

Eighteenth-Century Escape Tales: Between Fact and Fiction (Transits: Literature, Thought & Culture, 1650-1850)

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This volume is a study of the interdisciplinary nature of prison escape tales and their impact on European cultural identity in the eighteenth century. Prison escape narratives are reflections of the tension between the individual's potential happiness via freedom and the confines of the social order. Contemporary readers identified with the prisoner, who, like them suffered the injustices of an absolutist regime. The state imprisons such renegades not just out of a desire to protect the public but more importantly to protect the state itself. Hence, prison escape tales can be linked with a revolutionary tendency: when free, such former detainees equipped with a pen openly and justly challenge the status quo, hoping to inspire their readers to do the same. Escape tales have had a considerable impact on cultural identity, because they embody the interdependent relationship between literature and myth on the one hand and literature and history on the other.



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