

READING RESPONSE 4

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.

(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:

- Marinetti was a Fascist, and helped the fascist party come to power in Italy leading up to WWI ...
- Marinetti was somewhat of a Misogynist. Unfortunately, in 1909, this wasn't an uncommon view ... I'm not trying to justify it, just acknowledging that it was a view of culture at 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 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 ...

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.

Do you think people are this passionate about their ideas, ideals and beliefs now?

Does this give you anything to think about in relation to your action verb project?

Can you imagine this coming from a contemporary designer or artist?

Anything that makes you say “wow” or “I never thought of that”?

If you CAN imagine this coming from a contemporary, do you have an example of anyone who is promoting their cause so passionately?

How about anything that makes you say “That is just stupid and wrong”?

Does the writing appear to embody the powers of speed, technology, industry, and energy?

Is this completely out of date?

What does reading this make you think about?

Anything here you feel you could apply to our work?

Why should we even bother looking at something like this?

Is reading this just a waste of time?

Does any of this make the understanding of using time and motion in your work easier?