

# Reading response papers

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F. T. Marinetti, “ Manifesto of Futurism” As soon as I had said these words, I turned sharply back on my tracks with the mad intoxication of puppies biting their tails, and suddenly there were two cyclists disapproving of me and tottering in front of me like two persuasive but contradictory reasons. Their stupid swaying got in my way. What a bore! Pouah! I stopped short, and in disgust hurled myself — vlan! — head over heels in a ditch.

F. T. Marinetti’s “ Manifesto of Futurism,” is a public declaration of policy and aims published in 1909 in Le Figaro, Paris’ leading newspaper. It marks the birth of the Futurist Movement. While Marinetti’s manifesto is obviously motivated by the desire for change, it has the tone of a call-to-arms! It overflows with revolutionary enthusiasm and is written in a highly exaggerated, theatrical style. Marinetti urges men to embrace speed, war, machinery and danger. He rejects the past and disregards the future, living only in a hedonistic present. Throughout the manifesto, Marinetti’s love for automobiles, and speed, is evident. “ The hungry automobiles roared beneath our windows (209),” he says. Marinetti gives the car life as a powerful, dangerous animal – it is a snorting beast, and “ a vast shark” (211). He lavishes caresses on it. To him, a racing automobile embodies the very peak of beauty. He celebrates the man at the wheel of a car. The automobile finds mention in points three and four of his manifesto. In this context, it seems somehow appropriate that Marinetti meets with an accident when speeding on his automobile and lands in a ditch. “ The mad intoxication” of his speed, a Dionysian frenzy, is present in every line of his manifesto. His complete abandonment of reason, and his adamant resolve to “ leave good sense behind” (2010), can but lead to catastrophe, here embodied by the accident. The two cyclists can be perceived to represent

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reason. The “ love of danger, the habit of energy and rashness” (2011) is sure to lead to mishaps. However, for all its impractical, radical language, Manetti’s manifesto remains a lyrical testament to the Futurist Movement.