



The Wedding Dance (1566), by Pieter Brueghel the Elder

DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS

A HISTORY OF THE PAST: LIFE REEKED WITH JOY

One of the most popular *WQ* essays ever (and by far the funniest) was Anders Henriksson's brief history of Europe as told through the peculiar observations he had culled from papers written by college freshmen he had taught in Canada. As we wrote in introducing the piece in the Spring 1983 issue, paraphrasing George Santayana, "Those who forget history are condemned to mangle it."

COMPILED BY **ANDERS HENRIKSSON**

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HISTORY, AS WE KNOW, IS ALWAYS bias, because human beings have to be studied by other human beings, not by independent observers of another species.

During the Middle Ages, everybody was middle aged. Church and state were co-operatic. Middle Evil society was made up of monks, lords, and surfs. It is unfortunate that we do not have a medivel European laid out on a table before us, ready for dissection. After a revival of infantile commerce slowly creeped into Europe, merchants appeared. Some were sitters and some were drifters. They roamed from town to town exposing themselves and organized big fairies in the countryside. Mideval people were violent. Murder during this period was nothing. Everybody killed someone. England fought numerously for land in France and ended up wining and losing. The Crusades were a series of military expaditions made by Christians seeking to free the holy land (the "Home Town" of Christ) from the Islams.

In the 1400 hundreds most Englishmen were perpendicular. A class of yeowls arose. Finally, Europe caught the Black Death. The bubonic plague is a

social disease in the sense that it can be transmitted by intercourse and other etceteras. It was spread from port to port by inflected rats. Victims of the Black Death grew boobs on their necks. The plague also helped the emergance of the English language as the national language of England, France and Italy.

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The Middle Ages slimpared to a halt. The renasence bolted in from the blue. Life reeked with joy. Italy became robust, and more individuals felt the value of their human being. Italy, of course, was much closer to the rest of the world, thanks to northern Europe. Man was determined to civilise himself and his brothers, even if heads had to roll! It became sheik to be educated. Art was on a more associated level. Europe was full of incredible churches with great art bulging out their doors. Renaissance merchants were beautiful and almost lifelike.

The Reformation happened when German nobles resented the idea that tithes were going to Papal France or the Pope thus enriching Catholic coiffures. Traditions had become oppressive so they too were crushed in the wake of man's quest for resurrection above the not-just-social beast he had become. An angry Martin Luther nailed 95 theocrats to a church door. Theologically, Luther was into reorientation mutation. Calvinism was the most convenient religion since the days of the ancients. Anabaptist services tended to be migratory. The Popes, of course, were usually Catholic. Monks went right on seeing themselves as worms. The last Jesuit priest died in the 19th century.

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After the reformation were wars both foreign and infernal. If the Spanish could gain the Netherlands they would have a stronghold throughout northern Europe which would include their positions in Italy, Burgandy, central Europe and India thus surrounding

France. The German Emperor's lower passage was blocked by the French for years and years.

Louis XIV became King of the Sun. He gave the people food and artillery. If he didn't like someone, he sent them to the gallows to row for the rest of their lives. Vauban was the royal minister of flirtation. In Russia the 17th century was known as the time of the bounding of the serfs. Russian nobles wore clothes only to humour Peter the Great. Peter filled his government with accidental people and built a new capital near the European boarder. Orthodox priests became government antennae.

The enlightenment was a reasonable time. Voltare wrote a book called *Candy* that got him into trouble with Frederick the Great. Philosophers were unknown yet, and the fundamental stake was one of religious toleration slightly confused with defeatism. France was in a very serious state. Taxation was a great drain on the state budget. The French revolution was accomplished before it happened. The revolution evolved through monarchial, republican and tolarian phases until it catapulted into Napoleon. Napoleon was ill with bladder problems and was very tense and unrestrained.

History, a record of things left behind by past generations, started in 1815. Throughout the comparatively radical years 1815–1870 the western European continent was undergoing a Rampant period of economic modification. Industrialization was precipitating in England. Problems were so complexicated that in Paris, out of a city population of one million people, two million able bodies were on the loose.

Great Brittain, the USA and other European countrys had demicratic leanings. The middle class was tired and needed a rest. The old order could see the lid holding down new ideas beginning to shake. Among the goals of the chartists were universal suferage and an anal parliment. Voting was to be done by ballad.

A new time zone of national unification roared over the horizon. Founder of the new Italy was Cavour, an intelligent Sardine from the north. Nationalism aided Itally because nationalism is the growth of an army. We can see that nationalism succeeded for Itally because of France's big army. Napoleon III-IV mounted the French thrown. One thinks of Napoleon III as a live extension of the late, but great, Napoleon. Here too was the new Germany: loud, bold, vulgar and full of reality.

Culture fomented from Europe's tip to its top. Richard Strauss, who was violent but methodical like his wife made him, plunged into vicious and perverse plays. Dramatized were adventures in seduction and abortion. Music reeked with reality. Wagner was master of music, and people did not forget his contribution. When he died they labeled his seat "historical." Other countries had their own artists. France had Chekhov.

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World War I broke out around 1912–1914. Germany was on one side of France and Russia was on the other. At war people get killed, and then they aren't people any more, but friends. Peace was proclaimed at Versigh, which was attended by George Loid, Primal Minister of England. President Wilson arrived with 14 pointers. In 1937 Lenin revolted Russia. Communism raged among the peasants, and the civil war "team colours" were red and white.

Germany was displaced after WWI. This gave rise to Hitler. Germany was morbidly overexcited and unbalanced.

Berlin became the decadent capital, where all forms of sexual deprivations were practised. A huge anti-semantic movement arose. Attractive slogans like “death to all Jews” were used by governmental groups. Hitler remilitarized the Rhineland over a squirmish between Germany and France. The appeasers were blinded by the great red of the Soviets. Mussolini rested his foundations on eight million bayonets and invaded Hitler's Poland. Germany invaded Poland, France invaded Belgium, and Russia invaded everybody. War screeched to an end when a nuclear explosion was dropped on Hiroshima. A whole generation

had been wiped out in two world wars, and their forlorn families were left to pick up the pieces.

According to Fromm, individuation began historically in medieval times. This was a period of small childhood. There is increasing experience as adolescence experiences its life development. The last stage is us. ■

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