

Approaches to the Problem of “Monstrous Youth” in the Popular Print Culture of Seventeenth-Century England

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This paper investigates the various ways in which youth crime was addressed in the popular print culture of seventeenth-century England. It considers the way in which, in England at least, over the centuries people have tended to regard the youth of their own time with despair at their lack of morals and bad behavior while looking back fondly at the youth of bygone days as being paragons of virtue. This is, of course, a myth and has been previously traced back to the early eighteenth century as such by previous scholars. In this study, I extend that work to the seventeenth-century by examining a small sample of documents including a sermon, a confession before execution, and a broadside ballad. I conclude that what has been observed about attitudes to youth and crime in the later centuries did indeed pertain to the seventeenth century as well, albeit with some slight differences such as the greater emphasis on ungodliness and sin.

Keywords: Early modern culture, England, youth, crime

Introduction

Youth, as anyone who has experienced it will likely have noticed, can be a difficult period to get through. While much has been written, both academically and journalistically, about the physiological, cognitive and social changes attendant on this transitional period, one aspect above all that continues to receive an arguably disproportionate amount of attention is the troubled and troubling relationship between youth and crime. This issue seems to be one with which governments, communities, neighborhoods, educators and families around the world, not to mention the young people themselves, must constantly grapple. For the mass media, there appears to be something perennially newsworthy about the crimes and misdemeanors of young people which, from time to time, the media amplify into moral panics, be they to do with gangs, knife or gun crime, drug use, music, fashion or general rebelliousness and delinquency. Such problems, at least as they are presented to us by the news media, always seem be solidly about the present, about how *our* young people *today* are uniquely marked, in contrast to the youth of ages past, by their propensity for misrule. But what *of* the past, of the variegated history of youth crime and of the media's coverage of it? Well, it is exactly forty years since Geoffrey Pearson published his seminal work, *Hooligan: A History of Respectable Fears*¹, in which he laid bare the nostalgia-drenched myth of Britain's past as being one of peaceful “law-n-order” down the ages, of times when young people respected their elders, behaved with decorum and applied themselves diligently to study, work, matrimony and, above all, God. One of the delights of reading Pearson's book is to discover how he structured it in reverse chronological order, tracing the rose-tinted gaze of each generation back,

starting with his own, to the supposedly halcyon days of each preceding one. Of course, as he shows, such youth crime-free days never existed, or at least not since the dawn of the eighteenth century, beyond which he only briefly ventures. In my previous studies of seventeenth-century, particularly Civil War era, printed news, my interest has been on the ideological nature of “grown up” political news as it dealt with actors such as Sir John Hotham who, at the very start of the war, stoutly refused to admit Charles I to the strategically important town of Hull and its large store of weaponry. In this paper, therefore, I would like to extend Pearson’s survey by roughly a hundred years by examining what some of the popular or “street” literature of the seventeenth century had to say about the “monstrous youth” of those days. On the other hand, over many years I have also been studying the way in which contemporary issues to do with youth and crime have been reported on by the British news media, most notably the BBC. But as a way of marking the 40th anniversary of Pearson’s book, in this paper I would like to bring these two interests together by looking at some of the varied ways in which the popular press in England—which, for all intents and purposes at least in this study, means the popular press in London—addressed the issue. It is my aim to show that although many of the details may be different, there are remarkable continuities between today and then.

What do we mean by “Youth” and “Crime” in Early Modern England?

One major question that immediately confronts anyone seeking to understand the nature of youth crime and the representation thereof in the print culture of Early Modern England concerns the definition of “youth”. The modern understanding of what the term refers to derives from our own experiences, including our experience of interacting with others and our consumption of the representations of youth in media of various sorts. There is no guarantee that the term held the same meaning, or clusters of meaning, to people in previous centuries, particularly perhaps in the time prior to the Industrial Revolution.

The World Health Organization’s definition of adolescence as “the phase of life between childhood and adulthood, from ages 10 to 19” seems to rely too heavily on age rather than specific physiological, cognitive or other changes associated with this period. Looking for enlightenment in the OED involves something more of an excursion than an excursus. The term, “preadolescence”, for example, is defined as “belonging to, or relating to the two or three years before the beginning of adolescence” but we find “adolescence” itself is defined as “The period following the onset of puberty during which a young person develops from a child into an adult”.²

In his masterful study, *Youth and authority: Formative experiences in England 1560–1640*, Paul Griffiths strives valiantly to pin down the meaning of terms such as “lad”, “wench” and “youth” based on court records and other evidence but with only limited success. One thing we can be sure of is that the Early Moderns did not talk about “teenagers”, a term which the OED has only traced back as far as 1913. On the other hand, the seventeenth-century was the age of the apprentices (and masters) and consequently countless books, pamphlets, broadsides and ballads are addressed to, or about, such people.

