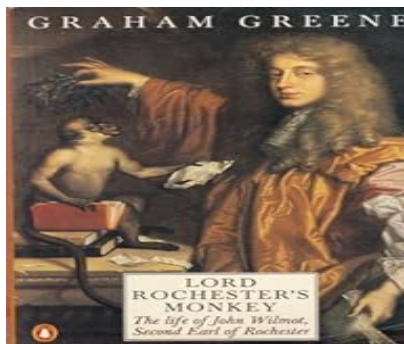


Lord Rochester's Monkey By Graham Greene 9780140101546 This book is a bit of an anomaly the kind of book that most people wouldn't know about despite the fact that it's written by a celebrated author a man who's usually grouped under 'classics' in the bookshop. Loosely speaking it's a biography of "Restoration rake and poet" John Wilmot the Second Earl of Rochester who was "famed for his lecheries wild pranks and drunkenness feared for his biting wit. " Now I'd never heard of the guy but despite the fact that it could've been a biography of anyone for all I cared and the fact that I was reading it because of an interest in the author himself and not his subject matter I actually enjoyed learning about Wilmot and the court of Charles II. I wish I knew a little more about why Greene chose Wilmot in the first place - perhaps there was a personal reason for it or perhaps it's just because Wilmot was "one of the finest poets of his age". He treated his wife for whom he had affection and his children whom he loved rather shabbily and was in his turn badly treated by his great passion Elizabeth Barry an actress of extremely easy virtue. In spite of Rochester's terrible unregulated even cruel behavior he also had a streak of sweetness and self-knowledge which makes his self-destruction very pitiable especially in his final years when he was terribly ill. It is peculiar in tone because even then Greene felt he could not be very explicit about Rochester's explicitness and so the casual modern reader cannot judge of what this consisted or what the poetry was like; some of the poems quoted were resonant others seem to come from a very great distance in the past.

9780140101546 In this sterling example of negative synergy a minor rake wit and poet lavish illustrations and Graham Greene are transmuted into a biography as dull and nearly unreadable as anything by A. Since I am reading Sherry's exhaustive (and exhausting) three-volume biography of Greene while I am reading all of Greene's writing (in one year in the pandemic) I find it quite amusing to find that Greene seems not only to have taken Rochester as an important literary subject but also as somewhat of an emulative character in his personal life. Frankly you need to be steeped in 17C British history and literature to appreciate the letters diary extracts and assorted triviatas that Greene uses to show how Wilmot's character relates to his life and poetry. Rochester who always amused the King once penned : Here lies a great and mighty king whose promise none relies on; he never said a foolish thing nor ever did a wise one. 9780140101546 I came across a quote the other day which seems massively applicable to John Wilmot 2nd Earl of Rochester: "LIFE'S JOURNEY is not to arrive at the grave safely in a well preserved body but rather to skid in sideways totally worn out shouting "Holy shit what a ride!" (Mavis Leyrer aged 83). He certainly packed one hell of a lot in! Poet wit fashion setter at Charles II's court lover and society bad-boy he was one of the most colourful characters of his age perhaps of any age. I'm a history nerd who is keenly interested in early modern Britain and I had really enjoyed The Libertine a 2004 biopic about Rochester even though my enthusiasm was not shared by many. I'm a sucker for costume dramas tales of dissipation and Johnny Depp whose Rochester was a wise-ass drunk not not unlike his Jack Sparrow but played straight without the scarves and mascara. Greene includes the entire text* of a pretty good poem about impotence but most of the rest of the writing that he includes is just nasty gossip and innuendo about the Restoration court and literary scene expressed in forced rhymes and awkward meter. To be fair I felt this way about The Dunciad and really everything between Milton and the Romantics that we read in my undergraduate English literature survey course - the dozens played in iambs for a hundred years. *Quotations - largely from arch circumlocutory exchanges of letters between self-conscious self-congratulatory wits - in this book are way WAY too long and Greene's own turgid prose supplies little in the way of relief. 9780140101546 s/t: Being the Life of John Wilmot Second Earl of Rochester Lord Rochester's Monkey was written between 1931 and 1934 and because of the reputation of its subject the notorious Restoration libertine and poet the book failed to find a publisher. He was also a fine lyrical and satirical poet whose work in Greene's opinion has been greatly underestimated being overshadowed by his life of lechery and drunkenness wild pranks and practical jokes. Greene objected strongly to description as a "Catholic novelist" despite Catholic religious themes at the root of much of his writing especially the four major Catholic novels: [Brighton Rock](#) [The Heart of the Matter](#) [The End of the Affair](#) and [The Power and the Glory](#) . Greene objected strongly to description as a "Catholic

novelist” despite Catholic religious themes at the root of much of his writing especially the four major Catholic novels: [Brighton Rock](#) [The Heart of the Matter](#) [The End of the Affair](#) and [The Power and the Glory](#) . Other works such as [The Quiet American](#) [Our Man in Havana](#) and [The Human Factor](#) also show an avid interest in the workings of international politics and espionage:



