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McPherson Assignment

Have you ever heard a rumor about someone's character you've never met that caused you to form an opinion of them, and then you meet them and they are not like what that person claimed them to be at all? It's happened to me, and as I grew older I have tried to keep an open and nonjudgmental mind with others, especially when meeting someone new. I don't want someone else's experience, whether it good or bad, taint my own, so I have learned to disregard other's opinions and allow myself to experience what I would if I had never heard anything about them at all. *- negative?*
~ ok, but I'm scared right now...

Just as I am with other's reviews of individuals, I'm a little apprehensive about reading reviews for a book or movie before I decide to read or watch them for myself. Everyone has their own experiences in life and different levels of knowledge about the world and the countless events that have taken place, giving us different perspectives from which we view things. If I allow myself to approach a book from their perspective I am often disappointed that I did not experience the same thing they did. I find myself thinking about what they said, waiting for the part they discovered to be noteworthy, not really enjoying the book freshly as it unfolds. Nevertheless, since I am required to read the *Yes!*
 suggested reviews on *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* by James M. McPherson, for this class, I can only try to approach the book in the same manner. However, I couldn't help but notice after reading all of the reviews I found myself putting more trust in the first review from the New York Times than all the other reviews. The writer of this review caught my attention with their enthusiasm over the book in comparison to all others they read of its kind, and their description of McPherson's literary style in how it was lucidly written with vivid details that bring the past to life. These are things I can appreciate *— why?*
 knowing before reading a book. The reviewer found some discrepancies, but it wasn't enough to discredit the book entirely or hinder him/her from giving praise to the book and author. I even started to think that books on historical events might be an exception to my rule when it comes to reading reviews before hand, for the simple reason that I don't want to be misinformed and should see how accurate other's found them to be. Secondly, with factual subject matter it is also just as important to me for the book to be engaging and compelling to read so it keeps my attention and makes it easier to remember, because I am horrible with remembering facts. *— why? what if it doesn't live up to the hype?*
so critiques about style & readability would be helpful?

I don't know how I ever made it this far without learning much about the Civil War, or remembering that I ever learned anything about it; I will be reading this book with a clean slate and hoping it will hold my attention enough to give me some sustainable knowledge of the war. The issues I will be most worried about historical accuracy will be the cause that started the Civil War and what roles slaves and slavery played in the war. Between the reviews I read and the fact that this book was chosen for this course, I'm feeling pretty confident that it will do its job in educating me about the Civil War. I know I will definitely finish this course knowing more than I do now, which I will give it two thumbs up for that!

It seems you'd rather have written the paper on "not prejudging" & why not to read reviews, rather than analyzing my questions (we need them) & the 3 separate sources well. [2/3rds of the word count & paper length was off topic]