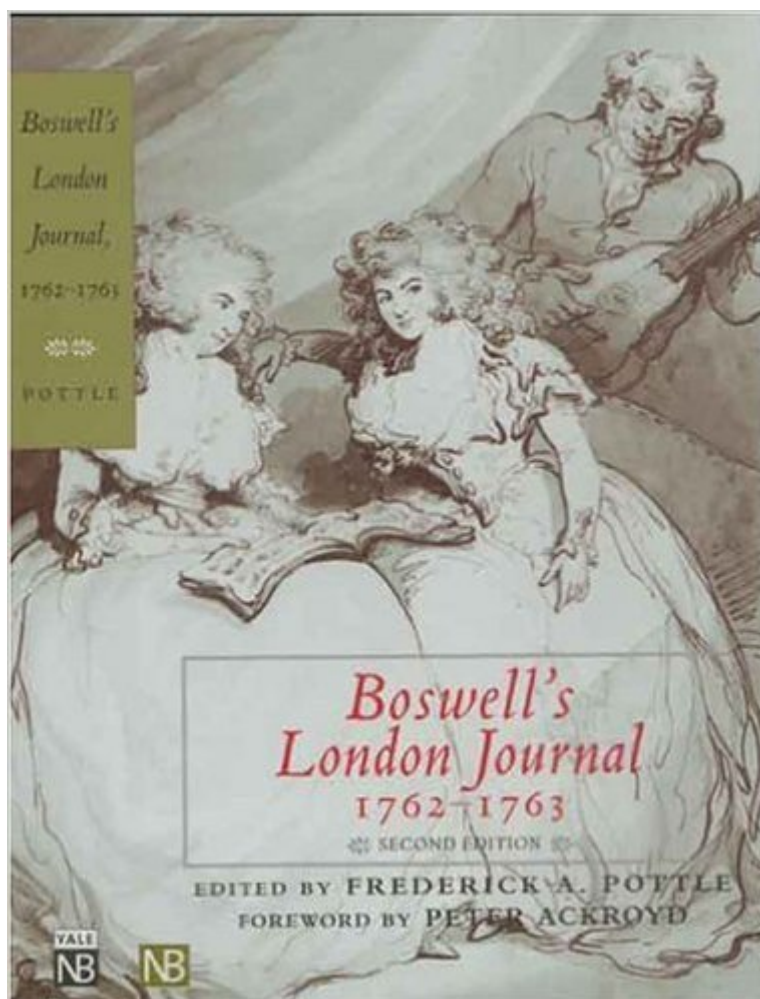


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Boswell's London Journal, 1762-1763



Synopsis

Praise for the earlier edition: The journal is admirably edited and annotated.--W. H. Auden, New Yorker

Book Information

Series: Yale Editions of the Private Papers of James Boswell

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Customer Reviews

To anyone who, like myself, has found a real and deep enjoyment in reading the Life of Johnson, I can only recommend Boswell's own diaries. The first volume - his 'London Journal' starting in the year he met Johnson - is pure delight. Boswell always saw himself as a character acting in the drama of life, and he could be almost excruciatingly honest and objective about himself. His voluminous diaries record all the trivia, triumphs, and despairs of his own life, day by day and year by year. My own opinion is that Boswell is a far better diarist than Pepys, though not nearly as well known in this respect. There is a fascination about seeing his whole life recorded from youth to shortly before his death, with all the same force and liveliness that went into his Life of Johnson. His inner life is at least as entertaining as his outer life. He seems totally determined to write about himself as he wrote about Johnson - warts and all. It's this courage and honesty about himself that makes us respect Boswell even when he is at his most foolish or debauched. The diaries make it extremely clear that he was no idiot, and that the Life of Johnson was no fortuitous masterpiece. From his diaries he comes across as a deeply sensitive, romantic, self-conscious man. Charming, likeable, and often playing the clown to his acquaintances; but often filled with self-doubt, frustration, insecurity, and a deep depression that he concealed from all except his closest friends. We see

Boswell puffed up with vanity at some silly social success, and the same Boswell quietly devoting large amounts of time and money that he could ill spare to helping people in trouble.

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