between Catholics and Protestants was now walking a tightrope between the Calvinists and the Arminians. The book ends with a discussion of Donne's triple role, at the end of his career, as a preacher, as the prolocutor of the Canterbury convocation, and as a charitable benefactor of the Charterhouse. Shami concludes by commending Donne as "one of the foundational voices of the Reformed English Church" (283).

This is a sophisticated, intelligent analysis of Donne's pivotal role in the late Jacobean church. It leaves the clear implication that Donne's voice of moderation was sorely missed when power passed in the Caroline church to the Laudians, who sorely lacked Donne's gift for compromise. Shami has read a prodigious number of sermons from the early 1620s and leaves the clear implication that Donne studies could profit from the comparative analysis of the sermons from all the phases of Donne's clerical career. Shami's impressive study makes it abundantly clear that we should not read Donne's sermons as abstract theological musings which are somehow divorced from the contentious religious and political issues of their time. There is a thorough general index, a helpful separate index for Donne references and a useful third index which gives page references to the ten-volume *Sermons of John Donne* edited by Potter and Simpson. I only wish that the *Directions for Preachers* had been included as an appendix to this superb study.

James William Johnson. *A Profane Wit: The Life of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2004. x + 467 pp. $34.95. Review by HAROLD LOVE, MONASH UNIVERSITY.

John Wilmot, second earl of Rochester, seems like a dream of a biographical subject. He led a scandalous and colorful life, wrote verse that has every appearance of being confessional, and has left a tolerable swag of letters and documents. He is also an excellent subject for retrospective psychoanalysis and venereology-at-a-distance. Why is it then that all attempts to write this life, including the one under review, are so unsatisfactory? The answers are simple. Firstly, the purportedly confessional verse is conditioned at every stage by Rochester's role as a factional clown prince at the court of Charles II. The expectations of a primary readership with whom he was in daily, face-to-face contact influence every line. Secondly, the authorship of

several key poems is uncertain: "Timon," "Tunbridge Wells," "Seigneur Dildoe," and "To the Postboy," to look no further, all stand under question, while the documentary evidence for his authorship of *Sodom* is about as convincing as that for *Hamlet* having been written by Marlowe. Thirdly, much of what we think we know about Rochester's life is based on utterly unreliable gossip and the fabrications of an early form of celebrity culture.

It is possible to imagine a biography of Rochester that would confront these difficulties and, where a stand needed to be taken, would do so on the basis of reasoned weighing of the options. Sadly this is not the present author's method. What we get instead is the repeated presentation of unsubstantiated hunches as if they were ascertained facts. Consider the following passage (one of many that could be cited):

> The letter sent off, he went to the Woodstock races and then back to London. There he rejoined his mistress one (Elizabeth?) Foster. She had passed herself off as an innocent girl from the north, but she was the low-born niece of a tavern-keeper in Knightsbridge; she had lost her virginity to one Butler, presumably a highwayman. Pretending faithfulness to Rochester, this "Corinna" as he called her, had sexual relations with others and reinfected John Wilmot with a more virulent form of the pox without his knowledge. (133)

Everything here is misleading, starting with the deceptively exact timetable. The events are placed by Johnson in the late summer of 1670 but the (undated) letter just "sent off" is assigned to 1675 in Treglown's edition of Rochester's correspondence (100-01), and all we know of Foster, apart from a passing mention in "Artemisa to Chloe," comes in a letter from John Muddyman to Rochester dated September 1671:

> Fate has taken care to vindicate your proceeding with Foster; whoe is discouerd to bee a damsell of low degre, and very fit for the latter part of your treatment: no northerne lass but a mere dresser at Hazards scoole: her uncle a wyght that wields the puisant spiggot at Kensington: debaucht by Mr Buttler a gentleman of the cloak and gallow shoe–an order of knighthood, uery fatal to maydenhead. (ed. Treglown, 70-71)

There is nothing here about either a sexual relationship (unless "proceeding" and "treatment" are to be wrested into that sense) or catching or re-catching

syphilis. In any case, if Rochester was already, as Johnson maintains, infected, how could he have caught it *again*? Clearly some covert dealing existed between Rochester and Muddyman, but its nature is concealed. It could easily have been one of Rochester's notorious hoaxes, perhaps directed at Foster's "Irish Lord," mentioned in "Artemisa to Chloe." A "wyght that wields the puisant spigot" is a tapster not an innkeeper. "Gallow-shoes" are galoshes or overshoes–unlikely wear for a hard-riding highwayman. Mr. Butler sounds more like a footman in wet weather dress. The assertion (clarified on p. 149) that Foster was the Corinna of "A ramble in Saint James's park" (late 1672?) is pure fantasy. The alleged infidelities are those described in the poem, which is bizarrely treated as a factual life document. A biographer has a right to speculate, but the reader has to be treated fairly, which in this case would have meant quoting Muddyman's sentence on which this whole fabric has been reared and considering all its possible meanings. The same method is on display in Johnson's account of Rochester's relationship with Elizabeth Barry, where once again undated letters are used to construct a narrative which never acknowledges its fabricated basis.

