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After reading the articles and Amazon reviews about our text book *Battle Cry of Freedom*, I plan on approaching the book with an open mind. While the reviews were varied on their opinions of James McPherson's account of the Civil War, I did notice a few consistencies among them which were worth noting.

There seems to be a general consensus in all three sources that McPherson wrote the book from a biased viewpoint. It seems most of the people who reviewed it felt as if he wrote it from a Unionist point of view, portraying the North as the more favorable of the two. I feel this issue is the one which worries me most when it comes to the historical accuracy of the book. In order to get an accurate portrayal of historical events, it is necessary to come at it from an unbiased viewpoint.

I also noticed a few of the reviews pointed out facts which were wrong in the book. For instance in the New York Times review the author says "there never was such a place as the 'Kingdom of Palermo.'" In one of the Amazon customer reviews, the author of the post points out what he or she feels are inaccuracies on five different pages in the book. However considering the text is 904 pages in length; I feel the mistakes this customer pointed out seem rather miniscule in comparison.

I will admit once I read the reviews, I googled Mr. Dave Thomer of *This is Not News*. I wanted some background information on him so I could better judge his knowledge of the subject of historical textbooks. The only credentials I could find for him were those on his Amazon profile. In which he stated he is "a third year PhD student in Temple University's philosophy program." I suppose since he is a scholar of sorts his opinions should hold some weight in the appraisal of McPherson's book. I do not know who wrote the review for the Times, but the publication itself gives the article merit. Despite having minimal knowledge of what qualifies these two critics of the text, I trust their reviews the most. Both reviews are well written and clearly a lot of thought was put into their critique of McPherson.

As for the reviews on Amazon, we are given no indication of the background of the customers who wrote them. The authors of these posts could be history buffs, professors, or just bored housewives, so while I will keep the opinions of these consumers in the back of my mind, I will not let them affect the way I approach the book.

I have a fair amount of confidence in *Battle Cry of Freedom* being our main source of historical information. Even though the reviews were not all favorable, it seems no one disputed McPherson's knowledge of the Civil War. Not to mention it was chosen by a professor of History as the required textbook for the course, so that bolsters my confidence in the book as well.

Nice work.

Philosophy vs History interesting

Amazon?

or to be already aware of a potential bias.

compare to Amazon

excellent

- thanks

Really well written
Jennifer
glad to have you back "in class"
Mook message on 4/12
Can I use your paper "A" anonymously as an example for future students?