

Yasmina Reza's *Art* as a Dialogue Between the Art Trends

Saeede Esmailzade

MA student, English department, Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literature, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran
esmailzadehsaeede@gmail.com

Abstract:

Yasmina Reza's play "Art" as the name signifies, revolves around an art product; a white painting which brings about so much dissention among the three main characters. This conflict gradually heats up because of the different opinions that these three characters hold about art. The definition and the purpose of art varies for each of them; therefore, the friendship of these character comes to the edge of destruction. However, what might arouse the curiosity of the audience is that why these people are to this extent obsessed with this painting and what significance it may have for them. The writer of this article proposes that the three characters of the play stand for the different art trends of the history and this play provides them with an appropriate field by which they can assert their power over another through dialogue. By eliciting supports from different parts of the play, it will be proven that the character of Marc stands for the traditional art trends while Serge represents the new art forms and Yven occupies a position in between. These artistic movements attempt to assert their power over one another through dialogue. The final outcome of this fight for power is that the new art trend, Serge, wins and Marc loses some of the power of his past and Yven proves to be a complete failure.

Keywords: Art, Avant-garde, Classicism, dialogue, movement, power.

The play *Art* by Yasmina Reza has attracted much attention from the time of its first premier on 28 October 1994, winning various awards such as The Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Comedy or the Tony Award for the Best Play. The most outstanding of all these awards were two Molière awards which solidified Reza's position among the best playwrights of her time. It is not surprising then that "the reviews of the play have several times referred to it as a "rare miracle" (Mateo 175). The time magazine has decaded that this play questions the values of the modern life and in this manner "has touched a universal nerve" (Times 9). Mateo moreover, sates that *Art* is a very physical play and it must be seen rather than read because "The subtle and skilful way in which Reza depicts her true-to-life characters' relationship is accompanied by an almost musical and skilful rhythm in which she plays with the audience's reactions, making them turn their sympathies from one to the other and get involved in the play more in an emotional than in a rational way" (Mateo 176). Although this play has scrutinized the issue of art with an intellectual taste, it also revolves around every-day concepts such as friendship and this quality makes the play pleasurable to watch for the art intellectuals and the lowbrows alike. Thus the critics hold different views about the main focus of the play. Behnaz Amani in her article *A Deconstructive Reading of Yasmina Reza's Art* states that miscommunication is presented as the shortcoming of the language in Reza's art and the indeterminacy of the text of