

Lecture 6

Silenced Voices: From Heresy to Early Feminists and the Famines

Reading: Downloadable Notes; Levack

Topics

- Gnosticism and Other Heresies
- Who was St. Eulalia?
- The Cathars and the First Inquisition
- History of Witch Burnings
- Early Feminists: de Gouges and Wollstonecraft

Silenced Religious Voices

- From 4th C. CE, instead of Christians, it was Christian heresies being actively suppressed
 - Ancient Heresies
 - Arianism (see Lec. 3)
 - Pre-Christian doctrines: Gnosticism, Manichaeism
- Dark Ages – period of defense from ‘Huns’ and ‘barbarians’; expansion and consolidation
 - Medieval Heresies
 - Bogomils
 - Cathars, Waldensians and Albigensians

Silenced Female Voices

- Numerous social restrictions on female advancement
 - Inheritance and succession rules favored first born son
 - Education often segregated and favoring males
 - Except for autodidacts like Mary Wollstonecraft, much female education (until the 19th C.) was confined to needlework, music, dancing, writing.
- Role of women in religion also reflects different treatment
 - All twelve apostles were male → Mary Magdalene was a disciple
 - The Virgin Mary versus the Pope as a descendent of Peter

Silence of the Starving and Diseased

- Horrific Events of the Colonial Era
 - The Great Bengal Famine of 1770
 - Spread over 1769 to 1773, combined with an outbreak of smallpox → policies of East India Company a major contributor
 - Est. of deaths between 2 to 10 million
 - Irish Potato Famine 1845-52
 - Over 2 million dead (approx. 25% of population)
 - Also accompanied by disease epidemics
 - Smallpox Epidemic and the HBC in the Pacific Northwest

Who was Saint Eulalia (290?-303)?

- Most well known as the patron saint of Barcelona
 - Story possibly borrowed from St. Eulalia of Merida, also a patron saint – at this time Merida was a major Roman settlement in Iberia
 - Similar story about this time with St. Agnes of Rome, patron saint of rape victims and virgins.
- First source of St. Eulalia (of Merida) story is Prudentius, a Christian Latin poet of the fourth century
 - The Mozarabic Breviary contains three hymns founded upon the St. Eulalia legend (the term Mozarabic is used in connection with the religious rites and culture of the Christians of Spain under Islamic Moorish rule that began in the 8th C.)

Saint Eulalia and the Diocletian Persecution

- St. Eulalia was a victim of the last and most vicious persecution of Christians by the Romans
- The Roman Emperor Diocletian (244-311 AD) ruled from 284-305 and in 303 initiated the Diocletian Persecution of Christians that eventually ended in 313
 - Emperor Constantine made Christianity the religion of the empire in 324
 - Diocletian not the only Roman emperor to persecute Christians → Nero, Maximin, Decius etc. also did so
 - Modern estimates identify an increase of 6x in the Christian population of the Empire from 250-300, with Christians rising to positions of high status and holding positions in the military

Sorting the Diocletian Persecutions

- Determining details of the persecutions illustrates the difficulties of interpreting ancient history sources
- Three 'primary' sources are available, all **apologetic**:
 - *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, a single manuscript discovered in 17th C. monastery library, attributed to Lactantius, a Christian author and advisor to Constantine, present during the Diocletian era
 - *Acta Martyrum*, a compilation of manuscripts with varying degrees of accuracy describing the acts of Christian martyrdom first appearing in 17th C. – the original *Acta* is attributed to a now lost manuscript by Eusebius
 - Various manuscripts of Eusebius of Caesarea capture certain events either not in the other two sources or providing additional, sometimes contrary, details – including *Historia Ecclesiastica* – a major (10 Book) source of Church history, originally in Koine Greek, with a manuscript tradition the is traceable to the Eusebius original





J.W. Waterhouse (1885) – National Gallery, London

P. Delaroche (1855) -- Louvre

Legend of the Thirteen Tortures of St. Eulalia

- ▣ For refusing to recant her Christianity, the Romans subjected St. Eulalia to thirteen tortures including:
 - ▣ Putting her into a barrel with knives (or glass) stuck into it and rolling it down a street Cutting off her breasts
 - ▣ Crucifixion on an X-shaped cross. She is depicted with this cross, the instrument of her martyrdom.
 - ▣ Decapitation
- ▣ Stories of Agnes and the two Eulalias differ in the types of torture.
- ▣ A dove flew from her neck after decapitation
 - ▣ In the legend of Eulalia of Merida by Prudentius, her spirit ascended to heaven in the form of a dove and a fall of snow covered her remains – as depicted in the St. Eulalia painting by Waterhouse

