

OLLSCOIL NA HÉIREANN, GAILLIMH  
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, GALWAY

B.A. DEGREE HISTORY  
SECOND SEMESTER 1999-2000  
POPULAR CULTURE IN PRE-INDUSTRIAL EUROPE (HI376)

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TIME: TWO HOURS; ANSWER QUESTION ONE AND TWO OTHER QUESTIONS

1. 'Belief in witchcraft [and magic] does not of itself exclude a considerable amount of what we can rightly call empirical observation and reasoning' (Gluckman). Do you agree?

OR

'There existed [in the early modern period] two completely different notions of what witches were'. (Cohn). What were these two notions, and what were the implications of the differences between them?

OR

According to Johnson, 'the Jesuits appear to have compromised to a degree with popular religious culture' in their missions to rural areas in the 17th and 18th centuries. What were the elements of this compromise?

OR

What are the drawbacks of approaching popular religion in terms of a division between 'orthodox' belief and 'superstition'?

2. In pre-industrial rural Europe, 'the distinction between work and leisure is not one which it is possible to draw' (Thomas). What were the implications of this for the organisation and the sense of time of a rural community?

3. 'Religion means the extension of social relations beyond the frontiers of merely human society' (Bossy) Discuss.

4. 'The city remained dependent, both from a material and conceptual point of view, on a rural life that was still the norm' (Muchembled). Is Muchembled's description an accurate one?

5. What were the 'norms and values' (Neveux and Osterberg) or the 'guiding myths' (Bercé) of political beliefs among the peasantry of early modern western Europe?

6. If symbolic or ritual inversion is a type of language, what kinds of statements can be made in it?

over/

7. 'The traditional performer [in an oral culture] was no mere mouthpiece for tradition, but he was not free to invent whatever he liked' (Burke). What is the balance between invention and conservation in such performance?

OR

Discuss some of the ways in which knowledge and belief are preserved and transmitted in an oral society.

8. 'Many of the cultural phenomena of pre-industrial England and Europe were able to survive, and adapt and thrive in new circumstances'. What sorts of practices and beliefs survived in industrial cities, printed books or centralised states? (You may discuss one or more of these as you wish)

9. 'In many places in lower Brittany the mysteries of religion were so little known that it was a question of establishing the faith rather than of teaching the Christian doctrine', according to a late seventeenth-century Jesuit missionary priest. What does his comment tell us about either (a) the forms of popular religion or (b) the attitudes of the Reformations, both Catholic and Protestant?

10. 'The great European witch-hunt was essentially a judicial operation' (Levack). Can the great witch-hunt be satisfactorily accounted for by developments in the law?

11. 'Cheap printed books have both advantages and difficulties as a source for popular beliefs and attitudes in the past'. What are these advantages and difficulties?

12. A stylised and structured literary image of the poor emerged in late medieval and early modern Europe. In what context was this image formed, and what were its characteristics?

OR

In what way did the literary image of the poor become the foundation of a similar literary image of criminality?

13. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Britain and Ireland saw sustained campaigns by sections of the elite against certain features of popular culture. Discuss the aims and success of the campaigns against of one of the following: seditious print, cruelty to animals, monday morning absenteeism, drinking.

14. 'It has usually been urban intellectuals who have retrospectively discovered the pleasures and sterling virtues of peasant life'. In your view, did these intellectuals present a false picture of 'traditional' rural society?

OR

To what extent were early folklore studies fostered and influenced by nationalism?