Johnson's belief that Rochester contracted syphilis early in life and then gave it to his wife who transmitted it to their son Charles (161) may be justified but runs against the objection that the couple's three other children lived to a healthy maturity. In the parallel contemporary case of Lord Latimer and his wife, Elizabeth, none of the children survived infancy. Moreover, when Johnson assures us that Thomas Wharton similarly infected Rochester's niece, Anne (176), he ignores Greer and Hastings's even grislier claim that Anne had contracted the disease when little more than a girl, that Wharton, knowing this, married her in the expectation that she would quickly die and make him the inheritor of her large estate, and that he "never went in bed with her" (347). Johnson quotes this last phrase without appreciating that it overturns his own theory.

This is not to say that Johnson does not get some things right. Among its errors and eccentricities the book has assembled much information not given in earlier biographies. Rochester's activity as a member of the House of Lords, the interminable squabbles within his extended family over property and marriages, and the content of his early education are all usefully explored. Readers attracted to early modern gossip about sodomites will also find much to entertain them. The year-by-year narration of events allows the

different streams of Rochester's life–family, amorous, political, literary and religious–to be brought together in a mutually illuminating way which becomes more effective as the story advances into the late 1670s with their richer haul of primary materials. The Popish Plot years and the events leading up to Rochester's death are presented as engrossingly as one would wish. Johnson's identification of Hamilton's mysterious Miss Hobart as Lady Dorothy Howard is persuasive, and he is able to draw on new evidence for identifying the same author's "Miss Sarah" with the actress Sarah Cooke. But the useful things are vitiated by reckless speculation of the kind just instanced and a consistently shaky grasp of detail. A biographer who believes that St Francis is buried at Tours (43), that the Dutch republic was a monarchy (44), that Charles II issued a pro-Catholic Declaration of Indulgence in 1663 (104), or that a knight could give a speech in the House of Lords (177), and who has the second Duke of Buckingham (born 1628) "reared as a virtual son by James I" (died 1625) (82) has surely been snoozing on the job.

But it is the refusal to acknowledge the attributional problems that is the chief drawback of this study. The fact that three manuscripts of "Timon" attribute the poem to Sedley (in many ways a more plausible author) as against only two to Rochester, in one of which his name has been crossed out and replaced by Sedley's, is simply withheld from the reader. In the case of *Sodom*, Johnson asserts Rochester's unaided authorship of the three-act version, which he dates to the early 1670s despite its parodying a line from Crowne's *The Destruction of Jerusalem*, first performed in 1677. He then draws on the work for evidence of Rochester's sexual views, artistic development and state of mind. In a footnote on page 394 the inquisitive reader will learn that the present reviewer had "disputed" an attempt by Johnson to establish this attribution, but without title or date given for my article. For the record, the two papers concerned are Johnson's "Did Lord Rochester write *Sodom*?" *PBSA* 81 (1987), 119-53 and my own "But did Rochester *really* write *Sodom*?" *PBSA* 87 (1993), 319-36. I invite readers of this review to consult both articles and make up their own minds regarding which one presents the more convincing case. Johnson's footnote continues, "However, [Love] includes *Sodom and Gomorah* in his edition of Rochester's works" (Oxford: OUP, 1999). This insinuates that I have changed my mind about the attribution; but what Johnson conceals is that the work is included not in the section of "Poems probably by Rochester," nor that of "Disputed Works," but in the

Appendix Roffensis of works which for one reason or another are associated with Rochester. Despite Johnson's devotion to his subject, this is not the clear-headed, demythologizing biography of Rochester that is urgently needed.

Erica Longfellow. *Women and Religious Writing in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. ix + 241 pp. $75.00. Review by FRANCES M. MALPEZZI, ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY.

Erica Longfellow's *Women and Religious Writing in Early Modern England* is not a quick read; rather, it is a complex, densely written, and ultimately rewarding study of the use of the mystical marriage metaphor by five women writers–Aemilia Lanyer, Lady Anne Southwell, the anonymous author of *Eliza's babes*, Anna Trapnel, and Lucy Hutchinson. Interwoven with the focus on mystical marriage is Longfellow's concern with the production of the texts, whether print or manuscript, and with basic assumptions about the gendering of public and private modes. Much in the same way Elizabeth Alvilda Petroff has previously argued that divine visions empowered medieval women, so Longfellow looks at the way a belief in an intimate relationship with the deity authorized and legitimized early modern women's writings, providing for some a moral standard beyond gender and for others a way to address the operation of divine providence in human institutions.

Longfellow's introduction and first chapter set the groundwork for the study of the individual authors. Her introduction clearly articulates not only the book's subject but also its feminist critical framework and the biographical, bibliographical, and literary historical modes of inquiry through which Longfellow pursues her subject. Her first chapter examines scriptural sources for the mystical marriage metaphor and the history of the commentaries on those sources. She then considers the way in which seventeenth-century Puritan male writers dealt with the metaphor. And while one might expect her to deal with earlier women who made use of the metaphor–Margery Kempe, Catherine of Siena, Mechthild of Magdeburg, or Angela of Foligno, for instance–Longfellow argues any connections between the holy women of the middle ages and these early modern women writers is tenuous since the works of medieval mystics largely disappeared as a result of the Reformation. Thus, the foundation she examines is biblical, patristic, Puritan, and male.