

OLLSCOIL NÁISIÚNTA NA hÉIREANN GAILLIMH  
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND GALWAY

B.A. DEGREE HISTORY  
SECOND SEMESTER 1998-9  
POPULAR CULTURE IN PRE-INDUSTRIAL EUROPE (HI376)

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

1. How far is it accurate or useful to think of an 'elite culture' and a 'popular culture' in early modern society? You may discuss Europe or Ireland or both if you wish.

OR

According to Jenkins, a supernatural explanation of a physical event in Irish rural society would invoke either witches or fairies, according to the social context of the event in question. Discuss this view.

OR

'By the standards of contemporary continental society, and even those of neighbouring England, early modern Ireland exhibited a remarkably low level of antiwitchcraft jural activity' (Lapoint). What are the different sorts of explanations put forward for this phenomenon, and do you accept them?

OR

'The Temperance movement in Ireland was not merely, as has often been suggested, a charismatic movement based upon Fr. Mathew's miracle working' (Kearney). What other impulses lay behind it?

2. 'Our modern categories of space and time have very little in common with the space and time perceived and experienced by people in other historical epochs' (Gurevich). Discuss this view with reference to the peasantry of pre-industrial Europe.

OR

What are rites of passage and what was their role in early modern rural society?

3. 'The belief in magic explains not how a misfortune occurs, but why a particular person suffered that misfortune' (Gluckman). Discuss.

OR

What were the relationships between people and saints within pre-Reformation Christianity?

4. 'Although many carnivals turned into revolts in Early Modern Europe, a far larger number did not'. What does this tell us about Carnival as an event or as a symbolic vocabulary?

OR

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

5. Outline some of the fundamental conceptions of popular politics as they appeared in either a rural peasant revolt against taxation or an urban food riot.

6. Fairy and folk tales were primarily a type of oral performance. How did this influence their structure?

7. 'The commercial revolution led to a golden age of traditional popular culture... before the combined commercial and industrial revolutions destroyed it' (Burke). Discuss.

8. What effect did the spread of literacy have on popular attitudes and practices in early modern Europe?

OR

'There was no firm dividing line between oral and literate culture; the two were face-to-face all over early modern Europe' (Houston). How did they interact?

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9. To what extent were the Protestant and Catholic Reformations advocating similar models of belief and practice?

OR

How successful were the Protestant and Catholic Reformations in suppressing those aspects of popular religion of which they disapproved?

10. How did traditional peasant beliefs concerning magic and witchcraft differ from those which underlay the witch hunts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries?

11. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the printed popular literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a guide to popular mentalities?

12. What, in your view, accounts for the success of the criminal biography within printed popular literature?

13. What aspects of popular culture were targeted by reforming movements in eighteenth and nineteenth century England?

OR

Hannah More's printed tracts of the 1790s 'proposed a remaking of the relations between the poor and the powerful' (Pedersen). How did they do this?

14. What lay behind the 'rediscovery of the people' from the late 18th century onwards? Did it draw an over-rosy picture of 'the people'?