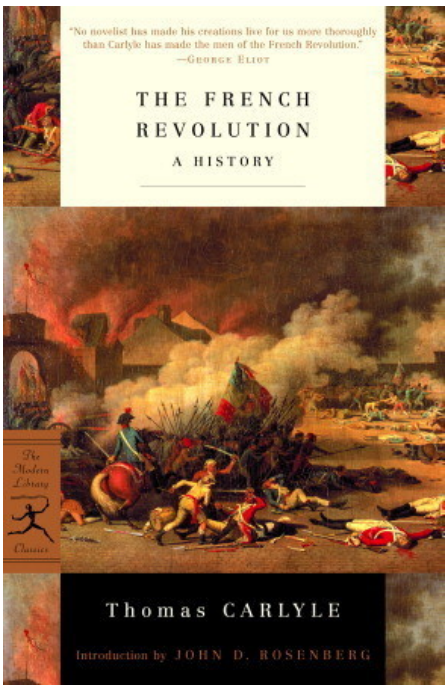

The French Revolution: A History (Modern Library Classics)

Thomas Carlyle , John D. Rosenberg (Introduction)

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The book that established Thomas Carlyle's reputation when first published in 1837, this spectacular historical masterpiece has since been accepted as the standard work on the subject. It combines a shrewd insight into character, a vivid realization of the picturesque, and a singular ability to bring the past to blazing life, making it a reading experience as thrilling as any novel. As John D. Rosenberg observes in his Introduction, *The French Revolution* is "one of the grand poems of [Carlyle's] century, yet its poetry consists in being everywhere scrupulously rooted in historical fact."

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The French Revolution: A History (Modern Library Classics) Details

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From Reader Review The French Revolution: A History (Modern Library Classics) for online ebook

Melodee says

This book is not what I expected. I was truly interested in finding out about the French Revolution. Instead of presenting facts, the author chose to use very flowery, Romantic language to describe everything. People were referred to by nicknames, so half of the time, I didn't know who he was referring to. There were so many metaphors and French words that my Kindle couldn't translate. I'm not sure why I read the whole book. It seemed to take me forever. I will probably have to read another book about the Revolution to really find out what actually happened.

Lucy says

An astonishing piece of work especially when you consider the circumstances of its writing. Apparently Dickens kept it by his side when writing TO2C...I can believe it. Not a book I would consult for dry facts, but unbeatable for sense of rising terror and loss of control. All you people with this on your to-read list - do it now.

Joseph says

This book is so full of detail and depth that it feels so real. Dickens based his novel A Tale of Two Cities on this book which he called 'wonderful' in his introduction. If you read it, you'll be inspired too!

Rozzer says

Regardless of a society's state of literary development there are always, I'd assume, new and different ways of addressing its literary possibilities, some fruitful and some dead ends. People experiment and some succeed. The attempts of others fall by the wayside for whatever reason. And so we come to Thomas Carlyle, offspring of a Scots peasant family who wound up exploding his way through British literary life in the second quarter of the 19th Century.

It wouldn't be easy to identify Carlyle's literary ancestors, at least for me. He came to the cultural fore at a time when his adopted country's literary language had become terribly convoluted and precious, relying for effect on verbal complications that would send many future readers into states of somnolence indistinguishable from sleep. Carlyle's choice was rather plain. Either begin to simplify, whether obviously or in a restrained manner, or go them all one better.

And Carlyle chose the latter, launching out into an individual prose style even more dense and impenetrable to modern readers than Shakespeare. To read and enjoy Carlyle when he was publishing was in a manner to demonstrate one's cultural superiority in a way similar to but more complicated than being able to understand Greek and Latin tags. At the time, this proved not only literary competence on the part of the reader but a

degree of moral superiority identified with such ability.

Carlyle's works met with great success in his day. Others at the time were happy to buy what he was selling. But no one, then or later, was willing to imitate him (with minor exceptions such as Doughty). The main streams of British prose ultimately became much simpler.

And so we get to Carlyle's French Revolution. There are, of course, an almost infinite supply of books about the French Revolution. It turns out to have been, in a sense, a universal event both appealing and interesting to huge numbers of people throughout the world in all succeeding times. Which is why I tried to make it perhaps the sixth or seventh or eighth French revolutionary history I've read.

And failed. Carlyle's language, for me and only perhaps for you, is so dense and difficult, so impregnated with entirely foreign manners of speech and writing (such as the historical present tense from French), so deep-dyed in impenetrably obscure references, as to be completely resistant to a satisfactory and acceptable reading rhythm. And this from a person, myself, entirely happy reading Sir Thomas Browne, Robert Burton and Doughty.

