

Grade 9 Answer

Source Utility Question

8
Marks

Question:

How useful is Source A to a historian studying attitudes towards the development of the vaccine. (8 marks)

Answer:

Source A, a cartoon by James Gillray published in 1802, is useful to a historian studying attitudes towards the development of the vaccine because it provides insight into the reactions to Edward Jenner's smallpox vaccination. In 1796 Jenner took cowpox pus from a milkmaid and put it into a cut on James Phipps' arm. Phipps became mildly ill with cowpox, and when he was later given pus from a smallpox victim he did not become ill, proving that cowpox gave people immunity against smallpox. The cartoon satirises fears that the cowpox vaccine would cause people to develop cow-like features, reflecting the skepticism and resistance toward vaccination in the early 19th century. The exaggerated depictions of patients sprouting cow parts demonstrate the irrational fears and widespread misinformation about the effects of the new medical procedure, showing public anxiety and the influence of anti-vaccine sentiments. The provenance of the source also increases its usefulness. As a well-known political and social satirist, Gillray aimed to capture and exaggerate popular concerns, and the date of publication, 1802, is significant as it coincides with the early introduction of Jenner's vaccine, providing a snapshot of the immediate public response.

However, the cartoon's satirical nature limits its reliability in terms of factual accuracy. Gillray's intent was to mock and entertain, not to provide an objective account of public opinion or scientific developments. As a result, while it is a valuable source for understanding the resistance and misconceptions about vaccination, it does not provide a balanced view of attitudes, especially those of the medical community who supported Jenner's work.

In conclusion, Source A is highly useful in revealing negative and exaggerated public attitudes towards vaccines during the early 1800s as it offers key insight into the fears and anti-vaccine attitudes that were prominent in society during the early stages of vaccine development.

Feedback:

This answer would get 8/8 marks because the pupil has given a judgement of the utility of the source, giving supporting factual knowledge and commenting on the provenance of the source. They have explained each point in depth, kept a focus on the question, and given an overall judgement.



Source A

Source A: A cartoon by English caricaturist James Gillray, who was famous for his political and social satires. It was published in 1802. It reads: The Cow-Pock,-or-The wonderful effects of the new inoculation!



The Cow-Pock — or — the Wonderful Effects of the New Inoculation! — Vide. — the Publications of y^e Anti-Vaccine Society.

[<https://www.themorgan.org/blog/cow-pock-or-wonderful-effects-new-inoculation>]