Given the definitional difficulties involved, therefore, in this study I shall be using the term “youth”, and likewise “young man” and “young woman” in a broad sense to encompass anyone who

is not regarded as a “child” but who is not yet married or at least of marriageable age.

“Crime” is another word that has meant different things to different people at different times. While it might not be a matter of saying that crime is simply “in the eye of the beholder”, nevertheless definitions of crime and what counts as “serious” or “real” crime, say as much about the definers as they do of the criminals. By the seventeenth century, the criminal justice system, to use an anachronistic term, was well-developed in England. There were various kinds of courts, from more local baronial and leet courts up to the quarterly courts and twice-yearly assizes held around the country to hear more serious cases. There was habeas corpus, trial by jury and established systems of punishment up to and including transportation to the newly created colonies or execution. One thing on which many in seventeenth-century England would agree is that “crime” and “sin” were closely related. In every part of the country the officers of the law, the constables, and of the church, the churchwardens, were responsible for maintaining good order amongst the people in their jurisdiction both in legal and religious matters. As Sharpe notes, people in those days were “addicted to the idea that minor sins and vices, if uncorrected, might lead all too easily to major crimes.”³ A vast amount of innocent ink was spilt warning young people off from the primrose path of vanity, drunkenness, fornication, and ungodliness. On the other hand, though, Sharpe also tentatively suggests that during this period the law “was coming to replace religion as the ideological cement which held society together”. In the case of apprentices, there was a particular fear of their disrespecting their masters. Social and political upheavals during the century, however, undoubtedly had an influence on how these issues were regarded. For example, during the Civil War period young men were actively encouraged by the king to oppose parliament, organize themselves and submit petitions.

Selection of materials

According to Sharpe, “The history of crime in early modern England ... constitutes a subject where methodologies are not fully established, where the exact extent and nature of the relevant source materials is still obscure, and whose ultimate intellectual destination is uncertain”.⁴ Nevertheless, one has to start somewhere and Sharpe discusses various options, including the legal history of laws and statutes and the study of literary works. Each approach has its strengths and weaknesses, but Sharpe himself chooses to focus narrowly on local historical archives, notably in London and Norwich, wherein much information on the activities of the local courts is to be found. Such a “micro” focus on the court proceedings of a particular village or parish has allowed for some very detailed studies, many of which have taken a statistical approach. However, there are many difficulties involved in interpreting such findings, not least of which is the relative lack of completeness of the records and the lack of precision in the use of terms such as “lad” and “youth”.

For this study, given my overarching interest in crime and media, I have chosen to investigate the popular or “street” literature of the time. These days it is remarkably easy to gain access to this material, or at least facsimile copies and, in some cases, transcriptions, via a number of online resources. Above all, in this study I have made extensive use of the Early English Books Online (EEBO) database. This consists of approximately 125,000 digitally scanned documents which is distributed online by ProQuest (formerly University Microfilms, Inc.). For scholars affiliated to

Nagoya University, access to EEBO is provided by the university library via the National Institute of Informatics' Repository of Electronic Journals and Online Publications (NII-REO). To supplement the scanned versions of the EEBO documents, since 2001 the Text Creation Partnership (TCP), a non-profit organization based at the University of Michigan, has been producing highly accurate and fully-searchable SGML/XML-encoded transcripts of these documents, with roughly one-third of the EEBO database having been transcribed to date. Although not all of the texts focused on in this study have been transcribed, nevertheless the availability of such resources in either scanned or searchable format is an inestimable boon to Japan-based scholars of early modern Britain, and never more so than during the coronavirus pandemic when visiting the libraries where the original documents are held became impossible.

In my sampling of EEBO, I restricted the date range to the seventeenth century alone and specifically, to the date range as it is more formally-defined as running from 1601 to 1700. It should not be forgotten, however, that at that time the Gregorian calendar had yet to be adopted in England and, accordingly, the year was regarded as beginning not on January 1st but on March 25th, the Feast of the Annunciation, which was a major event in the liturgical and cultural calendar commonly referred to as Lady Day. However, as will be clear from the following discussion, this curious calendrical conundrum has little or no bearing on the analysis.