For all I know Carlyle's scholarship is perfect. He may well have had and displayed in this work an exact knowledge of all facts and personalities in play in 1789 and both before and after. If he didn't give me consistently severe headaches, I'd have seen him through. As it is, I have to believe that all those who speak in his favor are either out of their minds or still shooting for the aforesaid cultural superiorities so attractive to readers in Carlyle's own day.

Charles Gonzalez says

I gave it 5 because it was one of the most original books I have read; that is was written over 100 years ago makes its adventurous and passionate approach to the subject even more amazing. As other reviewers have stated, this is not the book for a blow by blow history of the French Revolution....don't think Carlyle intended it to be; then he was writing about the the biggest political revolution of his time, less than 30 years in the past, as recent as if a writer today was to write about the Russian/Afghan war of the 80s. It seems immediate, opinionated, passionate almost breathless in presentation. I almost felt part of the story, or at least a bystander to the drama unfolding to a country that had seemed asleep at the wheel for decades. Having read on the French Revolution before, the names and events were not foreign, though for someone who has not had any reading on the subject before it will probably be overwhelming and confusing. But the characters that I knew from traditional linear told histories of that time came alive in Carlyle's hands, the illustrations in my late 19c edition, most of a surreally painful and frightening mien bringing his words greater intensity and meaningfulness.

I am glad I finally challenged myself to read it, though it took me longer than I expected because of concurrent readings and because the writing, while so expressive, is almost too much at one sitting. That is to be expected in a 19c. expose of the French Revolution, but does not take away from my feeling that this work is the masterpiece that history and reputation has given it.

Bruce says

Despite its age, now nearly two hundred years old (it was published in 1837), and its idiosyncratic style, Thomas Carlyle's history remains an important insight into the French Revolution. For the reader desiring a unique perspective on the event and a unique example of historiography, this is a book not to be missed.

The story of the writing of the book is itself of interest. Carlyle's friend John Stuart Mill was commissioned to write a history of the French Revolution but was overwhelmed with other work. So he asked Carlyle to write it instead, turning over all his books on the subject to him. Carlyle worked on it feverishly, and when he had finished the first of its three long volumes he sent the only manuscript to Mill for his comments. But Mill's housekeeper, thinking the manuscript was wastepaper, used it to start a fire in the stove, destroying the only extant copy. Carlyle went on to finish the final two volumes and then rewrote the first volume from memory.

Eschewing the objective and unemotional style of Gibbon, Carlyle instead chose to write an impassioned work from the perspective of an imaginary citizen of France during the events described. The result is a gripping epic, written in poetic language that often reminded me of the work of Blake, that presents the full panorama of the years 1789-1795 in all their agony, vividness, confusion, and turmoil, the vicissitudes and personalities that shaped events, and the domestic and international movements that swept across the country again and again, precipitating changes in policy and direction, involving the King, the nobility, the Church, and the common people in an atmosphere as exhilarating as it was horrifying. He plumbs reasons behind events, acknowledging those elements that seemed then and seem today inexplicable. He also provides trenchant philosophical reflections and observations well worth the considering. Yet throughout this compelling style of writing, Carlyle bases his work on original sources, documenting them within the text.

Because Carlyle's style is so unique and vivid, as many readers might be repelled by it as are enchanted. Here is one example:

"What generous heart can pretend to itself, or be hoodwinked into believing, that Loyalty to the Moneybag is a noble Loyalty? Mammon, cries the generous heart out of all ages and countries, is the basest of known Gods, even of known Devils. In him what glory is there, that ye should worship him? No glory discernable; not even terror: at best, detestability, ill-matched with despicability."

It is hard not to read such a work with its emphasis on economic inequality, women's rights, mob psychology, political machinations, and personal venality without reflecting on our own time, our own culture and society. It is also interesting to compare events in the France of the time with those in America only a decade or so earlier.

I found this book fascinating and compelling. Be it noted that Charles Dickens was inspired by this book to write his own novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*. Those readers interested in one thoughtful and articulate Englishman's view of events in France four decades later will not want to miss Carlyle's monumental work.

Alice Poon says

At last I've come to the end of this lengthy book! I won't deny that there were times when I wanted to abandon it, because the style of writing is quirky and polemic and the tone unabashedly self-righteous. I just wish there were other more readable historical works out there about this cataclysmic phase of French history.

