

History and Fiction: Demos's *The Unredeemed Captive*. By Xaq Frohlich.

1) In several scenes in *The Unredeemed Captive*, Demos takes license to write a speculative passage about what might have happened (e.g. p. 108-109, 189-190). In this scene, Demos tells us that the evidence only shows with certainty that the encounters took place, but leaves the historian with little else. Should the reader trust Demos's speculations-interpretations in these passages? Does his close reading of materials and deductive recreation of these historical characters give him greater authority to do so, or are such passages best left to the imagination of the reader? These passages are in some respects simply longer free-interpretations than similar "subjective" interpretations that take place throughout. How is this interpretation different from standard historical biographies where the biographer reads into the minds of those they study? Is Demos's opening salve, "I wanted to write a story," a caution to the reader that the work is part fiction, or just a call for a more narrative, engaging approach in writing history?

2) Building on the interpretive fiction concern mentioned above, how might we as readers reinterpret events that Demos presents us? For example, throughout the book there is a subtle argument that Eunice's "captivity" was one of choice, and that the choice might have reflected her preference for the Indian's life to that of the Colonists. There is compelling evidence for this in the fact that Eunice continued, despite repeated efforts and her increasing maturity (and presumably freedom), to remain with her husband, the tribe, and the Catholic Church. But is it possible that these "facts" obscure Eunice's inner thoughts, rather than clarify them? In the first speculative passage (p. 108-109), I was left wondering if what Eunice suffered was not a disassociation from her father, but rather Stockholm Syndrome. In this scene Demos sees fit to give Eunice the free will to choose the Indians over her father. Jump forward thirty-odd years (p. 197) and we find Eunice "obliged" by her tribe to visit her brother in response to the guilt-trip he lays on them. Why could the tribe compel Eunice (when she is an adult) when she somehow seems less compelled in the earlier scene (as a child)? I wonder if in these moments of interpretation, Demos is writing history rather than uncovering it. Again, is this more problematic—due to his convincing, guiding narrative style—than "regular" historical accounts?