A considerably more significant problem concerned the question of which search terms to employ. Any survey of youth crime news in England today could reliably expect terms such as "youth crime", "juvenile delinquency" and "knife gang" to yield a plethora of textual evidence. However, none of these collocations are to be found in the EEBO's collection of seventeenth-century documents. In fact, the earliest use of the term "juvenile delinquent" recorded by the OED was in 1816, while Pearson's term "hooligan" did not see the light of printed day until 1898.⁵ However, one rather unusual term that I found did occur quite often in association with the problems of youth was "warning-piece". Originally, a warning piece was a cannon or other form of signal gun used to give notification of something, specifically danger. But in the pamphlets it is used metaphorically to refer to warnings given to the readers about their behavior and the dangers of succumbing to "sin".

This term was sometimes spelt "warning-peece", sometimes written without a hyphen, and sometimes written in titles with two capital Vs rather than a single W. In total, I found 122 documents in the EEBO database that had one of these variants in their title. Of those, I found just seven that also included some variant of "young man", "young woman" or "young person" in their title. It is these texts that I shall discuss, as they appeared in chronological order of publication, in the following section.

The "Warning-Piece" texts

In this section, I will discuss the seven "warning-piece" texts. In order to give a sense of how the texts represented the problem of youth and crime I shall include extensive quotations, but since the texts are all available online via the EEBO database, I would strongly encourage interested readers to seek out the original (facsimile) texts for themselves.

*The Young-Man's Warning-peece (1632)*⁶

This earliest item is also, by a wide margin, the longest, consisting as it does of some 105 pages. The title page reads as follows:

The Yovng-Man's VVarning-peece: or A Sermon preached at the burial of William Rogers, Apothecary. Together with an Historie of his *sinfull Life, and woefull Death*, Dedicated to the Young-men of the *Parish, especially to his Companions.* // By Robert Abbot, Vicar of *Cranebrooke in Kent.* // *Prov. 7. 23.* The young Foole, *as a Bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.* // LONDON, // Printed by *R.B. for P. Stephens, and C. Meridith,* and are to be sold at their Shop at the signe of the *golden Lion* in *Pauls Church-yard.* // 1636

The printer may well have been Robert Barker.⁷ He was an official printer to King James I (just as his father, Christopher Barker, had been to Elizabeth I) and had been responsible for printing the celebrated King James Bible (1611), the text of which remains one of the crowning glories of the English language. However, Barker was also responsible for publishing the so-called “Wicked Bible” of 1631, intended as a reprint of the former bible in which the word “not” was omitted from the commandment “Thou shalt not commit adultery”. The Archbishop of Canterbury, George Abbot, was highly critical of this error, as was the king, and at the Star Chamber Barker was fined and ordered to recall and burn the books although a small number have survived. The booksellers were Philemon Stephens and Christopher Meredith who shared a shop near St. Pauls which was also sometimes called the “Gilded Lion”.⁸

The author of the book and of the original sermon upon which it is based, was Robert Abbot. He was a Puritan churchman who was given the living of Cranbourne in Kent by the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Abbot. According to Jacqueline Eales, there is no evidence to suggest that Robert and George were related.⁹

The book begins with an 11-page dedicatory “Epistle to the Young-Men” who were William Rogers’ companions. Abbot worries that his words may fall on deaf ears: “because (I feare) ye fo often prefer an ale-houfe before the Houfe of God”. After giving extensive warning of the Hellish fate to which youthful excess may lead, he concludes “Now, I live if yee stand falt in the Lord. Even I, who have beene often grieved by you, and have often prayed for you with groanes and sighs, but now hope to be comforted in my bowels over you, upon your amendment.”

The text of the sermon itself begins with Abbot explaining that he does not normally give long sermons at funeral services but he is making an exception this time because Roger himself had “earnestly intreated” him “to preach to all the young men of the parish, especially to his wicked companions (as he called them) something at his burial to waarne them, by his example, to take a better course, that they be not burned in hell with him for ever and ever.”