Gnosticism

- **“Gnosis”**
 - From the Greek meaning: understanding or consciousness gained through personal experience
 - Knowledge within versus external religious knowledge that needs interpretation by the descendants of Peter
- The term is a catchall for a collection of religious groups from the first few centuries AD (CE)
 - Many of these groups thought of themselves as Christians
 - Gnosticism actively suppressed by the Catholic Church
 - Some Gnostic writings give equal or favored position to feminine leadership



The Gnostic Gospels

- Gnostic Mythology
 - Nag Hammadi Library
 - The temporal world is the creation of a series of evil archons or powers that tries to trap the human soul in an evil physical body
 - The hidden wisdom or knowledge may only be available to a select group. This wisdom is necessary for salvation or escape from this world.
 - DUALIST, Inward looking and Exclusionary
 - Is Gnosticism an extension of Christianity or the result of pre-Christian influences?
 - Essential source: E. Pagels, *Beyond Belief*

Mani and Manichaeans

- **Mani** (210-276 CE), born in Babylon, then part of the Persian Empire;
 - A religious preacher, founder of Manichaeism: an ancient Persian gnostic religion.
 - Once widespread, the original religion is now extinct.
 - From Britain to China, central religion for Uyghur empires in central Asia
 - No original Mani writings have survived, reliance on Coptic Egyptian texts
 - Mani claimed to be an apostle of Jesus
 - Mani was exiled from Persia
 - Approx, 20 years
 - Preached in Northern India, Tibet, Chinese Turkistan and Khurastan
 - In 272 or 273 returned to Persia
 - Victim of Zoroastrian priests, executed in 273 or 274

The Manichaean Religion

- Basic tenets of the **Manichaeans**:
 - The transmigration of the soul
 - Division of Manichaean community into male and female monks (the "elect") and lay followers (the "hearers") who support them
 - Pre-Buddhist influences were significant in the formation of Mani's religious thought, spent time traveling through South Asia
 - Did not Buddhism start with **Siddhartha Gautama** (Gautama Buddha 563-483 BCE)?
 - Dualism → two opposing deities (neither is omnipotent)
 - Evil in the world is explained and the battle of all-good deity (King of Light) vs. the all-evil deity (King of Evil)

Conflicting Features of Dualism

- Evil vs. Good as Creators the World
 - Gnostics and Paulicians (Evil) vs. Manichaeans (Good)
 - Docetism
 - Jesus as a physical body was an illusion
 - Crucifixion was also an illusion
 - Jesus was pure spirit and could not die
 - Zoroastrianism (most ancient doctrinal religion, possibly founded 1200 BC) was dualistic
 - Another ancient religion, Hinduism – polytheistic – with One God that appears in various forms as different gods; originated as a combination of different texts

