**Lesson 9**

**Futurism**

**THE COURSE TEXT and WORKSHEET (required to be completed and submitted)**

**Name and parallel group (A or B): ……………………………………………………………………………..**

**Date of submission: ………………………………………………………………………………………………………**

*Before you read*

**Warm-up questions**

Where did ‘Futurism’ originate from? What is ‘Futurism’ famous for?

Does ‘Futurism’ have any predictions about the future? What was the

most remarkable impact of ‘Futurism’ on art?

**Skimming the text**

Read the text’s title (headings and subheadings) and

• Write some of the text’s keywords in the following blanks.

……………… ……………… ………………… ………………

• Write the names of some important people and places given in the

reading passage.

……………… ………………… ………………… ………………

• Read the first sentences of each paragraph. What do you think the

reading is probably about?

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

**Group work (classroom activity)**

Discuss the following terms in groups and compare your answers with

your partners.

• Intellectuals • Modernity

• Dynamic art • Fascism

• Nationalism • Divisionism

*Part Ι. Reading*

**Futurism**

[1] ‘Futurism’ was an artistic and social movement that originated in Italy in

the early 20th century. It emphasized and glorified themes associated with

contemporary concepts of the future, including speed, technology, youth

and violence, and objects such as the car, the airplane and the industrial

city. It was largely an Italian phenomenon, though there were parallel

movements in Russia, England and elsewhere. The ‘Futurists’ practiced in

every medium of art, including painting, sculpture, graphic design,

industrial design, interior design, urban design, theatre, film, fashion,

textiles, literature, music, architecture and even gastronomy.

[2] The founder of ‘Futurism’ was the Italian writer *Filippo Tommaso*

*Marinetti*. *Marinetti* launched the movement in his ‘Futurist’ Manifesto,

which he published for the first time on 5 February 1909 in La gazzetta

dell'Emilia, an article then reproduced in the French daily newspaper Le

Figaro on 20 February 1909. *Marinetti* expressed a passionate loathing of

everything old, especially political and artistic tradition. “We want no part

of it, the past”, he wrote, “we the young and strong Futurists!” The

‘Futurists’ admired speed, technology, youth and violence, the car, the

airplane and the industrial city, all that represented the technological

triumph of humanity over nature, and they were passionate nationalists.

[3] The ‘Futurist’ painters were slow to develop a distinctive style and

subject matter. In 1910 and 1911 they used the techniques of

‘Divisionism’, breaking light and color down into a field of dots and

stripes, which had been originally created by *Giovanni Segantini*. Later,

*Severini*, who lived in Paris, was the first to come into contact with

‘Cubism’ and following a visit to Paris in 1911 the ‘Futurist’ painters

adopted the methods of the Cubists. ‘Cubism’ offered them a means of

analyzing energy in paintings and expressing dynamism.

**Image: UMBERTO BOCCIONI (1882-1916) \_ *The City Rises***

[4] The adoption of ‘Cubism’ determined the style of much subsequent

‘Futurist’ painting, which *Boccioni* and *Severini* in particular continued to

render in the broken colors and short brush-strokes of ‘Divisionism’. But

‘Futurist’ painting differed in both subject matter and treatment from the

quiet and static ‘Cubism’ of *Picasso, Braque* and *Gris*.

[5] *Boccioni*'s *The City Rises* (1910) represents scenes of construction and

manual labor with a huge, rearing red horse in the centre foreground,

which workmen struggle to control. The work attempts to convey feelings

and sensations experienced in time, using new means of expression,

including ‘lines of force’, which were intended to convey the directional

tendencies of objects through space, ‘simultaneity’, which combined

memories, present impressions and anticipation of future events, and

‘emotional ambience’ in which the artist seeks by intuition to link

sympathies between the exterior scene and interior emotion.

[6] With the beginning of the twentieth century, Europe saw a moment of

great political, economic and social stability. That period was dominated

by a liberal discourse based on two main principles: the abolition of war

and the need for the States to establish commercial relations in order to

reduce conflict. This climate was interrupted by the birth of a new

antagonistic discourse that took shape in Italy, attacking the idea of peace

as a positive value and promoting hate and conflict as means to destroy the

vices and weariness that, according to the intellectuals supporting this

idea, characterized the new continent. The seeds of this new political and

intellectual wave were sewn by the ‘Futurist’ movement, starting with the

publication, in 1909, of its Manifesto, which clearly stated that conflict

was to be used as a means for the creation of a new artistic, social and

political project. Conflict would serve to lead to a revolution of the

consciousness that could erase the border between life and art.