Abbot then records in mournful detail the course of Roger’s descent into sin. He seemed at first to have been an upstanding and loved member of the community, working with skill as an apothecary that practiced “both Chyrurgery and Phyfik”. However, it seems that at some stage the Devil took ahold of him. “First, delight in vain company crept upon him, next, drunkenness, next, neglect of prayer, word and Sacraments, and lastly, a setled obstinacy in these sinfull and bewitching courses.”

There then follows an account of how Abbot tried to persuade Roger to return to church over the course of several years but without success. There is an almost comical element to his description of making Roger promise to attend church Sunday after Sunday and then Roger failing to turn up due to suddenly being taken sick or some other mishap. After one such aborted attempt, Abbot remarks “It was but as the fit of an ague, which being over, he was the next morning in his old course”. Eventually, despite Abbot’s best efforts, Roger dies of “some idle distemper in his braine”. His example, Abbot tells the young men, is “a warning-peece shot out by the God of Heaven to warne all Young-men”.

The next, and longest, part of the sermon consists of more examples of wicked youth and the falling of God’s wrath upon them, together with pastoral guidance, based on Biblical exemplars, for how they should mend their ways while they still have time. He ends this brimstone-girded sermon by telling them that:

“your age is a moft unfetled age, peftered with many lufts of youth, which drop by drop may fall upon you”.

The overall impression gained from this text, and many other sermons by priests like Abbot, is that youth is a vulnerable age and that young people need to be protected from stepping onto the path of sin. There is, in contrast, surprisingly little concern with the laws of man, as opposed to the laws of God.

The Apprentices Warning-piece (1641)

The title of this second text is as follows:

The Apprentices VWarning-piece. Being A Confelsion of *Peter Moore*, formerly Servant to Mr. *Bidgood*, Apothecary in Exeter, executed there the laft Assifes, for pyfoning his laid Master. // Wherein is obferved fuch lamentable expreffions proceeding from him, as may produce a trembling to all who reade or heare thereof, and be a warning to fuch leud fervants who walk the fame steps, left they receive the fame punifhment. // LONDON, // Printed, and are to be fold by *Henry Walker*. // 1641

Some interesting background information on this text was provided by T. N. Brushfield in a 1900/1901 contribution to *Devon Notes and Queries*.¹⁰ According to the diary of a local resident, John Hayne¹¹, seen by Brushfield, on December 16th 1641 Hayne paid a bill to Bidgood “for pilles twice, for a Cordiall for my Wife in March last, for fumus pectoralis, and some other very small things, amounting in all to x^s odde mony, but I paid him this in full of all demands to this day, and saw him crosse his booke being a long thin paper booke.”

Brushfield remarks that “There can be little doubt that any remarks that may have been made by him immediately prior to the completion of the sentence, have been considerably expanded in his so-named confession; and the attempt [which Moore seems to have made] to throw the onus of the act upon others is a feature by no means uncommon in such cases.”

Such “confession” texts as this one, purportedly spoken at their execution by condemned men and women to the assembled crowds, were a common genre in the seventeenth-century.¹² The following text from 1687 is another typical example.

A SERMON // occasioned by the EXECUTION of // *a man found* Guilty of // MURDER // *preached at Boston in N.E., March 11th, 1685/6* // (Together with the *Confession, Last Expressions, & solemn Warning* of that Murderer to all persons; *especially* to *Young men*, to beware of *those Sins* which brought him to his *miserable End*) // By INCREASE MATHER, Teacher of Church of CHRIST

Returning to the confession of Peter Moore, after an initial introduction by the anonymous author, we get to hear the supposedly authentic voice of the penitent sinner himself. He tells us a familiar story about how he came to fall into sin.

Being in the prime of my youth, the devill by his allurements and wicked inticing, made me partaker of each damned vice, so that my heart being puffed up with ambition, I began to scoffe at Gods holy Ministers, prophaning Sabbaths, and taking Gods holy name in vaine. But yet still was I provoked further to evil courses, so much alas, that you could scarce name a sinne wherein I had not beene an actor.

After trying to control his unruly feelings, including running away to his home for a spell, things came to a head after his relationship with his master’s wife became particularly heated.

for I feeling a messe of pot|tage about dinner time provided for my Mafter, I most unnaturall fervant put powdred white Mercury into it, so privately that no man could perceive me, which so soone as he good man had tasted, presently began to swel, and a while after died.

As he ascends the scaffold, he gives his final warning to the assembled crowd.

