Don Nardo, ed. *The French Revolution*. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, Inc., 1999. Pp. 223. Paper, $16.20; ISBN 1-56510-933-3.

The French Revolution certainly qualifies by any standard as a "Turning Point in World History." Its inclusion within the Greenhaven Press series of the same name should distress no one. Yet, identifying exactly what "turned" and why, remains at the heart of an analysis that began with the calling of the Estates General in 1789 and continues to this day. This volume's Foreword (a mere two pages) and Introduction, which are uncredited, go far to define the Revolution as a "turning point," and give a good narrative account of events, but do little to direct readers to any blended answers to these more pivotal questions.

Still, the volume is well crafted. As a collection of essays, the four "chapters" are evenly divided and wide-ranging. First are "Causes" such as early class struggles, the problem of royal debt, the need and desire for governmental reform, poor leadership, and the growing awareness of natural rights. The second section charts "Events in the Revolutionary Process" that are often only loosely connected to these causes. They include the calling of the Estates General, the fall of the Bastille, the Great Fear and the events of August 4, the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen*, and the mixed fates of Louis XVI, Robespierre, and Napoleon. A third chapter adds more depth to these political struggles by relating the "Social and Cultural Aspects of the Revolution," including changes to marriage and divorce practices, the Church, education, and the status of women. In conclusion, the final selections relate the "Impact and Legacy" of the Revolution as seen by three relatively recent scholars.

The research and writing are absolutely first-rate. Combining selections from classic works with newer pieces gives the volume a balance in coverage and eases the historiographical bias that is present in other anthologies. At 139 pages for the 19 entries, the secondary sources can be easily digested within even the ten-week quarter system. An extremely useful addition to the text is a selection of 26 primary sources. Running 43 pages, these entries are principally related to the political history of the Revolution but also support the secondary works. The final sections include a chronology of events, suggested further reading of many more recent titles, and a helpful index to allow readers to access information across the various essays.

These additions, and the book as a whole, will prove beneficial to instructors putting together syllabi, class projects, and lecture notes. For a more detailed, full-course treatment of the French Revolution, however, the book is too sparse for any discriminating analysis of the causes, key events, social and cultural changes, or legacies of the great conflict. For example, while nationalism and the rising role of the state is a major factor in the Revolution, little direction is given here to aid students and instructors in posing such questions. Still, the book would be an excellent addition to

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a survey or term course dealing with the French Revolution as part of a larger appreciation of Europe during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

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David Stevenson. *The Outbreak of the First World War: 1914 in Perspective.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. Pp. xiv, 72. Paper, $10.95; ISBN 0-312-16539-0. P.M.H. Bell. *The Origins of the Second World War in Europe.* London & New York: Longman, 1997. Second edition. Pp. xiii, 370. $15.96; ISBN 0-582-30470-9.

Explanations of why wars break out have become far more subtle than they were even a few generations ago. Theoretical works like Geoffrey Blainey's *The Causes of War* (3rd edition, 1988) and any number of detailed expositions on the genesis of specific wars use a whole new arsenal of theory and analysis to explain events.

The two books under review here sum up recent scholarship on the related questions of why World War I broke out and why World War II emerged from the still warm ashes of the first war. In *The Outbreak of the First World War: 1914 in Perspective*, David Stevenson of the London School of Economics, a distinguished scholar of international relations, tries to explain why the assassination of an unloved royal heir in a squalid Balkan city led to the deaths of ten million men and the reshaping of the European power structure.

Deliberately avoiding a narrative history–he refers his readers to the standard works by Luigi Albertini and A.J.P. Taylor–Stevenson discusses what each major continental power contributed to the July Crisis. In a brief but very dense analysis, Stevenson explains how investigations into the origins of World War I have changed over the years. Earlier writers, from the days just after the war up to Albertini in the 1940s, looked at the international system as a whole. The second phase of scholarship, initiated by Fritz Fischer's *Griff nach der Weltmacht* (1961), focused on domestic politics inside the Great Powers. The third phase, sparked by heightened Cold War tensions of the later 1970s, looked at technical matters, such as war plans and intelligence, to determine whether the outbreak of war in 1914 was inadvertent or spawned by the systems that then prevailed. In the most recent decade, scholars have returned to exploring the role of national governments, adding to their studies the influence of cultural factors on world politics.

From this welter of research, Stevenson concludes that the Central Powers should bear primary, but not sole, responsibility for the war, with "inadvertence" and "miscalculation" being part of the equation. The lack of a strong anti-war movement also led to the outbreak of the war. Imperialism and other factors, he believes, were far