

Christopher
columbus: should he
still be embraced?



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Essay #1: Non-Fiction Compare/Contrast Essay

Christopher Columbus: Should he still be embraced?

Introduction

Barbara Ransby wrote an article called “ Columbus and the Making of Historical Myth” in 1992, this article brought forth the truth about Christopher Columbus that had never been told which began a vast argument about whether Christopher Columbus should be celebrated or not. In 2018, Jacob Marie, wrote the article “ Why we should still celebrate Columbus Day”, which discussed if Columbus’ actions should not be held to today’s standards of equality and morality, and that he should still be embraced as a great explorer and hero.

Thesis Statement

Compare and contrast the approaches that Ransby (1992) and Marie (2018) used to make their arguments, the techniques they used to support their opinions, and the evidence they submitted. Moreover, the flaws in their methods and the prejudices in their beliefs will be evaluated.

Ransby (1992) implemented the deductive reasoning model by providing proof that Christopher Columbus was an anti-hero, and that the way he was portrayed was a manufactured story to make people believe that he was a hero. Ransby (1992) posed many small pieces of evidence that supported the greater picture she was attempting to paint in regard to how Columbus had been made to sound like a hero for generations. An example that Ransby (1992) presents suggests that “ Columbus introduced the slave trade

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in the Americas. When he was unsuccessful in his desperate search for gold and other riches in the islands of the Caribbean, he began sending human cargo back to Spain instead" (p. 11). Ransby (1992) begins her dispute with Columbus and the fictitious legends that have been told by unveiling the truth that had been hidden about Columbus' violence and cruelty. Ransby (1992) goes onto say that Columbus began white supremacy and that Andrew Jackson a President of the United States " engaged in the campaign to finish off the process of Native American genocide" (p. 11). Ransby's (1992) dispute was to enact change in what we have been led to believe and to give justice to those who suffered and perished at the hands of Columbus. Ransby (1992) enforces the notion that until the truth is revealed those who suffered these great atrocities will not be at peace and that they will continue to suffer until justice is served.

On the other hand, Marie (2018) also implemented the deductive reasoning model, and his key argument was that we should recognize Columbus' achievements and that it is " hard to understate how important Columbus' discovery of the Americas was" (Para. 6). Marie (2018) enforced his main idea with evidence that without the Europeans entering the Americas, the native people would never have been able to become so technologically advanced. He also goes on to say that the Europeans enhanced living conditions for the natives by implementing progressive technology (Para. 7).

Marie (2018) began his argument of how Columbus was usually portrayed as a hero. Unfortunately, He did not argue in objective terms but rather made subjective claims. Though Marie (2018) makes some rather persuasive points, they do not hold and cause for testability. Marie (2018) does not side

whole heartedly against the awful acts that Columbus haters talk about but rather gives them another perspective on a few of their arguments, such as the deaths of natives due to Columbus bringing disease and the destruction it caused (Marie, 2018, para. 8). Marie (2018) talks about how yes, the disease was introduced by Europeans when they came ashore however, even they did not use it as a weapon, nor did they actually fully comprehend how the disease was spreading or why the native people were so susceptible to it compared to the new world people. Effectively, Marie (2018) states it would not be right to accuse these travellers for something they had no hand nor any intent in.

Marie (2018) reminded the readers about how life was in the 15th century and that “ Columbus and the other European explorers were products of a violent time. War was just a fact of life, as was the subjugation of conquered peoples.” (para. 10). Marie (2018) makes a valid point that people must look at their actions as they were occurring in their era and not the 21st century, as these acts are what has led to the beliefs and rights that people have today. Marie (2018) goes on to talk about how people should look at the native people’s practises, saying that they were as ruthless and aggressive as any of the claims posed to Columbus and his men (para. 10). Marie (2018) goes on to say that though historians and archaeologists are not quite sure of the specifics on the new world, they all conclude that the native people were prevalent in fighting wars, savagery and even the practice of human sacrifices unlike the old-world Europeans (Para. 10).

