

READING RESPONSE

Tuesdays,
9am-3pm
Br308
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As I don't really
have office hours. If
you need something
outside of class
please email me,
and I'll get back to
you as soon as I can.
If it is an extreme
circumstance,
please call.

The Futurist Manifesto, F. T. Marinetti, 1909

Hopefully the Edwardian era prose doesn't obfuscate any of the meaning within. If you are having a hard time deciphering what exactly Marinetti is talking about because the writing is getting in the way let me know before class next week ... we can talk a little bit about "Critically reading a text" if necessary on 10/9/2012.

(If you are truly having a hard time with the introductory section, skip ahead to just the numbered Manifesto and at least try to get what you can from that ...)

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A note on the writing:

This is actually wonderfully written — if a bit flowery. Note all the ways Marinetti makes "Industry" and "Technology" come alive. By using adjectives, emotions, and actions you'd normally reserve for people, Marinetti makes trolleys, automobiles, factories, etc. all "alive." This is called anthropomorphism, and is a common narrative device.

Also, let me preempt your reading this by pointing out a couple of things related to critically reading a piece:

1. Marinetti was a Fascist, and helped the fascist party come to power in Italy leading up to WWI. Ignoring what is valuable and interesting in this piece of writing because of this would be foolish...

2. Marinetti was somewhat of a Misogynist. You must remember that in 1909, this wasn't an uncommon view ... I'm not trying to justify it, just acknowledge that it is a view on point with culture of the time ... women didn't get the right to vote in most of Europe until late in the 1910's and into the 1920's — American granted universal women's suffrage in 1920. So a man of power saying in 1909 that feminism is getting in the way of progress isn't necessarily good, but wasn't out of place for the time. Let's acknowledge this and look past it when reading the text.

It's important to know the historic era something comes from. This allows you to ignore the potential pitfalls and/or non-PC content and try to get the real ideas underneath out. In this case, try to look past the few mentions of repealing feminist ideals or other potential intellectual entanglements ... try to find ways in which speed, industry, change, novelty, etc. are at work in his ideas.