All young men which are here present, and did behold me drawne hither upon a sledge, take warning by me, and let your study be, first, to please your heavenly Master, and then your Masters upon earth.

From this confessional text, we may assume that the producers of such texts hoped that rather than hearing a sermon from a priest, hearing from the horse’s mouth would be more likely to have an impact on the impressionable audience.

The Young-Mans Second Warning-peece (1643)

The third text seems in its title to refer back to the first one we considered. However there is no clear textual link and neither have I been able to discover one in the various bibliographical sources. It is interesting, however, to speculate how many of the purchasers and readers of this text might have been familiar with the earlier one.

The YOVNG-MANS Second VWarning-peece: OR, *A Miracle of Mercies*. // Being a true Relation of the horrible suggestions, and tentations, wherewith Satan assaulted me *A. W.* Stationer of *London*, whereby he prevailed so far, as to force me to sin grossly, and to despaire fearfully, in so much, that he brought me near unto the making of my selfe away, many and fundry ways, from the which the Lord in mercy delivered me. //

And therefore, as a testimony of my thankfulness to God, and love to my brethren, and former sinful associates: I have thought good to publish in print, both the manner and time of my conflict, and also of my delivery. // Perused and allowed of, by four godly, and learned Divines in this Citie. // The second edition, Corrected by the Author. // Ephe. 6. 13. 16.

Wherefore take unto you the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. // LONDON // Printed for Anthony Wildegoose, and are to be sold at his house, in Little-Woodstreete, in Bunting Alley. 1643

This pamphlet is somewhat unusual in that the author, Anthony Wildegoose, was actually the printer himself. Wildegoose had been apprenticed for seven years up till 1637 to John Legate, who was the publisher of two of Robert Abbot's later works in a similar vein, *Milk for babes* and *A Christian family builded by God*. Although the title refers to this as being the second edition, I have not been able to find any record of the first edition.

Wildegoose confesses at the beginning to "committing of some grosse sins, even such as the Apostles faith, are not to be so much as once named". It transpires that he is talking about something that happened ten years previously and he refers to his master, which would mean he was talking about the time when he was a apprentice to John Legate. He talks about falling into a trance, seeing visions of Hell and being tempted by Satan to kill himself, which he almost does one day when he contemplates climbing a ladder and hanging himself. His miserable tormented life continues for "six or seven years" during which he would "oft sit by the fire, or lye upon my bed divers dayes together, and neglect my businesse". He credits his blessed release from that life to a sermon he attended after work one day which "wrought so upon my inner-man, that since that time I bleesse God, I have been well in minde."

Wildegoose clearly worries that people will not believe him for he writes "I beseech you do not conceive of this Relation as a fained or forged thing, for I professe unto you all, it is a most certain truth". Moreover, the text contains an interesting postscript.

"Now, if any through ignorance may suffer themselves hereafter to be persuaded either by their own corruptions, or Satans temptations, that this former Relation is but a fained thing, or some melancholy Fit only, or such like, I would entreat them to take an opportunity to come to my house in *Little-Woodstreet* in *Bunting-Ally*, and I will with the Lords help, give what satisfaction I am able."

One wonders whether this invitation was often taken up by his readers and whether he would send them away with a few of his books under their arms. In other words, this might just have been an early form of advertising.

Inhumane, & Cruel Bloody News from Leeds (1676)

The rather long and expository title of this text is as follows:

Inhumane, & Cruel Bloody News from Leeds in *Yorkshire*. // Being a True Relation of

a Young-man which Intic't an other Man's Wife from *London*, down into the Country; which after some time he most Barbarouly Murthered in a most frightful manner, in a Defart pace, near *Leeds*, Cutting her Tongue and her Eyes out of her Head, her Throat being Cutt from Ear to Ear; and after all this, being not satisfied, Rips her open, and takes a Child out of her Womb, laying it down by her side. This being done, he took Horfe and was coming for *London*; but the Murder being found he was Pursued and Taken, and sent to *York Castle*, where he muft lye till the next Lent Assizes, and then receive his due Punishment. This being Written in the meantime for a Warning-Piece to all Young-Women, to be careful how they be Trappan'd by false and deceitful Young men. With Allowance, Jan. 4. Ro. L'Estrange. The tune is, *The Bleeding Heart*, &c.

