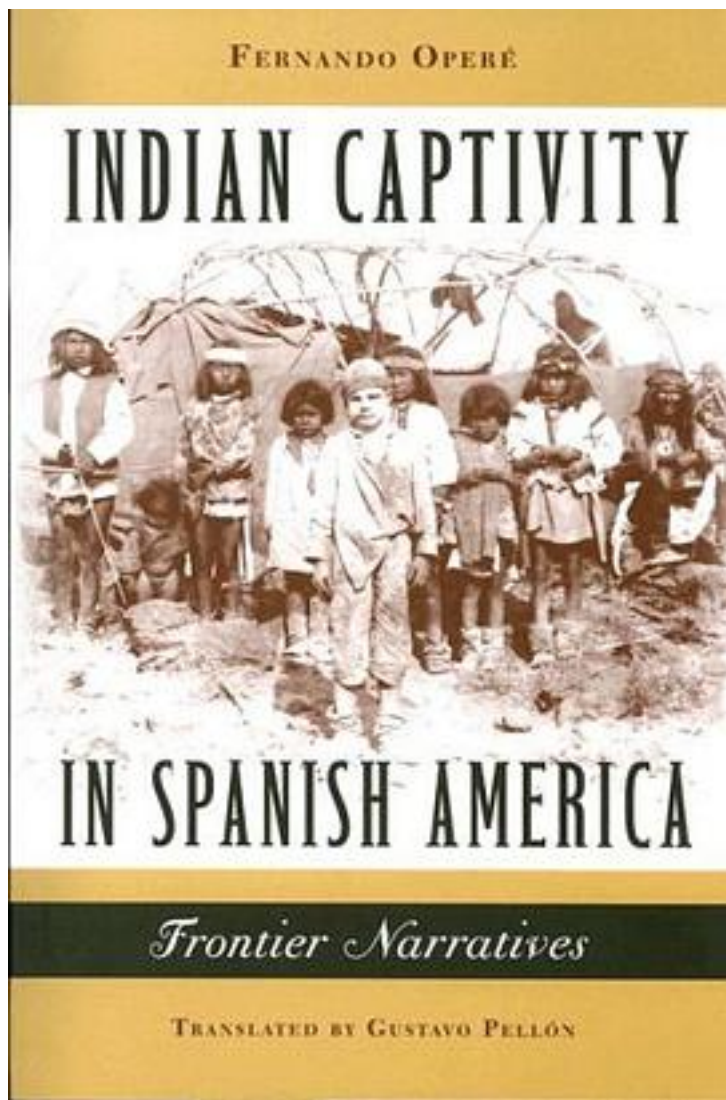


Indian Captivity in Spanish America



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Even before the arrival of Europeans to the Americas, the practice of taking captives was widespread among Native Americans. Indians took captives for many reasons: to replace -- by adoption -- tribal members who had been lost in battle, to use as barter for needed material goods, to use as slaves, or to use for reproductive purposes. From the legendary story of John Smith's captivity in the Virginia Colony to the wildly successful narratives of New England colonists taken captive by local Indians, the genre of the captivity narrative is well known among historians and students of early American literature. Not so for Hispanic America. Fernando OperA(c) redresses this oversight, offering the first comprehensive historical and literary account of Indian captivity in Spanish-controlled territory from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. Originally published in Spanish in 2001 as *Historias de la frontera: El cautiverio en la AmA(c)rica hispAnica*, this newly translated work reveals key insights into Native American culture in the New World's most remote regions. From the "happy captivity" of the Spanish military captain Francisco NuAez de Pineda y BascuAAAn, who in 1628 spent six congenial months with the Araucanian Indians on the Chilean frontier, to the harrowing nineteenth-century adventures of foreigners taken captive in the Argentine Pampas and Patagonia; from the declaraciones of the many captives rescued in the Rio de la Plata region of Argentina in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, to the riveting story of Helena Valero, who spent twenty-four years among the YanomamA in Venezuela during the mid-twentieth century, OperA(c)'s vibrant history spans the entire gamut of Spain's far-flung frontiers. Eventually focusing on the role of captivity in Latin American literature, OperA(c) convincingly shows how the captivity genre evolved over time, first to promote territorial expansion and deny intercultural connections during the colonial era, and later to romanticize the frontier in the service of nationalism after independence. This important book is thus multidisciplinary in its concept, providing ethnographic, historical, and literary insights into the lives and customs of Native Americans and their captives in the New World.

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