The Spread of Dualism

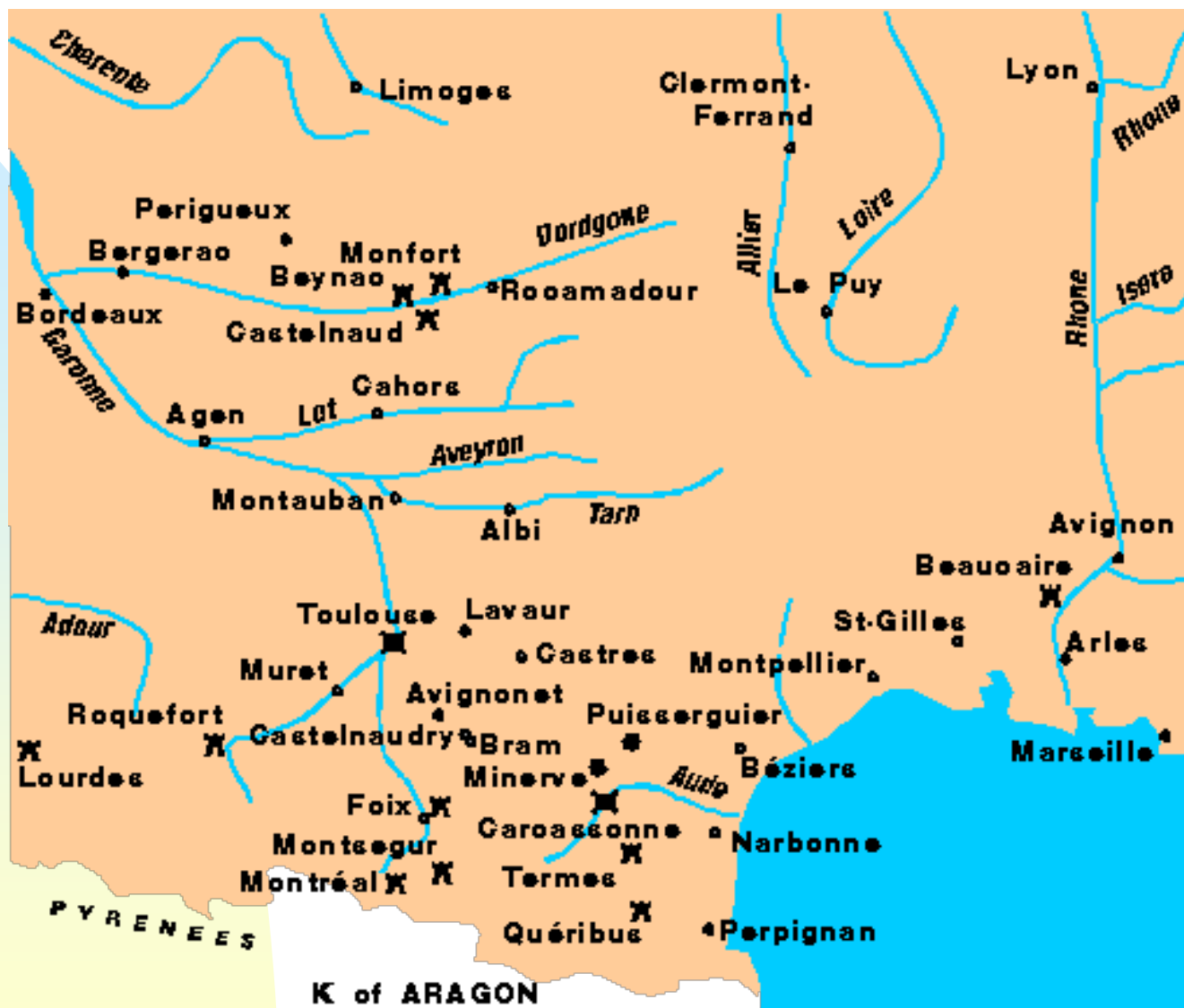
□ The Bogomils

- 10th-14th C. Bulgaria – (Bogomil is ‘priest/father’ in Bulgarian)
 - Cathars, Waldenses, Anabaptists and Doukhobors are descendents
- Deny divine birth of Christ and the Trinity
 - This extends to the sacraments and Church ceremonies
 - Deny the virgin birth and Mary worship
 - Accept the miracles performed by Jesus only in a spiritual sense, not as real material occurrences (as in Price)
- The Church is spiritual and all have an equal share
- Special role for Baptism
 - Only practiced on grown men and women (no infant baptism)
 - The rites of baptism are spiritual requiring prayers and hymnal chanting (not water, oil and ceremony)

The Cathars and Albigensians

- Where is Languedoc?
 - An historic region in central southern France
 - Shared the *langue d'oc* where *oc* was a corruption of Latin mixed with words of various invader tongues
 - Closer to Latin than the northern French (*langue d'oïl* -- especially north of the Loire)
 - The feudal system in Languedoc weaker than in northern France, local lords maintained considerable independence.
 - SEE MAP (Includes Toulouse)

- Albi is a town in Languedoc where Cathari religion was particularly strong, hence Albigensians was a reference to Catharism



The Castle at Montseger, the last stronghold of the Cathari



The Albigensian Crusades

- Initial event in 1208, murder of Papal legate in Languedoc
 - Invasion of northern armies in 1209 until death of Simon de Montfort in the siege of Toulouse in 1218
 - Following period of Cathari resistance, Treaty of Paris 1229 marked surrender of Count of Toulouse
 - Main Cathari resistance ended effectively at Montsegur in 1244 with mopping up to 1255
- First Crusade against Christians and within Europe
 - Many Cathari resettled in safe areas, but were forced to wear the yellow cross
 - Possibly some resettlement in Lombard – Cathari did not restrict money loans at interest, a practice of Renaissance Lombards

*St. Dominic
presiding over
an auto-da-fe
against the
Albigensians*

**Berruguete
(1475)**



The First Inquisition

- **Catharism represented a dual threat**
 - **To the economic strength of the Church (e.g., tithes paid to a separate church)**
 - The spiritual foundation of the Church (Catharism was almost a dual opposite of Catholicism) – following the Bogomils, Cathars allowed for female authority
- Inquisition established in Toulouse 1229, and in all of Languedoc 1233
 - Allowed power to torture and burn heretics at the stake
 - Papal Inquisition built on episcopal inquisitions of 12th C.
- The Roman Inquisition, Spanish Inquisition and Portuguese Inquisitions appear in second half 16th C.

