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).


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
barrier in many ways. We all probably recognise that regardless of its self-aggrandising retrograde epithet, the return of the Stuarts did not, because it could not, set the clock back to 1636. True some elements of the days before the Scots turned on Charles I had returned: Charles II had not taken advantage of the single thing which the revolutions had delivered of which his grandfather would have approved: the one-nation state was dismantled and replaced with the three kingdom monarchy and their three parliaments. In theory the church and kirk were restored and in time the kirk would see itself under an attack which must have seemed resonant of the 1630s only this time without the sympathy of a good proportion of the English onlookers. Much republic virtue was retained: the excise tax and higher taxes in general were too tempting to discard; the Navigation Act was too useful. In a similar vein the religious clock could not be turned back. Radical ideas and thoughts could not be eradicated once conjured and the apocalypse was not returned to the very real, but vaguely distant, prospect of Anglican theology. Warren Johnston demonstrates this fact in a truly valuable book. 

_Revelation Restored_ sets out to prove that apocalyptic vision continued after 1660 to carry that belief in the immediacy of the end of days which marked out the observations of the civil wars. If the wars which tore Britain and Ireland apart in the middle of the centuries had not proved to be the harbinger of the second coming then the political turmoil of the 1660s and the remaining decades of the century might just so. It was not only the militant tendency of the Fifth Monarchist movement which rejected the restoration, Baptists and Quakers saw the monarchy as termites and insects crawling out of the ground; it is almost back to the imagery of the dog returning to its own vomit prevalent three decades earlier when Charles I was seen as back-sliding towards Catholicism. The restored monarch and his adherents would, commentators predicted, soon be swept away. King Charles was particularly subjected to bile, compared for his licentiousness to Babylonian King Belshazzar and thus taking the readers straight back into the realms of the Book of Daniel so beloved by the pre-restoration world of the apocalypse. Old interpretations were resurrected or in the case of _The Panther-Prophesy_ brought into the light of day following a ten year hiatus in its production. Originally
created as a critique of the Protectorate, in 1662 it predicted the collapse of the monarchy, which is clearly associated with the fall of the four monarchies and Babylon. However, as with the pre restoration years there was no homogeneous approach to the apocalypse and it was not only because they feared the consequences of the crackdown on radicalism following the Fifth Monarchists’ seizure of St Paul’s Cathedral. There were some who had never believed in initiating the apocalypse and condemned rebellion. On the other hand Quakers, including Hester Biddle, were interpreting the violence aimed at themselves as being a harbinger of the imminence of the apocalypse.

Apocalyptic writings moved on as the restoration appeared to be an actual and lasting fact rather than an immediate harbinger of the end of the earthly world, and so signs and wonders were associated with the changing politics of the 60s and 70s such as the Popish Plot. With the notion of a Romish plot to reincorporate England into the Catholic Church naturally had commentators referring to the four monarchies and the need to escape Babylon. The potential for a catholic monarchy naturally also raised its head and the Exclusion Crisis raised real fears of the resurrection of a Babylonian exile for the godly protestants in England.

In the final years of the century there were many political twists and turns from which authors attempted to divine the likelihood of a sudden apocalypse or the millennium’s imminence: the succession of James II; Monmouth’s rebellion and of course the Glorious Revolution and even for some far sighted observers, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. It is clear, Johnston points out, that rather than appearing as a strange anachronism stranded half a century out of its proper time, Mason’s commune at Stony Stratford was emblematic of a continuing tradition of the politics and religious vicissitudes of the later seventeenth century for apocalyptic interpretation. Johnston provides us in the well written and engaging book, which comes with a useful brief handlist of apocalyptic biblical references, proof that history is not only written by the winners, but by the disappointed too. The Restoration was deeply flawed and limited in scope and it could not stop the continued development of political and religious radicalism. That people constantly hoped for the second coming and looked for it in the political events of their time demonstrates the
continued optimism that Christ was going to return and institute a better world is amply demonstrated in this detailed and worthy study.


In 1989, Margaret Thatcher used a bicentennial of the French Revolution to contrast it unfavorably with England’s anti-revolution of 1688. Steve Pincus, however, in his massive study of the revolutionary decade, 1685-1696, rejects any notion of a quiet revolution rooted in tradition, a notion he ascribes to Thomas Babington Macaulay’s interpretation which dominated virtually all future explanations of 1688-89 (from popular ideas of English exceptionalism to Marxist, Whig, or revisionist arguments). Unlike revisionist critiques of Macaulay’s Whig interpretation of history, however, Pincus happily models revolution. Whereas Macaulay’s 1688 is bloodless, Protestant, its consensual nature reflective of English character, and propelled by religion and dynastic not social conflict, Pincus’s 1688 is violent, its protagonists advance competing, secular views of government and political economy, divisive, and includes a popular, social revolution. In this, 1688 presaged modern revolutions that succeeded it and did not mirror previous religious or baronial wars. Moreover, Pincus suggests that the revolution arose from two divergent roads to the modern state: one bureaucratic and centralized, the other committed to the free market and individual rights.

Eighteenth century “establishment” voices first minimized revolutionary changes and later voices buried the modernity of 1688. (So many historians are blamed for furthering this conspiracy that there is a certain dark humor to be had from Pincus’s willingness to take on and smite scholars of all viewpoints, as being “wrong,” “flawed,” “fundamentally mistaken” (3, 94, 90, etc.). Opposition Whigs, however, continued to laud 1688 as a “salutiferous” violent, popular revolution (William Pulteney, quoted, 17). Edmund Burke, horrified by the shock of the news in the wake of 1789, constructed a vision of 1688-89 as a Restoration which dominated interpretations through