[7] The outbreak of war disguised the fact that Italian ‘Futurism’ had come

to an end. The Florence ‘Futurists’ had formally acknowledged their

withdrawal from the movement by the end of 1914. *Boccioni* produced

only one war picture and was killed in 1916. *Severini* painted some

significant war pictures in 1915 but in Paris turned towards ‘Cubism’ and

post-war was associated with the ‘Return to Order’. After the war,

*Marinetti* revived the movement. This revival was called il secondo

Futurismo (Second Futurism) by writers in the 1960s.

[8] Many Italian ‘Futurists’ supported ‘Fascism**’** in the hope of

modernizing a country divided between the industrializing north and the

rural, archaic South. Like the ‘Fascists’, the ‘Futurists’ were Italian

nationalists, radicals, admirers of violence, and were opposed to

parliamentary democracy. *Marinetti* founded the Futurist Political Party in

early 1918, which was absorbed into *Mussolini*'s Fasci di combattimento

in 1919, making *Marinetti* one of the first members of the *National*

*Fascist Party*. The Futurists' association with ‘Fascism’ after its triumph in

1922 brought them official acceptance in Italy and the ability to carry out

important work, especially in architecture. After the Second World War,

many ‘Futurist’ artists had difficulty in their careers because of their

association with a defeated and discredited regime.

*Part ΙΙ. Word study: Pronunciations, definitions and examples*

**Abolition (n.) /**æbəˈlɪʃ(ə)n/

The action or an act of abolishing a system, practice, or institution,

destruction.

*Are you for or against the* ***abolition*** *of the British Monarchy?*

**Acknowledge (v.) /**əkˈnɒlɪdʒ/

Accept or admit the existence or truth of.

*Please* ***acknowledge*** *the reception of my email.*

**Ambience (n.)** /ˈæmbiəns/

Background noise added to a musical recording to give the impression that

it was recorded live.

*The soft music created a suitable* ***ambience*** *in the dinner time.*

**Antagonistic (adj.)** /ænˈtægənistik/

Showing or feeling active opposition or hostility toward someone or

something.

*Two mutually* ***antagonistic*** *philosophies were always competing to*

*dominate the market.*

**Distinctive (adj.)** /disˈtiŋktiv/

Characteristic of one person or thing, and so serving to distinguish it from

others.

*It is her* ***distinctive*** *characteristic that made her popular.*

**Dynamism (n.) /**dīnəˈmizəm/

The quality of being characterized by vigorous activity and progress.

*Changes in human society reflect the* ***dynamism*** *of culture.*

**Glorify (v.) /**ˈɡlɔːrɪfʌɪ/

Give praise to (esp.) God.

***Glorify*** *your son, that your son may also* ***glorify*** *you.*

**Outbreak (n.) /**ˈaʊtbreɪk/

The sudden or violent start of something unwelcome, such as war,

disease, etc.

*Some observers claim it is the worst cancer* ***outbreak*** *for 25 years.*

**Phenomenon (n.) /** fəˈnamənən/

A fact or situation that is observed to exist or happen, esp. one whose

cause is in question.

*The decrease of income is a relatively recent economic* ***phenomenon****.*

**Rear (adj.) /**ri(ə)r/

(1) (Of a horse or other animal) raise itself upright on its hind legs. (2)

Bring up and care for (a child) until they are fully grown, esp. in a

particular manner or place.

*The painting depicts a* ***rearing*** *horse in a farm.*

**Revival (n.) /**riˈvīvəl/

(1) An instance of something becoming popular, active, or important

again. (2) An improvement in the condition or strength of something.

*His book brought about the forgotten custom's* ***revival****.*

**Simultaneity (n.) /**ˌsɪm(ə)lˈteɪnɪtɪ/

Happening or existing or done at the same time.

*We lost one of the matches due to their* ***simultaneity****.*

**Triumph (n.) /**ˈtrīəmf/

A great victory or achievement.

*We go forward with complete confidence in the eventual* ***triumph*** *of*

*freedom.*

**Vice (n.) /**vīs/

Immoral or wicked behavior.

*Gluttony is one of the ethical* ***vices****.*

**Withdrawal (n.) /**wɪðˈdrɔː(ə)l/

The action of withdrawing something.

*After you quit smoking, you will have some* ***withdrawal*** *symptoms.*

*Part ΙΙΙ. Exercises*

**A. Open questions**

Based on the text you have read, answer the following questions orally.

1- What were the interest areas of the ‘Futurists’?

2- What did Marinetti mention in the first “Futurist’ manifesto?

3- How were ‘Futurist’ and ‘Cubist’ artworks different?

4- Was the second ‘Futurism’ different from the first ‘Futurism’?

5- Why did many ‘Futurists’ support ‘Fascism’?

**B. Comprehension check**

Read each statement and decide whether it is true or false. Write “T”

before true statements and “F” before false ones.

…..... 1. Founder of ‘Futurism’ expressed a passionate loathing of

everything old, especially political and artistic tradition.

……. 2. The Futurist painters developed a distinctive style and subject

matter.

