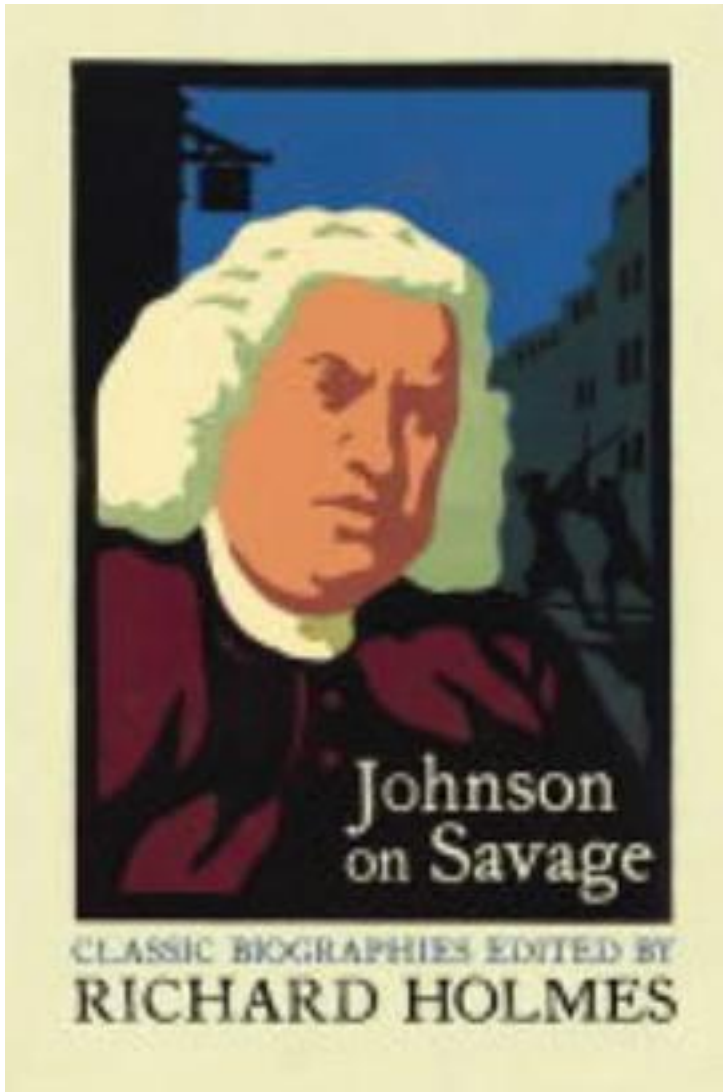


Johnson on Savage



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Lives that Never Grow Old Part of a radical new series --edited by Richard Holmes -- that recovers the great classical tradition of English biography. Johnson's book is a biographical masterpiece, still thrilling to read and vividly alive. When he first came to London, young Samuel Johnson was befriended by the flamboyant poet, playwright and blackmailer, Richard Savage. Walking the backstreets at night, he learned Savage's extraordinary story -- supposedly persecuted by a 'cruel mother', sentenced to death for a murder in a brothel, appointed Volunteer Poet Laureate to the Queen, and finally broken and outcast. With this moving and intimate account, Johnson created a brilliant black comedy of 18th-century Grub Street which revolutionised English biography by its psychological realism. Yet Savage's destructive charm and delusions of grandeur sometimes even threatened to entangle Johnson himself.

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