The Legal Framework for the Witch Hunts

Reading: Levack ch.3

- Heresy persecutions and witch hunts were judicially sanctioned
 - Inquisitional legal system sanctioned use of torture
 - Transition of heresy and witchcraft prosecutions to secular from ecclesiastical courts
- Prior to Inquisition: accusatorial criminal procedure
 - Action for criminal activity initiated by sworn statement and prosecuted by injured party or family members
 - Case decided by judge, use of “ordeals” in cases where guilt was uncertain
- Starting in 13th C., inquisitional legal system introduced
 - Cases now prosecuted by judges and subordinates
 - Use of torture legalized
 - Possible for legal actions to be introduced by judges and others



Who Was Joan of Arc (1412-1431)?

- Important figure in the French civil war between the Burgundians (allied with English) and the Orleanists
- 1424 Joan begins hearing voices telling her to lead an army against the Burgundians
 - 1428 English siege of Orleans, Joan acts on her voices and seeks out the Duke of Orleans
 - Initially unsuccessful, Joan is eventually able to contact the Duke and convince him to name her titular head of the army
 - Joan was able to rally the Orleanist troops to rout the English siege of Orleans
 - Led advance to Riems (coronation of the king) and proceeded to Paris
 - Due to intrigues of the French court and on-site betrayal, eventually captured by Burgundians in 1430, later sold by ransom to English