Having said that, I'm glad that I persevered to the end. With all its shortcomings, it is still a marvelously researched, all-round account of historical events and characters, beginning with the last days of Louis XV's reign and ending with the emergence of young Napoleon Bonaparte as a shrewd artillery officer. As much as the book offers copious factual details, off-putting was the author's obvious bias towards monarchy and his almost belligerent prejudice against "the seagreen" reformer, Maximilien Robespierre, and his Republican principles, which were based on Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Social Contract*. The French commoners didn't get murderously incensed with the monarchy, the nobility and the clergy for no reason. Social grievances had been allowed to fester for far too long and the privileged class had been too callous towards the oppressed. All that was needed was a spark to set off the conflagration.

It would seem to me that in the latter stage Robespierre and his Jacobins were literally backed into a corner, pressured both on the inside (with an empty state coffer and a hungry populace hankering for bread) and the outside (with France being attacked on all sides by its predatory neighbors). Sadly the extremely complex and dire political circumstances drove him to paranoia and jittery suspicion which made him succumb to his allies' ill advice of resorting to the guillotine to eliminate opponents. His vanity and hubris probably played a part in blinding him too.

With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that the French Revolution, though dearly paid for with 4,000 civilian lives, did have a crucial part in blazing a trail in the quest for more accountable and fairer governance in the following decades, leading ultimately to a democratic Third Republic in 1870.

Elisa says

Holy mammoth of a book!

I have mixed feelings about this one...

I stuck with it for two months and I don't hate it. But I didn't love it either. I really liked it once I finished it, though. The thing about these types of books is that, once every 10 pages or so, along comes a sentence that dazzles you with its brilliance. And that sort of thing keeps me hooked.

Carlyle is not objective at all and more than a bit ironic. His hatred for Marat is unsurpassed and I couldn't quite figure out if he was with or against Robespierre until the end.

You need to know quite a bit about the French Revolution, though, to understand it. I understood about half of it, but I enjoyed the ride, nonetheless. Lots of people paraded through these pages whom Carlyle mentioned by their nicknames (most of them made up by Carlyle, I think), so it's hard to keep them all straight.

This is how I can sum up this book: it reads like a passionate, eloquent, long-winded 19th century-style monologue. Somebody should do a summary and put this baby on the stage.

Rick says

Carlyle is a verbal riot, an elegant, organized, vivid compound sentence of a riot swarming over the personalities and events of the Revolution. According to Carlyle, Voltaire once demanded of his countrymen, “What have you invented?” Carlyle replies for them, “The Art of Insurrection. It was an art needed in these last singular times: an art, for which the French nature, so full of vehemence, so free from depth, was perhaps of all others the fittest.” Carlyle says little directly but few things without a sting. “Men beat, the wrong way, their ploughshares into swords.”

He adorns observation with wit and a pungently skeptical voice that, despite its skepticism, can find a seed in the ash. “For if there be Faith, from of old, it is this, as we often repeat, that no Lie can live forever. The very Truth has to change its vesture, from time to time; and be born again. But all Lies have sentence of death written down against them, and Heaven’s Chancery itself; and, slowly or fast, advance incessantly towards their hour.” Even short sentences ring like aphorisms. “Through all time, if we read aright, sin was, is, will be, the parent of misery.” And: “Hope deferred maketh the heart sick. And yet, as we said, Hope is but deferred; not abolished, not abolishable.”

The French Revolution is a large book and don’t undertake it unless you remember far more about the French Revolution from high school and college history courses than I did. I had to stop forty or so pages in to read Simon Schama’s *Citizens* because Carlyle assumes you know something. But once that deficiency was taken care of, it was all reward.

About a quarter of the way in Carlyle defines the Revolution as “the open violent Rebellion, and Victory, of disimprisoned Anarchy against corrupt worn-out Authority: how Anarchy breaks prison; bursts up from the infinite Deep, and rages uncontrollable, immeasurable, enveloping a world; in phasis after phasis of fever-frenzy” until the frenzy burns itself out. The lessons for a modern reader are many. There is this: “Alas, my Friends, credulous incredulity is a strange matter. But when a whole Nation is smitten with Suspicion…. Such Nation is already a hypochondriac bundle of diseases; as good as change into glass; atrabiliar, decadent; and will suffer crises. Is not Suspicion itself the one thing to be suspected, as Montaigne feared only fear?”

