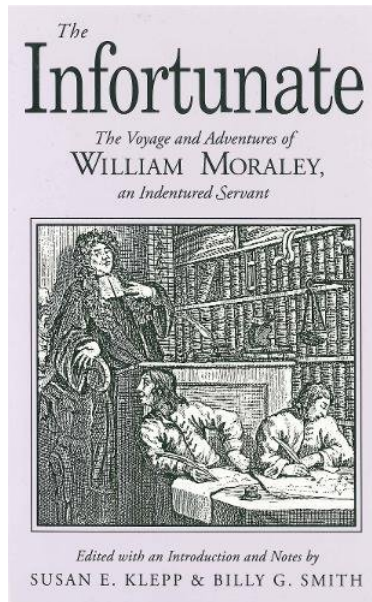


Y6z0w [Download] The Infortunate: The Voyage and Adventures of William Moraley, an Indentured Servant



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William Moraley's autobiography, originally published in 1743, provides a rare view of life among the lower classes in England and the American middle colonies during the early eighteenth century. In 1729, Moraley ventured as an indentured servant from England to the 'American Plantations,' where he worked in various jobs, rambled about the countryside, and mingled with white and black bonds people, laborers, artisans, Indians, and other common folk. His account brims over with observations about the geography and climate, the flora and fauna, and the customs, politics, religions, superstitions, material conditions, and daily lives of the inhabitants of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York. Of special interest are his comments about servants, slaves, and Native Americans--groups frequently ignored by early travelers. Moraley's experiences were similar to those of many other eighteenth-century European immigrants who sold themselves into servitude, but he is among only a handful of people at the bottom of society who left memoirs of their lives. Smart, sassy, and articulate, Moraley narrates a take of adventure designed primarily to entertain. At times a rogue, a drunkard, a liar, a vagabond, and a petty thief, he boasts that he could 'rake with the best of them.' But the autobiography has considerable historical value as well. It depicts the life of a down-and-out artisan whose fortunes, like so many other bound laborers, did not substantially improve. The reasons for the different career paths of such working people have been the subject of much scholarly debate, and these memoirs can more firmly ground that controversy in actual human experience. The substantial introduction by Klepp and Smith reconstructs Moraley's life, relates the autobiography to the literary developments of the era, compares the careers of Moraley and Franklin, and discusses the author's social, political, and religious worlds. It also identifies and leaves open to differing interpretations a host of issues and paradoxes about eighteenth-century life raised by Moraley's account.

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