Printed for *F. Coles, T. Vere, J. Wright, and J. Clarke*

There is some confusion about the author of this work. It is given in EEBO as “Anon.” but it appears to be by Roger L'Estrange. By coincidence, the following text *is* by L'Estrange. The place of publication (presumably London) is not given and neither is the date.

The text itself consists of a single sheet with the verses shown in four columns. It is headed with a large woodcut illustrating the gruesome throat-cutting scene. The first verse goes as follows:

Alas what times here be / For men to live so sinfully; / Nothing but wickedness doth
reign / In peoples hearts, we find it plain; / The Devil prompts me unto sin, / And to
amend they'l not begin, / Till Justice overtakes them streight, / Then they repent when
'tis too late; God grant us Grace, and keep us free, / From Murther and Adultery.

The song is about a young man “Which did his Parents not obey; / But like a Crafty, cunning Elf, / Despis'd his Friends, ruin'd himself”. The concluding verse gives this warning:

Young Maids and Wives I pray ye all, / Take warning by this womans fall; / Don't yield to
flattering speeches fair, / And of lewd young-men have a care; / Also you that Husbands
have, / Yeild to no tongue that comes to crave / You to defile your Marriage Bed, / Take
warning here, be not misled.

The implications for the author's understanding of gender and patriarchy are clear here.

The Bloody Sons Warning-piece (1676)

The title of this piece is as follows:

THE // Bloody Sons Warning-piece // OR, // NEWS // From READING in
BERKSHIRE. // *Being a True Relation of a Horrible Murther Committed by VV. H. an
Unnatural Son, on his own Father.* // With the Wonderful manner how the fact came to
be first discovered after the Murther was committed Five Years: the Murtherer being with
the Small Pox, and lying near the point of death, (though since recovered) confessed the
fact with all its Circumstances to a Justice. // Attested by an ear-Witness, an Inhabitant
there, depositions being made by several prisoners to the Justice there of the truth, for
which fact the Prisoner expects to suffer at the next Assizes holden for the Country

aforesaid. // With Allowance, Roger L'Estrange. // Printed for *Thomas Johnson*, 1676

The story concerns the son's crime, his apprehension and sentencing but not execution, his spending five years as a prisoner, then his contracting smallpox causing him, on death's door as he thought, to confess to the murder.

Oh let this example warn all others from following lewd courfes, abfenting themselves from Divine worfhip, and not providing for their families. // And efpecially from hearkening to the Devils fuggeltions, or their own revenge, fo as in pafion or defign to bereave any of their lives, which beides the danger of their fouls eternal ruine, moft defervedly, and affuredly will bring them to fall, unpitied, by an untimely and ignominious Death.

The text ascribes the smallpox infection which led to the confession as “the wonderful works and providence of God”. This reflects the contemporary view of sickness and disease as having a spiritual dimension which John Wesley later encapsulated in the phrase “cleanliness is next to godliness”.

The Young-Man's Warning-Piece (1682)

The title of this text is as follows:

The YOUNG-MAN'S Warning-Piece: // OR, *The Extravagant Youths Pilgrimage and Progreffs in this VWorld.* // Being a Faithful Relation of the Remarkable Life of *J. Bradwill*, Son of *W. Bradwill*, Merchant of the City. Giving an Account of his many Adventures during the firft and wicked part of his Life, (which may ferve as a Caution to Youth, which is too prone to be led into all manner of Vice. As likewife, the Wonderful means by which he was Converted and brought to know the Miserable State wherein he was, and confequently to avoid Eternal Woe. // *With Three Dreadful Examples* upon Drunkards, Swearers, and Blafphemers.

The text is attractively laid out in a way resembling a modern newspaper. It consists of four columns of text. For most of the page the middle two columns are occupied by a grid of small but finely wrought woodcuts consisting of three columns of four, each with a caption, which illustrate the story. The whole seems remarkably similar to a comic. The captions to the woodcuts are as follows. Double vertical lines || separate the captions for each woodcut.

Folly provides Apparel for the Young-Mans Vice. || *Folly* attires the Youngman anfwerable to her Temptations || They both fet forth to find fit objects for acting of Sin || He in his Gallantry mounts to the deg[rees] of Sin || *Foll[y]* ... [H]un[tin]g and Hawking. || *Folly* brings him to the fin of Gaming, where he lofes his Eftate. || *Folly* brings him to the Sin of Drunkennefs. || *Folly* brings him to commit Whoredom and Uncleannefs. || *Folly* and the Young-man funk up to the Saddle. || Gods grace appears to him, and draws him out of the mire. || Gods Grace fhews him Hell, and the Damned Tortures. || Gods Grace guides him to true unfeigned Repentance.