In this sentence he captures the personality of the fundamentalist, secular or godly, “Of incorruptible Robespierre it was long ago predicted that he might go far, mean meager mortal though he was; for Doubt dwelt not in him.” Doubt is a check on excessive zeal. Remove the doubt and history shows that there is not much that cannot be justified in the name of Truth by those who lack Doubt (but have a fragile faith). Not that too much doubt is a good thing. The hapless French king is overwhelmed by the crisis and seems incapable of any action, including flight. “Honour what virtue is in a man. Louis does not want courage; he has even the higher kind called moral-courage, though only the passive half of that.”

After Louis, the French government continues on its course of leveraging a nationalism that seeks its enemies at home and abroad and Carlyle observes, “All dogs have their day; even rabid dogs.” The revolution has become a rabid dog. “Two great movements…agitate this distracted National mind: a rushing

against domestic Traitors, a rushing against foreign Despots. Mad movements both, restrainable by no known rule; strongest passions of the human nature driving them on: love, hatred; vengeful sorrow, braggart Nationality also vengeful,--and pale Panic over all.” It’s a blood ailment without a cure, only an end.

Before Orwell, he notices the role of euphemism. He describes an act of well-praised mob violence, concluding: “This is the September Massacre, otherwise called ‘Severe Justice of the People.’” The Severe Justice moves from enemies of the State to friends of the Monarchy to aristocrats to property owners to moderate revolutionists to anyone suspected of any reluctance to stand with the most radical of the revolutionists. Death sentences are passed on those “Suspect of being Suspect.” One enemy of the Republic taunts his executioners, “I die on the day when the People have lost their reason; ye will die when they recover it.”

Carlyle is brilliant and rewarding and timeless. There are two notes of optimism at the book’s end. One speaks to evil and one to love. First evil—“all Evil, Injustice, is, by nature of it, dragon’s teeth; suicidal, and cannot endure.” But what hell, as Carlyle documents, it is while it does last. But, “the beginning of all Thought, worth the name, is Love; and the wise head never yet was, without first the generous heart”.

Sud666 says

I was looking for a good book on the French Revolution to fill in some holes in my knowledge. What I received was a slightly tortuous journey into a hybrid of Shakespeare and Boetius. Is this a classic work of prose? Absolutely. Does it deserve to be listed with great historical works a la Gibbon or Plutarch? Sure. Is it a good book to pick up and read to learn about the French revolution? Absolutely NOT. The prose is painful without any of the graceful utterances of Shakespeare. I read the first several chapters and had only a vague understanding (from the book-not my previous knowledge) of what was going on in terms of historical fact. So much time is spent deciphering his painful prose that any knowledge of the actual events of the Revolution falls by the wayside. Important historical characters are introduced and events mentioned without any explanation of WHO they are and WHAT happened, as if context has no meaning to this man. As a work of English literature it deserves a high standing (4 stars), as a historical document of the late 1700's showing a British perspective of the Revolution (4 stars) but as a well written engaging history of this epochal historical event it is awful(2 stars). I was not going to even write a review since I never finished the book (something I rarely, rarely do). I will go look for a better written history of the revolution. For "purists" who think this is a great historical book- may I suggest they read Tuchman's Guns of August? That is wonderful prose, engaging story, written as a "novel" while providing stunning accuracy, superb historical research and is easily readable whether one is learning about the subject or just wishes to read a good book. Carlyle's magnum opus should be relegated to the shelves of late 1700's English books versus being looked at as the seminal historical work. This work has far more appeal to an english major than a history major. I may revisit this book at a later time to be read as classic literature but as I was looking for a good book on the French Revolution I will return to the library and find something else to read.

William West says

There's so much to hate about this “classic” that I almost feel a little queasy saying that, at the end of the day, I do think its a great work... of a sort.

Carlyle was a nineteenth century “liberal,” which then as now means basically a conservative. He was thus horrified by the French Revolution's “excesses”- both the, I would say, excess of random carnage it eventually gave way to, and its attempts at legitimately egalitarian reform. To his credit, Carlyle makes absolutely no attempt at objectivity. Indeed, this is that rare work of “history” that seems to proclaim objectivity a farce. In that sense,the book, published in the mid-nineteenth century, was quite ahead of its time. The writer presents himself as a man out of time, positioned on the streets of Paris as they were before he was born. A lone man trying his best to understand momentous events as they happen, and taking time out to sermonize about them. His language is that of a person on the street, employing slang, epithets, low humor, and yet it is prose of the highest caliber. I've heard Carlyle's style described as “proto-Joycean”, and at the very least this is a for-runner of stream-of-consciousness writing. Indeed, few books I've ever read struck me as such a personal encounter with their author.

