

Speaking of such agreements, van der Pol also describes the business of prostitution, including not only the costs for services rendered, but also the distribution of profits, bribes, wages, and fines. In many cases, the working women were close to indentured servants, paying off large debts to *bawds* or brothel keepers for the fine clothing, food, and wine that contributed to the experience for visitors. The average prostitute in early modern Amsterdam did not become rich from her trade, though she might be able to do well relative to other opportunities for women at the bottom of the social ladder. Indeed, the profits from the trade as a whole were sufficiently large to keep a significant number of people employed and, in several cases highlighted in the book, to inspire corruption on the part of local officials.

It is tempting to say that this book is not new, as an earlier version (based on a dissertation) was published in Dutch in 1996. That being said, in many ways it is a new work because the author chose not simply to translate the original text, but rather to transform it into a more streamlined narrative, presumably to increase its appeal to a broader trans-Atlantic audience. The transformation was indeed successful and the tighter narrative should make the historical world of these prostitutes more accessible to a larger audience, including non-academics, without sacrificing rigor or relevance in the scholarly world. The translation work, by Liz Waters, is exceptionally fluid as she is able to capture the author's voice in a manner that reads as both authentic and engaging. The author uses that voice not simply to speak for these women who are so often elusive in historical sources, but also for the role of historian as voyeur (in the sense of observer) rather than judge.

J. L. Price. *Dutch Culture in the Golden Age*. London: Reaktion Press, 2011. 286 pp. + 32 illus. \$39.95. Review by LAURA CRUZ, WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY.

In 1974, J.L. Price published the now seminal work, *Culture and Society in the Dutch Republic during the Seventeenth Century*, which provided an interpretation of the art of the Dutch golden age through the lens of social history. By bridging the gaps between art history and

history, the book served a significant role in expanding conversations about the distinctive culture that arose during the Dutch golden age. In many ways, the current title serves as a bookend to that work, showing how the author's thinking on the integration of social history into the grand narrative of Dutch history has evolved and deepened over the course of a lengthy academic career.

The book is neither a monograph nor a research study. Rather, Price himself calls it "an extended essay" (7). Indeed, the essay format is evident throughout, with only a handful of footnotes and only scattered mentions of other works or authors in the fields. While he clearly draws inspiration from dozens, perhaps hundreds, of ideas drawn from his extensive knowledge of historiography, Price's approach is to synthesize and to place primacy on the narrative vision. That vision comes through in the vivid and compelling prose. The progenitors of the essay form saw it as means to display the finest literary writing, and while the modern essay has become more of a framework than an artistic vehicle, *Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* is an essay that breathes refreshing literary flair into historical writing. Turns of phrase such as "a respectable haven for [those groups] repelled by the cramped orthodoxy of the official church" (72) and "the glories of the Golden Age left an ambivalent legacy" (251) are triumphs not just of historical understanding, but also of excellent prose.

The prose styling also begs the question of audience. The book begins with an overview of Dutch history during the Golden Age (Chapter 1, Context) that an expert in the field can easily skip, but provides a level playing field for non-specialists to be able to appreciate the subtleties of the portrayal that follows. As a synthesis, the book provides one of the few overviews of the Golden Age that is both current and comprehensive (and published in English, it should be added). More broadly, the book uses the Dutch Golden Age as a case study for the significance and perspective that only a deep social understanding of the past can provide. These contributions, coupled with high readability, make *Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* an excellent gateway book for historians new to social history (e.g. graduate students), working historians new to Dutch history, and general audiences captivated by the artistic achievements of the period. The

question becomes what the work offers to the more academic conversations about Dutch history.

Another essential function of the essay, according to master stylists such as Montaigne, is to focus thought in order to make a compelling argument. In *Dutch Culture in the Golden Age*, Price does this not from the more conventional angle of original research, but rather draws upon penetrating insight drawn from a lifetime of thinking about the subject matter to make a claim for a semi-radical reinterpretation of the meaning of the period. Much of Dutch historiography has been characterized by the precocious modernity thesis, and scholars and politicians alike have frequently mined its rich history to highlight its distinctive and innovative features (albeit usually for different reasons). Such a portrayal, Price argues, belies the complexity of social forces that underpinned Dutch society. He comments on painting, that “much has been side-lined or forgotten merely because of a failure to fit with preconceptions of what was best or most typical of the age” (109), could also be extended to fit the period as a whole. Historians have touted, for example, the precocious ending of witch trials in the Netherlands, but in doing so, they neglected the continuing reality of the magical universe for most Dutch people. Analysis of economic success has trumped an understanding of the moral unease with which most Dutch people approached capitalism and urbanization. The art of Rembrandt and Vermeer continues to be celebrated for its virtuosity, but at the expense of the majority of painters whose work has been lost or overlooked.

While Price does not deny the precocious and innovative forces present in the seventeenth-century Netherlands, he argues instead that the Dutch Golden Age was one beset by an essential tension between the forces of tradition and innovation, old and new, past and the future, or medieval and modern views of the world. Scientific reasoning routinely confronted religious dogma; tolerance clashed with conservatism and censorship; and all of these debates took place in public places, in the pamphlet literature, in university classrooms, in cafes and living rooms, and in town squares. It was this tension, argues Price, which gave the Golden Age its distinctive dynamism and color. When that essential tension was resolved in the eighteenth century, the distinctiveness of Dutch culture faded, innovation became

mediocrity, and leadership became complacency. In some ways, this claim for distinctiveness presents an oxymoron. The clash between tradition and innovation was one that characterized most of early modern Europe, not just the Netherlands. While this draws the Dutch experience more deeply into the broader European continuum, at the same time it tarnishes the luster of the Golden Age, formerly a shining light in a sea of crises.

A final characteristic of the essay is it reflects the individual point of view of the author. As a capstone to a noteworthy academic career, *Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* provides insight into the mind of a single scholar. As such, it represents not only an accomplishment in historical writing, but also serves as a richly empathetic paean to the people and an age that captured his attention, admiration, and affection for over forty years. Throughout the book, Price frequently invokes painting as an implicit allegory for many things, including the writing of history. That allegory could be extended to the book itself. It is an essay, but also presents a highly personal portrait of an age that should be interpreted with the same challenges and constraints with which one should approach the derivation of meaning from older paintings. As Price himself states, “this piece of Dutch history still lives and is still capable of giving pleasure, though we can never be sure that what we see and experience now is either what the artist intended or what contemporaries perceived” (261).

Warren Johnston. *Revelation Restored: The Apocalypse in Later Seventeenth-Century England*. Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2011, xxii + 290, £99.00. Review by MARTYN BENNETT, NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY.

Radical religion and attendant hopes for the apocalypse in the years preceding and even more so during the British and Irish Civil Wars and Revolution of the mid-seventeenth century have been long examined and explored by a range of authors and through a series of perspective lenses, on both sides of the Atlantic, including Christopher Hill but more recently by Reay and Macgregor and Jim Holstun amongst many others. The restoration has acted conversely as a great