



PERSIAN PAINTING: A VISUAL WINDOW INTO A GENDERLESS LANGUAGE

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Abstract A discerning trait of Persian painting, which differentiates it from the Western style of painting, is the irrefutable resemblance between the male and female figures. Persian painting is closely entwined with Persian poetry and therefore, the primary focus of this study are the illustrations accompanying poems which narrate Persian folklores in order to have portrayals of culturally well-known male and female figures. An attempt is made to compare and demonstrate the similarities between the studies done on Persian literature and metaphor, and the studies done on Persian art. Previous studies on Persian paintings have mainly associated the genderless nature of the painted figures to widespread homosexuality in mediaeval Persia. However, this study investigates this trait of Persian paintings with a new outlook; it scrutinizes the relationship between the genderless nature of Persian language and the similarity between the different genders' figures in classical Persian paintings. The ambiguity of the gender, which could be possible only by the usage of a genderless language such as Persian, was transferred in Persian paintings in the form of similarity between the female and male appearances.

Keywords: Persian painting, gender-less language, medieval poetry, Iran, visual rhetoric