
Abstract

This thesis is a study of the sociological significance of crime and punishment discourse in early-nineteenth-century broadsides. Broadside were a form of street literature and, for almost 300 years until the late nineteenth century, were a forerunner to our modern tabloid newspapers. As such, they were published on a wide range of topics, but by far the most prevalent were those covering violent crime, especially murder, and the public execution of criminals. The publication of this genre of broadside reached a peak in the first half of the nineteenth century and its popular appeal was greatest among the labouring poor. This has led several scholars to propose two prominent, yet contrasting, arguments: namely, that this 'gallows literature' should be read as either evidence of attempts at ideological social control or merely as a form of debased, sensationalistic entertainment. However, this thesis proposes that broadside actually reveal ordinary people’s thoughts and feelings about crime and criminal justice and, as such, reflect common moralities and mentalities. By presenting a detailed discourse analysis of 650 broadsides printed all over Britain between the years 1800-1850, this thesis provides an alternative interpretation as to the form, function and meaning of their narratives of crime. This interpretation is based upon the social theories of Emile Durkheim, who recognised the higher utility of crime and punishment as being one of social integration and the preservation of moral boundaries. The central argument of this thesis, therefore, is that broadside relating to crime and punishment were a form of moral communication for the masses and that they are examples of how the working class once attempted to bolster a sense of stability and community, during the transitional years of the early nineteenth century, by effectively representing both a consolidation and celebration of their core values and beliefs.
After the trial, if you are found innocent, you are free. If you are guilty, you are punished with a sentence. In most countries, the most severe Crime and Punishment Quiz. You can do this quiz online or print it on paper. It’s based on our crime and punishment vocabulary page, part of our English for Police section. What crime is being committed in each of these cases? 1. A thief goes into your house through a window. fraud burglary vandalism. The British Library is the national library of the United Kingdom and one of the world’s greatest libraries. We hold over 13 million books, 920,000 journal and newspaper titles, 57 million patents and 3 million sound recordings. Sensational stories of crime and violence filled the pages of the popular press after 1800 with details of juvenile crime appearing in newspapers, broadsides and pamphlets. The activities of so-called ‘lads-men’ were regularly reported. This evidence is further supported by the findings of social investigators at work during the 19th century. Matthew’s major research interests include the history of crime, punishment and policing, and the social impact of urbanisation.