That being said, the author is a brilliant boar. His sympathies lie only with royalty, even though he acknowledges that the monarchy had failed and the time of absolutist feudalism had come to an end. He never acknowledges the atrocities committed by the reactionaries, as if the mass murders committed by the revolutionary government happened in a void. (There were horrific excesses committed by the Jacobins, but they were only fighting fire with fire.) And he's blatantly racist- his half page devoted to the Haitian uprisings is so offensive its comical.

So, beyond its literary value, is there any reason to read this tome? I think so. It became, despite its eccentricity, the “official” history of the Revolution in the United States and western Europe. More than that, I think it the proto-type of all depictions of attempts at egalitarian social reorganizations since the French Revolution meant to assert the hegemony of the reaction. “Psychologize the sovereign!” “Atomize the oppressed!” “Pick an individual bad guy (in this case Robespierre) to root against!”

But I have to say again, Carlye was a talented asshole. His, utterly manipulative, depictions of the royal family's last moments are devastating to read in exactly the ways he wants them to be. And his description of the execution of Robespierre shocked me. After simplistically vilifying the Sea-Green for hundreds of pages he acknowledges, after his agonizing death, that Robespierre was merely an overly-determined man in the wrong place at the wrong time- which is to say, a place and time of momentous change. Carlye was truly a conservative with a tragic sense of life- hateful of change, but also acknowledging its inevitability.

I thought the last paragraph an astonishing little meditation on the relationship between writer and reader. I wish to respond to it personally.

Yes, Carlyle, it has been a long, not entirely pleasant journey we have taken together. I tried to listen to what you had to say, but I disagreed with most of it. I can't honestly say I like you, then again I may never forget you. Farewell.

Ted says

This the most unusual history you are ever likely to read, dear Reader. Not, it must be emphasized, historical "fiction". One may perhaps best call it historical/philosophical Drama.

The work not unbiased recitation of fact; rather, a poetic play, the author shifting perspective and tense, at times most blatantly writing in the first person - plural/present - observing the events of which he writes as they happen. (He, Thomas Carlisle - Scottish philosopher, historian, satirist, essayist, mathematician - born December 1795 – this respected History, still in print, beginning with the death of Louis XV in 1774, ending within that micro-epoch in which the author himself began his path through life and the world.)

Yes, historical Drama – and thus shall I rephrase the Contents as if written for a play, a play in which notable men and women of France act out their part in the history of their Nation. Thus –

We read, with quickening pulse, drawn into the author's fantastic/extravagant/lavish description/remembrance/imagining/testimony/adumbration of the Procession of the 4th of May 1789 – the Procession to the Church of St. Louis, those pages, early in this drama, say Act I Scene IV, which, for unknown reasons, unknown synapses of the memory organ, live most vividly for the reviewer.

> But now finally the Sun, on Monday the 4th of May, has risen; - unconcerned, as if it were no special day. And yet, as his first rays could strike music from the Memnon's Statue on the Nile, what tones were these, so thrilling, of preparation and foreboding, which he awoke in every bosom at Versailles …
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> o o o
>
> Rejoice nevertheless, ye Versailles multitudes; to you, from whom all this is hid, the glorious

end of it is visible. This day, sentence of death is pronounced on Shams; judgment of resuscitation, were it but afar off, is pronounced on Realities. This day, it is declared aloud, as with a Doom-trumpet, that *a Lie is unbelievable.* …

Behold, however! The doors of St. Louis Church flung wide; and the Procession of Processions advancing towards Notre-Dame! Shouts rend the air … The Elected of France, and then the Court of France, they are marshalled and march here … Some Fourteen Hundred Men blown together from all winds, on the deepest errand.

Yes, in that silent marching mass … is a Covenant; they too preside at a new Era in the History of Man. The whole Future is there, and Destiny -ill-brooding over it …

Meanwhile, suppose we too, good Reader, should, as now without miracle Muse Clio enables us - take *our station* … to glance momentarily over this Procession ...

… As we gaze fixedly, do not nameless Figures not a few, which shall not always be nameless, disclose themselves… Young Baroness de Stael – she evidently looks from a window ...

