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History 209

Assignment #1

01/11/14

Through reading many reviews of *Battle Cry of Freedom*, by James McPherson, I have come to quite a few conclusions about this work. First, I have decided to approach this book with an open mind. Many of the reviewers complained of biases on McPherson's part that detract from the facts about the war. There were many reviewer issues with his supposedly anti-southern sentiments, one example being that slavery was (and is) the main cause of the Civil War. I have decided that I will approach this intimidating volume with a desire to analyze it in the best way I can. Whenever I peruse reviews of anything, from books to bars to restaurants, I take each review with a big grain of salt. I am the type of person who likes to know what I'm getting myself into, so I can then form my own opinion. So, when it comes to this book, I am going to approach it with an open mind, and a hope to expand on my limited knowledge of the Civil War.

In approaching this work with an open mind, I also need to remember that our biases can affect our work. I trust that this work was chosen because of its accuracy and depiction of the war. However, I am also aware that McPherson's personal biases could have had an impact on this work. Again, I am going to keep an open mind, reminding myself to double check any information that I feel is not fully accurate. If I need to take the time to do some additional research, I am willing to do that in order to gain the most from the reading and to have a deeper understanding of various aspects of the civil war.

I have very hard time trusting any reviews and/or reviewers because I feel that all of these people have some sort of bias. As I mentioned, I take any review with a grain of salt, and I have done the same with these. I feel inclined to appreciate the New York Times book review the most because of the authority behind it. However, the review itself was challenging to read and took time analyzing itself. For that reason I also appreciate the reviews by "regular" people because feel that I can relate more on a personal level to these people and thus can grasp more of what they are trying to express. I do find that their reviews often lack a level of intelligence and understanding that I have a hard time getting past when I am reading their reviews. All in all, I can appreciate what the reviewers have to say, but I will form my own opinion of this book and everything it has to offer.

At this point, having read a couple of chapters and many reviews of this text, I am confident that this book was chosen for this class because it contains information necessary to the study of the Civil War. I am just a novice, seeking to gain more knowledge of this event; I have to trust that experts in this field would not lead me astray

in my efforts to learn all that I can. I am going to dive head first into this text and all other materials that are presented in this class, so that I may begin to develop a great understanding of this war and its consequences. I am sure there are many more resources out there that can further help me comprehend the many facets of the Civil War, and I can seek out any information that will help me cultivate deeper knowledge of our country's history.