This text is quite unusual in giving an actual age of the young person.

Being now two and Twenty Years of Age, feldom an Evening passed, but he was either at a Gameing-Ordinary¹³, Tavern, or Bawdy-Houfe; notwithstanding he kept a Mifs, and allowed her a Guinney a week upon the bare Word of a Hore to be true to him, and at his command.

Eventually, after losing all his money and, with it, his friends, he begins to hear heavenly voices and have dreams which, miraculously, set him back on the straight and narrow path to a virtuous life.

The Difdainful Virgin led Captive (1690)

The title of this final text, a broadside ballad, is as follows:

The Difdainful Virgin led Captive: // OR, // Cupid’s Triumph over Pride: // BEING // *Rofilinda’s* Warning-piece to all ambitious Females; or, // Self-Admiring Lassēs. // *A most Delightful New Play Song*

Printed for *J. Jordan*, at the *Angel*, in *Guilt-spur Street*, without *Newgate*.

This text of this ballad is illustrated with woodcuts of Cupid, young men and women and most remarkably a woman with exposed breasts. The song itself is of little interest to the present study however, since it has little do to with youth crime and is only included here for completeness.

Conclusion

In this paper I have sought to extend into the seventeenth century the work of Geoffrey Pearson on the backward-oriented view of youth crime as being a contemporary horror in comparison to the halcyon days of the past. On the basis of the admittedly small sample of texts considered here, it appears to be indeed the case that people (by which I mean principally adults) were concerned with the state of their young people, the young men in particular, and how they needed to have the natural instincts and passions of their time of life reigned in if they were to avoid the clutches of the Devil. This emphasis on religion, godliness and sin is, I think, the most noticeable difference between the view of youth crime in the seventeenth century and that more secular view that developed in the later centuries. However, it is clear that there is much more work to be done on this subject than can be covered in this small study. I hope, therefore, to shed more light on this issue in future work.

Notes

- 1 Pearson, G. (1983) *Hooligan: A History of Respectable Fears*. London: Macmillan.
- 2 Incidentally, the earliest quotation given for “adolescence” by the OED comes in a document from the early 1400s wherein it is described as the “wexing” age. Somewhat disappointingly, this is a term which, rather than reflecting the view of the author that children of that age are “vexing”, is just a variant of “waxing” meaning to “increase” such as is found in the phrase “a waxing moon”.
- 3 Sharpe, J. (2013) *Crime in Early Modern England 1550–1750*, 2nd ed. London: Routledge.
- 4 *Ibid.*

- 5 Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. “juvenile delinquency, n.”, July 2023 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/6567145496>>
- 6 In displaying the title pages of the pamphlets and books, I have tried to reproduce something of the original formatting without taking up too much space on the page. To that end, I have used a double slash (//) to represent a paragraph break and, in the case of texts 4 and 7, a blank line to indicate that the information (about the text’s publication) was printed at the end of the text rather than at the bottom of the title page. I have also retained the original capitalization, spelling, punctuation and italicization, but not variations in font or font size. The most prominent words have been shown in bold.
- 7 It appears that around the time that this book was being printed, Barker was suffering from financial difficulties and was actually imprisoned towards the end of 1635 where he remained until his death in 1644.
- 8 The same pair were charged with selling another book by Abbot in 1639, wherein their names are given in full. In that book, Abbot refers to himself as being over 50 years old, meaning he would have been in his late forties when *The Young-Man’s Warning-peece* appeared.
- 9 Eales, J. (2004) Abbot, Robert. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford University Press.
- 10 The version of Brushfield’s note referred to here comes from a transcript available on the UK and Ireland genealogical website, Genuki.
- 11 Netherton (1865), who provides several extracts of this diary (which he describes as an “Account Book”) together with his somewhat droll commentary suggests that the surname was “Henly”.
- 12 EEBO has 742 items with “confession” in the title of which 166 also have “execution” and of those four have “young” (one “young man”, one “young men”, one “young wench” and one “young lady”).
- 13 The word “ordinary” here refers to an inn or tavern where standard (hence, ordinary) meals were available, by the 17th century often a venue for gambling.