

From reading reviews of our text book we are able to approach our assigned reading with foreknowledge of the author's bias. The New York Times article quoted "these defenders of the South doth protest too much," from McPherson and stated that "[it] is a horrible solecism." Hugh Brogan shows that pro slavery Southerners are the aggressors and that Lincoln was the great leader in the narrative Battle Cry of Freedom. Brogan also states that though the author is obviously pro Union he both praises the Confederacy and offers criticism for the Union, or at least certain individuals on either side. The third reviewer source, the Amazon.com book reviews, widely agrees that McPherson looks back on the history of the civil war in a relative or modern framework. Also one Amazon.com book reviewer points out that McPherson's knowledge of West Virginia may be slightly off and the reviewer poses the question "if he does this badly on one small area how can you trust him on anything else?" Without seeing the names and credentials listed from Amazon.com book reviewers it is important for me to take their factoids with a grain of salt, at least he or she concedes that McPherson states his sources often. The main issue that I would worry about McPherson's historic accuracy is whether or not he chooses to negate facts about the civil war while showing his bias for the Union. It's difficult to believe that he would win a Pulitzer prize for a single volume civil war history book by making up any facts but it isn't too far of a stretch to think that McPherson may leave out things that he didn't like. As far as which source I would trust the most to review our text book, it's a toss up between the New York Times article and Hugh Brogan's "Byline." The New York Times is a widely accepted news source for a lot of people, however, the author of the article, and his credentials, are unknown to me. Hugh Brogan wrote a book that I've never read that has the word "History" in it, his legitimacy is about as big a mystery as the author of the NYT article. Amazon.com book reviews are helpful when trying to get a consensus as to whether or not folks like a book, the reviewers' opinions carry about as much validity as mine though, they are anonymous people reviewing a book on the internet. I'm fairly

confident that the text you have chosen for our class will be interesting and largely based on historical fact, the book is twenty-six years old and has held up to scrutiny since it's publishing back in 1988. I don't mind the idea of reading a text who's bias lies on the same side as my own, had McPherson glorified the Confederacy I probably wouldn't be as interested in reading his book.

I feel like I should add that the first shot fired in the civil war is covered on page 275 apparently, which I think is why we're starting on chapter 8. Also the author of the NYT article found the names of chapters seven and eight inappropriate because he or she didn't see Lincoln's coming into power as a revolution in the same way they saw Stalin's 1917 takeover in Russia as a revolution.