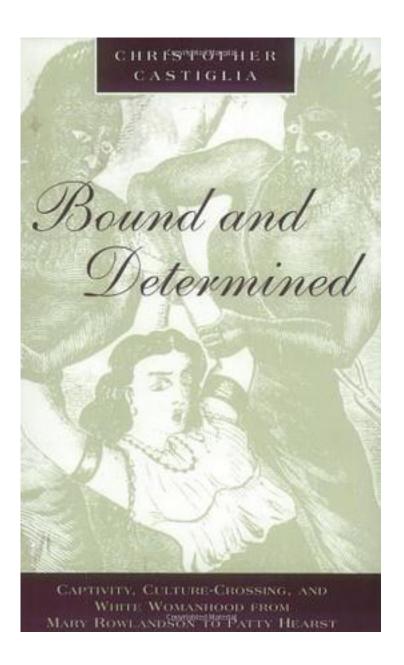
Bound and Determined



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出版者:Univ of Chicago Pr

出版时间:1996-2

装帧:Pap

This work provides an analysis of a tradition of American women's captivity narrative that range's across three centuries, from Puritan colonist Mary Rowlandson's abduction by Narragansett Indians to Patty Hearst's kidnapping by the Symbionese Liberation Army. Examining more than 60 accounts by women captives, as well as novels ranging from Susanna Rowson's 18th-century classic "Rueben and Rachel" to modern mass-market romances, the author investigates paradoxes central to the genre. In captivity, women often find freedom from stereotypical roles as helpless, dependent, sexually vulnerable and xenophobic. In their condemnations of their non-white captors, they defy assumptions about race that undergird their own societies. Castiglia questions critical conceptions of captivity stories as primarily an appeal to racism and misogyny, and instead finds in them an appeal of a much different nature: as all-too-rare stories of imaginative challenges to rigid gender roles and racial ideologies. Whether the women of these stories resist or escape captivity, endure until they are released, or eventually choose to live among their captors, they end up with the power to be critical of both cultures. Castiglia shows that these compelling narratives, with their boundary crossings and persistent explorations of cultural divisions and differences, have significant implications for current critical investigations into the construction of gender, race and nation.

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