But where is the brown-locked, light-behaved, fire-hearted Demoiselle Theroigne? … who, with thy winged words and glances, shall thrill rough bosoms, whole steel battalions, and persuade an Austrian Kaiser …

Of the rougher sex how … enumerate the notabilities! Has not Marquis Valadi hastily quitted his Quaker broadbrim .. De Morande from his *Courrier de l'Europe*; Linguet from his *Annales*, they looked eager through the London fog, and became ex-Editors - that they might feed the guillotine…

o o o

Surely also, in some place not of honour, stands or sprawls up querulous, that he too, though short, may see - one squalidest bleared mortal, redolent of soot and horse-drugs: Jean Paul Marat of Neuchatel! O Marat, Renovator of Human Science, lecturer on Optics; O thou remarkablest Horseleech, once in D'Artois' Stables – as thy bleared soul looks forth, through thy bleared, dull-acrid, woe-stricken face, what sees it in all this? Any faintest light of hope, like dayspring after Nova-Zembla night? Or is it but *blue* sulphur-light, and specters; woe, suspicion, revenge without end?

… Two other Figures, and only two, we signalize there. The huge, brawny Figure; through whose black brows, and rude flattened face (*figure ecrasee*), there looks a waste energy as of Hercules not yet furibund – he is an esurient, unprovided Advocate; Danton by name him mark. Then that other, his slight-built comrade, and craft-brother; he with the long curling locks; with the face of dingy blackguardism, wondrously irradiated with genius, as if a naphtha-lamp burnt within it: that Figure is Camille Desmoulins … Thou poor Camille, say of thee what they may, it were but falsehood to pretend one did not almost love thee, thou headlong lightly sparkling man! But the brawny, not yet furibund Figure, we say, is Jacques Danton; a name that shall be "tolerably known in the Revolution." He is President of the electoral Cordeliers District at Paris, or about to be it; and shall open his lungs of brass.

We dwell no more on the mixed shouting Multitude: for now, behold, the Common Deputies

are at hand!

Carlyle's farewell to his reader – as could be, eerily, my own:

> And so here, Reader, has the time come for us two to part. Toilsome was our journeying together, not without offence; but it is done. To me thou wert as a beloved shade, the disembodied or not yet embodied spirit of a Brother [or Sister]. To thee I was but as a Voice. Yet was our relation a kind of scared [sic - ?] one; doubt not that! For whatsoever once sacred things become hollow jargons, yet while the Voice of Man speaks with Man, hast thou not there the living fountain out of which all sacredness sprang, and will yet spring? Man, by the nature of him, is definable as "an incarnated Word". Ill stands it with me if I have spoken falsely; thine also it was to hear truly. Farewell.

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Previous review: Robert Frost – Critical Essays
Random review: Cloud Atlas
Next review: Basil Street Blues

Previous library review: The French Revolution *VSI*
Next library review: Paris to the Moon

James says

If you're looking for a humdrum, typical history book, what Carlyle would refer to as a "Dryasdust" (dry-as-dust) History, this is certainly not for you. It contains probably the most poetic prose ever written and is infused with so much of Carlyle's emotion and philosophy. On just about every page you'll find overt or vague references that require a deep knowledge of Roman, Greek and European history and literature to properly appreciate what is being said. A very good understanding of the French Revolution is necessary too.

It seems a lot of the reviewers are criticizing Carlyle for the amount of prerequisite knowledge needed to read this book, but this was something his audience at the time would have had. It will certainly make it difficult for many people today to read, but I don't think it's fair to criticize Carlyle for this. What Carlyle was writing was a sort-of modern Iliad, and in my opinion he succeeded. Partly because of my love of history and classical literature, this book was easy to read and is my absolute favorite. I think it's the pinnacle of literature. But I love all of Carlyle's works and would never give a bad opinion of him so take this for what it's worth.

So if you're looking for something profuse, emotional, dramatic and poetic, this if what you're after. If you

want to know the precise date-by-date facts explicitly describing the social and economic monotony that drove and evolved the French Revolution, look elsewhere.

Nathan "N.R." Gaddis says

Get this. From the Intro ::

"Yet today, Carlyle is rarely read by nonspecialists and only occasionally appears on reading lists within the academy. The causes are many, not least of which is that Carlyle is one of the most allusive and innovative of English prose writers, a kind of proto-Joyce in his incessant verbal coinages, conflation of ancient myth and modern actuality, his labyrinthine narrative strategies and gift for impersonation. It is impossible to 'speed-read' Carlyle, any more than Milton, whose *Paradise Lost* figures on virtually every pages of *The French Revolution*, as do Homer and the Bible. If he is now half-forgotten, his is not the case of a once-inflated popular reputation expiring into decent oblivion, but of meteoric genius now in partial eclipse."

I think I'll want a nicely annotated edition.

Thanks to Friend Nathan of the rec!

Nikolay Nikiforov says

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