The Interrogation of Joan of Arc

**Gillot Saint-Evre
(1835)**

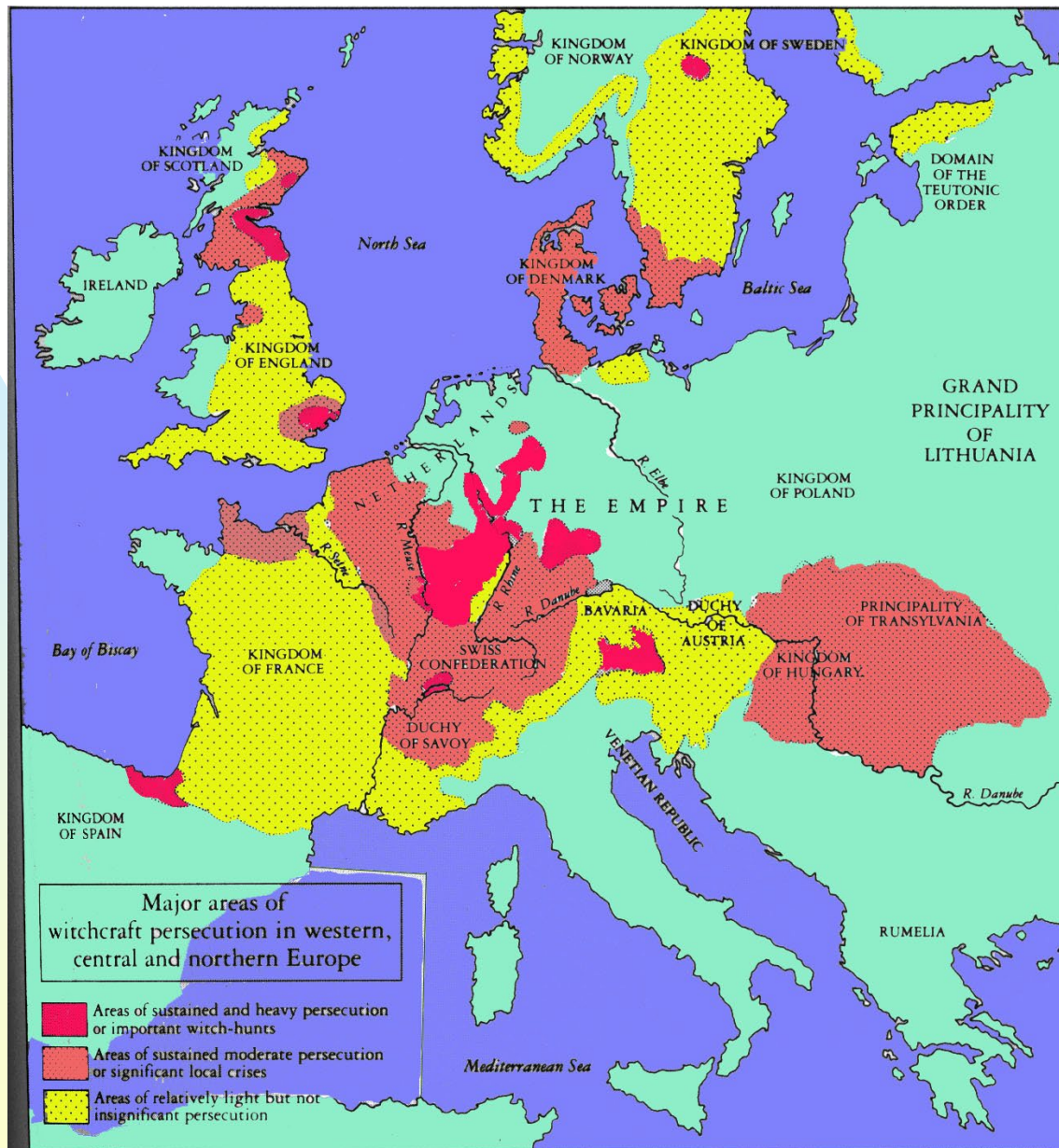


The Trial of Joan of Arc

- Trial from Feb-Mar 1431, followed by execution – burned alive at the stake.
- English were able to manipulate the selection of Inquisitor
 - Many charges, such as witchcraft, were dismissed
 - Eventually convicted of cross-dressing (which Joan claimed was necessary to prevent rape by guards and others)
 - Numerous procedural irregularities
- Expulsion of English in 1449 began a long process of reconciliation and eventual canonization of Joan as a saint in 1920

History of Witch Burnings

- The Great European Witch Hunts, approx. 1450-1750
 - Estimates as high as 200,000 deaths, over 80% female, often executed by burning at stake (also hanging and beheading)
 - Best estimates of 110,000 prosecutions and 60,000 executions (not including vigilante killings and deaths in prison/during torture)
 - In some areas, e.g., Estonia and Iceland, most executions were males
 - Few witch executions occurred in Italy, under the Roman Inquisition, and in most of Spain, under the Spanish Inquisition (not Basque region)
- Two key elements of witchcraft
 - Magical power controlled by human agent (as opposed to divine source)
 - *Maleficium*: harmful outcome
 - Possible to have 'good magic' which is not witchcraft
 - Witchcraft involves Devil worship (possible to be prosecuted for devil worship alone/without *Maleficium*)



Witchcraze

- Traditional treatment of witch hunts downplay the role of gender
 - Barstow *Witchcraze* (1994)
 - “women were accused primarily by men, tried by male juries, examined by male searchers, sentenced by male judges, tortured by male jailers, burned to death by male executioners”
 - Greed a possible reason for accusations involving larger numbers of ‘spinsters’ without children
 - Confusion over sexual issues in the Catholic church
 - Trials by civil courts often more draconian than religious Inquisitions



A MOST
Certain, Strange, and true Discovery of a
VVITCH.
Being taken by some of the Parliament Forces, as she was
standing on a small plank-board and sayling on
it over the River of *Newbury*;
Together with the strange and true manner of her death, with
the prophetical words and speeches she vied at the same time.

Printed by John Hammond, 1643.

Some Later Witch Hunts

- By mid-17th C., changes in legal procedure led to decline and end of witch trials in central European areas where witch hunts had been most prolific
 - Witch trials continued in the outer regions of Europe, e.g., Sweden and Austria (executions in Salzburg about 140 from 1675-90)
- Witch trials in colonial America (and New Mexico) commence with a hanging in New England in 1647
 - Levack reports 250+ trials with 19 executions, 3 deaths in prison and 1 by torture between 1647-1692
- The climax of witch hunts was reached in 1692-3 with the so-called Salem witch trials
 - These trials were conducted in various locations in New England, not just Salem
 - Results of the approx. 185 trials was 20 executions (19 by hanging; 14 women) plus 5 deaths in prison (including 2 infants)

