdeeds paired against a counter-narrative of Native kindness afforded by her captivity experience. While having to campaign against rumors amongst her own kinfolk and community, her invigoration by the injustice done to Chaska is afforded a platform with her narrative, thus evidencing a transitional role in the regard of power when she levies charges of murder and neglect against her own sovereign.

As I have argued, these narratives bear the essential quality of a captivity experience along with many other thematic and textual similarities, including the overlap of common objections concerning the circumstances of their production. This coterie of equivalences ultimately satisfies one supposition of the genre's essential quality: "when pared down to its essence, the genre is all about power and powerlessness" (Dernounian-Stodola xii). As critical attention is growing in scope on penalty, its justifications, its



successes and its failures, it is my view that incarceration memoirs, like those of Shakur and Tookie, participate in this conversation. Further, I suspect that many other existing incarceration memoirs—and new accounts forthcoming as popular focus continues to shift towards incarceration—will enrich the captivity genre while simultaneously benefitting from the critical insight the genre affords.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998. Print.
- Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press, 2012. Print.
- Alonso, Alex. *Territoriality Among African-American Street Gangs in Los Angeles*. MA thesis. University of Southern California, 1999. Los Angeles: 1999. Print.
- Apess, William. *Eulogy on King Philip, As Pronounced at the Odeon, in Federal Street, Boston*. Boston, 1836. *Sabin Americana*. Gale, Cengage Learning. University of Denver Libraries. 26 Jan. 1836. Web. 17 Feb 2016.
- Bell, Derrick. "Racial Standing." *The Derrick Bell Reader*. eds. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefanic. New York: New York University Press, 2005. 299-304. Print.
- Boyle, Gregory. "LAPD Must Drop CRASH in Order to Regain Public's Trust." LATimes.com. *Los Angeles Times*. 27 Sept. 1999. Web. 20 Feb. 2016.
- Brown, Dee. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West*. 4th ed. New York: Owl Books-Henry Holt and Company, 1971. Print.

- Brumble, H. David. "The Gangbanger Autobiography of Monster Kody (aka Sanyika Shakur) and Warrior Literature." *American Literary History* 12.1 (2000): 158-186. *Project MUSE*. Web. 3 Mar. 2016.
- Carroll, Lorraine. "Captivity Narratives." *American History Through Literature 1820-1870*. 3 vols. Eds. Janet Gabler-Hover and Robert Sattelmeyer. Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2006. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. Web. 3 Mar. 2016.
- Clarence-Smith, William G., and David Eltis. "White Servitude." *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*. Vol. 3. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 132-159. Print.
- Cockburn, Alexander, and Jeffrey St. Clair. *Whiteout: The CIA, Drugs and the Press*. London: Verso, 1998. Print.
- Corwin, Miles. "The Shooting That Didn't Kill Westwood." Zocalo Public Square. Arizona State University. 1 Aug. 2014. Web. 28 Apr. 2016.
- Davis, Mike. *City of Quartz*. 1990. Reprint. London: Verso, 1991. Print.
- Delgado, Richard and Jean Stefanic. *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*. New York: New York University Press, 2012. Print.
- Derounian-Stodola, Kathryn Zabelle and James Arthur Levernier. *The Indian Captivity Narratives 1550-1900*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993. Print.
- Derounian-Stodola, Kathryn Zabelle. Introduction. *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives*. Ed. Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola. New York: Penguin, 1998. XI-XXXV. Print.

- Domanick, Joe. *To Protect and To Serve*. New York: Pocket Books-Simon & Schuster, 1994. Print.
- Drimmer, Frederick. Introduction. *Captured by the Indians: 15 Firsthand Accounts, 1750-1870*. Ed. Frederick Drimmer. New York: Dover, 1985. 8-21. Print.
- Ek, Auli. *Race and Masculinity in Contemporary American Prison Narratives*. New York: Routledge-Taylor & Francis Group, 2005. Print.
- English Standard Version Bible*. *ESVBible.org*. Crossway. Web. 3 Apr. 2016.
- "First Readings 2015." *Library.Brown.edu*. Brown University, 2015. Web. 05 July 2016.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. 2nd ed. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage-Random House, 1995. Print.
- Franklin, H. Bruce. Introduction. *Prison Writing in 20th-Century America*. Ed. H Bruce Franklin. New York: Penguin, 1998. 1-18. Print.
- Garcés, María Antonia. *Cervantes in Algiers*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2002. Print.
- Gates, Daryl. *Chief: My Life in the LAPD*. New York: Bantam-Random House, 1992. Print.
- Gilgamesh: A New English Version*. Trans: Steven Mitchell. New York: Free Press, 2004. Print.
- Glionna, John M. "A Murder That Woke Up L.A." *Los Angeles Times*. The Tribune Company. 30 Jan. 1998. 1-4. Web. 20 Feb 2016.
- Howell, James. *The History of Street Gangs in The United States*. Lanham: Lexington-The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2015. Print.