Somewhat of a unique book I think but a more depressing personality than John Wilmot would be hard to find, if it hadn't have been for stage beauty and knowing some of the surrounding circumstances of the period i never would have finished this book: Lord Rochester's Monkey is in fact a thoroughly interesting read whether you're interested in history or not. That said I wouldn't read it again - it was interesting sure but it wasn't that interesting and one long session of learning about John Wilmot is enough for me: 9780140101546 This book is a bit of an oddity: a nearly forgotten book by a very famous author about a formerly famous but now nearly forgotten poet, The poet John Wilmot Lord Rochester was the scion of a Royalist family poor and on the make, Rochester was a handsome man of great charm; his life had the trajectory of a shooting star vaulting upwards and plummeting down with great rapidity.) Exhibiting conspicuous bravery force and direction in his early life he died with the reputation of a coward and feckless troublemaker, He rained the arrows of his wit on a broad array of court figures including his friends: He easily impressed Charles II who loved wit and had a fair tolerance for it even when directed at himself, Charles always forgave him (eventually) but many more did not: His sexual life was remarkable for its abundance and for the range of his partners' social levels. It is this tenderness which somehow emerges from the wreck especially in the course of his religious conversion and which Greene captures very successfully. This is Greene's only effort at biography written in the 1930s but laid aside because of Rochester's reputation for lewdness until the early 1970s. (His prose writing was far more present and interesting to me.) Greene's exploration of Rochester's life assumes that the reader is reasonably familiar with the court of Charles II and the world of the Restoration, The net result is that a kind of mist settles over the whole subject from which however certain scenes emerge memorably. 9780140101546 What an odd book to be set in the middle of Greene's oeuvre: In the preface Greene notes that it was written in 1931 to 1934 and immediately turned down by his publisher Heinemann, He attributes it to those Victorian times when both Ulysses and Lady Chatterley's Lover were considered pornography. It reminds me however of a master's thesis that is later pub into publication after the author has become famous. It is clear that Greene put a lot of research work into this piece and proudly remarks that it is probably the best history of the work of Lord Rochester at the time, Not only do I know very little about the period after the Restoration I realize now that I also don't care very much. With King Charles II on the throne "wit" was apparently determined to be a high point of regal acceptance - and Rochester excelled in it: The book is the most lavishly printed of Greene's works replete with a splendid array of portraits of the leading characters and the place of their times, I shouldn't push this too far (there certainly are some glaring differences - Greene's Catholicism vs, Rochester's virulent atheism) but the similarities are nevertheless there, (If anyone ever reads this I'll be punished for making this comparison:) If you have any interesting in the Restoration Period in English history or Restoration poetry by all means read this book. (Incidentally if anyone can tell me what a monkey has to do with this book I'd like to know:) 9780140101546 I