Examination of a Witch, Thompkins Matheson (1813-84) Painting about American witch trials



Early Feminists: Olympe de Gouges (1748-93)

- Born Marie Gouze in SW France, the *nom de plume* Olympe de Gouges was adopted as a moniker for the 30 or so plays written following a move to Paris in 1770. The moniker was also useful to gain entry to the salon culture of Paris.
 - Included among the plays is *Réflexions sur les hommes négres* (1788, performed as a play in 1785) written as a passionate plea for alleviating *Code Noir* governing slaves in the French colonies. The play was a target of threats and was closed down shortly after opening by hecklers in the audience.
 - de Gouges was also publicly attacked by those incensed about a women writing plays for theatre
- Best remembered for the *Déclaration des droits de la Femme et de la Citoyenne* (1791) (« Declaration of the Rights of Women and the Female Citizen ») and *Contrat Social* (1791) calling for equality between man and wife in marriage



Affiliated with the Girondins and openly critical of the use of violence and summary execution by Robespierre and the Montagnard faction, Olympe de Gouges was arrested during the reign of Terror (1793-4) and was executed three days after the leaders of the Girondins

Early Feminists: Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-97)



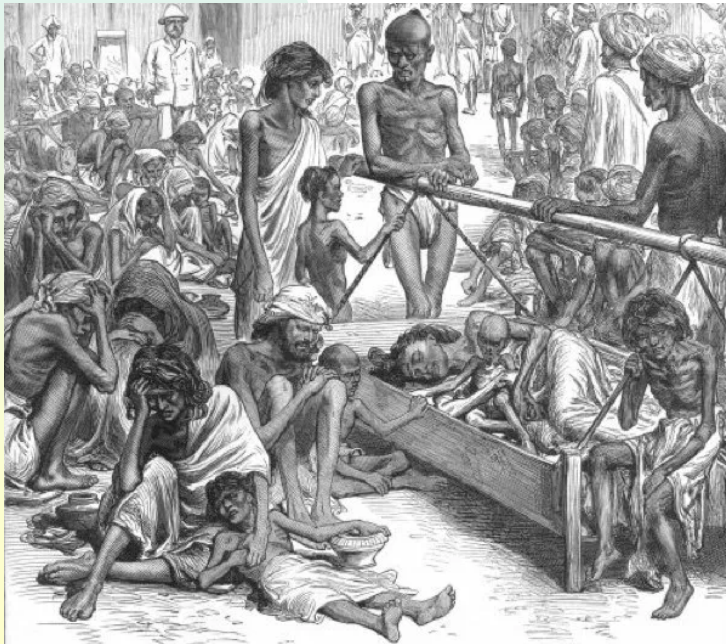
- *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters: with Reflections on Female Conduct in the more important Duties of Life* (1787)
- *A Vindication of the Rights of Men, in a Letter to the Right Honourable Edmund Burke* (1790)
- *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects* (1792)

The Vindications

- Wollstonecraft largely ignored ('silenced') until the rise of feminism in the '60's and '70', scattered references were usually more focused on perceived 'failings' of her personal life
- *Vindication of the Rights of Man*, motivated as a defense of Price (*Love of our Country*) against the attack of Edmund Burke (*Reflections on the Revolution in France*)
 - Adopted the view of Locke regarding the presence of God-given rights that could be discovered by reason
- *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, sought the transformation of women into rational and independent beings with civil and political rights necessary for a sense of self-worth
 - Achieving this goal required proper education needed to use reason to be successful wives, mothers and citizens.
- Wollstonecraft had a utopian vision based on small business and farming

Famine and Human Agency

- Who writes the History?
 - For the Bengal famine of 1770 and Irish Potato famine, British agency played a crucial role though the economic historiography stresses over-population and natural sources (drought, potato disease)
 - Malthusian arguments and classical political economy



Famine in the 20th Century

- Developments in 20th century have seen famine due to natural sources (drought, over population) fade in importance
- Major famines of 20th century
 - Great Chinese famine 1959-61 (total # of deaths uncertain → possible 20 million deaths
 - Primarily human agency arising from Cultural Revolution
 - Holodomor (Russian) famine 1932-3 (4 to 7 million deaths est.)
 - Connected to Soviet conversion to industrialization policies
 - Bengal famine 1943
 - British inaction denied there was an issue (2 to 3 million deaths est.)
 - North Korean famine 1994-8
 - Pursuit of 'military first' government policy (est. 3 million deaths)