- Krikorian, Michael. "Tookie's Mistaken Identity." *L.A. Weekly*. Voice Media Group, 15 Dec. 2005. Web. 08 July 2016.
- "L.A.P.D. Blues - Interview with Daryl Gates." *PBS Frontline*. WBGH Education Foundation, 27 Feb. 2001. Web. 20 Feb. 2016.
- "L.A.P.D. Blues - Interview with Gerald Chaleef." *PBS Frontline*. WBGH Education Foundation, 28 Feb. 2001. Web. 20 Feb. 2016.
- Matar, Nabil, and Rudolph Stoekel. "Europe's Mediterranean Frontier: The Moor." *Shakespeare and Renaissance Europe*. Eds. Andrew Hadfield and Paul Hammond. London: Thomas Learning, 2005. 220-252. Print.
- Metcalf, Josephine. *The Culture and Politics of Contemporary Street Gang Memoirs*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012. Print.
- Pearlman, Ann, and Colton Simpson. *Inside the Crips: Life Inside L.A.'s Most Notorious Gang*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2005. Print.
- Rowlandson, Mary. "*The Sovereignty and the Goodness of God by Mary Rowlandson with Related Documents*" 1686. Ed. Neil Salisbury. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1997. Print.
- Rolston, Simon. "Conversion and the Story of the American Prison." *Critical Survey* 23.3 (2011): 103-118. *ProQuest*. Web. 17 Feb. 2016.
- Salisbury, Neil. Introduction. *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God by Mary Rowlandson with Related Documents*. 1682. Ed. Neal Salisbury. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1997. 1-60. Print.

- Schwarzenegger, Arnold. "STATEMENT OF DECISION: Request For Clemency By Stanley Williams." Los Angeles: State of California, 2005. Web. 8 July 2016.
- Shakur, Sanyika. *Monster: The Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member*. New York: Grove Press, 1993. Print.
- Smith, James. "Prisoner of the Caughnawagas." *Captured by the Indians: 15 Firsthand Accounts, 1750-1870*. Ed. Frederick Drimmer. New York: Dover, 1985. 25-60. Print.
- Smith, Sidonie, and Julia Watson. *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2010. ProQuest. Web. 18 Mar 2016.
- Starr, Kevin. *Coast of Dreams: California on the Edge, 1990-2003*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf-Random House, 2004. Print.
- Stratton, Billy J. *Buried in Shades of Night: Contested Voices, Indian Captivity, and the Legacy of King Philip's War*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2014. Print.
- Turner, Frederick Jackson. "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." *The Early Writings of Frederick Jackson Turner: With a List of All His Works Compiled*. Ed. Everett E. Edwards. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1938. 183.229. eBook.
- Valdemar, Richard. "Dawn of the Crips." *Police Magazine*. 2007. May 09. n. pag. Web. 25 Mar. 2016.

- Wakefield, Sarah. "Six Weeks in the Sioux Teepees." *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives*. Ed. Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola. New York: Penguin, 1998. 24-313. Print.
- Washburn, Frances. Foreword. *Buried in Shades of Night: Contested Voices, Indian Captivity, and the Legacy of King Philip's War*. By Billy J. Stratton. Tucson: U of Arizona P, 2014. xi-xiii. Print.
- Williams, Stanley Tookie. *Blue Rage, Black Redemption: A Memoir*. New York: Touchstone-Simon & Schuster, 2007. Print.
- . *Life in Prison*. 1998. Reprint. San Francisco: SeaStar-Chronicle Books, 2010. Print.