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Reaction Paper to Futurism

Futurism is an artistic movement that began in 1909 in Italy. One of its key figures, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, wrote a manifesto that covered the artistic philosophy behind the new trend. The ideals and interests of Futurism were that they rejected the past and celebrated speed, and aggression.

The manifesto expresses the rejection of the past within various parts of it. This is hinted at the beginning when the author speaks of silence being broken by an automobile. It is quite literally the past era of silence being broken by the new technology that is automation. The author follows this scene up with “Let’s go… Slashing for the first time through our millennial gloom!” The author speaks of moving on from past ideals to find new things, those that are commonly not thought of or real. This point is most expressed in the third and eighth Manifesto of Futurism. In the third, the author identifies what has already been done, then speaks of what they intend to do. In the eighth, the author states, “We stand on the last promontory of the centuries!... Why should we look back, when what we want is to break down the mysterious doors of the Impossible? Time and Space died yesterday.”

The idea of embracing speed is also apparent within the piece. The author prides themself and their speed by stating in the fourth Manifesto of Futurism that the world has been enriched by the beauty of it. The author finds that the roaring racing car of the then-modern day and its speed is more worthy of praise than the *Victory of Samothrace*, a Greek sculpture from the Hellenistic Era considered to be a masterpiece.

Another interest found when reading the article is also the forgiving and acceptance of aggression. At the beginning of the piece, the author remarks that the stench of raging madness was enough for their “beasts” and then states that he ran after death. In several parts of the Manifesto of Futurism, the ideal of aggression is stated numerous times. In the first, they report that they “intend to sing the love of danger, the habit of energy and fearlessness.” In the second, they state that audacity and revolt will be essential elements of their poetry. In the seventh, Marinetti states that beauty will only be found through struggle, with the most apparent piece of evidence being the line stated after. In the seventh article, Marinetti states that “No work without an aggressive character can be a masterpiece.”

The goal of this article is to push the ideals of Futurism onto its reader. They are protesting that only through the acceptance of their ideals of rejection of the past and acceptance of aggressive change and evolution can humanity triumph. My initial reaction was that of confusion. I did not particularly understand what the author was trying to write but after reading it numerous times, I finally thought I understood what Filippo Marinetti was trying to say. I believe that he was saying only through struggle and forced growth can the fundamentals of humanity and its arts evolve. They put a large emphasis on machinery, products that automate or simplify common activities quickly in order to show how far we have come and how much further and faster we can go. While I understand that forced change sounds like it would be an effective way of bettering something, personally, it feels as though change should be gradual if it is meant to be lasting. While big changes are very easy to identify, it is the smaller changes that become commonplace that truly last. In a way, the manifesto is rather ironic: the cars, lights, and ships that the article speaks of are all things that had changed and grown very gradually and slowly. The speed that they adore was something that was developed slowly.