Ransby (1992) ran a few experiments where she read through roughly 30 social studies textbooks published in the mid to late 1900’s in an attempt to <https://assignbuster.com/christopher-columbus-should-he-still-be-embraced/>

better understand Columbus' stories, her findings confirmed her viewpoint that they do not talk about the wrong doings of Columbus but rather just hide the truth behind a wall of lies. The experiment allowed Ransby (2018) to prove and measure the reliability of her evidence making it a more compelling argument overall. She despises the way Columbus is portrayed in children's books as all it does is represent Columbus as a hero who was courageous, and because of him we know the world as it is today. The children's books exclude the horrific events native people had to endure once he found the new world. Ransby (2018) closes her argument by saying that the writers of these books take a selective tactic that only shows Columbus' best parts or they refrain from exposing the full extent of his crimes. (Ransby, 1992, p. 11).

In Ransby's writings she provides excellent proof to help solidify her argument, she does not just give the reader accusations on why she believes Columbus was not a hero as he was portrayed. Ransby (1992) effectively paints a picture of the unspeakable acts Columbus had committed whilst also putting together a compelling argument which allows the reader to be emotionally vested. Where as on the other hand Jacob Marie proposed opinions with a lack of solid evidence which makes his argument significantly shakier and unpersuasive. Marie's points almost seemed to be out of a piece of literature which supported Columbus and his actions. Marie (2018) suggests that many professionals believed that the native population were barbaric and almost led to a view point that they deserved to be treated in that way. This view point is flawed for the basis that each nation solves their difficulties in different ways and that this was their way of resolving conflicts,

and that wars were not ongoing for unjust reasons. People cannot assume that they fought for the fun of war.

Marie (2018) used naturalistic fallacy to describe the tribes as warlike and barbarian. He mentions human sacrifices in an attempt to make the reader feel appalled at their actions and thus getting the support of the reader. This is a shocking way to gain the readers support as it attacks the native people and undermines what they had to endure. Marie (2018) did not present any hard evidence to support his main ideologies but rather just repeated what we have already been told in books and in classes.

Ransby's article though very well written, was also packed with shortcomings and failings. She oversimplified her stance on Columbus and his men using fallacies to portray them as horrible individuals who were the only cause of the native people's suffering, she compared one individual as bad and another as good, which in itself is a fallacy. Ransby (1992) continues to implement fallacies in her text by implementing the false cause fallacy. She presumes that one thing was the ultimate cause that led to another thing when she compares a hand full of sailor's testimonials as a representation of the entire fleet.

Ransby (1992) attempts to reach out to the empathetic side of the reader throughout the article to reach her end goal of stripping Columbus' title of hero and labeling him as a barbaric monster. Ransby (1992) should have also spoken about the good that came from the expeditions, not just the negatives, this would have allowed for a better understanding of the situation. The 15th century was a very messy place where humanity wanted

to explore and discover new lands and conquer regions in the names of their kings, but also wanted to spread their beliefs, knowledge, and technology upon the world for the better. Every action has multiple consequences and writing about one side of the story inevitably undermines the remaining story. In order to be fair and unbiased, writers and historians must cover all sections of a story excluding any personal attachments or beliefs in regard to the matter at hand. This allows the reader to formulate an idea that is their own and that is not swayed by other viewpoints.

Conclusion

Jacob Marie believes that you should not prosecute an individual by today's rules and regulations when they occurred hundreds of years ago. This justification was to make people think that times were different and to look at it from the perspective of the era it happened. His dispute required appropriate proof to ensure his claims were legitimate which Jacob Marie failed to do, making his dispute subjective and lack the effectiveness required to convince an audience. On the other hand, Barbara Ransby provided substantial proof on Columbus and criticized all the Columbus supporters with evidence that was measurable and valid. Comparing both the authors, Barbara Ransby displayed superior arguments when it comes to critical writing, however the writing can still be expanded by allowing for a two-sided approach to the story rather than only enforcing one side of the story.

References

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