love Rochester his poetry and I love reading about him. This was written in the 1930's and Greene struggled to get it published for almost 40 years, Its an entertaining read not too long (manly because facts about Rochester are a little sketchy I think). The fascination of how a beautiful gifted romantic soul became so jaded with life will probably stay with me forever, 9780140101546 Lord Rochester (John Wilmot 1647-1680) is another unforgettable character from British history whose obscene verse and rude satires dismayed moralists for years. He intrigued Graham Greene who spent the early 1930s writing a bio that was rejected and remained unpublished until the 70s, It is difficult to think back now to the almost Victorian atmosphere of the early 30s he recalls in the preface: Greene finds Rochester a major poet and now there are other bios, Johnny Depp played the notorious rake in *The Libertine* (2004) which few saw, Women politics and drink dominated Rochester's life; he died age 33 of various venereal diseases, What interested Mr Greene? Possibly Lord Rochester's deathbed conversion--, The characters floating in-out of Wilmot's life -- Lord Goring Lady Sandwich Sir Francis Fane Lady Davenant -- evoke the names of characters in a Wilde comedy: The backdrop is the Court of Charles 2d which sent the Puritians to the Colonies and heralded an age when it was admirable to sin, Historians are still examining the unbridled sexuality of the Restoration. Lord Rochester at 20 married an heiress and stashed her in the country where she gave birth to four children. He also had a daughter with Elizabeth Barry an actress he personally trained for the stage, He was disappointed to learn she'd pleasure any man who offered five pounds, He bedded among others one of the King's favorites and assorted bawds during a five-year drunken spree. Constant intrigues political maneuvers and quarrels swirled around him. But playwright George Etherege a friend based his cold-hearted cad Dorimant in *The Man of Mode* on young Rochester, His maxims of morality were don't hurt anyone else and regard your own health, Graham Greene liked his colloquial poetry (musical like that of a man speaking -- the John Donne influence) which he felt had a real Restoration lyric, Charles 2d responded: This is very true for my words are my own and my actions are my ministers: I find this a most curious less than satisfying volume in the Greene canon, Rochester died aged 33 the cause of death sometimes given as 'old age', His much censored literary work is often of a frank nature: A fascinating man who had tried most variations of hedonism throughout his short life. He held a mirror to the hedonistic cynically 'merry' monarch Charles II and found him sadly wanting. Lavishly illustrated book and fascinating insight into the world of Restoration England: 9780140101546 This account of the life of John Wilmot 2nd Earl of Rochester is unequivocally the worst biography that I've ever read. I picked up an unreadable book about the Younger brothers in the nineties but that doesn't count because I didn't finish. I thought this was going to be one of those perfect conjunctions of my enthusiasms: Since then I've only read one novel *Travels with My Aunt*. At that time I found his prose every bit as elegant as I had remembered: So needless to say I was pretty excited by the prospect of reading this disappointment. When Lord Rochester's *Monkey* was written in 1931 Greene's publisher turned it down: I can only hope he coyly humblebrags it was the subject and not the treatment that displeased them: Can't speak for them but it was the treatment that displeased me, This account of the life of the most notorious rakehell of his age is tendentious undisciplined and boring: If it was too racy in 1931 by 1974 when it was finally issued in a really lovely edition with fine color plates it was not nearly racy enough: I am astonished that this meandering mess is the work of one of my favorite writers: No one Greene writes in his introduction doubts the importance of Rochester's poetry. Um I kinda do and Greene did nothing to change my mind. Rochester he goes on inherited from Donne a poetry of passionate colloquialism, I guess but I couldn't help thinking of something a sous chef liked to say when I was cooking for a living. There is a fine line Paul maintained between 'rustic' and lazy. [T]his biography is not intended primarily for students says Greene explaining the lack of footnotes, Even with my particular constellation of relevant interests it was definitely not for me. At court Charles II suffered but respected Rochester's coruscating satires joined in his erotic escapades and rewarded him with distinctions. Yet the last thirteen years of his life were clouded by the fumes of drink and literary quarrels. On his deathbed in 1680 - he was only 33 - he called for Dr Burnet and repented. His friend Etheridge wrote of him: I know he is a devil but had something of the angel yet undefac'd

in him. Lord Rochester's Monkey Particularly known novels such as [The Power and the Glory](#) (1940) of British writer Henry Graham Greene reflect his ardent Catholic beliefs: The Order of Merit and the Companions of Honour inducted this English novelist short story writer playwright screenplay writer travel writer and critic. His works explore the ambivalent moral and political issues of the modern world, Other works such as [The Power and the Glory](#) (1940) of British writer Henry Graham Greene reflect his ardent Catholic beliefs. The Order of Merit and the Companions of Honour inducted this English novelist short story writer playwright screenplay writer travel writer and critic, His works explore the ambivalent moral and political issues of the modern world. An interesting read. 9780140101546 fairly dry and impenetrable. probably a bad first graham greene. (He was only 33 when he died. He claimed once to have been drunk for five years. A curious biography but somehow entirely suitable to its subject. N. Wilson. Plus the monkey gets short shrift. Nevertheless I found it very difficult to read. BUT it WAS an odd time. If not I encourage you to move on to Greene's novels. (Lord R was viewed then as a pornographic writer). You were a prig if you didn't. The plague raged so did the Great Fire. He seems like a nasty brat and probably was. Otherwise indulge all appetites. But I won't think about it too long. I was a huge Graham Greene fan in my twenties. Can't recommend. I can't imagine the general reader that it would suit. Also he doesn't mention the monkey even once. Rochester was the most prominent of rakes. Greene combined serious literary acclaim with wide popularity. Greene combined serious literary acclaim with wide popularity. (Adapted from [Wikipedia](#)) [site_link](#)).