……. 3. ‘Futurism’ and Cubism are highly related.

……. 4. ‘Futurism’ died in the beginning of the twentieth century

forever.

……. 5. Like the Fascists, the Futurists were Italian nationalists,

radicals, admirers of violence, and were opposed to

parliamentary democracy.

**C. Multiple choice questions**

Read the reading passage carefully and select the most appropriate

answer for each of the following multiple-choice test items.

1- In his manifesto Marinetti expressed …………….

A). acceptable social and political standards.

B) loathing of everything old.

C) problems with other schools of art.

D) dissatisfaction with the technology.

2- What was the focus of ‘Futurism’?

A) anti-war works B) future concepts

C) self-expression D) realities of life

3- ‘Futurism’ was born in …………….

A) Italy in the 20th century. B) France in the 19th century.

C) Italy in the 19th century. D) France in the 20th century.

4- ‘Futurists’ favored ……………. techniques of painting.

A) ‘Pointillist’ B) ‘Divisionist’

C) ‘Fauvist’ D) ‘Impressionist’

5- ‘Weariness’ in paragraph 6 is closest in meaning to …………….

A) harness. B) tiredness.

C) happiness. D) sharpness.

**D. Word formation**

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate words from the following table.

Make necessary changes.

**Noun Verb Adjective Adverb**

revival revive revivable

simultaneity simultaneous simultaneously

triumph triumph triumphant triumphantly

dynamism dynamic dynamically

1- She rejected modernity in favor of ………………. old costumes.

2- When he won the case in the court, he made a …………….. shout.

3- The process of language learning is a(n) ……………. process.

4- Hebrew was a dead language but recently ……………… .

5- The General sent fresh forces to the battlefield to guarantee the

military …………. over the enemy.

**E. Synonym finding**

Find a single word in the passage which means:

1 equivalent (para.1) ……………………..

2 start (para.2) …………………….

3 provide, present (para.4) …………………….

4 vary (para.4) …………………….

5 feelings (para.5) ……………………..

6 expectation (para.5) ……………………..

7 strength, firmness (para.6) ……………………..

8 remove, clear (para.6) ……………………..

9 accept, admit (para.7) …………………….

10 aggression, cruelty (para.8) ……………………..

**F. Matching**

Match the words in column Ι with their appropriate equivalents in

column ΙΙ. Insert the letters in the parentheses provided. There are more

choices in column ΙΙ than required.

**column Ι column ΙΙ**

1 abolition (……) a. sin

2 vice (……) b. disagreement

3 loath (……) c. hate

4 exterior (……) d. ancient

5 conflict (……) e. external

6 archaic (……) f. destruction

7 association (……) g. connection

h. seek

**G. Cloze test (classroom activity)**

There are some missing words in the following text. Find the best

choice for each blank and mark it in your book.

‘Futurism’ had from the outset admired violence and was intensely

…..(1)…... The *Futurist Manifesto* had declared, "We will glorify war —the

world's only purity." Although it …..(2)…. much of its character and some of

its ideas to radical political movements, it was not much involved in

….(3)….. until the autumn of 1913. Then, fearing the re-election of Giolitti,

Marinetti published a political manifesto. In 1914 the ‘Futurists’ began to

campaign …..(4)…. against the Austro-Hungarian empire, which still

controlled some Italian territories. In September, Boccioni, seated in the

balcony of the Teatro dal Verme in Milan, tore up an Austrian flag and threw

it into the audience, while Marinetti waved an Italian ….(5)…... When Italy

entered the First World War in 1915, many Futurists joined the army.

**1**. A) realist B) polluted C) stupid D) patriotic

**2**. A) sent B) owed C) opened D) sold

**3**. A) society B) politics C) war D) art

**4**. A) actively B) finally C) really D) surely

**5**. A) rule B) emblem C) manifesto D) flag

**References**

Chiancone-Schneider, D. (2010). *Zukunftsmusik oder Schnee von gestern?*

*Interdisziplinarität, Internationalität und Aktualität des Futurismus.* Cologne:

Congress papers.

Coen, E. (1988). *Umberto Boccioni*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Conversi, D. (2009). Art, Nationalism and War: Political Futurism in Italy,

*Sociology Compass, (3*)1, 92–117.

Gentile, E. (2003). *The Struggle for Modernity: Nationalism, Futurism, and*

*Fascism*. Praeger Publishers.

Rainey, L. (2009). *Futurism: An Anthology.* Yale University Press.

Rodker, J. (1927). *The future of futurism*. New York: E.P. Dutton & company.

Source: KHAGHANINEJAD, Saber Mohammad. *English for the Students of Art*. Fars: Shiraz University Press 2016. ISBN 9789644626636.

(Adapted for Academic English course, Catholic theological faculty, Charles University, Prague.)