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Acclaimed historian James McPherson is highly respected in the historical community and has published several works which attest to his understanding of the accounts of the past and the lesson they tell. His book recounting the events that occurred before, during and after the Civil War, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, won a Pulitzer Prize and has been called one of the greatest historical narratives that deals with the subject. Whether the text deserves the praise it has received is a topic of great debate, a debate that has been published in several reviews that span several mediums.

Having read the articles in support of and with criticism towards *Battle Cry of Freedom*, I find myself approaching the text with a concerned skepticism. Originally, after reading the praise provided in the New York Times book review, I viewed McPherson's writing as a well researched and well presented historical narrative with slightly biased undertones. Apart from the skimming over of a few details and the misuse of the term "revolution" the review claims that McPherson's account of the civil war "is the best one-volume treatment of its subject." Having already read chapters eight and nine I couldn't agree more.

After reading the online blog, however, I began looking at the text in a much more critical light. The blog states that McPherson greatly under-exaggerates important details in his contingency based approach. He states that if important events that lead to the North's victory had ended up in the South's favor that the Confederacy could have had a legitimate opportunity to win the war. As the blog states, this notion completely ignores the vast superiority the North had in industrial ability to produce weapons and its much greater numbers in military population.

The primary reasoning for my concern with the text came from the Amazon reviews. It was much less apparent before reading these that McPherson had such a strong bias against the South, having a good versus evil approach to the Union and Confederacy.

McPherson leaving out important details such as black soldiers fighting in the Confederate army and his misinterpretation of the Dred Scott case left me especially skeptical of the apparent lack of objectivity present in *Battle Cry of Freedom*.

With both an appreciation for McPherson's style of narration and an understanding of where his text lacks strength I believe that I can learn a great deal from the book while understanding it is not a perfect account.

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